



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

Rensselaer County Veterans Newsletter

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
 County Executive

Volume 6, Issue 1
 Jan./Feb. 2011

Robert M. Reiter, Director

New Program Speeds Approval for Vietnam Veterans

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 the Troy VA CBOC for **most morning** medical appointments.

For more details call
 270-2760.



WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has decided more than 28,000 claims in the first six weeks of processing disability compensation applications from Vietnam Veterans with diseases related to exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange.

“With new technology and ongoing improvements, we are quickly removing roadblocks to processing benefits,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We are also conducting significant outreach to Vietnam Veterans to encourage them to submit their completed application for this long-awaited benefit.”

VA published a final regulation on Aug. 31 that makes Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam and who have been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, ischemic heart disease, or a B-cell (or hairy-cell) leukemia eligible for health care and disability compensation benefits. With the expiration of the required 60-day congressional review on Oct. 30, VA is now able to process these claims.

Vietnam Veterans covered under the new policy are encouraged to file their claims through a new VA Web portal at www.fasttrack.va.gov. Vietnam Veterans are the first users of this convenient automated claims processing system.

If treated for these diseases outside of VA’s health system, it is important for Veterans to gather medical evidence from their non-VA physicians. VA has made it easy for physicians to supply the clinical findings needed to approve the claim through the new Web portal. These medical forms are also available at www.vba.va.gov/disabilityexams.

The portal guides Veterans through Web-based menus to capture information and medical evidence required for faster claims decisions. While the new system currently is limited to these three disabilities, usage will expand soon to include claims for other conditions.

COLA TIED TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

WASHINGTON – The Social Security Administration has announced that no cost-of-living adjustments will be made to Social Security benefits in 2011 because the consumer price index has not risen since 2008 when the last Social Security increase occurred.

Like recipients of Social Security and other federal benefits, Veterans, their families and survivors will also not see a cost-of-living adjustment in 2011 to their compensation and pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Under federal law, the cost-of-living adjustments to VA’s compensation and pension rates are the same percentage as for Social Security benefits.

VA provides compensation and pension benefits to about four million Veterans and beneficiaries. For more information about VA benefits, go to www.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000.

A Message from County Executive Jimino:

Happy winter!!! And as we all dig out from yet another one of what seem to be an endless line of winter storms I want to highlight the importance of checking in with our Veterans Service Agency from time to time to ensure you are receiving all of the benefits you are eligible for due to your service to our nation.

The article published in this month's newsletter discussing newly expanded benefits available to those exposed to Agent Orange is a clear example of how important a task it can be to check if any changes or updates to eligibility could impact the benefits you or a loved one receives. Please allow us to help you get you full benefits as a small token of our appreciation of you have done for us!

Sincerely,



Kathy Jimino

A Message from the Director:

WARNING TO VETERANS: Forwarded by Kevin Secor, VSO Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

An organization called Veterans Affairs Services (VAS) is providing benefit and general information on VA and gathering personal information on veterans. This organization is not affiliated with VA in any way.

[Websites with the name "vaservices" immediately after the "www" ARE NOT part of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the US Government agency. Do not go to them or if approached or called, do not offer them any information concerning yourself or data on other veterans. Keep in mind that the real VA website ends in .gov. Also, be aware that the Department of Veterans Affairs does not randomly call veterans, nor does it ask veterans for information which it does not already have, like Social Security Numbers. In particular, if you have not dealt with the VA previously and in person and all of a sudden you receive a call from someone saying they are with the VA or something similar sounding, hang up the phone. Also, do not respond to emails which suggest that they are from the VA. The VA never conducts official business nor asks for personal information by email.

VAS may be gaining access to military personnel through their close resemblance to the VA name and seal. Our Legal Counsel has requested that we coordinate with DoD to inform military installations, particularly mobilization sites, of this group and their lack of affiliation or endorsement by VA to provide any services. In addition, GC requests that if you have any examples of VAS acts that violate chapter 59 of Title 38 United States Code, such as VAS employees assisting veterans in the preparation and presentation of claims for benefits, please pass any additional information to Mr. Daugherty at the address below.

