



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 4, Issue 1
January 2009

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive

Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

Robert M. Reiter
Director

VA Health Care:

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

Maintenance is complete and van transportation will resume on January 5.



VA operated the nation's largest integrated health care system with more than 1,300 sites of care, including hospitals, community clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities. For additional information on VA health care, visit: http://www.va.gov/health_benefits.

Enrollment: For most veterans, entry into the VA health care system begins by applying for enrollment. To apply, complete VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits, which may be obtained from any VA health care facility or by contacting our office. Once enrolled, veterans can receive services at the

VA facilities anywhere in the country.

Veterans who are enrolled for VA health care are afforded privacy rights under federal law. VA's Notice of Privacy Practices is available at the VA health care Web site listed above.

The following three categories of veterans are not required to enroll, but are urged to do so to permit better planning of health resources: (1) Veterans with a service-connected disability of 50% or more. (2) Veterans seeking care for a disability the military determined was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, but which the VA has not yet rated, within 12 months of discharge. (3) Veterans

seeking care for a service-connected disability only.

During enrollment veterans are assigned to priority groups the VA uses to balance demand with resources. Changes in available resources may reduce the number of priority groups VA can enroll. There are eight priority groups. These are also listed on the Web site listed previously.

Continued Page 2



A message from our County Executive Kathleen M. Jimino...

Happy New Year! I wish you all much happiness and success in the New Year. As we begin 2009 I would like to recognize the sacrifices made by the men and women of our armed forces who through their actions have afforded us the freedoms we are so fortunate to enjoy. Thank you!

As well, I hope you will join me in keeping our soldiers currently serving and their families in your prayers. They, like so many before them, face trying times in far off lands defending us here at home and the freedoms we hold so dear.

Thank you once again for your service and my best wishes for a healthy and happy New Year!!

Sincerely,
Kathleen M. Jimino

Kathy Jimino

New 2009 Veterans Service-Connected Disability Ratings

10%	\$123.00	<p>If you are military veteran with a service-related disability, you may qualify for over \$2,673.00 in monthly benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">These benefits are paid to veteran's who have injuries or diseases that were occurred or aggravated during their active duty military time.</p>	<p>If you believe that you may have a service-connected disability, please call our office at anytime, to either discuss your personal issue or to request that the necessary paperwork be sent to you in order to proceed with you claim.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Please be advised that a service-connected disability is not an income related benefit</p>
20%	\$243.00		
30%	\$376.00		
40%	\$541.00		
50%	\$770.00		
60%	\$974.00		
70%	\$1,228.00		
80%	\$1,427.00		
90%	\$1,604.00		
100%	\$2,673.00		
<p>These rates are for a "single" veteran with no dependents.</p>			

VA Health Care (continued from page 1)

<p>Combat Veterans: Veterans who qualify as combat veterans are not required to report their financial information for conditions potentially related to their combat service. However, unless otherwise exempted, combat veterans must either provide their financial information or decline to provide their financial information and agree to make applicable co-payments for hospital and outpatient care that VA determines to have resulted from a cause other than their combat service. NOTE: While income disclosure by a recently discharged combat veteran is not a requirement, this disclosure may permit VA to determine if the veteran is eligible for additional benefits such as beneficiary travel reimbursement, cost-free medication and/or cost-free outpatient or hospital care for</p>	<p>services unrelated to combat.</p> <p>The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) announced that effective December 1, 2008, veterans' benefits will receive an increase of 5.8 percent.</p> <p>NOTE: The new means test, net worth, and Geographical-based Means Test (GMT) threshold rates are effective January 1, 2009.</p> <p>Means Test Copay Exempt-this refers to veterans with household income and/or a net worth below the VA National income threshold.</p> <p>Means Test Copay Required-this refers to veterans with household income and/or a new worth above the VA National income threshold and whose</p>	<p>household income is above the geographically-based income threshold for their resident location.</p> <p>GMT- Copay Required-for veterans who are not Means Test Copay Exempt or Required, "GMT Copay Required" refers to veterans whose household income and/or net worth is above the VA National income threshold, but whose household income is below the geographically-based income threshold for their resident location. NOTE:A veteran's income, which is "below the geographically-based income threshold for their resident location" is not enough to place the veteran in a "GMT copay required" status. The GMT threshold must be above VA's National income threshold for this to apply</p>
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Upcoming Events:



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

January 1... New Year's Day—**Office Closed**

January 19... Martin Luther King Day—**Office Closed**

February 9... Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **To Be Announced**

February 16... President's Day—**Office Closed**

SPECIAL NOTE: Please watch next month's newsletter, included will be our Annual Report. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year from all the staff here at Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency! *Yours in Patriotism, BOB*

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 150-200 words.

One benefit of using your newsletter as a promotional tool is that you can reuse content from other marketing materials, such as press releases, market studies, and reports.

While your main goal of distributing a newsletter might be to sell your product or service, the key to a successful newsletter is making it useful to your readers.

A great way to add useful content to your newsletter is to develop and write your own articles, or include a

calendar of upcoming events or a special offer that promotes a new product.

You can also research articles and "filler" articles by accessing the Wide Web. You can write about a variety of topics but try to keep articles short.

Much of the content you put in your newsletter can also be used for your Web site. Microsoft Publisher offers a simple way to convert your newsletter to a Web publication. So, after you've finished writing your new



Caption describing picture or graphic.

Inside Story Headline

This story can fit 100-150 words.

The subject matter that appears in newsletters is virtually endless. You can include stories that focus on current technologies or innovations in your field.

You may also want to note business or economic trends, or make predictions for your customers or clients.

If the newsletter is distributed inter-

nally, you might comment upon new procedures or improvements to the business. Sales figures or earnings will show how your business is growing.

Some newsletters include a column that is updated every issue, for instance, an advice column, a book review, a letter from the president, or an editorial. You can also profile new

employees or top customers.

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."

Upcoming Events:

Rensselaer County
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1609 Seventh Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: (518) 270-2750
FAX: (518) 270-2954

gardner road-wynantskill-ny

We're on the Web!
example.microsoft.com



Organization

This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

Back Page Story Headline

This story can fit 175-225 words.

If your newsletter is folded and mailed, this story will appear on the back. So, it's a good idea to make it easy to read at a glance.

A question and answer session is a good way to quickly capture the attention of readers. You can either compile questions that you've received since the last edition or you can summarize some generic questions that are frequently asked about your organization.

A listing of names and titles of managers in your organization is a good way to give your newsletter a personal touch. If your organization is small, you may want to list the names of all employees.

If you have any prices of standard products or services, you can include a

listing of those here. You may want to refer your readers to any other forms of communication that you've created for your organization.

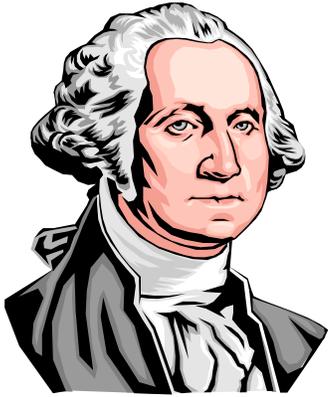
You can also use this space to remind readers to mark their calendars for a regular event, such as a breakfast

meeting on Monday, January 15, 2000, at 10:00 AM in the community auditorium.

If space is available, you can place a photograph of a person or group of people.



Caption describing picture or graphic.



