

## Inside This Issue

*Chapter/State News*  
*POW/MIA News*  
*At The Capitol*  
*On The Hill*  
*Veterans Affairs News*  
*From the Service Rep's Desk*  
*Neil Sheehan – Pentagon Papers*  
*Reporter*

## Meetings

Due to increasing COVID-19 cases in CT, the Chapter 120 membership meeting will be *tentatively* held on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford.

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, February 25 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 [ctchapter120@aol.com](mailto:ctchapter120@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.

## Denis McDonough nominated for VA Secretary



VA Secretary Nominee  
Denis McDonough

President Joe Biden nominated Denis McDonough to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs, adding the longtime chief of staff to former President Barack Obama to his new Cabinet.

As VA secretary, McDonough would be inheriting one of the most challenging agencies in the government, so Biden was looking “for a seasoned hand, who knows the government well,” a person familiar with the decision says.

McDonough, a native of Minnesota who served as chief of staff during Obama’s entire second term, also worked as deputy national security adviser. He developed a close relationship with Biden during both positions.

McDonough served as a top staffer on

Capitol Hill before working in the Obama White House, including as a foreign policy adviser for then-Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle.

Since leaving the White House, McDonough joined the Markle Foundation, which aims to create a labor market that allows all Americans to succeed in the digital economy, as a senior adviser.

Former Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald praised Biden’s choice, and said he had worked with McDonough when he was leading the department back during the Obama administration.

“His leadership and support as then White House Chief of Staff was very helpful to what we achieved while I was Secretary. He is a crisis-tested leader of character with great knowledge, skills, and experience in using the levers of government. He is also an extremely empathetic leader, especially for service members and their families,” McDonald said in a statement.

“Denis McDonough has the knowledge and experience needed to be an effective leader of the Department of Veterans Affairs,” noted VVA President John Rowan. “When confirmed, we can expect Denis McDonough to hit the ground running. We firmly believe that he has the breadth of knowledge and experience to provide the effective leadership direly needed at the helm of the Department of Veterans Affairs.”

The Senate VA Committee will hold a nomination hearing for Mr. McDonough on January 27.

<b>CHAPTER 120 OFFICE</b>	<b>568-9212</b>
<b>Board of Directors</b>	
Roger Anderson	528-4338
Paul Barry	569-3530
Peter Galgano	828-1999
Leigh Lovering	528-8312
Frank Zizzamia	569-0705
<b>Executive Officers</b>	
Bob Burgess, President	646-0205
Phil Morneau, Vice President	930-2122
Phil Morneau, Treasurer	930-2122
Peter Lund, Secretary	644-9770
<b>VVA Service Representatives</b>	
John Cutler	568-9212
E-Mail: VVA.Service.Rep@att.net	
Gerald Fabry, MD	884-7271
E-Mail : gerfab@comcast.net	
Gary Waterhouse	656-0430
E-Mail : gwaterhouse@cox.net	
<b>Membership</b>	
Frank J. Mello, Jr.	604-3879
E-Mail: Fmello336@yahoo.com	
<b>Women Vietnam Veterans</b>	
Patricia Dumin	620-4131
<b>Product Sales</b>	
Leigh Lovering	528-8312
lhlovering@gmail.com	
<b>Newsletter/Website</b>	
John Cutler	282-7470
E-Mail: ctchapter120@aol.com	
<b>Notary Public</b>	
Gary Gazdzicki, Sr.	812-5703
<b>Vet Centers</b>	
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
<b>All Telephone Numbers are Area Code 860 unless otherwise noted</b>	

*Chapter/State News*

**Helene F. ("Billee") Culin**



Billee and Taylor Culin

Helene F. ("Billee") Culin passed away on Tuesday Jan.19 with her husband Taylor and son Peter by her side. Billee had battled cancer for many years.

Born in San Antonio, Texas in 1946, Billee Culin was a secretary to General Westmoreland in the Pentagon during the Vietnam Era.

After her Army service, she joined the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) in East Hartford, Connecticut, where she advocated for veterans by serving as Chapter Director, State Council President, and National At-Large Director.

Relocating to Arizona in 2010, Billee founded West Valley Chapter 1043, VVA. Billee supported veterans with her

Service Officer expertise, leadership of Chapter fundraising activities, and the Help-A-Vet financial assistance program they started. She advocated for veterans as a member of the National VVA Agent Orange Committee. To thank Billee for her tireless efforts, West Valley Chapter 1043 was re-named: The Billee Culin West Valley Chapter 1043, VVA.

