



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

SERVICES FOR BLIND VETERANS

Blind and visually impaired veteran may be eligible for services at a VA medical center or for admission to a VA blind rehabilitation center. In addition, blind veterans enrolled in the VA health system may receive:

1. A total health and benefits review.
2. Adjustment to blindness training and counseling.
3. Home improvements and structural alterations.
4. Specially adapted housing and adaptations.
5. Automobile grant.
6. Low-vision devices and training in their use.
7. Electronic and mechanical aids for the blind, including adaptive computers and computer-assisted devices such as reading machines and electronic travel aids.
8. Guide dogs, including cost of training for the veteran to learn to work with the dog.
9. Talking books, tapes and Braille literature.

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.



**VETERANS
STAND-DOWN**
Saturday, October 3, 2009
8 a.m.—1 p.m.
At the
Colonie BPO Elks #2192
11 Elks Lane, Latham, NY



Eligible visually impaired veterans (who are not completely blind) enrolled in the VA health care system may receive:

1. A total health and benefits review.
2. Adjustment to vision loss counseling and training,
3. Low-vision devices and training in their use.
4. Electronic and mechanical aids for the visually impaired, including adaptive computers and computer-assisted devices such as reading machines and electronic travel aids, and training in their use.

Military Headstones and Markers

Veterans, active duty service-members, retired reservists, and National Guard service-members are eligible for an inscribed headstone or marker to mark their grave at any cemetery-national, state veterans, or private. The headstone or marker will be delivered at no cost, anywhere in the world. Spouses and dependent children are eligible for a government headstone or marker only if they are buried in a national or state veteran's cemetery.

Flat markers are available in bronze, granite or marble. Upright headstones come in granite or marble. In national cemeteries, the style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains.

Headstones and markers previously provided by the government may be replaced at the government's expense if badly deteriorated, illegible, vandalized or stolen. To check the status of an application for a headstone or marker for a national or state veterans cemetery, call the cemetery. To check the status of one being placed in a private cemetery, call 1-800-697-6947.

Inscription: Headstones and markers must be inscribed with the name of the deceased, branch of service, and year of birth and death. They also may be inscribed with other markings, including an authorized emblem of belief and, space permitting, additional text including rank; war service such as "World War II"; complete dates of birth and death; military awards; military organizations; civilian or veteran affiliations; and words of endearment.

Private Cemeteries: To apply for a headstone or marker for a private cemetery, mail a completed VA Form 40-1300 , Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker for Installation in a Private Cemetery or a State Veterans' Cemetery, and a copy of the veteran's military discharge document and death certificate to Memorial Programs Service (41A1), Department of Veterans Affairs. 5109 Russell Rd., Quantico, VA 22134-3903. Or fax documents to 1-800-455-7143.

For a veteran's death occurring on or after November 1, 1990, VA will provide a government headstone or marker even if the grave is already marked with a private one. Before ordering, check with the cemetery to ensure that the additional headstone or marker will be accepted. Any placement fee will not be reimbursed by the VA.

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 a 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 veteran and it is their life story.

CEO'S Weatherization Assistance Program

Organization Name and Address

COMMISSION ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GREATER CAPITAL REGION, INC.
2331 5TH AVE
TROY, NY 12180
<http://www.ceo-cap.org>

Weatherization Assistance Services

Service Area: RENSSELAER COUNTY
Contact: DEBRA BEDARD
Phone: (518)272-6012
Email: dbedard@ceo-cap.org
Service Profile: Weatherization assistance providers can assist eligible homeowners with

measures to improve energy efficiency including:

- an energy audit of the home to identify specific needs;
- Weather-stripping and caulking around doors and windows;
- cleaning, testing, repairs, or replacement of heating systems;
- replacement or repair of storm windows;
- replacement or repair of broken windows and/or outside doors;
- addition of insulation to walls or ceilings;
- mitigation of health and safety con-

cerns, in particular assure that all dwelling units receive smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

Weatherization Services may also include other energy-related improvements such as: water heater repair/replacement, roof repair/replacement, chimney repairs, lighting fixture replacement, venting systems, heating distribution system replacement, refrigerator replacement, installation of GFIC outlets, and electrical service upgrade.

Weatherization services are available to income-eligible (60% of State median income) individuals who may be either home owners or renters living in a mobile home, an apartment, or a single-family home.

