



RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Rensselaer County
Unified Family Services
Veterans Service Agency
1600 Seventh Avenue
Troy, NY 12180
Phone: (518) 270-2760
FAX: (518) 270-2956

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MAY 2009

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO
County Executive
Joseph W. Cybulski
Commissioner
Robert M. Reiter
Director

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 Troy Clinic for *most* morning medical appointments.

For more details call 270-2760



Presidential Memorial Certificates

Certificates are issued upon request to recognize the military service of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Next of kin, relatives and friends may request them by calling your local Veterans Service Agency. Please have a copy of the veteran's discharge document and death certificate to accompany the request.

Patriot Hills of New York

The Patriot Hills of New York Committee (compromised of both service members and civilians) is committed to developing the very first not for profit recreational facility and wellness center for the transition, reintegration and therapeutic healing for veterans and their families.

It's their intent to build a partnership with the military's healthcare system in order to generate support services for an integrative wellness center that will be available to all veterans, retirees and their families.

The recreational facility portion will give the veterans and their families an opportunity to reconnect and reestablish their relationship in a natural yet controlled environment that will be conditioned for their needs.

They have submitted a request for 501c Not for Profit status to develop this state-of-the-art recreational and wellness center that can serve as a model that can be replicated regionally across the United States.

Their primary objective will be to provide superior customer support and services, delicious health-conscious cuisine, comprehensive spa and therapeutic body treatments, indoor/outdoor physical activity, youth programs, multi-cultural spiritual counseling, and interactive educational programs facilitated by renowned health and wellness professionals. It is our ultimate goal to develop a customized facility that will be flexible for the ever-changing needs of our military and on that we can develop to be self-sustaining and environmentally green.

The reach and complexity of Patriot Hills' mission and vision requires strategic alliances. To that end we are proactively establishing collaborative strategic partnerships with experts in the fields of integrative medicine, academia/research, tourism/hospitality, as well as military organizations, VA hospitals, Tri-Care, philanthropic foundations, community groups, and front running health and welfare organizations.

They also provide information and outreach through training and development, conferences and informational workshops specifically designed to inform and empower its clients to make lifestyle changes to assist in healing from the effect of trauma by learning new skills in self-care to minimize its impact, maintaining good health and reducing susceptibility of premature degenerative diseases.

A Message From Our Director

Hello All-

We have received, what I call our report card, from the VA for last year. These numbers are for Rensselaer County ONLY.

The Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures for FY 08 are: Veterans' Population 11,992, down from 12,487 in '07; Total Expenditures for our County \$39,888,000.00, up from \$38,778,000.00 in '07; Compensation & Pension \$15,386,000.00 up from \$13,898,000.00 in '07; Education & Rehabilitation \$1,056,000.00, up from \$939,000.00 in '07; Insurance (life)

\$953,000.00, up from \$939,000.00 in '07; the next number is the only down turn we had, Medical care, \$22,493,000.00 from \$22,604,000.00 in '07. They also tell us that we only have 2,856 Veterans' receiving care at the VA centers.

As you can tell, we keep helping our Veterans' submit claims for Compensation due to injuries received on active duty. As our Veterans' population declines, our compensation and pensions rates keep going to record numbers.

The VA system has created a two-tiered system of health care and benefits. Vet-

erans' from Iraq and Afghanistan are given preference at VA medical facilities and are put first in line for having disability claims processed. But, to what end? Why would the VA take up so much time and spend so much money serving the needs of JUST 3 % of the Veterans' population... while the other 97 % waits... and waits... and waits?

I just ask, when does the VA plan to do the same for combat veterans' from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the first Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia and every other conflict?

Yours in Patriotism,
BCB

Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water

REGISTER TODAY

**Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water Call Center
(877)261-9782**

M-F 8:30 AM—5 PM, EST

**Or visit the website at
www.marines.mil/clsurvey**

- **If you lived or worked at Camp Lejeune 1987 or before, you may have been exposed to contaminated drinking water.**
- **The Department of the Navy is funding two independent research initiatives to evaluate possible health risks that may be associated with exposure.**
- **Individuals registered with the Marine Corps will be directly notified when results are available.**

PRESS RELEASE

Veteran character actor Hank Garrett will be receiving the Senator Hugh Farley Award at the Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame Induction May 16, 2009. Mr. Garrett received the NY Film critics award for "Three Days of the Condor" and has acted with such celebrities as Kirk Douglas, Mickey Rourke and Al Pacino. He is known as Officer Nicholson on "Car 54" and so-starred with James Earl Jones in the series "Paris". Mr. Garrett wrestled for five years against such wrestlers as Killer Kowalski and Mike Mazurki. Hank has been active in aiding disabled American veteran and donates much of the proceeds from his appearances to the DAV. Hank wishes to do this with any proceeds from his merchandise to be available at induction weekend here in Amsterdam. All veterans and/or organization are invited to attend and meet Hank.

Upcoming Events:



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

May 11...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Zigmund C. Wojton, US Army, WWII**

May 21...Villages of Valley Falls, Schaghticoke and Johnsonville Memorial Day parade, kick off at 7:00 p.m.

May 23...East Greenbush Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 10:00 a.m.

May 24... Rensselaer Memorial Day Parade, step off at 2:00 p.m.

May 25...Memorial Day—**OFFICE CLOSED**

May 25...Averill Park Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 10 a.m.

May 25...Veterans of Lansingburgh 13th Annual Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m.

May 26...Poestenkill Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m.

May 25...Nassau Memorial Day Parade, step off at 2:00 p.m.

