



Western New York Chapter 77

Tonawanda, New York

Mail Call:

October - December 2019

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Mike Walker

Summer is over, the days getting short and temps falling so get ready for the snow and cold. If you're a snow bird please let us at the chapter your address in the south. Better yet give us your email and we'll send the newsletter in an email.

The convention in Spokane, Washington was great, New York State had 71 delegates and the chapter had 5. There was only 695 members so New York was well represented. It was good seeing old friends and making new.

Now to tell you what was decided about our future. We passed a resolution to have the officers and the board to see how we can change our constitution to allow the younger Veterans to join. They would look at changing our name to make it that they would join and doing this we will keep the legacy we have. They have two years to get how we're going to do this and give their findings at the next convention and the members will vote on it. I feel this is the right thing to do. I know a few of you wanted to either help start a new organization or let the last man standing turn off the lights.

Norm Murry gave a good speech to make the case for what was decided. His speech is printed in the newsletter.

What we have to make the younger vets is that if they don't stand up for the rights we have now, the government will start taking them away.

Cannel Fest was a bust. With the weather and lack of people walking around we didn't do well at all, but we did well at the car show. I want to thank all who work at both. Without them both would have been bad instead of only one being bad.

We want to have an election committee to run the elections in April. So if you'd like to help let one of the officers or board member know. I would like to see two or three on the committee. It's not a hard job and we will teach you your responsibility will be.

Look at the calendar to see what is coming up.



VVA CHAPTER 77 LEADERSHIP

(Terms of office are from April 2018 to April 2020)

OFFICERS

President	Mike Walker	693-4479
1st Vice President	Ed Bodine	693-4479
2nd Vice President	Tom Konopka	693-4479
Secretary	Joe Rajnisz	693-4479
Treasurer	Paul Pietrowski	693-4479
Service Officer	Dee Garcia NYS Council	

DIRECTORS

Dan Brady	693-4479	Dennis Jorden	693-4479
Peter Divergillo	693-4479	Dale Zdrojewski	693-4479
John Heffernan	693-4479	Bill Paton	693-4479
Lee Chase	693-4479	Joe Pasek	693-4479
Tom Thompson	693-4479	Tim Huges	693-4479

SPECIAL DUTIES

NY State VVA	Ed Bodine	Bill Paton
Council Delegates	Paul Pietrowski (Alternate)	Tom Konopka (Alternate)
Newsletter Editor	Mike Walker	

STANDING COMMITTEES

Agent Orange / Veterans Affairs	Joe Pasek	693-4479
	Bill Paton	
Color Guard	Paul Pietrowski	693-4479
Community Affairs	Paul Pietrowski	693-4479
Constitution Committee	Lee Chase	693-4479
Scholarship	John Heffernan	693-4479
Employment Training & Business Training	Tom Konopka	694-0857
Golf Tournament	Al Schreier	694-3441
Government Affairs	Al Brusetti	693-4479
Web Master	Mike Walker	693-4479
Membership	Mike Walker	693-4479
	Paul Pietrowski	693-4479
Museum Curator	Paul Pietrowski	693-4479
POW/MIA Affairs	Paul Pietrowski	693-4479
PTSD		
Public Affairs	Patrick Welch	693-4479
Nominating Committee		
Veterans Benefits	Tom Konopka	693-4479
VA Hospital Reps.	Tom Konopka	693-4479
	Ed Bodine	693-4479

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 17

BOD MEETING 6PM MEMBERSHIP MEETING
7PM PIZZA AFTER THE MEETING

NOVEMBER 5

ELECTION DAY

NOVEMBER 11

UNITED VETS COUNCIL SERVICE ON THE
RENNISANCE BRIDGE 11AM COFFEE AND
DONUTS AT THE CHAPTER, VVA77 SERVICE
AT THE HELICOPTER MONUMENT 3PM