Rensselaer County Veterans Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 2
February 2009

Kathleen M. Jimino
County Executive
Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner
Robert M. Reiter
Director

Rensselaer County
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Special Groups of Veterans

Women Veterans:

Women veterans are eligible for the same VA benefits as male veterans, but can also receive additional gender-specific services, including breast and pelvic examinations and other reproductive health care services.

VA provides preventive health care counseling, contraceptive services, menopause management, Pap smears and mammography. Referrals are made for services that VA is unable to provide. Women Veterans' Program Managers are available in a private setting at all VA facilities to help women veterans seeking treatment and benefits. For information, visit <http://www.va.gov/womenvet/>.

VA health care professionals provide counseling and treatment to help veterans overcome psychological issues resulting from sexual trauma that occurred while serving on active duty, or active for training for service was in the National Guard or reserves. Veterans who are not otherwise eligible for health care may still receive these services and do not need to enroll. Appropriate services are provided for any injury, illness or psychological resulting from such trauma.

Homeless Veterans:

VA provides comprehensive medical, psychological and rehabilitation treatment for eligible homeless veterans and conducts homeless outreach such as community-based "stand-downs" to help homeless veterans. Many VA benefits, including disability compensation, pension and education can help at-risk veterans avoid homelessness.

(next page)



Van Transportation...

- * *Don't drive* or are *physically incapable* of driving 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.

Rensselaer County Honor-A-Deceased Veteran

- Have a deceased loved one or friend who was a veteran and resided in Rensselaer County?
- Would you like them to be honored in a ceremony?
- If so, please call 270-2760 to request an application.

A message from our Director...

ALL VETERANS' EXPOSED TO AGENT ORANGE:

I want to urge all Vietnam veterans and veterans who served in areas where this was used to get tested NOW. There are many illnesses caused by Agent Orange, this raises concerns of health issues and damage caused by the use of Agent Orange.

If you're are not tested you are at risk of not knowing whether you could have symptoms of any one of the 11 diseases and ailments linked to Agent Orange. As we all know, the earlier a disease is detected, the better chances are of dealing with it.

When we got out of the service in our 20's we were feeling good, then as we have aged we have started to notice that this hurts and that hurts.

According to the Department of Veterans' Affairs, about 20 million gallons of herbicides were used in Vietnam between 1962 and 1972 to remove unwanted plant life and leaves which otherwise provided cover for enemy forces during the war.

Shortly following their military service in Asia, some veterans reported a variety of health problems and concerns which where attributed to exposure to Agent Orange.

Right now the VA offers compensation and benefits for veterans exposed to Agent Orange for the following 11 diseases: Chloracne; Hodgkin's Disease; Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma; Multiple Mycelia; Porphyries Catenae Tarda; Respiratory Cancers (Lung, Bronchus, Larynx, and Trachea); Soft-Tissue Sarcoma; Peripheral Neuropathy (Acute and Sub Acute); Prostate Cancer; Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2 Diabetes); and Chronic Lymphocyte Leukemia.

Also potential health conditions under review are Hypertension (High Blood Pressure) and Colon Cancer. Recently Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), often referred to as Lou Gehrig's Disease, was added and more are being looked at each day.

Call our office TODAY so we can start the review process.

Bob

Special Groups of Veterans (cont'd from page 1)...

Other programs for homeless veterans include residential rehabilitation services at VA domiciliaries, therapeutic group homes, and contract residential care. For assistance, contact the nearest VA medical facility or visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless/> to find contact information on VA homeless veteran coordinators in each state.

VA also provides grant and per diem funds to community agencies providing services to homeless veterans. The grant program pays up to 65 percent of the cost of construction, renovation, or acquisition of a building for use as a service center or transitional housing for homeless veterans, or foe the purchase of vans for transporting homeless veterans. The per diem provides funding for operational costs. Call 1-877-332-0334 or visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless/>.

The Department of Labor provides employment and training services, as well as grants to community organizations that provide counseling, job search and placement assistance, remedial education and on-the-job training for homeless veterans. For information, call 202-693-4700 or visit <http://www.dol.gov/vet/welcome.html>.

Upcoming Events:

February 16...President's Day—**Office Closed**

February 27...Wounded Warriors Snowsports Event from 6 pm—10 pm at Michael's Banquet House, Latham. Tickets are \$30. For more info call STRIDE 518-598-1279 or kmoshier@stride.org

March 9...monthly Honor-A-Deceased Veteran ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 am **To Be Announced**



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

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Volume 4, Issue 4
MARCH 2009

Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive

Robert M. Reiter
Director

Relaxation of Priority Group 8 Enrollment Restrictions

The Department of Veterans Affairs has received increased funding through Public Law 110-329 to alleviate some of the restrictions on Priority Group 8 enrollment. The adjustment applies to veterans who were not allowed to enroll in the VA health care system in the past because their income fell above the VA's means test threshold (MTT). This new provision stipulates that the veteran's income cannot fall beyond the limits of 10 percent and goes into effect June 2009.

Veterans who apply for enrollment starting January 1, 2009, but before June 2009 and whose income surpasses the MTT or geographic means test (GMTT) by 10 percent will not be enrolled in the VA health care system. However, the VA will make a re-determination after the effective date. Veterans whose applications were submitted prior to January 1, 2009, and were disapproved due to the MTT and GMTT will have to be re-submitted in order to be considered for the new provision.

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For more details call 270-2760.



American Legion Riders Melvin Roads Post 1231

The American Legion Riders Chapter 1231 of the Melvin Roads Post, East Greenbush, NY, is hosting a very special concert to raise money for the **children of fallen or seriously wounded soldiers who served in Afghanistan and Iraq.....**

WHEN:	Sunday, March 29, 2009
WHERE:	The "Troy Savings Bank Music Hall"
TIME:	2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
OPENING ACT:	Don Ackerman
FEATURED BAND:	The "Yankee Doodle Band"
DONATION:	\$12.00 per ticket

Tickets may be purchase from:

Troy Savings Bank Music Hall Ticket Sales 518 273-0038

All proceeds to go: 50% to the National American Legion Legacy Fund (scholarship) and 50% to the Melvin Roads Post 1231 ALR Hero Fund.

A Message from County Executive Jimino:

I hope you find the information contained in the monthly Veterans Newsletters helpful. We in Rensselaer County take a great deal of pride in the programs and services available to help support our Veterans who have through their service defended the freedoms we hold so dear.

To ensure that you are receiving all of the benefits you are entitled to through your service to our nation or the service of your spouse I urge you to check in with our Veterans Service Agency from time to time or join us at one of our Veterans Information Nights that are currently being held throughout the County.

Sincerely,
Kathleen M. Jimino
Kathy Jimino

FREE TAX PREP.....

The Diver Memorial Library at 136 Main St. in Schaghticoke will offer free tax preparation through the help of AARP. Qualified volunteers will be at the library from 10 am to 2 pm on Fri., Feb. 6th, March 6th, and April 3rd to prepare and electronically file tax returns. This service is geared towards taxpayers with middle and low incomes with special attention to those age 60 and older. An appointment can be made by calling 753-4344.

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2008. This Act extends the period of enhanced health care eligibility provided to a veteran who served in a theater of combat operation after November 11, 1998 (commonly referred to as combat veterans or OEF/OIF veterans) as follows:

- **Currently enrolled veterans and new enrollees who were discharged from active duty on or after January 28, 2003** are eligible for the enhanced benefits, for 5 years post discharge.
- **Veterans discharged from active duty before January 28, 2003, who apply for enrollment on or after January 28, 2008**, are eligible for the enhanced benefit until January 27, 2011.

