

Inside This Issue

Chapter/State News

POW/MIA News

At The Capitol

On The Hill

Veterans Affairs News

From the Service Rep's Desk

50 Years Ago

Helping Hands for Our Veterans

Hartford Vet Center

Scammers trying to steal credit card data from veterans dialing fake Choice Program phone line



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is warning veterans of a scam involving a fake Choice Program phone line.

The two phone numbers differ only in the area code. The VA reports the fake line does not provide information on the Choice Program or its

eligibility criteria, instead it offers callers a \$100 rebate if they provide a credit card number.

The correct Veterans Choice Program is (866) 606-8198. The imposter phone line is using (800) 606-8198.

The VA says it would never ask veterans for their credit card information or offer this type of financial incentive through the Choice Program phone line.

VA officials are working with the Office of the Inspector General to take legal action to get the fake phone line shut down.

Veterans can tell if they dialed the correct phone number, if it automatically states the caller reached the "U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs." The fake line will incorrectly confirm callers reached the "Veterans Choice Program" if the caller asks this question.

The VA is also offering veterans its Identity Safety Service toll-free identity theft help line to Veterans and their beneficiaries who believe that they are at risk for identity theft. The number is (855) 578-5492. It operates Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST.

Meetings

The Chapter 120 membership meeting will be held on Thursday, June 1, 2017 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford.

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, June 29 at 7:00pm. Call the Chapter office for any changes in schedule. Chapter members are welcomed to attend.

Notice

If you have moved or changed your address, PLEASE notify us immediately. Call the Chapter office at (860) 568-9212, mail us at the address on the back of this newsletter or e-mail the Newsletter editor at JRCVVA120@aol.com.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE: In accordance with Title 17 of U. S. C. Section 107, any copyrighted work in this newsletter is distributed under fair use without profit or payment to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for nonprofit research and educational purposes only.

CHAPTER 120 OFFICE	568-9212
Board of Directors	
Paul Barry	569-3530
Peter Galgano	828-1999
William Chiodo	688-2518
Patricia Dumin	620-4131
Frank Zizzamia	569-0705
Executive Officers	
Frank J. Mello, Jr., President	604-3879
Jerome Blum, Vice President	267-2981
Roger Anderson, Treasurer	528-4338
Peter Lund, Secretary	644-9770
VVA Service Representatives	
John Cutler	568-9212
E-Mail: VVA.Service.Rep@att.net	
Gerald Fabry, MD	887-1755
E-Mail : gerfab@comcast.net	
Gary Waterhouse	656-0430
E-Mail : gwaterhouse@cox.net	
Membership	
Frank J. Mello, Jr.	604-3879
E-Mail: Fmello336@yahoo.com	
Women Vietnam Veterans	
Patricia Dumin	620-4131
Product Sales	
Ted Groenstein	688-5671
Newsletter/Website	
John Cutler	282-7470
E-Mail: jrcvva120@aol.com	
Notary Public	
Gary Gazdzicki, Sr.	812-5703
Vet Centers	
Hartford (Area Code 860)	563-8800
New Haven (Area Code 203)	932-9899
Norwich (Area Code 860)	887-1755
Danbury (Area Code 203)	790-4000
All Telephone Numbers are Area Code 860 unless otherwise noted	

Chapter/State News

National Convention Delegate Added

Life member Phil Morneault was added to our Chapter delegate count to attend the National Convention. Phil received a unanimous vote by the membership at the May 4 Chapter meeting. *Congratulations Phil!*

**Robert Charles Carlstrom
Chapter 120 Life Member**



Robert Charles Carlstrom, 73, passed away of heart failure at his home, on Sunday, April 17, 2016. Robert was born in New Haven, Conn., to Lawrence L. Carlstrom and Florence Little Carlstrom.