Chapter 120 offers Billee's family the most sincere condolences in their time of grief. We will miss you Billee, until we all meet again in that special place saved for our departed brothers and sisters in arms.



**Veterans Commission**

TOWN OF BERLIN  
240 Kensington Road  
Kensington, CT 06037

**Birthday Wishes**

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

- |                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Vernon Bertrand</i>    | <i>Paul S. Egan</i>          |
| <i>Michael Kane</i>       | <i>Kathryn M. Lechasseur</i> |
| <i>Richard Linnon</i>     | <i>Robert Longworth</i>      |
| <i>Diana Mello</i>        | <i>George T. Miller</i>      |
| <i>Joseph Rinaldi</i>     | <i>Roger Rowley</i>          |
| <i>Robert Savino</i>      | <i>Earl J. Schofield</i>     |
| <i>Francis T. Schulze</i> | <i>Timothy M. Siggia</i>     |
| <i>Joe C. Visco</i>       |                              |

**Gold Star Memorial**

For Immediate Release  
November 9, 2020

Contact: Peter Galgano, Secretary  
(860) 604-7258

**Gold Star Families Monument coming to Berlin, CT**

(Berlin, CT) – The Town of Berlin Veterans Commission is proud to announce that Berlin, CT has been chosen to be the home of the "Gold Star Families Monument" in Connecticut.

This monument is being built to: To honor, recognize, and serve Gold Star Families and the legacy of their Loved Ones who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

**Happy Birthday!**

The monument will be built in the Berlin Veterans Memorial Park on Veterans Way. We are hoping to have it built and dedicated on Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day which is the last Sunday in September. That will be September 26, 2021.

We are collaborating with the Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation (a 501(c)(3) organization) to build a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument in Connecticut.

If you would like to help get the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument built here in Berlin, Connecticut, you can make a donation through the Hershel Woody William Medal of Honor Foundation at: <https://woodywilliams.org/monuments/ct-monument.html>

We have a goal to get the monument completed in 2021. Donations must be designated for the CONNECTICUT Memorial or they will not apply. Thank you all for your help.

The Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation is a charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that pursues specific endeavors and goals through the vision of Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams. The Foundation encourages, with the assistance of the American public and community leaders, establishing permanent Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments in communities throughout the United States, conducting Gold Star Families Outreach across the country, providing Living Legacy scholarships to eligible Gold Star Children, and advocating for educational benefits for all Gold Star Family members.

The impact of the Foundation's work helps to raise public awareness about Gold Star Families' enduring sacrifice and the ultimate sacrifice made by their Loved Ones. The Foundation wishes to educate the community about these sacrifices, reminding us all that freedom has not been and is not free.

**Pillars of the Foundation**

The Foundation developed the mission and goals for honoring Gold Star Families based on five philosophical pillars representing Homeland, Family, Patriot, Sacrifice and Legacy.

They were important to the fallen loved ones who made the ultimate sacrifice, the families who continue to endure their sacrifice and the Legacy they have left behind. These pillars are so profound that they inspired the creation and model of the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument as it is today.

The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument is two sided. The front specifically honors Gold Star Families with the statement, "A Tribute to Gold Star Families and Relatives Who Sacrificed a Loved One for Our Freedom". The reverse of the monument shows the pillars and representative images for each. And, within the monument there is an open silhouette that represents the missing family member surrounded by the pillars and the legacy they left behind.

Below is a photo-shopped picture of where the monument will be at the Berlin Veterans Memorial Park.



**POW/MIA News**



*From U.S. News & World Report*  
**Unidentified GIs Who Died in Philippines Returned to Hawaii**

The remains of some U.S. military personnel who died during World War II and were buried anonymously in the Philippines have been returned to Hawaii to try to determine their identities.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency recently conducted an "honorable carry" ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam for about 40 sets of unidentified remains, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported Monday.

The repatriation from the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial was one of the agency's large disinterment projects, and the remains will be examined at a lab at Hickam for possible identification by forensic anthropologists and others.

The agency said it made 120 identifications in the fiscal year ending in September, with 82 from WWII, 36 from the Korean War and two from the Vietnam War. The agency recorded 218 identifications in 2019, its highest yearly total.

During WWII, thousands of U.S. and Filipino service members were sent to prisoner of war camps.

