

# The Voice of 436

December 2020 ✪ Major Louis. F. Guillermin Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 436



Next meeting:  
Date: TBD

Location and time: TBD

**Bad weather cancellations:**  
email notices will be sent  
or call 484 705-5041

## From DMVA Digest, December 16, 2020:

In DMVA News, Governor Wolf announced a Veterans' Trust Grant Opportunity. The Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF) is accepting grant applications for programs and services benefiting Pennsylvania veterans. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) will award up to \$800,000 in VTF grants to non-profit organizations, veteran service organizations and county directors of veteran affairs across the state. Grant applications must be received no later than 2 p.m EST on Wednesday, January 27, 2021. You can find more information at [www.dmva.pa.gov/veteranaffairs/pages/outreach](http://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteranaffairs/pages/outreach)

## Penn State Law Veterans Clinic Helps Veterans During the Pandemic:

The clinic will restart its Military Mondays program in January 2021. It will be a virtual program focusing on helping veterans with disability claims and appeals. [www.pennstatelaw.psu.edu/practice-skill/s/clinic/veterans-and-servicemembers-legal-clinic](http://www.pennstatelaw.psu.edu/practice-skill/s/clinic/veterans-and-servicemembers-legal-clinic)

## 2021 Veterans Disability Compensation Rates:

Starting Dec. 1, all compensation benefit rates will increase by 1.3 percent. VA is required by law to match the percentage of cost-of-living adjustments made to Social Security benefits. These adjustments help to make sure that the purchasing power of your benefits keeps up with inflation. [www.va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/veteran-rates](http://www.va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/veteran-rates)

## Updates from Doc Maher:

- Activity has been underway at the VA since October to develop plans to deliver a COVID-19 vaccine. The DOD moved quickly to ensure a safe and effective rollout of the first COVID-19 vaccine, and began with frontline healthcare workers, and first responders, since initial allocations of the vaccine were delivered beginning December 14th. 13 military communities in the US received their vaccine doses on time and within 24 hours of receipt, they began administering the vaccine. Partial list of initial 13 communities include: Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center at Joint Base, San Antonio-Lackland Texas, Navy Medical Center Portsmouth Virginia, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda Maryland.

## Chapter officers 2019-2020

President: Frank Houck  
1st V.P.: Ken Schweitzer  
2nd V.P.: Barry Amole  
Secretary: Michael DiPuppo  
Treasurer: Jim Doedderlein  
Directors: Robert Gallagher  
Chris Pitt,  
Sandy Lopacki  
Vince DiLodovico  
Ralph Bassetti  
Ron Kosh  
D. Fenstamacher

## Upcoming Meetings

Due to the recent lockdown imposed by Harrisburg, our past meeting venue has been closed until January 4, 2021. Once further clarification is received, an email blast will be sent out and posted on the website of date, time and location of the next meeting. Also you will notice there are no minutes mentioned in this newsletter, as there was no meeting due to the lockdown. Financial reports will be forward to the webmaster for inclusion in the password protected section.

**Website:** [HYPERLINK "http://www.vva436.org/"](http://www.vva436.org/) Webmaster Phil Prinzi continues to do a great job with the site, and would appreciate comments, and suggestions. Regular updates are posted with important issues of concern to the membership. Please visit regularly to stay informed.

**Newsletter:** As always, Frank requests input from the membership for inclusion in the newsletter. Since there was no December meeting, this newsletter may appear short, as it will contain info received from various VA and military websites.

**Membership:** Jim Doedderlein reports 143 members and 9 associate members.

**Agent Orange:** See Comments

**Holiday message from President Frank:** On behalf of my wife Barbara, daughter and computer expert, Sarah, and myself, we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. In hopes that 2021 provides some much needed relief from the pandemic disaster that befell all of us this year, we pray for health, happiness, and prosperity, to return to the greatest country on earth. God Bless the United States of America.

## Membership form

Regular membership in VVA is open to any Veteran who served anywhere during the Vietnam War era.