He is survived by four siblings: Brothers, Arthur Carlstrom, of Worcester, Mass., and Lawrence A. Carlstrom, of Bonsall, Calif.; and sisters, Janet Carlstrom, of Wallingford, and Judith Palmieri, of Orange, Conn. Robert, a

Vietnam veteran, served three years in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged in March 1969. Robert was proud of his service to our freedom loving country. He resided for many years in Wallingford. He was an avid collector of U.S. coins and stamps, and baseball cards.

Robert will be buried, with military honors, on Thursday, June 16, in the State Veterans' Cemetery, 315 Bow Lane, Middletown, at 10:30 a.m. May he rest in peace.

Robert was a Life member of Chapter 120 for 23 years.

Killingly Veterans Coffeehouse seeks independence

Members of the popular veterans' coffeehouse in Killingly are looking to break away from a community agency and run the service on their own – with a little help from the town.

The coffeehouse, which formed in 2015 under the guidance of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action, or TVCCA's, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, regularly attracts dozens of local veterans during its weekly gatherings inside the Killingly Community Center that feature guest speakers and opportunities for former service members to socialize.

TVCCA, a 501c3 nonprofit, handles the acceptance and disbursement of donations earmarked for the coffeehouse and uses federal grants to pay staff salaries.

But some members of the coffeehouse's leadership team, made up of local veterans, are looking for more freedom in how donations are used.

"One of the issues is the coffeehouse has gotten bigger and bigger and we're looking to do more," said Fred Ruhlemann, president of the coffeehouse advisory group.

The coffeehouse recently received a \$3,500 donation from the Real Housewives of Windham County group, money Ruhlemann said could be used to help start a veterans' assistance fund.

Birthday Wishes

Birthday wishes go to our members born in June. May you have many more!

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Moe Armstrong | Dorothy Barry |
| Peter J. Beley | Jerome Blum |
| Bo J. De Alba | Robert Dowding |
| Gary M. Gazdzicki Sr. | Joseph S. Hachey |
| Halsey F. Hesse | Donald Kelly |
| Harry Kiernan | Leland E. Moulton |
| Jeff Nielsen | James M. Parent |
| Ronald Pariseau | Dean R. Saucier |
| Arthur N. Steben, Jr. | Robert Stepanian |
| George W. Washington | |

Happy Birthday!

“We envisioned it as a way to help veterans whose backs are right up against the wall, who’ve exhausted all other avenues,” he said. “But we couldn’t work out an arrangement to do that with TVCCA.”

The coffeehouse has approximately \$8,500 in donation money, of which about \$3,000 is used for yearly operation – food, supplies, advertising – for the group.

“TVCCA also discouraged us from using donations for things like paying guest speakers or for bands that play at our evening meetings,” Ruhlemann said. “We feel, as veterans, we know what our veterans need. We’re the ones they talk to about the VA, their federal benefits and other issues. It should be us overseeing the group.”

Ruhlemann, a Killingly resident and U.S. Navy veteran, said separating from TVCCA offers benefits to the council as well.

“We’re a small cog in their wheel,” he said. “This move would allow them to concentrate and re-focus on their other programs, like the coffeehouses in Norwich and Stonington.”

Jennifer Johnson, director of senior volunteer services for TVCCA said her agency fully supports the change.

“We worked very hard to get this coffeehouse up and running and now they are self-sustaining, thanks to the local support,” she said. “We see this as a success story.”

The veterans’ leadership team on Tuesday discussed the possibility with the Killingly Town Council of having the town hold onto its donation funds, similar to an agreement worked out with the Killingly Community Garden group.

“With the garden group, they deposit whatever money they may have raised through fundraising,” Council Chairman David Griffiths said. “Then the group’s treasurer requests a check be cut for what they might need, like supplies or to pay vendors.”

Griffiths said the issue will be discussed more fully by the council in June after a more detailed plan is worked out between coffeehouse members and the town manager.

“The important thing is, we’re hoping this deal will keep us right where we are,” Ruhlemann said. “We don’t want to change a thing about the services we’re offering now.”