In March 2018, a team of eight Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency personnel spent 13 days at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial disinterring 20 graves of unidentified prisoners of war killed in the Cabanatuan POW Camp.

Between November 2019 and January 2020, 55 exhumations were conducted at the Manila cemetery, where some headstones read, "Here rests in honored glory a comrade in arms known but to God."



At The Capitol



**Connecticut VA Committee holds first meeting for 2021 session**

The Connecticut General Assembly began their 2021 session on Jan. 6. The Veterans Affairs Committee held their introductory meeting on Jan. 12. The following initial veteran related bills were proposed as follows:

**PROPOSED SENATE BILLS**

- PSB-129: AAC MEDICAL MARIJUANA FOR VETERANS. To exempt veterans from the fees for registration and written certification for medical marijuana and to establish a process to identify veterans who qualify as patients for medical marijuana.
- PSB-130: AA ESTABLISHING A GREEN ALERT SYSTEM FOR MISSING VETERANS. To establish a green alert system to notify the public that a veteran is missing.
- PSB-131: AAC THE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR GOLD STAR PARENTS AND SURVIVING SPOUSES. To permit municipalities to exempt the income of Gold Star parents or a surviving spouse when determining the property tax exemption under section 12-81ii of the general statutes.
- PSB-132: AA PROVIDING CERTAIN BENEFITS TO HMONG LAOTIAN SPECIAL GUERRILLA UNITS WHO SERVED IN THE KINGDOM OF LAOS. To provide certain benefits to members of the Hmong Laotian special guerilla units who served in the secret war in the Kingdom of Laos during the Vietnam War.
- PSB-133: AA EXEMPTING DISABLED VETERANS FROM THE PASSPORT TO THE PARKS FEE WHEN REGISTERING A MOTOR VEHICLE. To exempt disabled veterans from the Passport to the Parks fee when registering a motor vehicle.
- PSJ-6: RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO ENACT THE AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE FAIRNESS ACT. To memorialize Congress to enact the Agent Orange Exposure Fairness Act.

**PROPOSED HOUSE BILLS**

- PHB-5146: AA EXPANDING VETERANS' ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. To exclude all veterans' pension benefits from income when determining eligibility for public assistance programs.
- PHB-5147: AA EXEMPTING VETERANS' PENSIONS FROM THE CALCULATION OF INCOME FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS. To exempt all veterans' pension benefits from the calculation of income when determining eligibility for state and municipal benefits granted to veterans.

On The Hill



**Historic Deborah Sampson Act Signed Into Law**

Women veterans will have greater access to critical care and services following the signing of U.S. Senator Jon Tester's historic Deborah Sampson Act into law by the President on Jan.5. Tester's bipartisan bill unanimously passed the Senate last month as part of an end-of-year package to better address the needs of veterans nationwide.

"This is a historic moment for the nearly two million women veterans across the country who will now have access to quality health care and benefits under the Deborah Sampson Act," said Tester, Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. "This new law will ensure that VA does its part in supporting the selfless women who have borne the battle by providing services tailored to meet their needs now and into the future. I thank Senator Boozman, Congresswoman Brownley, IAVA, and DAV for partnering with me on this bipartisan effort to help change the culture at VA to better support women veterans' service and sacrifice."

The Deborah Sampson Act will eliminate barriers to care and services that many women veterans face and would help ensure the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) addresses the needs of women veterans who are more likely to face homelessness, unemployment, and go without needed health care through the following provisions:

- Creates a dedicated Office of Women's Health at VA, expands reintegration and readjustment group counseling retreats for women veterans and their family members, and bolsters call center services for women veterans.
- Eliminates barriers to care by staffing every VA health facility with a dedicated women's health primary care provider, training clinicians, and retrofitting VA facilities to enhance privacy and improve the environment of care for women veterans.
- Bolsters supportive services by providing access to legal services for women veterans, expanding child care for veterans receiving VA health care, and requiring the Government Accountability Office to report on VA's efforts to support homeless or at-risk women veterans.
- Improves access to care and benefits for survivors of military sexual trauma (MST) of all genders by expanding MST counseling to former Guard and Reserve members, allowing VA to treat the physical health conditions of MST, and improving the claims process for MST survivors at the Veterans Benefits Administration.

## Veterans Affairs News



*From Stars & Stripes*

## Biden names new VA leadership

President Joe Biden's administration on Wednesday Jan.20 announced new leaders of the Department of Veterans Affairs – the country's second-largest federal agency.

