

CONNECTION



Connecticut Chapter 120

Greater Hartford
Over 39 Years of Service to Veterans

November 2022

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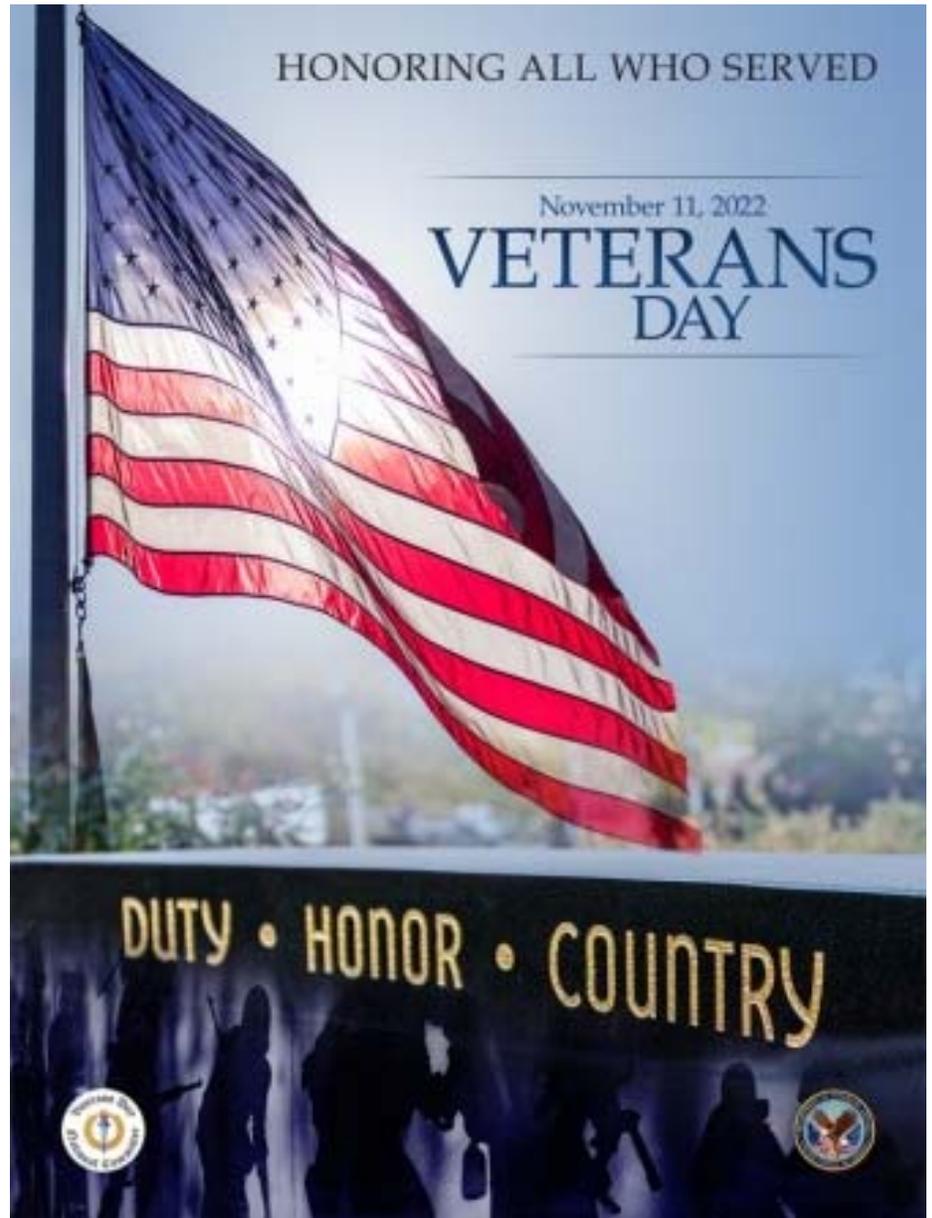
Chapter 120 membership meeting will be held on Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford. *State and East Hartford COVID-19 guidelines apply.*

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, November 17 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 Newsletter Editor at (860) 282-7470, or e-mail the Newsletter Editor at ctchapter120@aol.com.

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A veteran is someone who wrote a blank check made payable to the United States of America for an amount up to and including their life.