Receive “The Connection” by E-Mail

The monthly Chapter 120 newsletter, *The Connection*, is available by e-mail. Currently, 97 members receive the newsletter by e-mail, saving the Chapter over \$600 in postal fees annually. The newsletter is available in Adobe format (.pdf), attached to your e-mail. If you wish to receive the newsletter via e-mail, please e-mail the newsletter editor at jrcvva120@aol.com

Veterans' Stand Down at QVCC



Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) and the Connecticut Community Veterans Engagement Board are teaming up once again for the college’s Stand Down, to be held on Saturday, June 10th from 10:00 a.m. to

2:00 p.m., at the QVCC campus, 742 Upper Maple Street, Danielson, CT. Last year was a success and they’re looking forward to another great event for area Veterans.

FEATURING

- CT Community Veterans Engagement Board
- CT and U.S. Depts. of Veterans Affairs
- QVCC Veterans Services
- QVCC GI Guardians
- Northeast CT Council of Government
- TVCCA/RSVP Veterans Coffeehouse
- The American Legion
- Department of Labor
- Job fair
- Vet dogs
- Local service providers, and more...

FREE OF CHARGE

- Free hearing screenings
- Free eye screenings
- Refreshments provided
- Raffle prizes, and much more...

For questions, contact Pam Brown at 860-932-4066 or pbrown@qvcc.edu

On the web: www.QVCC.edu/veterans

Newsletter articles/stories/photos

Any articles, stories and/or photos submitted for the newsletter must be received by the "cut off" date for any given month. Photos must be accompanied by text which describes the event, names, dates and any other pertinent facts so our readers understand the story behind the photo(s). The newsletter editor will announce the "cut off" dates at each Chapter meeting. The "cut off" date for our June 2017 newsletter is 19 May 2017. Due to space availability, the editor reserves the right to include or not include photos for a given month.



POW/MIA News



Airman Missing From Vietnam War Accounted For

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today (May 11, 2017) that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Air Force Col. William E. Campbell, 37, of McAllen, Texas, will be buried May 18 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. On Jan. 29, 1969, Campbell was a member of the 497th Tactical Fighter Squadron as an aircraft commander in a flight of two F-4Ds on an armed reconnaissance mission over southern Laos. Campbell was cleared to engage a target, and his ordnance was seen impacting the ground. Haze in the area made for difficult visibility but immediately thereafter, aircrews saw a large fireball on the ground in the vicinity of the target. The crewmember on another U.S. aircraft radioed the missing aircraft but received no reply, and no parachutes were seen. Efforts to make contact with Campbell continued until the remaining planes were forced to leave the area due to low fuel. Campbell was subsequently declared missing in action.

Between 1994 and 2011, the Department of Defense conducted nine investigations and excavated a site in both Vietnam and Laos in its attempts to resolve this case. In 2014, residents of Boualapha District, Khammouan Province, in Laos turned over possible human remains and material evidence reportedly recovered from crash sites in the vicinity of Ban Phanop Village, the area where Campbell's aircraft was lost.

Today there are 1,611 American servicemen and civilians that are still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

At The Capitol



House passes bills for SSMF, veterans' property tax and personal information protection

The State House passed bills concerning SSMF transparency, a municipal tax exemption option and personal information protection during the first three weeks of May. Unfortunately, the House failed to pass HB-7181 that would provide sufficient funds to ensure an honor guard at the funeral of eligible wartime veterans or certain National Guard members that includes at least two but not more than three riflemen or riflewomen. That bill was referred to the

Appropriations Committee - a committee well-known for letting such bills die in committee.

HB-7100 AAC AMERICAN LEGION STATE FUND COMMISSION TRANSPARENCY (Passed on 5/18/17). This bill establishes an additional optional municipal veteran's property tax exemption by allowing municipalities, with their legislative body's approval, to provide a property tax exemption to certain veterans who do not qualify for certain veteran property tax exemptions (i.e., wartime, disabled, and severe service-related exemptions). A municipality may exempt up to \$5,000 or 5% of the property's assessed value. The bill establishes application requirements and procedures.