Commissary and Exchange Privileges

Unlimited exchange and commissary store privileges in the United States are available to honorably discharged veterans with a service-connected disability rated at 100 percent, unmarried surviving spouses of members or retired members of the armed forces, recipients of the Medal of Honor, and their dependents and orphans. Certification of total disability is done by the VA. Reservists and their dependents also may be eligible.

Privileges overseas are governed by international law and are available only if agreed upon by the foreign government concerned.

Though these benefits are provided by DOD, the VA does provide assistance in completing DD Form 1172, "Application for Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card." For detailed information, contact the nearest military installation.

For ID cards, call for an Appointment at the following:

- Albany Reserve Center: 489-5441
- Glens Falls: 792-6368
- Latham DMNA: 786-4406
- Stratton ANG: 244-2115
- Watervliet Arsenal: 266-5290

Commissary:

- Scotia Commissary: 370-5935
- Hours of Operation: 370-5913
- Navy Exchange: 377-6440

A Message From Our Director

I just wanted to share this very touching poem
by: A. Lawrence Viancourt

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past,
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, every one.
And tho' sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his Veterans' buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer for old Dan has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.
He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life,
Held a job and raised a family, quietly going on his way
And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.
Papers tell their whole life stories from the time that they were young,
But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.
Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land,
Some guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man?
Or the ordinary fellow, who in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?
Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives,
While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal and, perhaps, a pension small.
It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago
That the old Dans of our Country went to battle, but we know
It was not the politicians, with their compromise

and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom that our Country now enjoys.
Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,
Would you want a person with his ever-shifting stand?
Or would you prefer a soldier who has sworn to defend
His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the end?
He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us we may need his like again,
For when countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part
Is to clean up all the troubles that others start.
If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline in the paper that would say,
"Our Country is in mourning, for a soldier died today."

VA STUDY SHOWS GULF WAR VETS HAVE MORE ILLNESSES

Gulf War vets report significantly higher rates of unexplained multi-symptom illness, chronic fatigue syndrome, PTSD and functional impairment. On Tuesday, May 19, 2009 the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing entitled Gulf War Illness Research: Is Enough Being Done?

At that hearing a host of veterans' advocates and researchers presented the latest findings on the health of Gulf War veterans. Among those presenting testimony was Paul Sullivan, Executive Director of Veterans for Common Sense (VCS). One of the weapons in Sullivan's arsenal was a study by VA researcher Dr. Han Kang of the VA's Environmental Epidemiological Service. Kang's study, released just last month, is titled: *Health of US Veterans of 1991 Gulf War: A Follow-Up Survey in 10 Years*. The brief excerpt below gives you an idea of the tone of the study:

Fourteen years after the 1991 Gulf War, a population-based sample of 6111 Gulf veterans reported significantly higher rates for 20 of 23 physical conditions and all seven mental disorders assessed in the survey compared to 3859 Gulf Era veteran controls, both before or after adjustment for explanatory demographic and military factors. Moreover, deployed veterans reported almost two times more functional impairment, a 50% higher rate of health related activity limitation, and more clinic, doctors' offices visits, and inpatient hospital health care than the Gulf Era veterans. These results are similar to those observed in the 1995 National Health Survey of Gulf War Era Veterans and Their Families. Thus, military service in the 1991 Gulf War appears to be continuing to affect the health status of veterans, which may impact future use of physical and mental health care services.

Sullivan, in an email, stated:

VA's own study confirms the findings of earlier studies cited in a 450-page report by the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses (RAC) released in November 2008. Page 26 of the RAC reported an excess rate of multi-symptom illness of 25-32%. The U.S. military deployed nearly 700,000 troops to Southwest Asia in 1990 – 1991 for Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

VCS expected VA witnesses to confirm the results of the study and accept that Gulf War illness is real. If VA leaders do confirm the new study, it will be the first time the VA officially acknowledged the existence of Gulf War illness.

VCS hopes the VA will revise VA training manuals given to VA doctors who treat Gulf War veterans. Currently, the VA's training program dismisses the veterans' illnesses, comparing problems to women with silicone breast implants.

Upcoming Events:



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

July 13...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Carl D. Sheeley, Sr., US Army, Korea**

August 10...Honor-a-Deceased Veteran Ceremony in the Legislative Chambers, 8:15 a.m. **Joseph J. Vanderwerken, US Navy, Vietnam Era**