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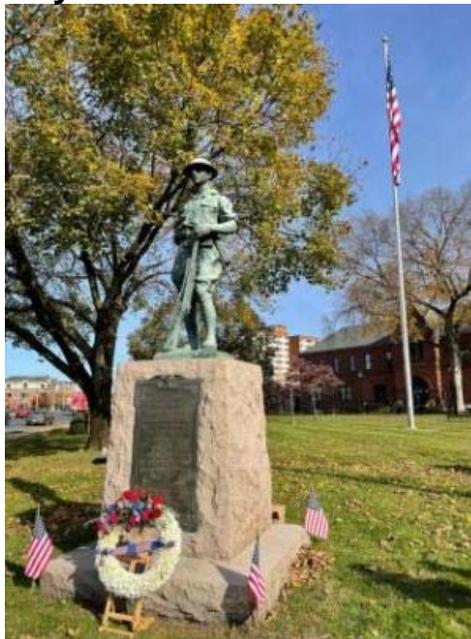
Chapter/State News

Veterans Day Program at Goodwin University



A Veterans Day Program will be staged by the school's Office of Veteran Service. The Veterans Day Program takes place in the main lobby at One Riverside Drive on Nov.10 from 10 to 11:30 am. Veterans who served from WWII through to the 9/11 War on Terror will be invited to meet and greet students, faculty, and staff as well as members of the public. Tables will be set up for any displays, memorabilia etc. At least three classes of high school students will attend as well as University students and faculty. Panera's will be providing lunch at 11:30 – so please plan on staying so that we can sit down and possibly discuss plans for the future, issues, things that need to be done etc. All are welcome to stop by, chat, and thank our veterans for their service. FMI contact Craig Jordan, Veterans Coordinator, at cjordan@goodwin.edu.

Wreath-Laying Ceremony to be Held on Veterans Day at the East Hartford Public Library



A wreath-laying ceremony will be held at the World War I memorial on the front lawn of the Raymond Library in East Hartford on Veterans Day, November 11, 2022 at 10:30 am. This ceremony will commemorate the veterans of East Hartford from that conflict as well as all veterans, living and deceased.

“Veterans Day serves as a reminder to all to commemorate and honor all past and present veterans for their service and sacrifice, and recognizing these contributions of East Hartford’s sons and daughters is an important and time-honored tradition within our community,” said Mayor Michael P. Walsh.

Representatives from the East Hartford Rochambeau Elms VFW Post 2083, the Historical Society of East Hartford, and the East Hartford Public Library will be present. A wreath, donated by ShopRite, will be laid at the foot of the monument. The program will include the tolling of the bell at First Congregational Church, East Hartford, in remembrance of the veterans listed on the monument.

“We are honored to commemorate the lives and sacrifices of all of our veterans,” said Library Director Sarah Kline Morgan. “We hope that this ceremony will become an annual event to remember and pass on the history of all East Hartford residents who have served in the armed forces.”

All are welcome to join us for this ceremony, which is suitable for all ages. The event will be held, rain or shine, on the front lawn of the Raymond Library. Assemble at the statue near the corner of Main Street and Central Avenue. The program begins promptly at 10:30 am and will last approximately 30 minutes.

Birthday Wishes

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

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Rocco N. Arturo | Eugene Bacon |
| Michael Belliveau | Patricia M. Dumin |
| William F. Ellis | Joseph Goyette |
| Robert W. Hoover | Robert L. King |
| Samuel Mack | Frank J. Mello Jr. |
| Robert Perritt | Paul Scappaticci |
| Jerry D. St Amand | William R. Zenga |

Happy Birthday!

Gary A. Chappell

Chapter 120 Life Member



Gary A. Chappell, 78, of Manchester, passed away surrounded by family on Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2022, after a 4-year courageous battle with Multiple Myeloma.

Gary was born in Manchester on July 13, 1944. He graduated from Manchester High School in 1962 and served his country in the Army and Vietnam War. He loved his country and was a proud American. He enjoyed having English

Setters his entire life and also loved horses. He was always reading something to gain knowledge and anything we didn't know, we knew we could always ask Dad. Gary was married to Mary Patricca on Oct. 17, 1969. They would have celebrated 53 years this year, but their time was sadly cut short.

Gary worked for H.P. Hood for 17 years and later retired from West Reach Construction. He was also a lifelong member of the VFW, American Legion, and a strong supporter of the NRA.