Existing law allows municipalities, with their legislative body's approval, to provide 100% disabled veterans, under certain income thresholds, with three times the amount provided under the state-mandated disabled veterans' exemption. The bill increases such income eligibility thresholds from (1) \$18,000 to \$21,000, if single and (2) \$21,000 to \$24,000, if married.

The bill also, generally, deems any American Legion records related to the administration of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund as public records and subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). It prohibits the state treasurer, as the SSMF custodian and trustee, from disclosing certain personal information. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon passage for the FOIA provision, and October 1, 2017 for the property tax provisions, and the property tax exemptions apply to assessment years beginning on or after October 1, 2017.

HB-7102 AA PROTECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS (Passed on 5/10/17). This bill requires any person in possession of military identification information to (1) safeguard the data, and computer files and documents containing it, from misuse by third parties and (2) destroy, erase, or make unreadable such data, computer files, and documents before disposing of them. (Existing law already imposes these same requirements on people who possess other personal information, such as Social Security numbers and drivers' license numbers.) **EFFECTIVE DATE:** October 1, 2017

HB 7181 AN ACT HONORING DECEASED VETERANS. This bill requires the state to provide sufficient funds to ensure an honor guard at the funeral of eligible wartime veterans or certain National Guard members that includes at least two but not more than three riflemen or riflewomen.

Federal law currently requires and funds at least two uniformed persons who fold the U.S. flag and present it to the veteran's family (10 U.S.C. § 1491). Current state law requires the adjutant general to provide, upon request, an honor guard of up to five members and one bugler. The members are paid \$50 per day. The bill specifies that these five members must include at least two but not more than three riflemen or riflewomen.

The bill was referred to Appropriations Committee on 5/10/17. This action may as well be a death sentence for this bill.

On The Hill



HVAC Passes 11 Bills Out of Committee

The following bills were passed out of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs on May 15 and heads for full House votes:

- H.R. 1461, as amended, the VET Protection Act of 2017;
- H.R. 2288, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017;
- H.R. 1725, as amended, the Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017;
- H.R. 1329, as amended, the

Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017;

- H.R. 1005, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans;
- H.R. 1662, to prohibit smoking in any facility of the Veterans Health Administration;
- H.R. 467, the VA Scheduling Accountability Act;
- H.R. 1545, the VA Prescription Data Accountability Act 2017;
- H.R. 1848, the Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017;
- H.R. 91, the Building Supportive Networks for Women Veterans Act; and
- H.R. 1162, the No Hero Left Untreated Act.

'No Hero Left Untreated Act' Passes Committee, Heads to House Floor Vote

On Wednesday May 17, Representative Steve Knight's (CA-25) bill, No Hero Left Untreated Act, passed from the House Veterans Affairs Committee and is likely on its way to the floor for a vote soon. No Hero Left Untreated Act, H.R. 1162, would help veterans recover from post-traumatic stress (PTS), traumatic brain injury (TBI), military sexual trauma (MST), chronic pain, and opiate addiction.

"Our veterans face many challenges after returning home and it is our job to try to limit those challenges as much as we can," said Rep. Knight. "I am proud to continuously offer new solutions for these challenges."

H.R. 1162 would establish a pilot program within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on a promising neurological treatment option for mental trauma called magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy, also known as Magnetic eResonance Therapy (MeRT). This is an individualized non-pharmaceutical, non-invasive neuromodulation procedure that applies magnetic stimulation to restore proper brain function. To date, open label trials and placebo-controlled, double-blind studies indicate that over 400 veterans have reported a marked improvement in symptoms associated with PTS, TBI, MST, chronic pain, and opiate addiction. In one study done at Tinker

Air Force Base, after 4 weeks of testing, specifically concluded, "Transcranial MeRT is a promising adjuvant treatment modality to help veterans suffering from PTSD."