NOVEMBER 21

BOD MEETING 6PM, MEMBERSHIP
MEETING 7PM PIZZA AFTER THE MEETING

DECEMBER 12

CHRISTMAS PARTY AT SIKORA POST 6PM
COCKTAILS 7PM DINNER, COST IS \$15.00
PER PERSON RSVP

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER

JANUARY 16, 2020

BOD MEETING 6PM, MEMBERSHIP
MEETING 7PM PIZZA AFTER THE MEETING

JANUARY 23

TYCZ SCHOLARSHIP SPAGHETTI, DETAILS
AT A LATER DATE

AVVA

By Lori Paton

The AVVA is having a great year, thus far. Our group is comprised of dedicated volunteers who have so generously donated their time, talents and merchandise to all of our projects. Many thanks to all.

We are now gearing up for the Christmas season. Again, we hope to provide gifts for the children and grandchildren of Vets who are in need of help. The AVVA would appreciate any donations of toys for the youngsters and gift cards (Walmart or Target) for the teens. Donations can be dropped off at the food pantry on Wednesdays or Saturdays.

Also, we are visiting Willow Lodge at the VA on December 5th, where we will be distributing gifts to the residents. We will, once again, bring gift bags to the VA for Vets who will be hospitalized during the Christmas season.

The AVVA would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership stands at 675, we are 1st in New York and 5th in the country. Remember if you are a member who pays yearly dues you must renew as a life member for \$50.00 to remain a member, no more yearly dues, life membership only. We have lost a few members who do not want to renew and we have 16 members who still have to renew as life members.



SPEECH BY NORM MURRAY AT THE CONVENTION

The good that people do is too often buried with their bones.

Most of you are parents. Did you give your children love and guidance or did you abandon them to struggle on their own? Do you want them to have a life better than yours or worse than yours? Whatever possessions or treasure you have earned in this lifetime – will it be buried with you, or will you pass it on to your children, to help make their future better?

When my parents died, their wills didn't decree that I build a shrine with their names on it. They expected me to continue and carry on with the values they had instilled in me, and to pass those on to future generations. They didn't care that my sister's children would have a different last name – the FAMILY, not the name, was the important thing.

The VVA is a family – veterans who came after us are family – and I want the family to survive our short lives. I want it to continue and carry on the values and work you have done – to build on your achievements for many generations to come.

Our Founding Principle is “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.” And goes on to say that we will “make sure that those who serve our country receive the care and respect they have earned.”

“You who are on the road, must have a code that you can live by ... Teach your children well ... “

We cannot abandon the future generations of veterans by fading away – they are our family, the ones we have pledged to never abandon. The VVA must survive – it doesn't matter what our future name is – our successes must survive and be built on by future generations of veterans.

CONTACTS FOR VETS

E-Benefits Portal Site

<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>

Enrollment/Eligibility

<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility>

Health Resource Center

1-877-222-8387 (VETS)

OEF / OIF

<http://www.oefoif.va.gov>

Women Veterans

<http://www.va.gov/womenvet>

Benefits Line: 1-855-829-6636

Dental Care

http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB10-442_dental_benefits_for_veterans_2_14.pdf

Copays

<http://www1.va.gov/CBO/brochures.asp>

Health Resource Center

1-877-222-8387

Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

Prosthetics

<http://www.prosthetics.va.gov>

My HealtheVet

<http://www.myhealth.va.gov>

Homeless Veterans Hotline

1-877-424-3838

AGENT ORANGE

By Bill Paton

No Decision Yet From VA on New Agent Orange Presumptive Diseases

The VA has not announced any decision on whether it will provide disability compensation for four diseases linked to exposure to Agent Orange by a scientific panel, breaking a pledge to make a decision by late June.

Despite a promise in March from a Veterans Health Administration official that VA would decide within 90 days whether to add four health conditions -- bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension and Parkinson's like symptoms -- to a list of diseases presumed related to herbicide exposure, a VA spokesman said last week that none is forthcoming. "We have no announcements on Agent Orange presumptive conditions at this time," a VA spokeswoman said Wednesday, three months after a hearing in which a VA official told a senator the decision was pending. During a Senate Veterans Affairs hearing March 26, Dr. Richard Stone, the executive in charge of the Veterans Health Administration, said it was his "hope within the next 90 days that we'll have some decisions made."