Gary is survived by his wife Mary, his son Christopher and daughter-in-law Diane of Stark, New Hampshire, and their three kids, Kaycee, Julia and Jacob; and his daughter Amy and son-in-law David Blanco of Stark, and their two sons Jimmy and Evan. He was proud to have three stepsons, Michael and his wife, Alison Doherty, their daughters Kelly Buerk and Melissa Caye; Mark and his wife, Carol Doherty, and their kids Emma Lingurariu, Brian and Peter Doherty, and Tom Doherty. His pride and joy were his 10 grandkids; and seven great-grandkids. Gary is preceded in death by his mother Marion; his father Gerald; and his two sisters, Vivian and Anita.

A funeral service at the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 W. Center St., Manchester, was on Saturday, Oct. 15. Burial followed at Hillstown Road Veterans Cemetery.

Receive "The Connection" by E-Mail – Help your Chapter

The monthly Chapter 120 newsletter, *The Connection*, is available by e-mail. Currently, 100 members receive the newsletter by e-mail, saving the Chapter over \$1,800 in printing and 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 ctchapter120@aol.com

POW/MIA News



From Mass Live

Mass. POW Joseph J. Puopolo's remains flown home for Malden burial

The remains of East Boston native U.S. Army Cpl. Joseph J. Puopolo returned home at Boston Logan International on Oct. 18.

A member of C Battery, 38th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division Artillery, 8th U.S. Army, Puopolo's remains were accounted for on Aug. 23, according to a press release from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, or DPAA. He was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950, when his unit attempted to withdraw two days prior from Kunu-ri, North Korea. It was not until 1953 during Operation Big Switch that four prisoners of war said Puopolo died at Prisoner of War Camp No. 5 in February 1951.



Cpl. Joseph J. Puopolo

North Korea returned remains from War Camp No. 5 to the United Nations during Operation Glory in 1954. Puopolo, then only identified as Unknown X-14430, was one of the 652 Korean War Unknowns interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

Through dental and anthropological analysis, combined with

circumstantial evidence and mitochondrial DNA analysis, DPAA confirmed they had found Puopolo.

Puopolo's remains were escorted to Magrath Funeral Home in East Boston, where a funeral mass was held at Sacred Heart Church on Oct. 22, according to the funeral home's obituary. Puopolo was interred alongside his mother and younger brother at Holy Cross Cemetery.



On The Hill



From *Military.com*

Congress Wants America to Thank Veterans in the Most Awkward Way Possible

Opinion by Blake Stilwell

When “Thank you for your service” usually comes from a well-meaning civilian, veterans often fumble for an appropriate and respectful response. Saying “thank you” to a “thank you” seems awkward, and saying “you’re welcome” feels a little pompous.

So imagine having to reply when someone says “thank you for our freedom,” as if you’re Captain America, personally dealing death to terrorists and various super villains.

No matter how awkward that might feel for veterans, two members of Congress seem to think that the highfalutin phrase should be the official way to thank vets and want to make it official.

Reps. Jack Bergman (R-Mich.) and J. Luis Correa (D-Calif.) introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives on Sept. 29 to replace “thank you for your service” with “thank you for our freedom,” despite neither phrase having an official status of any kind in U.S. law or policy.

“As a Nation, we have an obligation to support the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who risk their lives to protect the freedom of the American people, and our allies,” Bergman said in a press release that related a 70-year-old story that inspired him to actually introduce the idea when we all have better things we could be doing.

The U.S. military faces a number of high-profile problems. All branches are struggling to meet manning requirements, the U.S. Army is recommending food stamps to military families and Fort Hood is still an evolving tragedy -- just to name a few of the real issues Congress could be fixing.

Although likely unintentional, the language of the resolution is surprisingly self-aware, acknowledging congressional shortcomings in dealing with the actual problems faced by troops, veterans and their families, stating “for far too long, our Nation has fallen short in our obligation to our military.”

Thanking the troops who are putting up with moldy barracks and jet fuel-flavored water while Russian President Vladimir Putin threatens them with nuclear weapons is where Congress decided to begin addressing its obligation. It is literally the least they could do.

“All gave some and many made the ultimate sacrifice,” Correa said, paraphrasing legendary American Billy Ray Cyrus in Bergman’s press release about the resolution.

The non-binding resolution was referred to the House Armed Services Committee the same day it was introduced. There, it will likely die a death as meaningless as its existence. Even if it were ever to pass, it would be a purely symbolic gesture. As a non-binding resolution, it can’t be enforced.

The opinions expressed in this op-ed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Military.com.