"As new technologies are proven to be beneficial to the health of others, we need to be on the front lines of expanding those technology options to our veterans. The No Hero Left Untreated Act would support those technologies and their access to our veteran community," said Knight. "I thank the Members on the House Veterans Affairs Committee for being proactive on this bill and look forward to the support of my colleagues for the floor passage vote."

The measure was initially introduced by Rep. Knight last year in the 114th Congress and passed the House of Representatives with unanimous, bipartisan support in November 2016. A new vote is necessary for the bill to pass the 115th Congress and hopefully receive a Presidential signature after Senate consideration. The bill currently has 54 bi-partisan cosponsors and it is supported by a broad coalition of Veterans Service Organizations, including AMVETS, Veterans Advantage PBC, Patriot Project, and the Veterans House Council.

"Magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy has successfully treated more than 400 veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opiate addiction" said Joseph R. Chenelly, Executive Director of AMVETS (American Veterans). "This small pilot would be instructive to VA in understanding the benefits and deciding whether to offer this promising therapy to those receiving VA health care."

Veterans Affairs News



From Task & Purpose

The VA Takes Back Millions in Benefits from Disabled Vets and Can't Explain Why

In a surprising turn, the Department of Veteran Affairs — which took away nearly half a billion dollars in military separation pay from disabled veterans in a single five-year period — now tells Task & Purpose that it has no rationale for the practice and sees no reason why it couldn't be changed by Congress.

At least 24,998 veterans were hit with the financial penalties from 2010 to 2015, a result of a federal law going back to the 1980s that bans the duplication of government benefits, Task & Purpose previously reported. Under the U.S. code meant to prevent "double dipping" for government benefits, service members who accept military separation pay will have that money recouped by the VA if they later apply for disability compensation; only after their severance is fully repaid, usually through monthly withholdings, can a veteran collect his or her full disability payments. For many vets, that process can take as long as repaying a mortgage — and wreck personal finances.

In an email to T&P, the VA's Office of General Counsel offered little defense of that long-standing practice.

"Unfortunately, we cannot provide an authoritative answer to this question regarding the purpose of the statutory provision," that letter stated. "Neither the statutory text nor the legislative history... provides clear insight into the 'why' behind the requirement that separation pay must be recouped from VA disability benefits.

"Congress may well have considered the prohibition on multiple payments from multiple parts of the government based on a single period of service to be self-explanatory," the letter stated, but if so, Congress's rationale was no longer so self-evident.

That leaves the onus on Congress to clarify the practice's value, or to rip it up. In 2003, the VA letter noted, Congress changed the federal codes "to remove the prohibition on concurrent receipt" only with respect to Department of Defense retirement pay.

"While this does not explain the basis on which Congress has determined VA and DoD payments to be duplicative, it reflects that Congress has evaluated whether the historical prohibition on receipt of such benefits should be lifted as to certain types of payments," the VA concluded. In other words: Congress can change the rule if it wants, just as it already has done to benefit military lifers with retirement pay.

Lawmakers, however, have to yet to propose a significant and lasting legislative fix to this problem, even though some in Congress have vocally opposed the rules for payback of military separation benefits.

"It seems to me — whether intended or not, or whether it was a bureaucratic snafu — to be a bait and switch," Democratic Rep. Mark DeSaulnier of California told T&P of the double-dip catch-22 last week. "There is a promise between the American public, the American taxpayer, and military service members, when they go in, when they serve and when they get out, they'll have this support, and in my view, the federal government and the Congress are violating this contractual obligation."

DeSaulnier would like to pass legislation to stop the recoupments, but finding funds to pay for it has stalled those plans in Congress.

"When you're trying to appropriate money and still dealing with the issues of the federal deficit and federal debt, then you get a situation where everybody who is currently receiving money doesn't want that money cut," he said.

From Task and Purpose

Nearly 50% of VA Clinicians Aren't Doing Their Required Suicide-Prevention Training

Nearly half of all Veterans Health Administration clinicians did not complete suicide risk management training within the timeframe mandated by the Department of Veterans Affairs last

year, according to a new report released May 18 by the Department of VA Inspector General.