Michael G. Daugherty
Staff Attorney
Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Counsel (02262)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

*Yours in Patriotism,
BOB*

Upcoming Events:



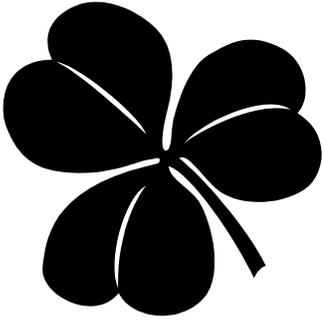
*Call us by the 15th of the month and we
will list your event.*

February 14...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m., **Samuel R. Dinova, Army, WWII**

February 21... President's Day—**Office Closed**

March 14...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m., **John M. Hall, Navy, WWII**

April 11...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m., **Wayne B. Hotailing, Coast Guard, Vietnam Era**



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

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Volume 6, Issue 2
March /April 2011

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive

Robert M. Reiter

Director

Emergency Care in Non-VA Facilities

Van Transportation...

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CEO's Transport-A-Hero Program

This program needs you! Would you like to give back to those who were willing to give up their lives for you? CEO needs drivers who can volunteer several hours a week to drive veterans from Rensselaer County to their medical appointments.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Elaine Gerwin at 272-6012, Ext.302.

What is an emergency?

A medical emergency is when you have an injury or illness that is so severe that without immediate treatment, the injury or illness threatens your health or life.

How do I know my situation is an emergency?

Use your best judgment. If you believe that your health or life is in danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

If I believe my life or health is in danger, do I need to call the VA before I call for an ambulance or go into the emergency room?

No. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.

Do I need to notify the VA after an ambulance takes me to an emergency room, or when I am treated and released?

Yes. You, your family, friends or hospital staff should contact the nearest VA medical center as soon as possible-preferably within 72 hours, so you are better aware of services the VA may limit payment for. Provide the VA with information about your emergency event and services being provided to you. Ask the VA for guidance on how they will consider reimbursing these emergency charges on your behalf, so you can plan accordingly.

If the doctor then wants to admit me to the hospital, must I obtain advance approval from the VA?

- If the admission is an emergency-NO, although prompt notification of the VA is necessary.
- If the admission is not an emergency-YES.

If a VA bed is available and I can be safely transferred, do I have to move to the VA hospital?

Yes. If you refuse to be transferred, the VA will not pay for any further care.

If I am admitted to the hospital as a result of an emergency, how much will VA pay?

This depends on your VA eligibility. The VA may pay all, some, or none of the charges. Ask your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor about what is allowed under non-VA emergency care programs:

- For service-connected conditions
- For non-service-connected conditions

Will I have to pay for any part of my emergency care?

It is possible. Sometimes co-pays are required based on your VA enrollment. Sometimes the extent of healthcare services reimbursable by the VA are limited by federal law.

(Cont'd page 2)

Emergency Care in Non-VA Facilities cont'd from Page 1

Will VA pay for the ambulance and any possible emergency room charges if I leave the emergency room before being treated by a doctor?

Possibly not. If you leave the emergency room prior to being treated by a physician, the VA may not consider claims for that emergency event. You may be liable for some or all resulting ambulance and emergency room charges, regardless of your veteran eligibility.

Does my enrollment in the VA Health Care System affect my eligibility for emergency care at VA expense?

Yes. Your local VA medical center's benefits counselor can explain how enrollment (or other special status categories) affect your eligibility.

If I have other insurance (TRICARE, Medicare, Medicaid, Blue Cross, Etc.), will it affect whether claims for emergency services will be paid at VA expense?

Yes, it may. Your local VA medical center's benefits counselor can explain how other insurance can affect whether the VA can pay for your non-VA medical claims.

Will VA pay for emergency care if I am in jail?

No. The VA is prohibited, by federal law, from paying for the medical claims of incarcerated veterans (or fugitive felons).

How Long do I have to file a claim for reimbursement for emergency medical care?

File your claim with the nearest VA medical center quickly. Time limits of 90-days usually apply. Contact your local VA medical center's patient benefits counselor for more information on the timely filing requirements for non-VA care programs.

Will VA pay for emergency care received outside the United States?

Yes, in certain cases. VA will only pay for emergency care outside the US if your emergency is related to a service-connected condition. For more information, contact the VA Health Administration Center at (877)345-8179 or consult this web site <http://www4.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/fmp/fmp.asp>

Nearest local VA medical center is in Albany, NY. You may contact them at (518) 626-5000.

SPECIAL NOTE TO THE UN-REARRIED WIDOWS OF VIETNAM VETERANS— IF THE VETERAN PASSED AWAY DUE TO ONE OF THE PRESUMPTIVE CONDITIONS OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE AND IT IS CLEARLY NOTED AS A CAUSE OF DEATH ON THE DEATH CERTIFICATE, YOU MAY BE ELGIBILE FOR DIC BENEFITS THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS. ANY QUESTIONS IN REGARDS TO THESE BENEFITS, PLEASE CALL THE RENSELAER COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY AT 270-2760.

