



County of Albany Veterans Service Bureau Newsletter

January-February 2021

Daniel P. McCoy
Albany County Executive
Kenneth Secor
Director



Services for Veterans

Albany County Veterans Service Bureau provides information on the various Veterans benefits. We aid veterans and their families with various county, state, and federal entitlements such as:

- Disability, pension, and/or compensation benefits
- Burial allowances, head stones, and flags
- Educational benefits
- Upgrading military discharges
- Obtaining copies of discharges & medical records
- Job referrals
- Return the FAVOR cards

Message from the Director

Happy New Year! As we turn the page on a challenging 2020 and roll into 2021, I hope this will be a much better year for everyone.

We started to see a spike in COVID-19 towards the end of 2020 which kept most events and ceremonies from happening. To be safe the Honor A Veteran committee has continued to postpone the monthly Honor A Veteran ceremonies until further notice. As soon as the committee feels it is safe enough to gather and appropriately recognize Veterans, we will send out information by email and following newsletters.

Our office is still open and providing services but there is limited access to the building. If you need assistance with any benefits or services please give us a call and we can schedule an appointment or if possible we can help you over the phone or through email.

In this issue we will discuss the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, and the benefits rate increase.

Albany VA Medical Center

The VAMC has started to increase access and appointments. However, there are still restrictions due to COVID-19. It is recommended that you call before going to get updated information and guidance about entry requirements. You can call 518-626-5000 or 800-223-4810.

For entrance, face masks are required and everyone will be screened.

COVID-19 Vaccinations at VA

The VA has begun Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccinations at more than 128 sites nationwide. One of those sites is the Albany VA Medical Center. However, due to a limited supply and CDC recommendation, they are currently only available for health care personnel, as well as community living center and spinal cord unit residents. As vaccine supplies increase, VA's ultimate goal is to offer COVID-19 vaccinations to all Veterans and employees who want to be vaccinated.

We will keep you updated on changes to availability but to get the latest updates and sign up to stay informed about COVID-19 vaccines, visit their vaccine information page at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>



The Veterans Crisis Line connects Service members and Veterans in crisis, as well as their family members and friends, with qualified, caring VA responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text-messaging service.

This Free support is:

- Confidential
- Available every day, 24/7

And serves:

- All Veterans
- All service members
- National Guard & Reserve
- Family members & friends

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

162 Washington Ave, Albany, New York 12210 | (518) 447-7710 | FAX (518) 447-7714
www.AlbanyCounty.com/veterans

ALBANY COUNTY
Cares about our veterans



Return The F.A.V.O.R. Discount For Veterans

Return the F.A.V.O.R. (Find & Assist Veterans of Record) is a merchant discount program for eligible Albany County Veterans. The program provides veterans with a discount on services or purchases at participating merchants.

Veterans can enroll by bringing their DD-214 to the Albany County Veterans Service Bureau office Monday through Friday 9am to 4pm. Please call for an appointment to ensure availability and timely service.

Return the FAVOR ID application form can be downloaded at:

<http://www.albanycounty.com/veterans>



Albany County Honor A Veteran Program

Each month Albany County honors a deceased Veteran with a ceremony at various locations throughout the County that includes a County Proclamation presented to the Veteran's family and the raising of an American flag that was flown over our Nation's Capitol in tribute to the honored Veteran.

Anyone (family, friends, funeral directors, veterans groups, etc.) may submit nomination form and resume for consideration.

For nomination information, process, & criteria, please visit our webpage at:

<http://www.albanycounty.com/veterans>

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

We open the new year with big news: Congress overrode the President's veto of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA becoming law means significant improvements for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families, including three new Agent Orange Presumptive Conditions, TRICARE improvements, and more.

New Agent Orange Presumptive Conditions

The NDAA added Bladder Cancer, Hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism ("Parkinson's-like symptoms") to the list of medical conditions that VA presumes to be caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

This has significant implications for Disability Compensation claims and Dependency & Indemnity Compensation claims. If a Veteran who served in Vietnam has any of these new conditions they can file for compensation. Also, if a Veteran passed away from any of these new conditions, the surviving spouse of that Veteran should now file for Dependency & Indemnity Compensation based on a medical condition presumed to be service-connected.

No New TRICARE Co-Pay Increases

Other than the new TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee for Group A retirees that became effective on January 1 — a residual impact of the 2017 NDAA — this NDAA guarantees that there will be no new co-pay increases and no new fees for Tri-Care users throughout the year.

Additional Benefits

Some of the additional benefits the new NDAA provides

- 3% pay raise for Service Members
- Improves child care services for Military families
- Enhances the Military's Uniform Code of Basic Standards for housing
- Improved assistance for Gold Star children
- Continuing education cost coverage for Military spouses
- Increased Hazardous Duty pay for Reserve Components

More information regarding the NDAA can be found at:

<https://congress.gov/116/plaws/publ92/PLAW-116publ92.pdf>



Important Documents & Information When Applying for Benefits

- Honorable Discharge from the Armed Forces or Report of Military Separation (DD-214)
- Record of Marriage
- Birth certificate or adoption papers for dependent children
- Death Certificate of Veteran & any previous spouse
- Divorce Papers
- Veterans social security number
- Department of Veterans Affairs claim or file number
- Annual family income information (wages, retirement, interest, etc.)

All Documents listed above may be copied, except for the DD-214, which must be a certified copy.

Veterans Service Officers (VSO)

Albany County Veterans Service Bureau has three American Legion certified VSO's to assist Veterans with benefits.