May 25... North Greenbush Memorial Day Parade, step off time 1: 30 p.m.

June 14...Troy Flag Day Parade

June 8...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Anthony F. Chetko, Jr., US Army, Vietnam**

Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony

Every second Monday of the month, the County honors a deceased veteran in a very moving and respectful ceremony in the County Legislative Chambers.

If you have loved one, who was a veteran from Rensselaer County and would like to have them honored, please contact the Rensselaer County Veterans at 270-2760 for an application.

The following criteria applies to the honorees:

- Must be from Rensselaer County (born, raised or resided in);
- Must have been Honorably Discharged and discharge must accompany application;
- May only be honored once;
- Submitted application must be legible and have a family contact (name, address and telephone number);
- List of all medals, campaigns, and battles;
- Include civilian history (all community services and organizations);
- Be as detailed as possible, the entire ceremony is dedicated to this one veteran and it is their life story.

Troy Flag Day Parade



MARCHERS WANTED

June 14, 2009 Annual Troy Flag Day Parade

Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency

Is looking for Veterans to march with us in the parade

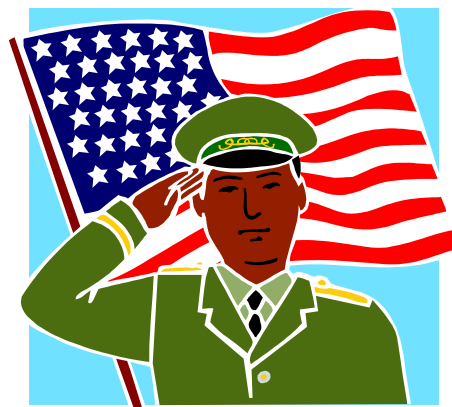
If you are interested please call our office for details

At (518) 270-2760

Military Medal Presentation for Local Veterans

Several times each year we host medal ceremonies for our veterans who never received the medals they earned while serving their country. It would be an honor to present these tributes of military service to all of our local veterans.

If you are interested in receiving your medals or the medals of a deceased loved one, please contact our office (270-2760) to request the form needed. When the medals arrive, we will present them to you at the next upcoming medal ceremony.



Rensselaer County Veterans Van Transportation Guidelines

- Reservations have to be made five (5) business days prior to scheduled medical appointment, by verbally contacting our office via the telephone. The sooner you book your ride the better the possibility that you will secure your reservation for your transportation needs. If you call and get our voicemail, please leave you name and date and time of your appointment, but we advise that you call our office the following business day to confirm receipt of your message. Also, advising our van drivers of your appointment does not put you on the schedule; you must call the office personally. Calling on a Friday for a Monday appointment does not count as a (5) five business day notice and therefore we may be unable to accommodate your need for transportation.
- There is no charge for this service; however, this service is for non-driving veterans only. If you drive and are going in for a medical appointment which requires that you do not drive, then we will transport you in. We only transport for morning appointments. We reserve the right to consider each request on an individual basis and need.
- Riders must be able to access the vehicle (in and out) without assistance. We do have a wheelchair accessible van, if you need this type of accommodation, you must let us know at the time you schedule your ride.
- Our drivers are NOT required to give personal assistance such as carrying packages from the vehicle into a home. They are also totally forbidden to transport your medical prescriptions. If you need prescriptions, you must ride the van to the VA medical facility to pick them up yourself.
- It is NYS policy to wear a seat belt while in a motor vehicle, therefore we do enforce this law.
- All schedule trip are round trips. Please advise at the time of scheduling if you require a one-way trip.
- Cancellation due to weather conditions will be at the discretion of the Veterans Service Agency. You will be notified of cancellations.
- Loss of transportation privileges may result if you are repeatedly not available when the van stops to pick you up; you are not ready when the van is ready to leave the VA or if your language and/or behavior are inappropriate.
- If you are not ready to board the van by 12:30, the drivers will page you. If you do not respond to the page within 5 minutes (either by arriving at the van or verbal contact with the driver), the van may leave without you and you will have to secure your own ride home. After verbal contact with the driver, they will not wait more than five minutes.
- If you are experiencing incontinence, we will expect that you are properly prepared to ride our vehicles without causing a problem, i.e. incontinence clothing additions, etc. The drivers are not allowed to deviate from the scheduled route to accommodate you individual needs.
- In the event of an individual emergency arises, both 911 and the person you designated as you "emergency contact person" will be contacted. Your transportation with us for the remained of the day will be cancelled.
- NO food or drink is allowed on the van.

A Message From Our County Executive

During the month of May we celebrate two special days, Mother's Day and Memorial Day. On Mother's Day I hope you will join me in keeping all military moms or moms serving in the armed forces in our thoughts and prayers. To be separated from your child because you or they are in harms way makes for a difficult Mother's Day and is just one example of the many sacrifices made by those who serve our nation.

Memorial Day is a day where we recognize all those who have fallen while fighting for the freedoms we hold so dear. As we recognize those fallen soldiers let us also keep in mind all those who are currently serving our Country, defending our freedoms and our way of life. May they come home safely to a grateful nation.

Sincerely,
Kathleen M. Jimino
 Kathleen M. Jimino

Important Documents:

Those seeking a VA benefit for the first time must submit a copy of their service discharge form (DD-214, WDAGO 53-55, NAV PERS 53-55, Report of Separation or Certificate of Military Service), which documents your service dates and character of discharge, along with personal identifying information: name, date of birth and service number. The veteran's discharge form should always be kept in a safe and secure location accessible to the veteran and next of kin or designated representative.