Upcoming Events:



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

March 14...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m., **John M. Hall, US Navy ,WWII**

April 11...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Wayne B. Hotaling, US Coast Guard, Vietnam Era**

May 9...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Thomas F. Roberts, US Navy, WWII MIA/KIA**

May 29...Rensselaer Memorial Day Parade, step-off at 2:00 p.m.

May 30 Memorial Day— **Office Closed**

May 30...Veterans of Lansingburgh 15th Annual Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m.

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

May 31...Nassau Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 2:00 p.m.



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive

Volume 6, Issue 3
MAY 2011

Robert M. Reiter
Director

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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.

More Purple Hearts after Army clarifies 'concussion'

By [Gregg Zoroya](#), USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The Army will allow more battlefield concussions to be eligible for a Purple Heart, embracing the latest scientific findings that even brief periods of dizziness or headaches are evidence of the wound.

The decision to expand the definition for concussions will mean thousands of Purple Heart medals going to soldiers denied them in the past.

For decades, Army award regulations used the term "concussion" for the injury, but left it to doctors or battlefield commanders to decide whether a blow to the head during combat warranted the medal.

Many held the view that "you've got to be bleeding to get (the medal)," says Gen. Peter Chiarelli, the Army vice chief of staff, who has pushed for the clarification on awarding a Purple Heart for concussion.

The new rules spell out precisely what constitutes a concussion, with symptoms such as any momentary loss of consciousness or memory, dizziness, headache, nausea or light sensitivity. Medical treatment, also required for the medal, is defined by the rules to include merely rest and Tylenol.

More than 80,000 GIs have suffered concussions since 2001, many in combat and often from exposure to roadside bomb blasts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The figure dwarfs the 26,000 Purple Hearts given to soldiers for other wounds in the two wars. How many concussion injuries will qualify for the award remains uncertain.

Chiarelli, who has worked to reduce a stigma in the Army about mental health problems, says he pushed for the changes in order to correct misconceptions that more subtle forms of concussions cannot be true war wounds.

(Continued Page 2)

More Purple Hearts after Army clarifies 'concussion' (Continued from Page 1)

The Army began reviewing how Purple Hearts are awarded for battlefield concussions last year in response to a story by NPR-ProPublica.

Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-N.J., co-chairman of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, hailed the changes as long overdue and called for similar criteria for other service branches.

"It is imperative that the Pentagon makes it crystal clear that all service members, no matter what branch they serve in, will be awarded the Purple Heart when they are wounded in any way," Pascrell says.

The Marine Corps awards a Purple Heart only for a concussion that causes a loss of consciousness, says Marine Capt. Patrick Boyce, a Marine Corps spokesman. New standards have been proposed that could broaden the definition, much as the Army has done, Boyce says.

Apart from the prestige of earning a Purple Heart, the award also entitles the recipient to priority enrollment for VA benefits, exempting them from co-pays for hospital and outpatient care.

Some are cautious about the changes.

"Anything that can be done to erase the stigma so that (soldiers) will not be embarrassed to seek treatment I'm definitely in favor of," says Army Capt. Jonathan Entrekin, a chaplain who served in Iraq. "At the same time, the Purple Heart is one of the most sacred medals that can be received by somebody. We've got to be careful that we're not just giving them out for any reason. We don't want to cheapen that."

Vietnam Army veteran Rua Petty backs the new rules.

"An injury is an injury. And just because you can't see it, doesn't mean it isn't a wound," Petty says. "If it's a clear-cut indication you've had a brain injury, then I think you deserve it as much as anyone else."

CORRECTION: IT HAS JUST BEEN BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION THAT IN A 2010 EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER, WHEN WE DISCUSSED THE NEW VETRAK PROGRAM FOR VETERANS IN NYS THAT HAVE A PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASE IN RENSSELAER COUNTY, WE PROVIDED CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE RESOURCE COORDINATOR: BONNIE HAZARD. THE TELEPHONE NUMBER PROVIDED IN THAT EDITION IS WRONG, THE CORRECT PHONE NUMBER FOR BONNIE HAZARD IS AS FOLLOWS: (518) 271-1602, EXT 324.

Upcoming Events:



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

May 9...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **MM2c Thomas F. Roberts, US Navy, MIA/KIA WWII**

May 29...City of Rensselaer Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 2:00 p.m.