In March 2016, the Institute of Medicine, an arm of the National Academies of Sciences, found evidence that two conditions, bladder cancer and hypothyroidism, are likely linked to Agent Orange exposure and that a third, Parkinson-like symptoms, should be added to the list of diseases presumed to be related to contact with the herbicide.

In November 2018, the organization, the National Academies, released a report finding sufficient evidence to link high blood pressure with exposure to Agent Orange. Hypertension previously had been designated as having limited or suggestive evidence that it could be related to contact with Agent Orange. But high blood pressure is so common among older Americans that it has never been added to the presumptive list. Having a diagnosis of a disease on the VA's presumptive list allows a veteran to bypass a requirement to prove that their illness is service-connected to receive disability compensation. Instead, they only need to prove that they served in an area where defoliants were used.

In late 2017, former VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin said he had decided whether to add several conditions to the presumptives list, and VA sent a recommendation to the Office of Management and Budget regarding the decision. But no further action was taken. Responding to a question from Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, during the hearing, Stone said VA is working "through this right now," adding that the recommendation will go to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie for final approval.



CAR SHOW

On September 1st VVA 77 and Post 264 held our 12th car show, Classics on the Niagara. We had 150 cars show up and again the weather was not in our favor. Forty-one awards went to car owners. Special thanks to our sponsors, Buffalo Engine, Keller Chevrolet and Mayor Rick Davis. Our DJ Rick Mann who has been with us for all 12 years. We are looking at changing the date of our show to July 5th next year, Labor Day weekend is so busy and we can't seem to catch a break on the weather, we will hold a meeting and decide soon.



Paul, Mayor Davis and Dennis presenting a sponsor's award.



Pinups For A Cause and Joe Follendorf from the Piston Broke Car Club presenting a check for \$250.00 to our food pantry.



Our very own Bob Lillis at the Veteran Games in Alaska. He took 4th place in pickle ball !



Canal Fest 2019, it was a down year for all of the vendors. Sales and the crowds were off from previous years. We don't know the status of Canal Fest for next year yet, rumor has it that Tonawanda will not participate because of construction on the closed part of Young St. where the rides usually go. Thank you to all of the members who came out to help at the tent.

KIA Road March, our truck loaded and volunteers sorting the canned goods. We estimate at least 5000 lbs. of canned goods. Chapter 77 had to members who participated in the 10K march, Tom Steinagle and Larry Gray. Congrats guys, job well done.



NEWSLETTER BOOSTER FORM

Fill out and submit with a check for \$12 payable to the chapter.

Name: _____ Branch: _____

Unit: _____ Year: _____



Vietnam Veterans of America
WNY Chapter 77
47 Main St.
Tonawanda, NY 14150
Return Service Requested

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #2
Tonawanda, NY 14150

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please send this application, with your dues payment and a copy of your DD-214 to: VVA Chapter 77, 47 Main St., Tonawanda, NY 14150

Name _____ Male ___ Female ___ Date of Birth _____
Address _____ e-mail address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone number _____ Sponsor (optional) _____

Life Member: ___ \$50 (Only Membership Available)

Eligibility: Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975. You must submit a copy of your DD-214 with this membership application.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- ☐ I am a spouse, family member or friend of a Vietnam veteran and would like membership information about the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America.
- ☐ I would like information on membership for permanently hospitalized Vietnam veterans.
- ☐ I would like information on membership for incarcerated Vietnam veterans.
- ☐ I want to help Vietnam veterans and their families. Please accept my tax-deductible donation: ___\$10 ___\$20 ___\$50 ___Other: \$_____

(VVA is a non-profit, veteran's service organization. Programs and services are funded by member dues and public donations.)