Veterans Affairs News



From Stars & Stripes

Veterans, military retirees to see 8.7% boost in benefits to match Social Security increase

Veterans and military retirees will see an increase in their disability compensation after the Social Security Administration announced 70 million Americans will see an 8.7% increase in their benefits next year.

The announcement comes two days after President Joe Biden signed the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2022, which will require the Department of Veterans Affairs to boost compensation for veterans with disabilities and their families by providing a cost-of-living adjustment equal to the Social Security increase.

The cost-of living adjustment — the largest in more than 40 years — means the average recipient will receive more than \$140 extra a month beginning in January, the Social Security Administration said Thursday.

If a veteran with no dependents has a disability rating of 60%, that person’s monthly compensation from the VA is about \$1,214 and could increase by about \$105.

Joe Parsetich, the national commander for Disabled American Veterans, said the organization is delighted at the cost-of-living increase for veterans’ disability compensation. He said many veterans with disabilities rely on that money.

“This increase...comes at a time when many veterans across the nation are battling higher retail costs associated with everyday living,” he said in a prepared statement. “This welcomed increase will help ease the financial burden many veterans and their families are facing.”

About 70 million people — including retirees, disabled people and children — receive Social Security benefits. This will be the

biggest increase in benefits that baby boomers, those born between the years 1946 and 1964, have ever seen. The last time a COLA was higher was in 1981, at 11.2%.

This is also the largest VA increase in compensation for veterans in 40 years. Last year, the increase went up by 5.9%.

AMVETS, another veterans group, said veterans with disabilities depend on the payouts as inflation costs have risen.

“While it's unclear how much of a financial burden this will lift from veterans and caregivers, every bit helps,” AMVETS said in a prepared statement. “Our next step as advocates is pushing for veterans to begin seeing that increase in their payouts hopefully as soon as December.”

From Federal News Network

VA pursues ‘bottom-up’ approach to modernize facilities

The VA is going back to the drawing board on plans to reshape its real estate portfolio of health care facilities.

The VA is pursuing an alternative strategy to rethink its real-estate needs for health care facilities after lawmakers scuttled the Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission process, as envisioned under the MISSION Act.

A bipartisan group of a dozen senators in June put out a statement rejecting the VA’s plan to close or overhaul hospitals and medical facilities that no longer meet the health care needs of veterans.

McDonough said last month that the AIR Commission process, as envisioned under the MISSION Act, “will not go forward, as far as I can tell.”

Elnahal said the VA is updating the market assessments that served as the foundation for its AIR Commission recommendations and using more up-to-date data that takes into account the COVID-19 pandemic’s effects on the VA health care system

Elnahal said the VA is also taking a “bottom-up process” to determine the agency’s new infrastructure needs, based on input from facility leaders, veteran service organizations and other veteran advocacy groups in every local market.

“This is going to be a diligent process that’s going to start over, because we think it needs to start over. Trends have changed significantly since the pandemic,” Elnahal said.

The average age of VA hospitals and clinics is 60 years, which far exceeds the average of private sector health care facilities.

“We need modern facilities that are able to accommodate the best and newest technology available to patients across the country. That’s what our veterans deserve from our brick-and-mortar infrastructure. So it’s a process that absolutely still needs to take place,” Elnahal said.

From Military Times

Burn pit registry is failing to help track vet illnesses, experts say



The nearly decade-old Veterans Affairs registry to track burn pit illnesses and help veterans get care for those injuries is achieving neither of those goals, according to research from independent health experts, who are recommending major changes to the effort.

“[Our findings] conclude that there are no refinements or improvements that will allow the registry to serve as a population health surveillance system,” said Kristen Olson, director of sociological research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine committee analyzing the registry.

“Because there is no way for registry participants to update their health information, there is no way for the registry to accomplish this goal or even to monitor health patterns over time.”

Olson’s comments came during an event Friday unveiling the research, mandated by Congress after concerns arose about the effectiveness of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

More than 317,000 veterans have enrolled in the registry since it was launched in 2014. VA officials say the goal of the effort is to “put data to work for veterans and help us better understand the potential health effects of exposure to airborne hazards during military service.”

But veterans’ advocates have complained for years that the registry is too restrictive and complicated, and offers little direct benefit to individuals who participate.

The Department of Defense estimates that nearly 3.5 million troops from the recent wars alone may have suffered enough exposure to toxic smoke from open-air burn pits to cause health problems.