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May 30...Nassau Memorial Day Parade, step off at 2:00 p.m.

June 12...Troy Flag Day Parade

June 13...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Glenn R. Brust, US Army, KIA 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 Office 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 12, 2011 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.



SURVIVORS OF JUNE 6, 1944

A DAY OF RECOGNITION AND REMEMBRANCE

SEARCHING for Survivors of this Special Day. Let's not forget those still living and have a day of Recognition for their Bravery, Service and Dedication.

Many of these Survivors may not want to remember that day but we should never forget it.

Searching for those Survivors of June 6, 1944 who reside within a 50-70 mile radius of Albany New York. Currently being planned is an afternoon event (starting at 2pm-3pm) for friends and family of the Survivors of D-Day on the weekend of June 4-5, 2011. Event to last about 2-3 hours.

A Survivor is any person who participated in any way with the invasion on June 6, 1944. An 18 year old in the service would now be 85 years old. Currently there is one Army survivor who stormed the beach. We must remember these brave people now.

If you know any Survivors, friends or family who could offer information relative to Survivors please contact Frank. He will be working with American Legions Post, Veteran Hospitals, a School Group, newspapers and TV publicity.

Please contact Frank DeSorbo via email or telephone with any information you can provide:

Email – fomserevice@aol.com
 Phone Home 518-439-9265
 Cell 518-364-4759

A Message From Our County Executive

The month of May brings us 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 day under any circumstances, let alone on Mother's Day.

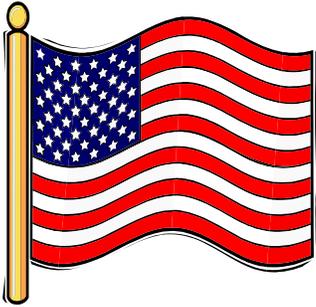
On Memorial Day while we honor those who have fallen while fighting for the freedoms we hold so dear. I also hope you take the time to inform your loved ones of a younger generation the meaning of this hallowed day.

During these times I also ask that as we recognize those fallen soldiers. Let us also keep in mind the sacrifices of 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.



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Volume 6, Issue 4
JUNE/JULY 2011

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive

Robert M. Reiter
Director

VA to Take Applications for New Family Caregiver Program VA Implementing Enhancements to Existing Services for Veterans and Their Caregivers

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WASHINGTON - Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published the interim final rule for implementing the Family Caregiver Program of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act 2010. This new rule will provide additional support to eligible post-9/11 Veterans who elect to receive their care in a home setting from a primary Family Caregiver.

"We at VA know that every day is a challenge for our most seriously injured Veterans and their Family Caregivers," said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. "I know many Veterans and their Family Caregivers have been waiting anxiously for this day and I urge them to get their applications in as soon as possible so they can receive the additional support they have earned."

On May 9, staff in VA's Office of Care Management and Social Work will open the application process for eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Servicemembers to designate their Family Caregivers. Additional services for primary Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Servicemembers include a stipend, mental health services, and access to health care insurance, if they are not already entitled to care or services under a health care plan. Comprehensive Caregiver training and medical support are other key components of this program.

The program builds on the foundation of Caregiver support now provided at VA and reflects what families and clinicians have long known; that Family Caregivers in a home environment can enhance the health and well-being of Veterans under VA care.

Starting May 9th, Veterans may download a copy of the Family Caregiver program application (VA CG 10-10) at www.caregiver.va.gov. The application enables the Veteran to designate a primary Family Caregiver and secondary Family Caregivers if needed. Caregiver Support Coordinators are stationed at every VA medical center and via phone at 1-877-222 VETS (8387) to assist Veterans and their Family Caregivers with the application process.

"Providing support to Family Caregivers who sacrifice so much to allow Veterans to remain at home surrounded by their loved ones, is very important to us at VA. We offer a range of Caregiver support services including training, counseling and respite care to ensure that our caregivers have the tools and support they need to continue in their care giving role," said Deborah Amdur, VA's Chief Consultant for Care Management and Social Work. "We appreciate the patience, support and assistance we have received from Veterans, Veterans Service Organizations, and the greater Caregiver community in shaping this program to our wounded warriors and their dedicated Family Caregivers."

Caregivers for Veterans of all eras are eligible for respite care, education and training on what it means to be a caregiver, how to best meet the Veteran's care needs, and the importance of self-care when in a care giving role. The full range of VA services already provided to

(Continued Page 2)



VETERANS STAND-DOWN

Saturday, October 1, 2011
8 a.m.—1 p.m.