Of the nine new leaders named, four are rejoining the VA after leaving in recent years for other positions.

The announcement, which was made minutes after Biden was sworn into office, follows his nomination of Denis McDonough as VA secretary. McDonough's confirmation hearing is scheduled for Jan. 27. A VA news release Wednesday – the first authored by the new administration – said there would be more leadership announcements “in the near future.”

The political appointees named Wednesday afternoon include:

Kayla Williams as the new assistant secretary for public and international affairs. Williams worked most recently as the director of the military, veterans and society program at the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank. She previously served as director of the center for women veterans at the VA.

Raymond Kelley as the liaison for veteran service organizations. Kelley recently worked on Capitol Hill as the majority staff director for the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Chris Díaz as the new acting chief of staff and White House liaison. Diaz is an entrepreneur and the founder and former executive director of Action Tank, a nonprofit based in Philadelphia.

Ya Wei (Jenny) Wang as director of mission operations. From 2013 to 2017, Wang served as special assistant and adviser to the White House chief of staff. She is also held numerous positions in the National Security Council.

Paula Molloy as assistant secretary for human resources. Molloy, like several other appointees, is rejoining the VA. Molloy once served as the VA assistant deputy undersecretary for health. Most recently, she worked as the chief administrative officer for the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation.

Meg Kabat as the senior adviser for families, caregivers and survivors. Kabat is a licensed clinical social worker and served in leadership roles from 2011 to 2019 within the VA Caregiver Support Program.

Tahmika Jackson as special counsel in the Office of General Counsel. Jackson previously served as the National Security Agency senior representative to the National Counterterrorism Center in McLean, Va.

Terrence Hayes as press secretary. Hayes recently worked as the national director of communication and public affairs for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He formerly served as a public affairs officer at the VA.

John Santos as special assistant in the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. Santos previously worked as the Asian American and Pacific Islander outreach director at the Democratic National Committee.

## Dat Tran to temporarily lead VA as acting secretary



Dat Tran

President Joe Biden named Dat Tran to immediately take the helm of the Department of Veterans Affairs on Jan.20.

Tran, the principal deputy assistant secretary for the VA's Office of Enterprise Integration, will lead the VA until the Senate confirms Biden's nominee for VA secretary. Biden chose Denis McDonough, a longtime aide of former President Barack Obama, to lead the department.

Tran has served at the VA for more than a decade. In his current role, he advises VA senior leaders in several areas including strategic planning, risk management, policy research, data analytics and innovations. Before coming to the VA, Tran worked as a staff member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee from 1995 to 2001.

*Extracted from NBC News*

## 1,900 Covid vaccine doses ruined by loose freezer plug at Massachusetts VA hospital

A Massachusetts Veterans Affairs hospital said that nearly 2,000 doses of Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine were spoiled after a cleaning contractor accidentally unplugged a refrigerator.

The 1,900 doses were located at a VA facility in the Boston neighborhood of Jamaica Plain, where on Tuesday Jan.19 VA officials realized that the doses had not been stored at proper temperatures, NBC News Boston reported.

A VA spokesperson told the NBC News affiliate that a contractor “accidentally removed [an electrical plug] while cleaning” and that an investigation is underway to find out why the freezer's alarm system and monitoring system did not work as intended.

The VA also said that replenishments were on the way and that they did not expect that the loss of nearly 2,000 doses of vaccine would impact their vaccination efforts.

The Department of Veterans Affairs and Boston VA did not immediately respond to a NBC News request for comment.

## **VA to provide COVID-19 testing and vaccinations to caregivers of Veterans in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care facilities will begin offering COVID-19 testing and vaccinations to designated family caregivers of Veterans participating in the Program of Comprehensive

Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC).

Each facility will determine its own start date based on site-specific resources, needs and vaccine availability.

“Caregivers play a critical role in caring for some of our most vulnerable Veterans,” said VA Acting Under Secretary for Health Richard A. Stone, M.D. “One of the most important things we can do for caregivers is to help them take care of themselves. The current pandemic has amplified the importance of our caregivers whom we recognize as valuable members of Veterans’ health care teams.”