Members of the committee researching the registry said more than 130,000 individuals started the enrollment process but never completed it, undermining the VA’s goal of getting a thorough accounting of illnesses among the veterans population.

It is also a voluntary endeavor, meaning the individuals who choose to participate may not be a good representation of the veterans' population as a whole.

"The stated registry purpose of research about how the effects of airborne hazards and conducting population health surveillance are unattainable," said David Savitz, a professor of epidemiology at Brown University in Rhode Island and chairman of the committee.

"The data collected to meet these purposes is not helpful. Efforts to address these important functions could be pursued in other more effective ways."

The analysis comes just a few months after Congress approved a host of new benefits for veterans dealing with toxic exposure issues and research mandates for VA officials to better identify and care for those injuries.

Researchers said the time and resources spent on the registry could be better spent on new tools to improve outreach to victims of toxic exposure injuries and to link those individuals to their health care options.

"It has great value in certain areas, and those areas are well worth developing," Savitz said. "So, even though it doesn't meet some of the original goals, it has important goals that it is capable of attaining and that could be enhanced and streamlined going forward."

VA extends delay of upcoming electronic health record deployments to June 2023 to address technical and other system performance issues

On Oct. 13, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced it is delaying upcoming deployments of the Oracle Cerner electronic health record (EHR) until June 2023 to address challenges with the system and make sure it is functioning optimally for Veterans and for VA health care personnel.

This decision comes after Secretary Denis McDonough announced in July that VA would delay EHR deployments until January 2023 to ensure that the system's issues had been resolved. During VA's subsequent investigation at our current sites, several additional technical and system issues were identified – including challenges with performance, such as latency and slowness, problems with patient scheduling, referrals, medication management, and other types of medical orders.

Over the coming months, VA will continue to work closely with Oracle Cerner to resolve issues with the system's performance, maximize usability for VA health care providers, and ensure our nation's Veterans are served by an effective records system to support their healthcare. During this "assess & address" period, we will correct outstanding issues—especially those that may have patient safety implications—before restarting deployments at other VA medical centers.

"Right now, the Oracle Cerner electronic health record system is not delivering for Veterans or VA health care providers – and we are holding Oracle Cerner and ourselves accountable to get this right," said Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Donald Remy, who has oversight over VA's EHR program. "We are delaying all future deployments of the new EHR while we fully assess performance and address every concern. Veterans and clinicians deserve a seamless, modernized health record system, and we will not rest until they get it."

While executing this "assess and address" plan, VA will continue to focus on the five facilities where the new system has already been deployed to ensure every patient is getting the world-class health care they deserve. In addition to the system review, VA is sending letters to every Veteran who may have been impacted by these system challenges in some manner, asking that if they have experienced a delay in medications, appointments, referrals, or test results, to contact VA through the call center or online. Once they reach out, these Veterans can expect a member of their care team to follow up with them within five business days to resolve the issue.

The modernized EHR will replace VA's current Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) to document and support all aspects of Veteran health care. VA remains committed to building an EHR solution that will link with the Department of Defense's health record system to create a lifetime of seamless care for service members and Veterans.

For more information about VA's overall EHR modernization effort, visit <https://www.ehrm.va.gov/>.

From the VA History Office

Bonus Army



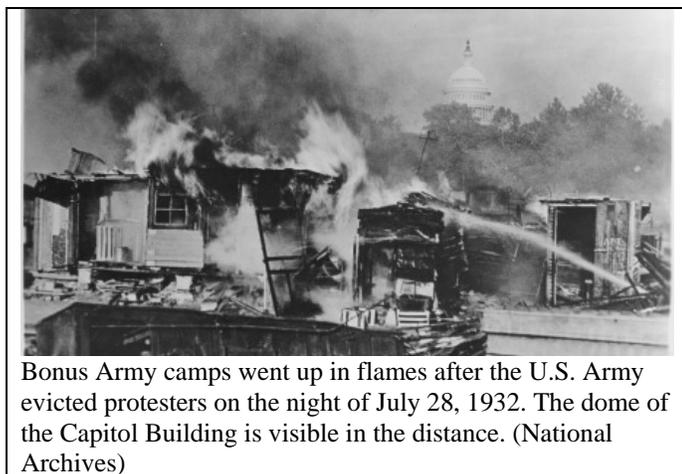
Bonus Army Veterans on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol, in the summer of 1932. (Library of Congress)