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



Continued from Page 1

Caregivers will continue, and local Caregiver Support Coordinators at each VA medical center are available to assist Family Caregivers in identifying benefits and services they may be eligible for. The Caregiver Support Coordinators are well versed in VA programs and also have information about other local public, private and non-profit agency support services that are available to support Veterans and their Family Caregivers at home.

VA programs for Veterans and their Family Caregivers include:

- **In-Home and Community Based Care:** This includes skilled home health care, homemaker home health aide services, community adult day health care and Home Based Primary Care.
- **Respite Care:** Designed to relieve the Family Caregiver from the constant challenge of caring for a chronically ill or disabled Veteran at home, respite services can include in-home care, a short stay in one of VA's community living centers or an environment designed for adult day health care.
- **Caregiver education and training programs:** VA currently provides multiple training opportunities which include pre-discharge care instruction and specialized caregiver programs in multiple severe traumas such as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Spinal Cord Injury/Disorders, and Blind Rehabilitation. VA has a Family Caregiver assistance healthy living center on My HealtheVet, www.myhealth.va.gov <<http://www.myhealth.va.gov>>, as well as caregiver information on the VA's main Web page health site; both Websites include information on VA and community resources and Caregiver health and wellness.
- **Caregiver support groups and other services:** Family Caregiver support groups, offered in a face to face setting or on the telephone, provide emotional and peer support, and information. Family Caregiver services include family counseling, spiritual and pastoral care, family leisure and recreational activities and temporary lodging in Fisher Houses.
- **Other services:** VA provides durable medical equipment and prosthetic and sensory aides to improve function, financial assistance with home modification to improve access and mobility, and transportation assistance for some Veterans to and from medical appointments.

A Message from Our Director.....

Healing Trip to Vietnam:

Many Vietnam Veterans, about 90%; still carry a burden of guilt or sorrow; or both, about their time in Vietnam. Many veterans' saw the loss of friends and comrades on the battle field. A lot were injured and scarred, not just physically but emotionally also. Even after 40 years it is still difficult to deal with since there has not been any closure. The purpose of this trip is 'HEALING'. Trips like this one have been done in the past. Veterans' and their families say that the experience was peaceful and gratifying. They were able to relieve themselves of some of their "demons" and bring closure to a long heartache.

This trip is open to ALL veterans' and family members. However, we are limited to the amount of guests we can bring. If you have any questions, please call Bob Reiter at 733-5827 or Sam Rounds at 209-1822. We are currently selling 50/50 tickets to help with the cost for some veterans' who can not afford the trip. The fundraising will be on going, and we already have the O'Neil American Legion Post Auxiliary doing a breakfast in support. The cost for the trip is about \$150.00 a day for 21 days, which is a total of \$3,200.00; which pays for all hotels, ground and air transpiration (in Vietnam) and most meals. It also pays for any fees, but NOT for beverages or airfare to or from Vietnam.

We would also like to build a 'COMPASSION HOUSE', for a very poor family. This would be for a family of 6 people who live in the rural area just South of Da Nang. It will be built of bricks by the size of 5m + 10m with a metal roof (storm proof). The cost is about \$2,500.00. The head of the house hold is a mother, HUYNH THI HIEN, single (husband passed from Agent Orange). She is a 54 year old farmer and has her mother, both her in-laws and two mentally ill children, ages 26 and 29. The family lives on less than \$2.00 a day. The current home is built of bamboo walls, earthen floor and a grass roof with NO furniture at all except the "Family's" alter.

Please support us by hosting an event, buying tickets and/ or sending donations to "VIETNAM VETERANS' HEALING TRIP" at Post Office Box 152, Troy, New York 12181.

Yours in Patriotism, Bob

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

June 13....Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers @ 8:15 a.m., **Spec 4 Glenn R. Brust, US Army—KIA Vietnam**

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

July 11...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m., **Harry Ferguson, USMC WWII**

August 8...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers @ 8:15 a.m., **Everett L. Emery, US Army WWII**



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KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
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Volume 6, Issue 5
Aug./Sept. 2011

Robert M. Reiter
Director

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COMP & PEN EXAMINATION...

The C & P Exam

The Ratings Veterans Services Representative (RVSR) is a primary decision maker of the outcome of your claim for VA disability compensation benefits. Once the veteran has filed for the compensation benefit a folder or file is created and data...evidence...is added to the file for consideration by the RVSR.

