



# RENSSELAER COUNTY VETERANS NEWSLETTER

KATHLEEN M. JIMINO  
County Executive

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Phone: (518) 270-2760  
FAX: (518) 270-2956

## 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.

## More Purple Hearts after Army clarifies 'concussion'

By [Gregg Zoroya](#), USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The Army will allow more battlefield concussions to be eligible for a Purple Heart, embracing the latest scientific findings that even brief periods of dizziness or headaches are evidence of the wound.

The decision to expand the definition for concussions will mean thousands of Purple Heart medals going to soldiers denied them in the past.

For decades, Army award regulations used the term "concussion" for the injury, but left it to doctors or battlefield commanders to decide whether a blow to the head during combat warranted the medal.

Many held the view that "you've got to be bleeding to get (the medal)," says Gen. Peter Chiarelli, the Army vice chief of staff, who has pushed for the clarification on awarding a Purple Heart for concussion.

The new rules spell out precisely what constitutes a concussion, with symptoms such as any momentary loss of consciousness or memory, dizziness, headache, nausea or light sensitivity. Medical treatment, also required for the medal, is defined by the rules to include merely rest and Tylenol.

More than 80,000 GIs have suffered concussions since 2001, many in combat and often from exposure to roadside bomb blasts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The figure dwarfs the 26,000 Purple Hearts given to soldiers for other wounds in the two wars. How many concussion injuries will qualify for the award remains uncertain.

Chiarelli, who has worked to reduce a stigma in the Army about mental health problems, says he pushed for the changes in order to correct misconceptions that more subtle forms of concussions cannot be true war wounds.

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## More Purple Hearts after Army clarifies 'concussion' (Continued from Page 1)

The Army began reviewing how Purple Hearts are awarded for battlefield concussions last year in response to a story by NPR-ProPublica.

Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-N.J., co-chairman of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, hailed the changes as long overdue and called for similar criteria for other service branches.

"It is imperative that the Pentagon makes it crystal clear that all service members, no matter what branch they serve in, will be awarded the Purple Heart when they are wounded in any way," Pascrell says.

The Marine Corps awards a Purple Heart only for a concussion that causes a loss of consciousness, says Marine Capt. Patrick Boyce, a Marine Corps spokesman. New standards have been proposed that could broaden the definition, much as the Army has done, Boyce says.

Apart from the prestige of earning a Purple Heart, the award also entitles the recipient to priority enrollment for VA benefits, exempting them from co-pays for hospital and outpatient care.

Some are cautious about the changes.

"Anything that can be done to erase the stigma so that (soldiers) will not be embarrassed to seek treatment I'm definitely in favor of," says Army Capt. Jonathan Entekin, a chaplain who served in Iraq. "At the same time, the Purple Heart is one of the most sacred medals that can be received by somebody. We've got to be careful that we're not just giving them out for any reason. We don't want to cheapen that."

Vietnam Army veteran Rua Petty backs the new rules.

"An injury is an injury. And just because you can't see it, doesn't mean it isn't a wound," Petty says. "If it's a clear-cut indication you've had a brain injury, then I think you deserve it as much as anyone else."

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**CORRECTION: IT HAS JUST BEEN BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION THAT IN A 2010 EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER, WHEN WE DISCUSSED THE NEW VETRAK PROGRAM FOR VETERANS IN NYS THAT HAVE A PENDING MISDEMEANOR CASE IN RENSSELAER COUNTY, WE PROVIDED CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE RESOURCE COORDINATOR: BONNIE HAZARD. THE TELEPHONE NUMBER PROVIDED IN THAT EDITION IS WRONG, THE CORRECT PHONE NUMBER FOR BONNIE HAZARD IS AS FOLLOWS: (518) 271-1602, EXT 324.**

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### Upcoming Events:



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

May 9...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **MM2c Thomas F. Roberts, US Navy, MIA/KIA WWII**

May 29...City of Rensselaer Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 2:00 p.m.

May 30...Memorial Day—**OFFICE CLOSED**

May 30...Veterans of Lansingburgh 15th Annual Memorial Day Parade, kick off at 11:00 a.m.

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

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

June 12...Troy Flag Day Parade

June 13...Honor-A-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Glenn R. Brust, US Army, KIA Vietnam**

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## 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 Office 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 12, 2011 Annual Troy Flag Day Parade.

Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency  
is looking for Veterans to march with us in the parade.

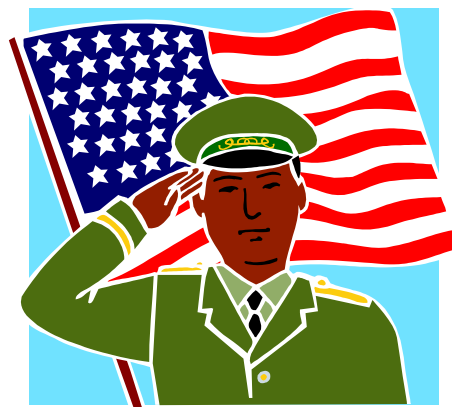
If you are interested please call our office for details

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.



# **SURVIVORS OF JUNE 6, 1944**

## **A DAY OF RECOGNITION AND REMEMBRANCE**

SEARCHING for Survivors of this Special Day. Let's not forget those still living and have a day of Recognition for their Bravery, Service and Dedication.

Many of these Survivors may not want to remember that day but we should never forget it.

Searching for those Survivors of June 6, 1944 who reside within a 50-70 mile radius of Albany New York. Currently being planned is an afternoon event (starting at 2pm-3pm) for friends and family of the Survivors of D-Day on the weekend of June 4-5, 2011. Event to last about 2-3 hours.

A Survivor is any person who participated in any way with the invasion on June 6, 1944. An 18 year old in the service would now be 85 years old. Currently there is one Army survivor who stormed the beach. We must remember these brave people now.

If you know any Survivors, friends or family who could offer information relative to Survivors please contact Frank. He will be working with American Legions Post, Veteran Hospitals, a School Group, newspapers and TV publicity.

Please contact Frank DeSorbo via email or telephone with any information you can provide:

Email – [fomserevice@aol.com](mailto:fomserevice@aol.com)  
Phone Home 518-439-9265  
Cell 518-364-4759

### **A Message From Our County Executive**

The month of May brings us 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 day under any circumstances, let alone on Mother's Day.

On Memorial Day while we honor those who have fallen while fighting for the freedoms we hold so dear. I also hope you take the time to inform your loved ones of a younger generation the meaning of this hallowed day.

During these times I also ask that as we recognize those fallen soldiers. Let us also keep in mind the sacrifices of 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.**