After World War I, Americans discharged from military service faced a difficult homecoming. Many struggled to find work in the tight labor market created by a post-war recession. They also felt ill-used. During the war, civilian workers benefited from a booming economy and enjoyed wages that far exceeded their own military pay. In the early 1920s, Veterans took their grievances to Congress. The newly formed American Legion and the more established Veterans of Foreign Wars led the way in lobbying for a one-time cash payment that would compensate Veterans for their missed earnings. In 1924, Congress passed the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, which awarded

Veterans interest-bearing certificates with a face value of up to \$625. But the law came with an important proviso: the certificates could not be redeemed until 1945. Even with its deferred payout, the Bonus Act, as the bill was called, satisfied Veterans' demands for some form of monetary compensation for their service. Their attitudes changed, however, with the onset of the Great Depression. The economic crash sent unemployment rates soaring and caused immense hardship for millions of Americans. Veterans were particularly hard hit by the crisis and they appealed to the government for immediate payment of their bonus certificates to alleviate their financial distress. When the administration of President Herbert Hoover proved recalcitrant, they mobilized for action.

In the summer of 1932, an estimated 20,000 Veterans, many with their families in tow, descended on Washington from all parts of the country to petition Congress for their money. Dubbed the "Bonus Army" or "Bonus Marchers," they settled in tents, cardboard shanties and wooden shacks in parks and empty buildings in downtown Washington. They also established their main encampment across the Anacostia River on a muddy expanse of land called the Flats. Their daily presence on the steps and grounds of the U.S. Capitol, however, failed to win over Hoover or enough members of Congress. After the Senate on June 17 rejected a bill authorizing payment of the bonuses, many of the marchers went home. But even after Congress adjourned for the season in July, several thousand stayed on to continue their protests at the Capitol building.

Fearful that the demonstrations would turn violent, Hoover and the District of Columbia Commissioners on July 28 ordered the police to remove the marchers from their downtown camps. Following a skirmish that left two marchers dead and three policemen injured, Hoover made the fateful decision to send in the Army to restore order. Later in the day, six hundred soldiers, some mounted on horseback, and six light tanks under the command of General Douglas MacArthur moved against the Veterans. The troops on foot threw tear gas grenades and the makeshift shantytowns on both sides of the river went up in flames. The Bonus Marchers dispersed and by July 30 the city had been cleared of their presence.



Bonus Army camps went up in flames after the U.S. Army evicted protesters on the night of July 28, 1932. The dome of the Capitol Building is visible in the distance. (National Archives)

In his official report, MacArthur praised his men for their discipline and avoidance of civilian fatalities. But the events of

July 28, splashed across the front pages of the nation's newspapers and shown in movie theater newsreels for weeks afterwards, prompted a swift backlash. The Army was booed and Hoover excoriated for his heartless treatment of the Bonus Army protesters. When he heard what had happened, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Democratic candidate for president in 1932, reportedly remarked, "Well, this elects me." In fact, Roosevelt did handily defeat Hoover in November. His victory left Veterans hopeful that they would soon be able to convert their certificates into money and an estimated 3,000 returned to Washington the following May to press their case. But with the country still in the grips of the Great Depression, Roosevelt had other priorities. Not until 1936 did Congress pass a bill allowing Veterans to exchange their certificates for saving bonds redeemable at any time. The Treasury wound up distributing more than \$1.4 billion in payments to needy Veterans that year, as most chose to cash in the bonds within months of receiving them.

New Box for VVA Membership Applications



The PO Box where new member applications are sent to be processed is moving. Revise and/or replace any of your chapter correspondence with the below update. This only applies to the NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.

PO Box 49030, Baltimore, MD 21297-4930

Eligibility Guidelines Date: The eligibility date has been revised to accept an entry date as early as: November 1, 1955. These revisions have been made to the Membership Application and all documents that reflect the eligibility guidelines. We ask that you download the current documents online to replace the ones you may currently use within your chapter.

As we press towards the road to 90K members, we appreciate your active work in your chapters and community.

How to contact the Membership Department: Phone: (800) 882-1316 option 3; email: VVAMembership@vva.org Fax: 301-585-3019

Please download the new member application for new members to complete:
<https://vva.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/APPLICATION-FOR-MEMBERSHIP.pdf>



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 06147

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.*

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 December newsletter is 18 November 2022. Due to space availability, the editor reserves the right to include or not include photos for a given month.

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