



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Rensselaer County
Unified Family Services
Veterans Service Agency
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Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive

Robert M. Reiter
Director

Veterans Agency here to help..

By Kathleen M. Jimino as it appeared in the Troy Record 02/08/10

Van Transportation...

- * Don't drive and need to get to the VA Medical Center or the Troy VA Clinic!?
- * We offer complimentary van transportation to and from the VAMC and Clinic for most morning medical appointments.

For more details call 270-2760.



Lowe's 10% military discount is now year round for active duty personnel, National Guard and Reserve, retiree and disabled service members, and their families.

All other military veterans will receive the 10% discount on the holiday weekends of Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Veterans Day.

Those who want to receive the discount must present a valid military ID card.

Recently, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) revised a number of their policies that could have significant impact on the lives of Vietnam veterans and their family members. These changes, if not heard about already, are clear examples of why veterans should from time to time check in with their local veterans service agency to make sure that as their health changes or when changes in Veterans Administration policies occur the benefits the veteran is entitled to are applied for and received.

Some recent changes implemented by the VA include a modification to their presumption of whether or not a veteran was exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. This change applies to Navy veterans who served on certain ships during spans of time when those ships traveled on inland waterways and those servicemen on board would have presumably been exposed to Agent Orange. According to the January 2010 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Compensation and Pension Service Bulletin regarding the expansion of the presumption of exposure to certain navy veterans, "If a veteran's service aboard one of these ships can be confirmed through military records during the time frames specified, then exposure to herbicide agents [agent orange] can be presumed without further development."

This change is of great importance as applicable veterans will now have better access to health care and can make disability claims for diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange.

Along the same lines, the VA has also expanded the list of diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange to include B cell leukemia, hairy cell leukemia, Parkinson's disease as well as heart disease. Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and diagnosed with these or any of the other diseases linked to the herbicide are eligible for disability compensation and health care benefits.

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As I mentioned before, changes in VA policies such as these make it extremely important that veterans review their health status and check in with their veteran's services agency to make sure they are receiving the benefits and care they have earned through their service to our nation.

Locally, in Rensselaer County, veterans and their families can rely on their own Office of Veterans Affairs located in the County Office Building at 1600 Seventh Ave. in downtown Troy to find out about services and programs currently available. Our highly qualified staff will gladly walk a veteran or their family member(s) through the VA claims process. Last year alone, the Rensselaer County Veterans Affairs agency assisted more than 14,000 veterans or their dependents to receive services or benefits they were due. Services provided range from the assistance with benefits claims such as those mentioned earlier to transportation services for medical visits. If you are a veteran, or care for one, I urge you to give us a call at (518) 270-2760 so that we can make sure you or the veteran you care for is receiving the care and benefits they are owed.

To help ensure that the needs of our veterans are being met, I recently formed the Veterans Services Coordinating Council to help facilitate communication among all the community organizations that offer veterans services. Along with helping assess the current services available, I expect that this group will prove essential when changes in the needs of the veterans' population arise in helping all of the groups and organizations dedicated to this cause in order to take appropriate measures.

For more information on veterans' services provided by the Rensselaer County Veterans Agency, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. You have served us so well, it is now our turn to help provide the service that you may need!

Kathleen M. Jimino
Rensselaer County Executive

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

Upcoming Events:



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

March 8...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m., **John J. Devine, Jr., Army ,WWII**

April 12...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **John H. Wilkes, Jr., Army, WWII**

May 10...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **TO BE ANNOUNCED**

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

May 31...Memorial Day— **Office Closed**

May 31...Veterans of Lansingburgh 12th Annual Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m.

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

PLEASE NOTE: The April HAV honoree has changed from Walter Karpiak to John Wilkes, per the Karpiak family's request.