The testing and vaccines will be administered in line with CDC allocation guidelines. Vaccinations will be offered in accordance with VA’s phased risk stratification framework and will build upon elements outlined in the COVID-19 Vaccination Plan for the Veterans Health Administration. Veterans and their caregivers can get the latest information and sign up to receive updates on VA’s COVID-19 vaccine webpage at: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/stay-informed>

For more information visit VA’s Caregiver Support Program, contact your local facility’s VA Caregiver Support Coordinator or call the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274 from Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## **8,000 Veterans Affairs patients have died of the coronavirus – 1,000 in the last 2 weeks**

The Department of Veterans Affairs reached yet another grim milestone Jan. 20 – 8,000 patient deaths, with more than 1,000 of those deaths recorded in the last two weeks.

January is on track to become the deadliest month of the pandemic for VA patients, with 1,481 deaths recorded this month as of Jan. 20. December was the deadliest month of the pandemic so far for VA patients and staff, with more than 1,500 patient deaths and 21 staff deaths recorded. The more than 1,000 patient deaths recorded in the last two weeks represent more than 13% of VA’s total patient deaths during the pandemic.

Deaths at the department are up about 31% in the last month, roughly coinciding with a sharp spike in active cases among VA patients and staff, though active cases hit a two-week low of more than 15,000 on Jan. 20.

VA officials have repeatedly cited the percentage of patients who require hospitalization as the most reliable judge of how patients are faring amid the pandemic, and that number has consistently fallen since a height of 38% in March to 12% in both November and December. The total number of patients hospitalized also had been increasing up until last week. In the latest of VA’s weekly pandemic response reports for Jan. 12-18, the department reported 1,508 COVID-19 inpatients, down slightly from the week prior but still up nearly 113% from November.

While VA has recorded a significant spike in total number of patients who have died because of the virus, VA’s overall mortality rate continues to decrease. In October, it was about 5.5%. So far in January, it has reached about 4.2%, which is still significantly higher than the about 1.7% for Americans overall, according to the most recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data. Earlier during the pandemic, VA’s mortality rate reached a high of nearly 6.8%.



VA’s mortality rate is influenced by the age and overall health of its patients, who tend to be older and less healthy than the overall American population.

Since VA cares for about half of the roughly 18 million veterans in America, its numbers are representative only of those in its care and do not include veterans who receive care elsewhere or who do not qualify for VA health care.

VA’s publicly available data also includes its staff and some non-veteran patients the department treated as part of its Fourth Mission. VA has already recorded 10 staff deaths in January, for a total of 105 during the pandemic so far.



The top 10 VA health systems with the most active cases are: Columbia, South Carolina (359); San Antonio (336); Loma Linda, California (336); Phoenix (335); Atlanta (332); Long Beach, California (313); Dallas (300); Los Angeles (281); Cleveland, Ohio (280); Gainesville, Florida (260).

The VA health systems that have recorded the most deaths during the pandemic include those in: Cleveland; Minneapolis; Phoenix; Columbia, South Carolina; New Jersey; New York; Texas; and Boston. Those with the most confirmed cases were North Chicago; Cleveland; Phoenix; San Antonio; Columbia, South Carolina; Loma Linda, California Atlanta; Orlando; Houston; and Dallas.

From Connecting Vets

### Biden extends pause on veteran debt collection during coronavirus pandemic

After months of calls from veterans, advocates and Capitol Hill lawmakers, the White House has approved further extending the pause on veteran debt collection at the Department of Veterans Affairs during the pandemic.

Rep. Chris Pappas, D-New Hampshire, who serves on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, introduced legislation at the beginning of the pandemic to temporarily halt collection of outstanding VA debts until the pandemic emergency declaration is lifted. While President Donald Trump authorized pausing veteran debt collection through 2020 that expired with the new year, and Trump did not order VA to continue that pause.

The Biden administration extended the pause of veteran debt collection during the pandemic in an executive order announced Friday Jan.22.

Previously, VA was set to begin collecting those outstanding copays and debts this month.

“Since the onset of this pandemic I have fought to provide much-needed relief to veterans across our country who are suffering from the catastrophic consequences of COVID-19, and I am glad that President Joe Biden has heeded our calls,” Pappas said in a statement. “Far too often veterans face unexpected debt collection from the VA, some due to overpayments that were through no fault of their own. However, this Executive Order will provide the relief so many need and ensure that our veterans can focus on their physical and financial health during these trying times.”

Those with questions about debt related to VA benefits are asked to contact the VA Debt Management Center at 800-827-0648 and those with debt related to VA health care can contact the Health Resource Center at 866-400-1238.