All primary care and mental health providers within the VA are required to receive the training to help them manage high-risk patients. Between Oct. 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, the inspector general evaluated 28 facilities around the country. Of those, 84.4% of facilities assessed by the inspector general provided suicide prevention training to new non-clinical staff; however, "45.7 percent of the time clinicians did not complete suicide risk management training within 90 days of hire."

It is unclear whether those clinicians complete training after the 90-day mandated time frame, or if they forego the training altogether.

"While overall we are very pleased with the report, we are concerned about some clinicians who failed to adhere to fully adhere to VHA guidelines because of their reluctance to label patients, concerns about liability, and the perception it would increase their workload," Louis Celli, national director of veterans affairs & rehabilitation at The American Legion, told Task & Purpose.

The report also found that 25.4% of clinicians were not documenting reviews of patient record flags on electronic health records for upward of 120 days, even though the VHA requires them clinicians to review patient record flags regularly — essentially every 90 days — and document justification for continuing or discontinuing them. Patient record flags are used "to communicate to other treating clinicians that the patients are at high risk for suicide," according to the report.

Further, the inspector general also found that 11.4% of high-risk inpatients' and high-risk outpatients' electronic health records did not contain up-to-date suicide prevention safety plans, which are supposed to be put in place by clinicians for all high-risk patients. In its last report, the inspector general found 12% of high-risk patients did not have suicide prevention safety plans in place, meaning that there has only been a 0.6% improvement since 2011.

"We take this issue very seriously," Joe Plenzler, director of media relations at the American Legion, told Task & Purpose. "In March 2013, the Pentagon reported more soldiers were dying overseas by committing suicide than from combat wounds, about one a day; and there was one suicide every 17 hours among all active duty, reserve and National Guard members, according to figures gathered from each branch."

"According to the Congressional Research Service, there have been over 128,000 deployed veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder between 2000 and 2014, and fewer than half of veterans who report symptoms of combat-related PTSD receive the care they need, and of those who do start treatment, between 20 to 50% do not finish," he added.

But the VA is taking steps in the right direction. In late April, the department unveiled a new program that reviews veterans' health records to identify those who might be at greater risk of suicide. Military.com reported that after six years in

development, 6,400 of the most high-risk VA patients across the country have been enrolled in the program so far.

But VHA facilities still have much work to do.

Last year, the VA released a report showing that 20 veterans died by suicide daily in 2014. Additionally, the study found that veterans make up less than 9% of the U.S. population, but accounted for 18% of all suicides in 2014. Further, that same year, 65% of veterans who died by suicide were aged 50 years or older.

VVA Calls on Trump to Save PTSD Veterans with Bad Paper



“The report issued today (May 16, 2017) by the Government Accountability Office is immensely disturbing,” said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America. That's why we are, once again, calling on President Trump to exercise his constitutional authority and to act now to save these veterans with bad paper.”

The Government Accountability Office released the report indicating that 62 percent of veterans who have been issued “bad-paper” discharges were suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), or certain other conditions that could be associated with misconduct.

Many veterans from the Post-9/11 generation with PTSD and other service-related illnesses or injuries end up ineligible for transition benefits, such as the GI Bill, due to unfair administrative discharges. As many as 10 percent of recently discharged Marines have been excluded from these benefits and services, which compounds the already significant barriers faced during transition, especially for those with PTSD.

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin recently announced plans for the VA to provide emergency access to mental healthcare for some veterans with other-than-honorable discharges. Advocates have been calling for the expansion of resources to the VA to ensure comprehensive healthcare for these veterans, rather than care restricted to those on the verge of suicide.

“It’s horrific to think of these young men and women as statistics, but that’s what they’re becoming. These are veterans who volunteered to serve in a time of war, yet they’ve been failed by previous administrations,” continued Rowan. “They didn’t hesitate to run into battle. Our current Commander-in-Chief can’t hesitate now. President Trump has always supported our veterans, and we are confident that he will listen to our plea on behalf of these veterans.”