As before, veterans included in this authority may be enrolled in Priority Group 6, if not eligible for a higher Priority Group placement, and may be charged co-pays for medication and/or treatment of conditions that are clearly unrelated to their combat service (common cold, broken bone, etc.). These veterans, while not required to disclose income, may do so to determine their eligibility for a higher priority status, beneficiary travel benefits and exemption of co-pays for care unrelated to their military service.

There is no change to VA's policy of continuing enrollment of veterans who enroll with VA under this "Combat Veteran" authority after their enhanced eligibility period ends. At the end of the enhanced eligibility period, VA will reassess the veteran's information and make a new enrollment decision. If the veteran was in Priority Group 6 and no other eligibility factors apply then he/she will continue enrollment in either Priority Group 7 or Priority Group 8 depending on their income level and will be required to make applicable co-pays.

Upcoming Events:



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

April 13...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Brigadier General Leon E. Wait (Ret.), US Army**

April 18...Informational meeting at the Averill Park American Legion from 1 pm—3 pm.

May 11...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.

May 25...Memorial Day— **Office Closed**

May 25...Veterans of Lansingburgh 13th Annual Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m., rain or shine/

May 25...North Greenbush Memorial Day Parade, step off time 1:30 pm.



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

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Unified Family Services
Veterans Service Agency
1600 Seventh Avenue
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Volume 4, Issue 4
APRIL 2009

Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive

Robert M. Reiter
Director

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WASHINGTON (March 13, 2009) - Following is an open letter to Veterans from the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki:

"My name is Ric Shinseki, and I am a Veteran. For me, serving as Secretary of Veterans Affairs is a noble calling. It provides me the opportunity to give back to those who served with and for me during my 38 years in uniform and those on whose shoulders we all stood as we grew up in the profession of arms.

"The Department of Veterans Affairs has a solemn responsibility to all of you, today and in the future, as more Veterans join our ranks and enroll to secure the benefits and services they have earned. I am fully committed to fulfilling President Obama's vision for transforming our department so that it will be well-positioned to perform this duty even better during the 21st Century. We welcome the assistance and advice of our Veterans Service Organizations, other government departments and agencies, Congress, and all VA stakeholders as we move forward, ethically and transparently, so that Veterans and citizens can understand our efforts.

"Creating that vision for transforming the VA into a 21st Century organization requires a comprehensive review of our department. We approach that review understanding that Veterans are central to everything VA does. We know that results count, that the department will be measured by what we do, not what we promise, and that our best days as an organization supporting Veterans are ahead of us. We will fulfill President Lincoln's charge to care for ". . . him, who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan . . ." by redesigning and reengineering ourselves for the future.

"Transforming any institution is supremely challenging; I know this from my own experience in leading large, proud, complex, and high-performing organizations through change. But the best organizations must be prepared to meet the challenging times, evolving technology and, most importantly, evolving needs of clients. Historically, organizations that are unwilling or unable to change soon find themselves irrelevant. You and your needs are not irrelevant.

"Veterans are our clients, and delivering the highest quality care and services in a timely, consistent and fair manner is a VA responsibility. I take that responsibility seriously and have charged all of the department's employees for their best efforts and support every day to meet our obligations to you. Our path forward is challenging, but the President and Congress support us. They have asked us to do this well-for you. Veterans are our sole reason for existence and our number one priority-bar none. I look forward to working together with all VA employees to transform our department into an organization that reflects the change and commitment our country expects and our Veterans deserve.

"Thank you, and God bless our military, our Veterans, and our Nation."

Signed: Eric K. Shinseki

A Message From Our Director

GOT MONEY? Beware those who promise Free Government Money! In tough economic times the pitches for government grants are great, with many aimed at Veterans. If it seems too good to be true...it probably is. It's that plain and simple.

Or, let me put it this way: If someone walked up to you on the street and said, "I'm going to give you money, but you have to give me some money first," WOULD you believe them? Of course not.

So, don't believe them on the Internet. With tough economic times, the ads

for "Government Grants" of Government Money" or "\$27,000.00 free for the asking", can be found everywhere on the Web.

These are folks who will charge you for them to send you information that is usually worthless and / or outdated and / or completely bogus.

Want to know about REAL Grants? Only trust verified government web pages.

For example, the VA site (www.va.gov) will tell you about grants for adaptive housing or an adaptive auto-

mobile, should you qualify.

Unfortunately, there are those out there who would take advantage of others, even those who have given so much for their country. So please, do not allow yourself to fall victim to these predators who would take advantage of the needs of our veterans.

A special thanks to Larry Scott for providing some of the information for this article.

Yours in Patriotism,
BCB

Troy Boys & Girls Club Offers Free Membership to Military Children

In partnership with every armed service, (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard), Troy Boys & Girls Club is proud to support **MISSION: Youth Outreach**. This US Department of Defense and Boys & Girls Club of America sponsored initiative underwrites off-base Club membership dues and program fees for each child of re-

serve, guard or active duty personnel. The Troy Boys & Girls Club was recently recognized with a Military Outreach Award by The Boys & Girls Club of America for providing quality youth programs to military dependent children in civilian communities. **MISSION: Youth Outreach** allows The Troy Boys & Girls Club to

show its support to military families by expanding the reach of its after school and summer programs that focus on personal development, the arts, education, recreation and health. For more information about **MISSION: Youth Outreach** or to find out how to enroll your child in the Troy program, please call The Troy Boys & Girls

Upcoming Events:



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

April 2...NYS Employment For Women Veterans, The Canon Club @ Watervliet Arsenal, 5:30 pm, please RSVP at 465-5251 ext. 210

April 13...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Brigadier General Leon E. Wait (Ret.), US Army**

April 18...Informational meeting at the Averill park American Legion from 1 pm— 3 pm

April 18... Tools for Caregivers, Bulmer Communications Center, Hudson Valley Community College, Troy from 8 am—2 pm (lunch included) to register call (518) 434-2160 or email CapitalRegionCC@yahoo.com. For more info or to register for Respite, call 270-2768.

May 11...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.

May 23...East Greenbush Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 10:00 a.m.

May 25...Memorial Day— **OFFICE CLOSED**

May 25...Veterans of Lansingburgh 13th Annual Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m.

May 25...North Greenbush Memorial Day Parade, step off time 1:30 p.m.

July 3 ... Independence Day Observed—**OFFICE CLOSED**

July 4...Independence Day



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive

Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

Robert M. Reiter
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Volume 3, Issue 5
MAY 2009

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Patriot Hills of New York

The Patriot Hills of New York Committee (compromised of both service members and civilians) is committed to developing the very first not for profit recreational facility and wellness center for the transition, reintegration and therapeutic healing for veterans and their families.

It's their intent to build a partnership with the military's healthcare system in order to generate support services for an integrative wellness center that will be available to all veterans, retirees and their families.

The recreational facility portion will give the veterans and their families an opportunity to reconnect and reestablish their relationship in a natural yet controlled environment that will be conditioned for their needs.

They have submitted a request for 501c Not for Profit status to develop this state-of-the-art recreational and wellness center that can serve as a model that can be replicated regionally across the United States.

Their primary objective will be to provide superior customer support and services, delicious health-conscious cuisine, comprehensive spa and therapeutic body treatments, indoor/outdoor physical activity, youth programs, multi-cultural spiritual counseling, and interactive educational programs facilitated by renowned health and wellness professionals. It is our ultimate goal to develop a customized facility that will be flexible for the ever-changing needs of our military and on that we can develop to be self-sustaining and environmentally green.