Mail to PO Box 189  
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Born: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

- VVA Life Membership: \$50 (this is a reduced price)**
- I served in the US military, for other than training purposes, between 8/5/64 and 5/7/75
- I served in the US military in Vietnam between 2/21/61 and 8/5/64.
- DD214 enclosed (Applications without DD214s will be processed as associate memberships)
- I wish to join the Associates of the VVA. (No military service needed) (No age limits)
- HYPERLINK**  
["https://vva.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Membership-Quick-Reference-Guide-January-2018.pdf"](https://vva.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Membership-Quick-Reference-Guide-January-2018.pdf) AVVA Life Membership. Price based on age

VA will begin Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccinations this week at 128 additional sites, including CVAMC.

- Due to COVID-19 exposures, the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has informed the National Cemetery Administration that they have shut down most of their remaining operations indefinitely, thus negatively impacting the ability to obtain documents to determine eligibility for interment at national cemeteries.

- VA's Blue Button feature on the MyHealthVet site reached its 10-year anniversary. The feature makes it easier for Veterans to access their EHRs (electronic health records) and download copies and personnel medical history information including lab reports, images, VA prescriptions, appointment logs, and emergency contact info. You can go to [www.myhealthvet.va.org](http://www.myhealthvet.va.org) to search for more info regarding Blue Button.

- The VA Debt Management Center will resume sending out "due process notification letters" in January 2021 for those with outstanding VA benefit debts. The notices are to start after 1/1/21 and should include your options. If you expect problems with this, you can request info and help at [www.va.gov/debtman](http://www.va.gov/debtman) or call 1-800827-0648. Otherwise, visit [blogs.va.gov/VAntage](http://blogs.va.gov/VAntage) and search for Debt Management notification letters.

VAntage Point is the official blog of the Department of Veteran Affairs.

1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411) is the one number to reach VA. It's the number to call when you don't know who to call. With one phone call, Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors, can easily access information on VA benefits and services or be connected to an expert for answers to questions.

The Veterans Crisis Line is always available 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. To chat visit:

[www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat). Text 838225.

You can also call the White House VA Hotline at 1-855-948-2311 to share compliments or concerns.

**Input received from Ken Schweitzer, 1st Vice President:** SEVC report on COVID-19. 16 staff tested positive, all with no symptoms, quarantining at home. Also 6 residents tested positive and are in isolation, separated from other residents. As of this printing, the center is awaiting the vaccine schedule.

Holiday celebrations are quite different this year due to COVID, as no outside visitors are permitted. The staff is decorating the facility in a holiday theme to help lift the spirits of all. A holiday parade was held on December 20th with family, National Guard, First Responders, participating, waving and cheering at the residents from outside. All admissions are halted due to the virus, and plans for admitting new residents are being discussed at this time.

### Agent Orange:

**From VVA National, on December 3rd, news immediate release:**

### **The VVA applauds the passage of NDAA and Tester/Harder Amendment; Urges President Trump to sign this legislation immediately**

"VVA applauds the passage of the *FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act*, which, when signed into law by the President, will add three Agent Orange-related diseases: bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism- to the Department of Veterans Affairs list of conditions linked to herbicide exposure in Vietnam and elsewhere," said VVA National President John Rowan. "This legislation will correct a long-lingering injustice, allowing our afflicted Vietnam Veterans to receive the care and benefits they have earned by their service in our long-ago, unpopular war."

We encourage all veterans to write or call the President. Let him know how important this legislation is to our Vietnam Veterans. With President Trump's signature on this bill, he will have done the right thing for our veterans, and his legacy will prevail. Contact the White House office at: 202-456-1111. Or write to the President at The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20500. Time is of the essence.

### **Info from military.com:**

According to the DVA, veterans who typically pay for their medical care, may be hit with a big bill in January after the VA halted all collections in April 2020, including those copays. The copay bill letter, the VA warned in a December 17 announcement, will ask the recipient to pay for all "new copay charges for medical care and prescriptions they received from April 6, 202 through December 31, 2020." It also said, the bills could also include unpaid amounts for care received before April.

Many military personnel, their families and veterans would be eligible for one-time stimulus checks of \$600 under the \$1.4 trillion federal funding package and coronavirus relief bill released by Congress on Monday.

The proposal calls for direct payments of \$600 to eligible Americans, plus \$600 per dependent child. Under the plan, those earning up to \$75,000; \$112,500 as head of household; or \$150,000 as a married couple filing jointly, qualify for the full payment.



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