The condition claimed will likely have some past evidence in the form of a Service Medical Record (SMR) or records of diagnosis and treatment from civilian providers. No matter the amount of evidence you have, it's likely that the Veterans Service Representative (VSR) or the RSVR will request that a VA contractor perform a C & P exam on you. The examiner is usually a physician or registered nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant. The examiner will not treat you or order any medications. Lab work, x-rays and other such studies may be ordered by the C & P examiner.

The depth of the examination is determined by order of the VSR or the RSVR and is included in the request for examination. The examiner has no authority to go beyond what is requested. Frequently the examiner will not have your medical records or any other history available. That is often the case when the VSR only wishes to determine the degree of function of a joint, as in a knee injury. This is sometimes referred to as a "nexus statement" and may connect the condition you allege today with an event that happened many years ago.

It's important to know and remember that the examiner does not make the decision of an award of disability compensation. The report that the examiner makes will be considered by the RSVR along with all the other accumulated evidence in the file.

As you ready yourself for your examination, you may take copies of any notes or other documents that you believe are relevant. Then you may offer those to the examiner. Don't be surprised or offended if the examiner refuses to accept or review such paperwork. If their orders don't include that as a part of their assignment, they aren't allowed to accept it and won't be able to do anything with it in any case.

Whether or not you should carry copies of files with you is often the topic of intense debate. Examiners are not generally required to review your records or and files you may have with you. Their assigned task is to provide a snapshot of the moment. How far does that joint move? Do you walk with a normal gait? How large is the scar that troubles you? They only report on the degree of the disability at that moment, not anything about how it may have happened.

However, it often pays to be prepared and take anything with you that you think is relevant. Offer it to your examiner. If it's refused, don't argue with that and move on. If the examiner accepts and uses your paperwork, then you may have advanced your case a bit. Be prepared and go with the flow.

(Continued 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 **most morning** medical appointments. Call our office for more details, to included hours of operation and rules/regulations 270-2760.



Services offered...

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

C&P Exam continued from Page 1.....

Be cooperative with your examiner. Your goal is to have the examiner write a report that agrees with your own conclusion about your condition. Expressing hostility, complaining about how terrible you're being treated or otherwise acting out your frustrations isn't going to help your cause.

If you're asked to perform maneuvers that cause you pain, for example; actively extending your arm out straight in front of your body, you should politely inform the examiner that the nature and severity of the pain will prevent you from completing that act. If the examiner attempts to assist you with the motion and you are positive that it will cause you pain, you should again politely tell the examiner that you can't allow that due to the harm it may cause you. It isn't the time or place to argue about it, a courteous explanation is all that's needed.

Your examiner may or may not welcome family or friends to accompany you as you're being examined. You do not have absolute rights to be accompanied unless you've established that beforehand with the VA Regional Office that scheduled your exam. If you would like to have your spouse in the room with you, ask the examiner for approval. If the examiner denies your request, don't argue the point. It isn't one you're going to win and it may cause the cancellation of your exam.

As you are examined, pay close attention to what the examiner does during the process. Later, if you don't agree that you had a complete examination of the relevant issues, you'll want to be precise in detailing all you can about your exam. The examiner should follow guidelines that are established on worksheets. If you're sure that your examiner didn't follow those guidelines and your claim is later denied, an inadequate examination may be a point of appeal.

VA may require a C & P exam at any time. "Where there is a claim for disability compensation or pension but medical evidence accompanying the claim is not adequate for rating purposes, a Department of Veterans Affairs examination will be authorized." You may not refuse a C & P exam or reexamination. "Individuals for whom reexaminations have been authorized and scheduled are required to report for such reexaminations."

Although you may feel that you have provided more than adequate evidence from private physician sources, VA will usually insist on a C & P exam by one of their own examiners.

Failure to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination may result in an interruption or even termination of your benefits.

TITLE 38 PART 4 SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES

Subpart B

Sec. 4.70 Inadequate examinations.

If the report of examination is inadequate as a basis for the required consideration of service connection and evaluation, the rating agency may request a supplementary report from the examiner giving further details as to the limitations of the disabled person's ordinary activity imposed by the disease, injury, or residual condition, the prognosis for return to, or continuance of, useful work. When the best interests of the service will be advanced by personal conference with the examiner, such conference may be arranged through channels.

Note: The VA may claim an examination is inadequate for the purposes of rating and the veteran may make the same claim. If you believe your examination was less than perfect, you may appeal that.

Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony

Every second Monday of the month, Rensselaer 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 and a resident at one time or another of Rensselaer County, and you would like to have them honored, please contact the Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency 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 discharged under honorable conditions 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 veteran and it is their life story.