The reach and complexity of Patriot Hills' mission and vision requires strategic alliances. To that end we are proactively establishing collaborative strategic partnerships with experts in the fields of integrative medicine, academia/research, tourism/hospitality, as well as military organizations, VA hospitals, Tri-Care, philanthropic foundations, community groups, and front running health and welfare organizations.

They also provide information and outreach through training and development, conferences and informational workshops specifically designed to inform and empower its clients to make lifestyle changes to assist in healing from the effect of trauma by learning new skills in self-care to minimize its impact, maintaining good health and reducing susceptibility of premature degenerative diseases.

Van Transportation...

- * **Don't drive** and need to get to the VA Medical Center or the Troy VA Clinic!?
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For more details call 270-2760



Presidential Memorial Certificates

Certificates are issued upon request to recognize the military service of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Next of kin, relatives and friends may request them by calling your local Veterans Service Agency. Please have a copy of the veteran's discharge document and death certificate to accompany the request.

A Message From Our Director

Hello All-

We have received, what I call our report card, from the VA for last year. These numbers are for Rensselaer County ONLY.

The Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures for FY 08 are: Veterans' Population 11,992, down from 12,487 in '07; Total Expenditures for our County \$39,888,000.00, up from \$38,778,000.00 in '07; Compensation & Pension \$15,386,000.00 up from \$13,898,000.00 in '07; Education & Rehabilitation \$1,056,000.00, up from \$939,000.00 in '07; Insurance (life)

\$953,000.00, up from \$939,000.00 in '07; the next number is the only down turn we had, Medical care, \$22,493,000.00 from \$22,604,000.00 in '07. They also tell us that we only have 2,856 Veterans' receiving care at the VA centers.

As you can tell, we keep helping our Veterans' submit claims for Compensation due to injuries received on active duty. As our Veterans' population declines, our compensation and pensions rates keep going to record numbers.

The VA system has created a two-tiered system of health care and benefits. Vet-

erans' from Iraq and Afghanistan are given preference at VA medical facilities and are put first in line for having disability claims processed. But, to what end? Why would the VA take up so much time and spend so much money serving the needs of JUST 3 % of the Veterans' population... while the other 97 % waits... and waits... and waits?

I just ask, when does the VA plan to do the same for combat veterans' from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the first Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia and every other conflict?

Yours in Patriotism,
BCB

Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water

REGISTER TODAY

**Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Call Center
(877)261-9782**

M-F 8:30 AM—5 PM, EST

**Or visit the website at
www.marines.mil/clsurvey**

- **If you lived or worked at Camp Lejeune 1987 or before, you may have been exposed to contaminated drinking water.**
- **The Department of the Navy is funding two independent research initiatives to evaluate possible health risks that may be associated with exposure.**
- **Individuals registered with the Marine Corps will be directly notified when results are available.**

PRESS RELEASE

Veteran character actor Hank Garrett will be receiving the Senator Hugh Farley Award at the Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame Induction May 16, 2009. Mr. Garrett received the NY Film critics award for "Three Days of the Condor" and has acted with such celebrities as Kirk Douglas, Mickey Rourke and Al Pacino. He is known as Officer Nicholson on "Car 54" and so-starred with James Earl Jones in the series "Paris". Mr. Garrett wrestled for five years against such wrestlers as Killer Kowalski and Mike Mazurki. Hank has been active in aiding disabled American veteran and donates much of the proceeds from his appearances to the DAV. Hank wishes to do this with any proceeds from his merchandise to be available at induction weekend here in Amsterdam. All veterans and/or organization are invited to attend and meet Hank.

Upcoming Events:



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

May 11...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Zigmund C. Wojton, US Army, WWII**

May 21...Villages of Valley Falls, Schaghticoke and Johnsonville Memorial Day parade, kick off at 7:00 p.m.

May 23...East Greenbush Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 10:00 a.m.

May 24... Rensselaer Memorial Day Parade, step off at 2:00 p.m.

May 25...Memorial Day—**OFFICE CLOSED**

May 25...Averill Park Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 10 a.m.

May 25...Veterans of Lansingburgh 13th Annual Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m.

May 26...Poestenkill Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m.

May 25...Nassau Memorial Day Parade, step off at 2:00 p.m.

May 25... North Greenbush Memorial Day Parade, step off time 1: 30 p.m.

June 14...Troy Flag Day Parade

June 8...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Anthony F. Chetko, Jr., US Army, Vietnam**

Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony

Every second Monday of the month, the County honors a deceased veteran in a very moving and respectful ceremony in the County Legislative Chambers.

If you have loved one, who was a veteran from Rensselaer County and would like to have them honored, please contact the Rensselaer County Veterans at 270-2760 for an application.

The following criteria applies to the honorees:

- Must be from Rensselaer County (born, raised or resided in);
- Must have been Honorably Discharged and discharge must accompany application;
- May only be honored once;
- Submitted application must be legible and have a family contact (name, address and telephone number);
- List of all medals, campaigns, and battles;
- Include civilian history (all community services and organizations);
- Be as detailed as possible, the entire ceremony is dedicated to this one veteran and it is their life story.

Troy Flag Day Parade



MARCHERS WANTED

June 14, 2009 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

Several times each year we host medal ceremonies for our veterans who never received the medals they earned while serving their country. It would be an honor to present these tributes of military service to all of our local veterans.

If you are interested in receiving your medals or the medals of a deceased loved one, please contact our office (270-2760) to request the form needed. When the medals arrive, we will present them to you at the next upcoming medal ceremony.



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. We reserve the right to consider each request on an individual basis and need.
- 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. Please 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.

A Message From Our County Executive

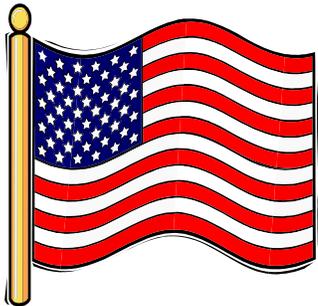
During the month of May we celebrate two special days, Mother's Day and Memorial Day. On Mother's Day I hope you will join me in keeping all military moms or moms serving in the armed forces in our thoughts and prayers. To be separated from your child because you or they are in harms way makes for a difficult Mother's Day and is just one example of the many sacrifices made by those who serve our nation.

Memorial Day is a day where we recognize all those who have fallen while fighting for the freedoms we hold so dear. As we recognize those fallen soldiers let us also keep in mind all those who are currently serving our Country, defending our freedoms and our way of life. May they come home safely to a grateful nation.

Sincerely,
Kathleen M. Jimino
 Kathleen M. Jimino

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.



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO

County Executive

Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

Robert M. Reiter
Director

Volume 4, Issue 6
JUNE/JULY 2009

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

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 3, 2009
8 a.m.—1 p.m.

At the

Colonie BPO Elks #2192
11 Elks Lane, Latham, NY



SERVICES FOR BLIND VETERANS

Blind and visually impaired veteran may be eligible for services at a VA medical center or for admission to a VA blind rehabilitation center. In addition, blind veterans enrolled in the VA health system may receive:

1. A total health and benefits review.
2. Adjustment to blindness training and counseling.
3. Home improvements and structural alterations.
4. Specially adapted housing and adaptations.
5. Automobile grant.
6. Low-vision devices and training in their use.
7. Electronic and mechanical aids for the blind, including adaptive computers and computer-assisted devices such as reading machines and electronic travel aids.
8. Guide dogs, including cost of training for the veteran to learn to work with the dog.
9. Talking books, tapes and Braille literature.