### From the Service Rep's Desk



### Plan to close Connecticut VBP Operations postponed

In mid-2019, I had informed the Veterans Benefits Plan (VBP) Director Felicia Mullaney, that we planned to end our CT VBP

operations in June 2021.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) claims processing has slowed considerably. C&P exams have been delayed month after month due to examiners' and veterans' lack of person-to-person access to examinations. VBA receipt of veterans' records from National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) have been curtailed because NARA has all but stopped processing records requests due to COVID-19 exposures within that organization.

Additionally, VVA VBP attorneys at the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) are becoming overwhelmed by the number of appeals which need Informal Hearing Presentations (IHP) prepared prior to BVA decisions (last count was 2,500 cases nationwide - CT VBP has 17 cases waiting for IHPs). VVA VBP attorneys have asked service officers to assist if those attorneys have questions that can be answered by service officers.

Because of the above effect that the pandemic has had on veterans' claims and appeals, I have decided that our CT VBP should continue operations beyond the proposed June 2021 closing date, to a date to be determined based on effects the pandemic has on our veterans' claims and appeals.

Though we will continue supporting our existing veterans, we will not accept power of attorney representation for new veterans.

### Neil Sheehan, reporter who obtained Pentagon Papers, dies at 84



Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Neil Sheehan died on Thursday Jan.7, his family said. He was 84.

Sheehan's wife, Susan Sheehan, and daughter, Catherine Sheehan Bruno, said the Vietnam War correspondent known for obtaining the Pentagon Papers for The New York Times died due to complications from Parkinson's disease, The Times and Politico reported.

Born on Oct. 27, 1936, in Holyoke, Mass., Sheehan graduated from Harvard in 1958 and joined the Army, where he worked as

a journalist. He moonlighted for UPI at the agency's Asian headquarters in Tokyo.

Upon leaving the Army in 1962, UPI hired Sheehan and sent him to work in Saigon as a staff correspondent. There, observing the destruction and bloodshed of war, he first began to question the United States' role in Vietnam.

He gained a reputation as one of the so-called "fearless threesome" of war correspondents, which included Malcolm Browne of the Associated Press and David Halberstam of The Times. They became known for digging up details about the war that challenged the more upbeat daily military briefings, The Washington Post reported.

"I simply cannot help worrying that, in the process of waging this war, we are corrupting ourselves," he wrote in The New York Times Magazine in 1966. "I wonder, when I look at the bombed-out peasant hamlets, the orphans begging and stealing on the streets of Saigon and the women and children with napalm burns lying on the hospital cots, whether the United States or any nation has the right to inflict this suffering and degradation on another people for its own ends."

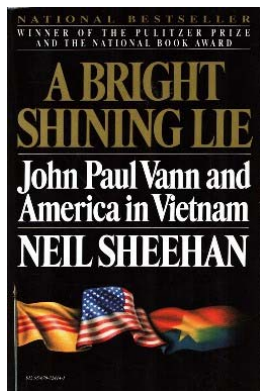
After establishing himself as a reputable reporter, The Times hired Sheehan in 1964 and sent him to Vietnam.

Seven years later, Daniel Ellsberg, a former Defense Department analyst, leaked the Pentagon papers to Sheehan, providing 7,000 pages of classified documents revealing that the government was deceptive about U.S. prospects for victory in the war.

The Nixon administration obtained an injunction against the publication of the report, saying national security was at stake.

The issue was taken to the Supreme Court, which on June 30, 1971, ruled 6-3 in favor of allowing The New York Times and The Washington Post to publish their stories.

The New York Times won a Pulitzer Prize in public service in 1972 for the Pentagon Papers coverage and its editors praised Sheehan for obtaining the documents.



After the publication of the Pentagon Papers, Sheehan published his book, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*, which won a National Book Award and a Pulitzer in 1989 as he described his disillusionment with the war.

Sheehan is survived by his wife, two brothers, Patrick and Eugene, two daughters Maria Sheehan and Catherine Sheehan Bruno and two grandsons.

**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 March 2021 newsletter is 19 February 2021. Due to space availability, the editor reserves the right to include or not include photos for a given month.

**This newsletter printed by**



**97B Pierson Lane  
Windsor, CT  
www.printhubct.com  
print@printhubct.com  
860-580-7909**

**Hartford Vet Center**



25 Elm Street, Suite A  
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

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



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