**CHINA BEACH
LZ-18**

**Saturday, 13 August 2011
11 a.m. till Dusk**

**Local 190 Training Center
666 Wemple Rd., Glenmont**

*Couples \$30
Adults \$20
Under 16 FREE
More Info call (518) 465-6829*

Place Your Ad...

Our 13th Annual Veterans Day Brunch will be held on November 6th. 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 14, 2011- NO EXCEPTIONS.**



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...

Rensselaer County hosts 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 1, from 8:00 am until 1:00 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) 447-7713**
- Columbia..... (518) 828-9511**
- Rensselaer..... (518) 270-2760**
- Saratoga..... (518) 884-4115**
- Schenectady.... (518) 377-2423**
- Washington..... (518) 746-2470**
- Saturday only... (518)785-3557**

FLY THE FLAG

On Sunday, September 11, 2011, we encourage you to fly an American flag on displayed outside every home, apartment, office, and store in the United States. Every individual should take pride and display an American flag on this tenth anniversary of one of our country's worst tragedies.

We do this to honor those who lost their lives on 9/11, their families and loved ones who continue to endure the pain, and those who today are fighting at home and abroad to preserve our cherished freedoms.

In the days, weeks and months following 9/11, our country was bathed in America flags as citizens mourned the incredible losses and stood shoulder-to-shoulder against terrorism. Sadly, those flags have all but disappeared.

Our patriotism pulled us through some tough times and it shouldn't take another to galvanize us in solidarity. Our flag is the fabric of our country and together we can prevail over terrorism of all kinds.

Message from our County Executive...

Kathleen M. Jimino

I have always felt that the programs and services provided by Rensselaer County can make a profound difference in the lives of our residents. Whether it is those offered through our Veterans Services Agency, the Health Department, Aging, or the many other County agencies, day in and day out your County government works to make Rensselaer County an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.

To help shine a spotlight on some of those services Rensselaer County will once again have a number of informational tables and representatives at the Schaghticoke Fair which runs from August 31st through September 5th.

So if you are taking part in some of the family fun the fair offers, I hope you will stop by to visit us in our traditional location in the Hoosic Valley Fire Department building

Hope to see you soon and a sincere thank you for your service!

Sincerely,
Kathleen M. Jimino



JOIN US FOR THE UNCLE SAM PARADE...

September 17th & 18th our community will celebrate Samuel Wilson's birthday (9/13/1766). This event includes a graveside ceremony on Saturday at Oakwood Cemetery at 10:00 am. Followed by a brunch at the Veterans of Lansingburgh, tickets can be purchased at the door. On Sunday the festivities begin with a parade at 12:45 p.m. followed by family fun and entertainment in Knickerbacker Park and a fireworks show. For more info call John Rustin at 235-0615 or Jim Gordon At 365-2270.

The RCVSA office always participates in this parade. It is our desire to have a large representation of veterans. If you would like to join our marching contingent, (line-up at noon) you may contact our office for more details at 270-2760.

Upcoming events...



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

August 8th...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in Legislative Chambers, 8:15am **Everett L. Emery, US Army, WWII POW**

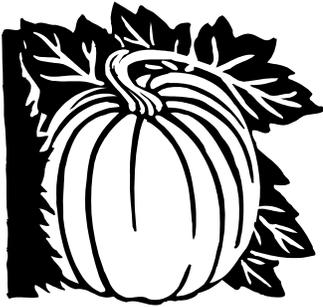
August 31st—September 5th ...Schaghticoke Fair **COME VISIT OUR BOOTH!** (Office Closed)

September 12...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in Legislative Chambers, 8:15am **Stephen A. Corina, US Army, Vietnam Era**

September 17... Uncle Sam Gravesite Ceremony at 10:00 a.m., followed by a brunch at the Veterans of Lansingburgh

September 18..... **Uncle Sam Parade** (see above article)

October 1... Capital Region Veteran's Stand-Down (see Page 3)



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 6, Issue 6
Oct./Nov. 2011

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive

Robert M. Reiter
Director

Armed Forces Retirement Home

Veterans are eligible to live in the Armed Forces Retirement Home located in Gulfport, Mississippi or Washington, D.C., if their active duty military service is at least 50 percent enlisted, warrant officer or limited duty officer if they qualify under one of the following categories:

- 1) Are 60 years of age or older; and were discharged or released under honorable conditions after 20 or more years of active service.
- 2) Are determined to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of a service-connected disability incurred in the line of duty.
- 3) Served in a war theater during a time of war declared by Congress or were eligible for hostile fire special pay and were discharged or released under honorable conditions; and are determined to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of injuries, disease or disability.
- 4) Served in a women's component of the armed forces before June 12, 1948; and are determined to be eligible for admission due to compelling personal circumstances.