Eligible visually impaired veterans (who are not completely blind) enrolled in the VA health care system may receive:

1. A total health and benefits review.
2. Adjustment to vision loss counseling and training,
3. Low-vision devices and training in their use.
4. Electronic and mechanical aids for the visually impaired, including adaptive computers and computer-assisted devices such as reading machines and electronic travel aids, and training in their use.

Military Headstones and Markers

Veterans, active duty service-members, retired reservists, and National Guard service-members are eligible for an inscribed headstone or marker to mark their grave at any cemetery-national, state veterans, or private. The headstone or marker will be delivered at no cost, anywhere in the world. Spouses and dependent children are eligible for a government headstone or marker only if they are buried in a national or state veteran's cemetery.

Flat markers are available in bronze, granite or marble. Upright headstones come in granite or marble. In national cemeteries, the style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains.

Headstones and markers previously provided by the government may be replaced at the government's expense if badly deteriorated, illegible, vandalized or stolen. To check the status of an application for a headstone or marker for a national or state veterans cemetery, call the cemetery. To check the status of one being placed in a private cemetery, call 1-800-697-6947.

Inscription: Headstones and markers must be inscribed with the name of the deceased, branch of service, and year of birth and death. They also may be inscribed with other markings, including an authorized emblem of belief and, space permitting, additional text including rank; war service such as "World War II"; complete dates of birth and death; military awards; military organizations; civilian or veteran affiliations; and words of endearment.

Private Cemeteries: To apply for a headstone or marker for a private cemetery, mail a completed VA Form 40-1300 , Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker for Installation in a Private Cemetery or a State Veterans' Cemetery, and a copy of the veteran's military discharge document and death certificate to Memorial Programs Service (41A1), Department of Veterans Affairs. 5109 Russell Rd., Quantico, VA 22134-3903. Or fax documents to 1-800-455-7143.

For a veteran's death occurring on or after November 1, 1990, VA will provide a government headstone or marker even if the grave is already marked with a private one. Before ordering, check with the cemetery to ensure that the additional headstone or marker will be accepted. Any placement fee will not be reimbursed by the VA.

Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony

Every second Monday of the month, the County honors a deceased veteran in a very moving and respectful ceremony in the County Legislative Chambers.

If you have a loved one, who was a veteran from Rensselaer County and would like to have them honored, please contact the Rensselaer County Veterans' office at 270-2760 for an application.

The following criteria applies to the honorees:

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- List of all medals, campaigns, and battles;
- Include civilian history (all community services and organizations);
- Be as detailed as possible, the entire ceremony is dedicated to this veteran and it is their life story.

CEO'S Weatherization Assistance Program

Organization Name and Address

COMMISSION ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GREATER CAPITAL REGION, INC.
2331 5TH AVE
TROY, NY 12180
<http://www.ceo-cap.org>

Weatherization Assistance Services

Service Area: RENSSELAER COUNTY
Contact: DEBRA BEDARD
Phone: (518)272-6012
Email: dbedard@ceo-cap.org
Service Profile: Weatherization assistance providers can assist eligible homeowners with

measures to improve energy efficiency including:

- an energy audit of the home to identify specific needs;
- Weather-stripping and caulking around doors and windows;
- cleaning, testing, repairs, or replacement of heating systems;
- replacement or repair of storm windows;
- replacement or repair of broken windows and/or outside doors;
- addition of insulation to walls or ceilings;
- mitigation of health and safety con-

cerns, in particular assure that all dwelling units receive smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

Weatherization Services may also include other energy-related improvements such as: water heater repair/replacement, roof repair/replacement, chimney repairs, lighting fixture replacement, venting systems, heating distribution system replacement, refrigerator replacement, installation of GFIC outlets, and electrical service upgrade.

Weatherization services are available to income-eligible (60% of State median income) individuals who may be either home owners or renters living in a mobile home, an apartment, or a single-family home.

Commissary and Exchange Privileges

Unlimited exchange and commissary store privileges in the United States are available to honorably discharged veterans with a service-connected disability rated at 100 percent, unmarried surviving spouses of members or retired members of the armed forces, recipients of the Medal of Honor, and their dependents and orphans. Certification of total disability is done by the VA. Reservists and their dependents also may be eligible.

Privileges overseas are governed by international law and are available only if agreed upon by the foreign government concerned.

Though these benefits are provided by DOD, the VA does provide assistance in completing DD Form 1172, "Application for Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card." For detailed information, contact the nearest military installation.

For ID cards, call for an Appointment at the following:

- Albany Reserve Center: 489-5441
- Glens Falls: 792-6368
- Latham DMNA: 786-4406
- Stratton ANG: 244-2115
- Watervliet Arsenal: 266-5290

Commissary:

- Scotia Commissary: 370-5935
- Hours of Operation: 370-5913
- Navy Exchange: 377-6440

A Message From Our Director

<p>I just wanted to share this very touching poem by: A. Lawrence Viancourt</p> <p>He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast, And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past, Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, every one. And tho' sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became a joke, All his Veterans' buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke. But we'll hear his tales no longer for old Dan has passed away, And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today. He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife, For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life, Held a job and raised a family, quietly going on his way And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier died today.</p>	<p>When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state, While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great. Papers tell their whole life stories from the time that they were young, But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung. Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land, Some guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man? Or the ordinary fellow, who in times of war and strife, Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life? Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives, While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all, Is paid off with a medal and, perhaps, a pension small. It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago That the old Dans of our Country went to battle, but we know It was not the politicians, with their compromise</p>	<p>and ploys, Who won for us the freedom that our Country now enjoys. Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand, Would you want a person with his ever-shifting stand? Or would you prefer a soldier who has sworn to defend His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the end? He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin, But his presence should remind us we may need his like again, For when countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part Is to clean up all the troubles that others start. If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise, Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days. Perhaps just a simple headline in the paper that would say, "Our Country is in mourning, for a soldier died today."</p>
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VA STUDY SHOWS GULF WAR VETS HAVE MORE ILLNESSES

Gulf War vets report significantly higher rates of unexplained multi-symptom illness, chronic fatigue syndrome, PTSD and functional impairment. On Tuesday, May 19, 2009 the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing entitled Gulf War Illness Research: Is Enough Being Done?

At that hearing a host of veterans' advocates and researchers presented the latest findings on the health of Gulf War veterans. Among those presenting testimony was Paul Sullivan, Executive Director of Veterans for Common Sense (VCS). One of the weapons in Sullivan's arsenal was a study by VA researcher Dr. Han Kang of the VA's Environmental Epidemiological Service. Kang's study, released just last month, is titled: *Health of US Veterans of 1991 Gulf War: A Follow-Up Survey in 10 Years*. The brief excerpt below gives you an idea of the tone of the study:

Fourteen years after the 1991 Gulf War, a population-based sample of 6111 Gulf veterans reported significantly higher rates for 20 of 23 physical conditions and all seven mental disorders assessed in the survey compared to 3859 Gulf Era veteran controls, both before or after adjustment for explanatory demographic and military factors. Moreover, deployed veterans reported almost two times more functional impairment, a 50% higher rate of health related activity limitation, and more clinic, doctors' offices visits, and inpatient hospital health care than the Gulf Era veterans. These results are similar to those observed in the 1995 National Health Survey of Gulf War Era Veterans and Their Families. Thus, military service in the 1991 Gulf War appears to be continuing to affect the health status of veterans, which may impact future use of physical and mental health care services.