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another

From the Service Rep’s Desk



Free Hearing Aids from the VA

By Tom Stoddert

Previously a veteran had to gain the status of service-connection for a hearing loss as the result of military duties. Once service-connection was awarded, the vet could get free hearing aids, batteries for life, and maybe some money. That has all changed now, a service connected hearing loss is not needed. All veterans with an honorable discharge can now receive hearing aids, batteries, and assistive care for free – for life. All one must do is register for enrollment at any VA medical facility. Then a referral from the vet’s primary health care provider to the audiology services will be needed.

Audiology services provide a standardized hearing exam to determine what kind of hearing loss exists and the severity. Once approved for hearing aids, a device will be ordered, then fitted. After that, all repairs and batteries are free for life. This is true for all honorably discharged veterans regardless of the reason for the hearing loss. However, for veterans with a hearing loss that is shown by medical evidence to have occurred while the vet was in the military, there may be financial compensation also. This begins with a claim to the VA Regional Benefits Office and is handled like any other claim for benefits.

Medical evidence is first gathered and the Rating Board decides to determine service-connection and the rating percentage (money) to be awarded. Generally, the rating percentage for hearing loss is rarely above 10%. This is because most hearing loss is compensated for by these devices. Other conditions of the ear can also be service connected, such as ringing in the ears, scars, cancers, and chronic infections. Visit https://www.prosthetics.va.gov/psas/Hearing_Aids.asp

Tom Stoddert is a combat vet (Vietnam & Desert Storm) and former VA Rating Specialist with 4 years’ experience making decisions on veteran’s claims.

50 Years Ago

June 2 - JAMES A. GRAHAM, MEDAL OF HONOR.

June 8 - WILLIAM L. MCGONAGLE, MEDAL OF HONOR.

June 21 - CARMEL BERNON HARVEY, JR. MEDAL OF HONOR.

June 21 - EDGAR LEE MCWETHY, JR. MEDAL OF HONOR.

Membership Renewals

Is your membership renewal about to become due? Please renew today so you can continue to receive the Chapter newsletter, as well as the VVA Veteran! And as you renew, please consider joining the other 221 members who have chosen Life membership for \$100. You must submit a copy of your DD214 to qualify for Life membership.

Helping Hands for Our Fellow Veterans



Won't You Please Give a Helping Hand to a Brother or Sister Veteran?

Several veterans have contacted Chapter 120 asking for help in paying the most basic of needs for themselves and their families. These veterans are those who do not qualify for regular federal, state or local assistance – they fall into that financial category where they make too much to qualify for assistance, but not enough to afford basic needs for their families, like food, fuel for heat, or clothing for their children.

Chapter 120 has decided to ask you – our members – to lend a helping hand to your fellow veterans and their families. Won't you please consider donating for this worthy cause? Even a small amount of \$5 can make a difference – or more if you can afford to help a fellow veteran and his or her family.

Please send your generous gift, made out to Connecticut Chapter 120, to:

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
 Connecticut Chapter 120
 Attention: Helping Hands for Veterans
 P.O. Box 4136
 Hartford, CT 06145

Chapter 120 has established a separate line item in the budget to collect donations to assist these fellow veterans and their families in need. *And don't forget, your donations are tax deductible.*

Hartford Vet Center



25 Elm Street, Suite A
 Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Phone: (860)-563-8800
 Fax: (860)-563-8805

We are the people in VA who welcome home war veterans with honor by providing quality readjustment counseling in a caring manner. Vet Centers understand and appreciate Veterans' war experiences while assisting them and their family members toward a successful post-war adjustment in or near their community.

Printing Donated by Konica Minolta Business Solutions



KONICA MINOLTA

550 Marshall Phelps Road
 Windsor CT 06075

Email: printshop@kmbs.konicaminolta.us



Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
Greater Hartford Chapter 120
 P.O. Box 4136
 Hartford, CT 06145