Eligibility determinations are based on rules prescribed by the Home's Chief Operating Officer. Veterans are not eligible if they have been convicted of a felony or suffering from alcohol, drug or psychiatric problems. Married couples are welcomed, but both must be eligible in their own right. At the time of admission, applicants must be capable of living independently.

The Armed Forces Retirement Home is an independent federal agency. For information, call 1-800-332-3527 or 1-800-422-9988, or visit their Web site at <http://www/afrh.gov/>.

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.



Please Note:

Both our county veterans vans will be off the road from December 26, 2011 to January 2, 2012 for annual maintenance. They will resume their normal scheduled days and hours of operation on January 3, 2012.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

NOVEMBER 14, 2011 HONOR-A-DECEASED VETERAN CEREMONY

HONOREE IS :
THOMAS F. SHARPE

We would like as many people in attendance as possible. Tom was not just the MOPH NY Commander and MOPH National Commander but he was also a member of the Rensselaer County HAV Committee for many years.



13th Annual Veterans Brunch
Sunday, November 6, 2011
8:30 am-11:30 am

Noontime Medal Presentation Ceremony
Free Breakfast at the North Greenbush
American Legion Post #1489
Main Avenue, Wynantskill
(Free to all Veterans & Immediate
Family Members only please)
For more information, please call 270-2760

A Message From Our Director

Hello All-

By the time you receive this newsletter we will have a new family member at Rensselaer County Veterans; Lonnie's baby is due very soon and we are very happy. I do want to tell you all that she would not take any money for naming rights, I can't even buy a baby's name any more, what's with that? Lonnie will be out until after the first of January so things are going to be very different. There is only so much that our office will be able to do, so please bear with us in her absent.

Our annual breakfast/brunch will be November 6th (see more in the add in this newsletter), it has always been a good event and we do need help. Please call our office at 270-2760 if you're looking to help

with

serving and dining hall or call Marie Busher at 237-9367. Please support our ad book for the brunch/breakfast so that we can keep this event at no charge and plan on staying when we do our noontime Medal Presentation Ceremony.

Lots of benefits have changed for veterans exposed to Agent Orange and I urge you to call me so that we can review your case. Also did you know that if you already have a service connected claim and the condition has gotten worse it can be reopened? Say you have a claim in for a bad ankle and now your knee is bad or your back or other knee is giving you trouble because of the way you're walking from your bad ankle, we can put in a claim for those

conditions.

We are planning on a trip to Vietnam in early January with about 10 local veterans, to help them deal with some pass issues and are looking for donations for some of our veterans who just can't do it on their own. The cost is just over \$4,000.00 per veteran, half of the cost is for airfares alone, we will be in Vietnam for about 2 and a half weeks. If this is something you have been thinking of doing, you need to get a hold of me ASAP; the cutoff date is coming soon. Even if you're not a Vietnam veteran it is a very safe and beautiful place to visit and your U.S. money goes a long way.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family,

Commissary and Exchange Privileges

Unlimited exchange and commissary store privileges in the United States are available to honorably discharges 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, 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: 344-2436
- Watervliet Arsenal: 266-5111
- Navy Exchange: 886-0200
Ext:9104 or Ext:111

Commissary:

- Saratoga Springs Commissary: 886-0200 Ext: 104 or 105
- Navy Exchange: 377-6440

Upcoming Events:



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

October 10...Columbus Day observed—**OFFICE CLOSED**

October 11...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony—County Legislative Chambers at 8:15 a.m., **First Lt. Roger A. Fulkerson, KIA-Vietnam**

November 6....Free Veterans Day Brunch at the North Greenbush AL Post #1489, 8:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m., medal presentation at Noontime

November 8...Election Day—**OFFICE CLOSED**

November 9 ... Questar III Veterans Day Luncheon 11:00—12:30 pm, Rensselaer Education Center, 35 Colleen Road, Troy

November 11....Veterans Day— **OFFICE CLOSED**

November 11...Veterans Day Walk in Troy, meet at 9 am

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

November 14...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony—County Legislative Chambers at 8:15 a.m., **Thomas F. Sharpe, USMC, Korea**

November 24...Thanksgiving Day—**OFFICE CLOSED**

November 25...**OFFICE CLOSED**