Sullivan, in an email, stated:

VA's own study confirms the findings of earlier studies cited in a 450-page report by the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses (RAC) released in November 2008. Page 26 of the RAC reported an excess rate of multi-symptom illness of 25-32%. The U.S. military deployed nearly 700,000 troops to Southwest Asia in 1990 – 1991 for Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

VCS expected VA witnesses to confirm the results of the study and accept that Gulf War illness is real. If VA leaders do confirm the new study, it will be the first time the VA officially acknowledged the existence of Gulf War illness.

VCS hopes the VA will revise VA training manuals given to VA doctors who treat Gulf War veterans. Currently, the VA's training program dismisses the veterans' illnesses, comparing problems to women with silicone breast implants.

Upcoming Events:



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

July 13...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Carl D. Sheeley, Sr., US Army, Korea**

August 10...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Joseph J. Vanderwerken, US Navy, Vietnam Era**



Rensselaer County Veterans Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 8
OCTOBER, 2009

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

Rensselaer County Unified Family Services

1600 Seventh Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: (518) 270-2760
FAX: (518) 270-2956



Yellow Ribbon Program



ATTENTION TO ALL:

**THE LOCATION OF
THE 11TH ANNUAL
VETERANS DAY
BREAKFAST HAS
BEEN MOVED TO**

**THE
NORTH GREENBUSH
AMERICAN LEGION
POST #1489
MAIN AVE.,
WYNANTSKILL
NOVEMBER 8, 2009
8:30AM—11:30AM**

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 Troy Clinic for **most morning** medical appointments. Call 270-2760 for more info.



What is the Yellow Ribbon Program?

The Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program (Yellow Ribbon Program) is a provision of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008. This program allows institutions of higher learning (degree granting institutions) in the United States to voluntarily enter into an agreement with VA to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate. The institution can contribute up to 50% of those expenses and VA will match the same amount as the institution.

The Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) must agree to:

- Provide contributions to eligible individuals who apply for the Yellow Ribbon Program on a first-come first-served basis, regardless of the rate at which the individual is pursuing training in any given academic year;
- Provide contributions during the current academic year and all subsequent academic years in which the IHL is participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program and the student maintains satisfactory progress, conduct, and attendance;
- Make contributions toward the program on behalf of the individual in the form of a grant, scholarship, etc;
- State the dollar amount that will be contributed for each participant during the academic year;
- State the maximum number of individuals for whom contributions will be made in any given academic year.

How Does the Yellow Ribbon Program Benefit Me?

The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays up to the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition and fees. You may have tuition and fees that exceed that amount if you are attending a private institution, graduate school or attending in an out-of-state status. If you are enrolled at a Yellow Ribbon participating institution and the tuition and fees exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition or fees, additional funds may be available for your education program without an additional charge to your entitlement.

Institutions that voluntarily enter into a Yellow Ribbon Agreement with VA choose the amount of tuition and fees that will be contributed. VA will match that amount and issue payment directly to the institution.

Am I Eligible?

Only individuals entitled to the maximum benefit rate (based on service requirements) may receive this funding. Therefore, you may be eligible if:

- You served an aggregate period of active duty after September 10, 2001, of at least 36 months;
- You were honorably discharged from active duty for a service connected disability and you served 30 continuous days after September 10, 2001;
- You are a dependent eligible for Transfer of Entitlement under the Post-9/11 GI Bill based on a veteran's service under the eligibility criteria listed above.

Yellow Ribbon Program Cont'd from Page 1

How will I Know My School is Participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program?

You must be enrolled in an approved program offered by an IHL.

When Will Benefits under the Yellow Ribbon Program Be Available?

Benefits are payable for training pursued on or after August 1, 2009. No payments can be made under this program for training pursued before that date.

How Much Money Will I Receive Under the Yellow Ribbon Program?

Question: What portion of tuition and fees charges will be considered under the Yellow Ribbon Program?

Answer: The difference of the amount charged to the student and what has been paid by VA as educational assistance.

The following steps are provided to determine the difference for one student:

Student's enrolled credit hours reported by the institution to the VA x Maximum Credit Hour Charge for the State = Maximum Tuition Payable

Compare the Maximum Tuition Payable with the amount charged the student. VA will pay the institution the lesser amount

Compare the Maximum Single Term Fees for your State with what you have charged the student. VA will pay the institution the lesser amount.

Add the amounts VA has paid for tuition and fees and compare that with the total amount charged to the student. Institution charges that exceed what has already been paid by VA are the difference that could be applied to the Yellow Ribbon Program.

Determine how much of the difference, up to one-half of that amount, that the institution will agree to cover with funds of the institution and the VA will match that amount.

Example: The student enrolled in 12 credit hours during the Fall term and the institution charged the student \$5,000 for tuition and \$1,200 in fees. The Maximum Charge Per Credit Hour for the State = \$250 and the Maximum Fees for a single term = \$1,000:

12 credit hours x \$250 = \$3,000 - VA will pay \$3,000 of the \$5,000 tuition charged

VA will pay \$1,000 of the \$1,200 fees charged

VA has paid \$4,000 of the \$6,200 charged the student. \$2,200 could be applied to the Yellow Ribbon Program

Your institution can choose to contribute up to \$1,100 of this amount and VA will match that contribution.

PLEASE NOTE: The amounts provided by the States on the corresponding table are preliminary and are not necessarily the amounts for academic year 2009-2010. Also, the amounts used in this example do not relate to any specific State.

To see a table listing 2009-2010 information on State maximum Tuition & Fees click [here](#). The information provided in this table is in accordance with VA's statutory requirement to determine the *highest* in-state, undergraduate, public tuition as specified in 38 USC 3313(c)(1)(A). This information has no relationship to, and should not be compared with, average costs of tuition and fees of public institutions within any state commonly referred to when considering educational options.

Application Procedures

How do I apply for the Yellow Ribbon Program?

Schools that intend to participate in the Yellow Ribbon program will establish application procedures for eligible students. The school will determine the maximum number of students that may participate in the program and the percent of tuition that will be contributed. VA is currently accepting agreements from institutions for participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program. You may wish to inquire at your school about their intent to participate and the application procedures they plan to establish for the Yellow Ribbon Program. Please remember that you must be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill at the 100% rate to be considered for the Yellow Ribbon Program.

How Do I Apply for Benefits under Post-9/11 GI Bill?

The Department of Veterans Affairs is now accepting and processing applications for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. You should complete and submit the application form available online and will receive written notification explaining VA's decision regarding your eligibility for the program. If you are eligible, your Certificate of Eligibility will also advise you if your service meets the requirements for the Yellow Ribbon Program. If your school has volunteered to participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program, you should take your Certificate of Eligibility to your school and ask your school to certify your enrollment to VA, including Yellow Ribbon. You cannot certify your participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program directly to the VA. Your school must report this information on your enrollment certification.

Remember, to receive benefits under the Yellow Ribbon Program:

- You must be eligible for the maximum benefit rate under the Post-9/11 GI Bill;
- Your school must agree to participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program;
- Your school must have not offered Yellow Ribbon to more than the maximum number of individuals stated in their participation agreement;
- Your school must certify your enrollment to VA, including Yellow Ribbon Program information.

For Additional Information

Visit www.gibill.va.gov for additional information on the Yellow Ribbon Program or other benefits.

A Message from Our Director:

This month I want to share with you a recent address by the President of the American Gold Star Mothers, Ruth Stonesifer, ...BOB

Distinguished guests, family and friends of the Gold Star Community, thank you for coming today and sharing your time with us on this special occasion.

The first time I came to Arlington National Cemetery, it was so many years ago that I have forgotten whether I was wearing a Brownie uniform or my green Girl Scout outfit. However, I do remember being mesmerized by the ceremony of the changing of the guard in front of a big white marble stone, the Tomb of the Unknowns. Our troop leader hurried us off to our next stop before I could figure out what it was all about.

Years later -- after my brother had flown A7's in Vietnam; after 11 years as a Navy wife; and after seeing my two sons off to serve in the Army -- my sense of connection to the ceremonies and meaning of Arlington had grown. But it wasn't until my son Kris was killed on the first night of Operation Enduring Freedom, a month after 9/11, that the deeper meaning of the Changing of the Guard ceremony finally revealed itself: our nation has an ironclad commitment to remember and honor its fallen sons and daughters.

We hold our Gold Star Mother Sunday ceremony steps away from the remains of three unidentified soldiers, from the World Wars One and Two, and Korea. They were lovingly placed here so our nation would always remember the price we must sometimes pay for the freedom we enjoy at home and the freedom we have purchased for others abroad. Gold Star mothers and families bear the weight of that cost, and it is a lifelong burden.

Somewhere in our healing process, many of us experience moments of panic that our sons and daughters will be forgotten. We place memory markers to permanently verify the existence and passage of those bright spirits -- the children to whom we gave life and who once filled our hearts with hope and joy. Many of us write down the family stories, and some of us tell them over and over as a way to keep our loved ones alive in our thoughts.

My son was an avid student of philosophy who had no illusions about being remembered with chisel and stone. He would have accepted the probability, that in time, his story, just like all of ours, will fade as his family evolves through the generations ahead.

I take great comfort in the knowledge that on these rolling hills -- as on thousands of courthouse walls and in thousands of town squares and community cemeteries -- our country strives to preserve the memory of all our children who went to serve their country and didn't return. I am reassured by the knowledge that the Old Guard is still on duty 24 hours of every day at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

This tradition has its roots in something George Washington wrote more than two centuries ago:

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."

(Cont'd page 4)

Place Your AD:



There is still time to place your ad in the program for our 11th Annual Veterans Breakfast being held on November 8th. Rates are: Full Page-\$100; Half Page-\$60; Quarter Page-\$30; Booster-\$10. Please send in your payment so that it is received by our office by **October 23rd**. Please adhere to this deadline so we may have the program "press" ready on time. Your checks should be made payable to: **Rensselaer County Veterans Fund.**

Breakfast will be held at the North Greenbush American Legion Post #1489 (Main Ave., Wynantskill), November 8th, from 8:30 am-11:30 am. Free to all veterans and their immediate family members.

For more info please call Rensselaer County Veterans at (518) 270-2760.

**Please join us for a retirement celebration to Honor
Sergeant Major P. J. Higgitt**

after

29 years of service to

State and Nation



Saturday, November 14th, 2009

6pm

At the 42d Infantry Division Headquarters

137 Glenmore Road

Troy, NY 12180-8398

**Dress: Business Suit, Dress Blue (W/Bow Tie),
Army Service Uniform (W/Bow Tie), No.2 (Mess Kit),**

No. 2B (DEU with white Shirt and bow tie)

Cash Bar, (Draft Beer and Soda Included)

Hot and Cold Buffet with Carving Station

\$35.00

Checks payable to: The Last Drop Club, INC

RSVP NLT 9 Nov 09

Mail Payment to: Lisa Higgitt

53 102nd Street, Troy, NY 12180

Director's Message Cont'd from Page 3

In that spirit, as I help lay the American Gold Star Mothers wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, I will be thinking about all the mothers since the American Revolution to the present who saw their children off to war: standing by garden gates with handkerchiefs clutched in their hands; or waving goodbye at train stations; or driving home from the bus stop in tears; or looking out the windows of airports until the planes bearing their children took off. I am proud to have been a part of that long American tradition.

I will be thinking about the soldiers resting under that Colorado marble as only a mother can -- recalling the warm sweet smell of a newborn, the soft sleeping sounds coming from a child's bedroom in the middle of the night, the countless bruises and broken bones earned by a fearless child's daredevil feats. I will be thinking of the summer night I watched my son drive down the lane from my house into the dark, never to return.

My son's story, all of our children's stories, are part of those three soldiers who, although unknown, all had mothers and families who felt the same losses we share today.

No one could have imagined that the little girl in her scout uniform who watched wide-eyed all those years ago as the Old Guard performed its enduring ritual would one day be standing here giving voice to all the mothers of the thousands of soldiers we have come here to honor.

A grateful nation remembers its fallen, and today we Gold Star Mothers dedicate ourselves anew to the task of ensuring that none of our children shall ever be forgotten.

Ruth Stonesifer

National President AGSM 2009-2010

IMPORTANT PUBLIC INFO FOR ALL:

Please be advised that we have received a warning from the Veterans Affairs in Washington regarding reports that Veterans are being contacted by "Patient Care Group" representing that they are helping administer VA prescriptions and stating that the pharmacy billing procedures have changed and they are therefore requesting Veteran credit card numbers for prescription payments in advance of filling their prescriptions. **This is false.** VA does not call Veterans asking to disclose personal financial information over the phone. VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines.

You Can Help Prevent Suicides:

As we all know the VA reports about 5,000 self-inflicted deaths among Veterans', please note REPORTED, we all know that amount is much higher. There is a 24/7 suicide hotline (1-800-273-8255) and this has been helpful. I need all of us to be looking for signs of emotional distress, changes in our friends that just seem to be out of the normal. When you see something like this please call the hot line or if you would like call me at the office at 270-2760 and I will personally talk to our Brothers/Sisters. There is NO reason for any Veteran in the United States of America should die by their own hand because they think we don't care!

Suicides are real! It is NOT just the troops who have recently returned from combat, over 50% are from Vietnam, we need to take care of each other, our Veterans' need to step up and help.

Upcoming Events: (If you have an event to add, call our office ASAP)

October 12...Columbus Day Observed—**OFFICE CLOSED**

October 13...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Cornelius "Neil" W. Kelleher, US Navy WWII**

October 23...**DEADLINE** to submit ads for Veterans Breakfast Program

November 3...Election Day—**GET OUT AND VOTE!** (OFFICE CLOSED)

November 5...Questar III Annual Veterans Day luncheon 11 am—12:30 pm at 35 Colleen Rd., Troy. Free to veterans, call 273-2264 to RSVP

November 8.. Veterans Breakfast at the North Greenbush American Legion 8:30 am– 11:30 am / Noontime Medal Presentation Ceremony

November 9...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m.

November 11...Veterans' Day Observed (**OFFICE CLOSED**)

November 11...Free Car Wash to any active duty and former members of the military at any Hoffman's Car Wash



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 4, Issue 9
DECEMBER, 2009

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive
Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

Robert M. Reiter
Director

Emergency Payments for Veterans & Beneficiaries Awaiting

VA Educational Benefits

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.

* NOTE:

IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OUR VANS WILL BE OFF-ROAD FROM DECEMBER 21ST THROUGH DECEMBER 25TH SERVICE WILL RESUME ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2009.

PEARL HARBOR
REMEMBRANCE DAY

DECEMBER 7, 1941

DECEMBER 7, 2009

ALWAYS REMEMBERED

Background Information

I have heard about education advanced payments. What are they?

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki has authorized advanced education payments up to \$3,000 for veterans who have applied for VA educational benefits and who have not yet received their monthly education payment as of October 2, 2009. **This is an advance payment of the veteran's housing and book allowance only, as the tuition payment will be paid to the school.**

Obtaining Payment

How do I obtain an advance payment and what do I need to provide?

Starting October 2nd, you may go to one of VA's 57 regional offices with a government issued photo ID (Driver's License, Military ID, etc.) and proof you are enrolled in school (class schedule, admission letter, enrollment verification letter, etc.) You will be required to sign for the payment upon receipt.

What if I cannot make it to a Regional Office?

Currently VA is only offering advance payments at one of our 57 offices, however we are looking at other alternatives.

Can I receive more than one advance payment?

This is a one-time advance payment, which will be recouped from future education payments. Only one payment is authorized per veteran, up to \$3000.

Payment Details

I am a veteran, am I eligible for an advance payment?

Yes, if you are currently enrolled in school under a VA education program.

List of VA Education Programs:

- Ch.33 - Post-9/11 GI Bill
- Ch.30 - Montgomery GI Bill
- Ch.1606 - Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve
- Ch.1607 - Reserve Education Assistance Program

I am a dependent, am I eligible for an advance payment?

No, payments are only available to veterans.

If I received my education payment on October 1st, am I still eligible for a \$3000 advance payment?

(Continued Page 2)

VA Educations Benefits..... continued from page 1

No, advance payments are only authorized for veterans who did not receive a payment on October 1st.

Will I have to pay this advance payment back to VA?

This payment will be recouped from future VA payments. However, if you stop attending school during the semester, recoupment by VA will not be possible and you will have to repay the advance payment.

What if I want less than \$3000?

Veterans may chose to receive a payment less than \$3000, however, only one advance payment is authorized regardless of amount.

Future Payments

When can I expect future payments?

After the advance payment is recouped, you can expect future payments at the beginning of each month, which will likely start in November.

How does this emergency payment affect my future education payments?

This payment will be recouped from future VA payments, however, if you stop attending school during the semester, recoupment by VA will not be possible and you will have to repay the advance payment. The exact recoupment amount will be determined once your education claim is processed.

Additional Information

This is the latest information concerning the education advance payments. At this time, there is no additional information that can be provided or number to refer the claimant to for additional information. If a claimant needs more information, they should contact the National Call Center for updated information or visit the education website at www.gibill.va.gov.

Veterans may be eligible for [disability compensation](#) and [health care benefits](#) for diseases that VA has recognized as associated with exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides:

Acute and Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy

AL Amyloidosis

B Cell Leukemias*

Chloracne

Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia

Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2)

Hodgkin's Disease

Ischemic Heart Disease*

Multiple Myeloma

Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma

Parkinson's Disease*

Porphyria Cutanea Tarda

Prostate Cancer

Respiratory Cancers

Soft Tissue Sarcoma (other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or Mesothelioma)

*** New conditions added ***

SOCIAL SECURITY SERVES THOSE WHO SERVE AMERICA

By Everett M. Lo

Social Security Administration's Regional Public Affairs Office in the New York Region

Each and every day of the year, Americans in the armed forces serve our nation. At Social Security, we honor our nation's military personnel and all of America's veterans not only on Veterans Day, but every day of the year.

In fact, military service members receive expedited processing of their disability applications from Social Security. Under an agreement initiated by Social Security, the Department of Defense transmits information that allows us to quickly identify military personnel injured in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The expedited process is available for any military service member who becomes disabled during active duty on or after October 1, 2001, regardless of where the disability occurs. Depending on the situation, some family members of military personnel also may be able to receive benefits, including dependent children and spouses.

If you, or someone you know, were wounded while on active duty in the military, find out more about what Social Security can do for you by visiting our website designed specifically for our wounded veterans: www.socialsecurity.gov/woundedwarriors. There, you will find answers to a number of commonly asked questions, as well as other useful information about disability benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Please pay special attention to the fact sheets available on that website, *Disability Benefits for Wounded Warriors* and *Expediting Disability Applications for Wounded Warriors*.

You'll also find links to useful Veterans Affairs websites. There are links to information about the "Operation Enduring Freedom / Operation Iraqi Freedom Home," information on Survivors Benefits, the Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes, a fact sheet on Veterans benefits, and the Veterans On-Line Application, known as VONAPP.

Although the expedited service is relatively new, military personnel have been covered under Social Security since 1957. Even people in the service before 1957 may receive special credit for some of their service. People in the military are covered for the same Social Security survivors, disability and retirement benefits as everyone else.

A person's Social Security benefit depends on earnings, averaged over a lifetime. Generally, the higher your earnings, the higher your Social Security benefit. Under certain circumstances, special earnings can be credited from your military pay record for Social Security purposes. The extra earnings are for periods of active duty or active duty for training. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit and are added to your earnings record when you apply for Social Security benefits.

To learn more about Social Security for people who have served in the military, read a copy of our publication, *Military Service and Social Security*. You can find it online at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10017.html, or call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) to ask us to mail a free copy to you.

Each and every day, the brave men and women of our nation's armed forces serve us. Social Security salutes everyone who serves.

A message from our County Executive

Happy Holidays and I am hopeful you have a healthy as well as happy holiday season! I would also ask that as we find ourselves celebrating the holidays in our homes we keep in mind those serving in our armed forces who will be unable to enjoy the comforts of home and the company of their friends and families this holiday season as they serve to protect our nation, and the freedoms we hold so dear. Let us keep them and their loved ones in our thoughts and prayers during this special season.

Sincerely,

Kathy Jimino

RENSSELAER COUNTY HONOR-A-DECEASED VETERAN COMMITTEE

- HAVE A DECEASED LOVED ONE OR FRIEND WHO WAS A VETERAN ?
- WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE THEM HONORED IN A CEREMONY ?
- IF SO, PLEASE INQUIRE HERE OR CALL 270-2760.

REQUIREMENTS:

- MUST BE DISCHARGED UNDER CONDITIONS OTHER THAN DISHONORABLE;
- MUST HAVE RESIDED IN RENSSELAER COUNTY AT SOME POINT DURING THEIR LIFETIME;
- MAY ONLY BE HONORED ONCE.

A Message from our Director:

The Final Inspection

The soldier stood and faced God, which must always come to pass. He hoped his shoes were shining, just as brightly as his brass.

'Step forward now, you soldier, how shall I deal with you? Have you always turned the other cheek? To my church have you been true?'

The soldier squared his shoulders and said, 'No, Lord, I guess I ain't. Because those of us who carry guns, can't always be a saint.

I've had to work most Sundays, and at times my talk was tough. And sometimes

I've been violent, because the world is awful rough.

But, I never took a penny, that wasn't mine to keep...Though I worked a lot of overtime, when the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help, though at times I shook with fear. And sometimes, God, forgive me, I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place, among the people here. They never wanted me around, except to calm their fears.

If you've a place for me here, Lord, it

Needn't be so grand. I never expected or had too much, but if you don't, I'll understand.

There was a silence all around the throne, where the saints had often trod. As the soldier waited quietly, for the judgment of his God.

'Step forward now, you soldier, you've borne your burdens well. Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets, you've done your time in Hell.'

~Author unknown~

Happy Holidays to all....Bob

Upcoming Events:

December 7...Pearl Harbor remembered

December 14...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Alfred Curley, Army, WWII**

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

December 21 – December 25...**no van transportation** (see front page)

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

January 4... Van schedule resumes

January 11...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Ken Tremont, Navy, WWII**

January 18...Martin Luther King Jr. Day—**Office Closed**



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