Ken Secor, SGM (Ret)
Mike Good, SGM (Ret)
Jim Ader, SGT (Ret)

(518) 447-7710 or email at veteransbureau@albanycountyny.gov

Albany County Mobile Crisis Team

Psychiatric crisis services are available 24/7 at the CDPC Crisis Unit and from the Mobile Crisis Team.

Call (518) 549-6500

<https://www.albanycounty.com/mentalhealth>

Benefit Rates Get a Boost

Starting December 1, 2020 all compensation benefit rates increased by 1.3%. 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. If you receive VA compensation benefits, learn your new rates today at <https://www.va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/veteran-rates/>

Stay Informed on Benefits

Anyone who has dealt with the VA knows that benefits and resources change on a regular basis. Here are a couple resources so you can keep up on any changes in benefits or find resources.

VA Updates

You can receive regular VA updates and information by registering your email at <https://www.va.gov/VetResources/>

1-800-MyVA411

The VA announced the formal launch of 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411), a single access point to all VA contact centers.

The number is available 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year to serve Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. According to VA, 1-800-MyVA411 provides easy access to specialized contact centers as well as an option to immediately talk to a live agent.

Reminder: 2020 Flu Clinic at Albany VA Medical Center

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the flu clinic will be conducted by appointment only. Walk-ins will not be accepted due to newly enhanced safety precautions. You may schedule your flu shot by calling 518-626-PACT(7228). The flu clinic will be located on the first floor near the back elevators.

FREE STUFF!

Free Dental Cleanings

The Hudson Valley Community College Dental Hygiene Clinic is offering free services to area Veterans to include: Oral exam, periodontal screening, dental cleaning, & dental nutritional counseling. They will also be offering some low cost services to include: Radiographs (bitewings, full mouth series, & Panorex) and sealants. Appointments can be made starting in January 2021 by calling their clinic at 518-629-7400. More information can be found at www.hvcc.edu/dept-academic/health/dhy-clinic

162 Washington Ave, Albany, New York 12210 | (518) 447-7710 | FAX (518) 447-7714
www.AlbanyCounty.com/veterans





U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

Stratton VA Medical Center serves Veterans in 22 counties of upstate New York, western Massachusetts and Vermont and operates 11 community-based outpatient clinics.

113 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12208
(518) 626-5000 | 800-223-4810
<https://www.albany.va.gov/>
800-877-6976—VA Nurse Helpline 24 hr medical advice for Veterans

RESOURCES & VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS

Resources and county Veteran organization information is now available on our redesigned webpage at:

<https://www.albanycounty.com/departments/veterans-service-bureau>

**Veterans of Foreign War
Robert L. Weininger
Post 8692**

140 VFW Dr
Albany, NY 12205
(518) 456-7794
www.vfwpost8692.com

Monthly meeting:
7pm on second Mon

**American Legion
Colonie Post 1256**

140 VFW Dr
Albany, NY 12205
(518) 456-7794
[www.vfwpost8692.com/
am_legion_1256](http://www.vfwpost8692.com/am_legion_1256)

Monthly meeting:
7pm on second Fri

**Marine Corps League
NYS Capital District
AMVETS Post 35**

PO Box 4152
Schenectady, NY 12304
<http://amvetspost35ny.com/>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on fourth Thur
at Guilderland Elks Lodge
(3867 Carman Rd,
Guilderland)

UPCOMING VETERAN EVENTS

18-Jan	Martin Luther King, Jr Day		Office Closed
28-Jan	American Legion County Meeting	7pm	Ruane Post, Cohoes
Feb	Black History Month		
3-Feb	Four Chaplains Day		
4-5-Feb	Boots 2 Business Reboot (Berkley)	830am	Virtual / B2BR Registration Link
15-Feb	President's Day		Office Closed
18-19-Feb	Boots 2 Business Reboot (NJ Dist Off)	830am	Virtual / B2BR Registration Link
19-Feb	Coast Guard Reserve Birthday		
22-Feb	STRIDE 110k Vertical Challenge		Jiminy Peak, MA
25-Feb	American Legion County Meeting	7pm	Legnard Curtin Post, Green Island
Mar	Women's History Month		
3-Mar	Navy Reserve Birthday		
5-Mar	Seabee Birthday		
5-Mar	STRIDE Snow Fest Dinner Ceremony		Hilton Garden Inn, Troy
5-7-Mar	STRIDE Snow Fest		Jiminy Peak, MA
6-Mar	Saratoga National Cemetery Wreath Removal	8am	Schuylerville
14-Mar	Daylight Savings Time Starts		
15-Mar	American Legion Birthday		
25-Mar	Medal Of Honor Day		
25-Mar	American Legion County Meeting	7pm	North Albany Post
Every Friday	Veterans & Friends Breakfast	8am	Gateway Diner, Albany
Every Friday	Art4Vets	9am-12pm	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany

The Albany County Honor A Veteran ceremonies are postponed until further notice due to COVID-19 restrictions

Stratton VA Medical Center, Albany, NY

Flu Clinic 2020

Moving Forward with Your Safety, Our Priority

This year's Flu clinic will be conducted by

APPOINTMENT ONLY

Walk-Ins will not be accepted due to newly enhanced safety precautions against COVID-19.

You may begin scheduling your Flu Shot
Mon. Sept. 21, 2020 by calling 518-626-PACT(7228).

The FLU SHOT Clinic will be located on the
First (1st) floor, near the back elevators.

**Thank you for your service...
Now it is our time to support you!**

Free Dental Cleanings for Veterans at
Hudson Valley Community College
Dental Hygiene Clinic

Services Include

- Oral evaluation, periodontal screening, patient education, dental prophylaxis (cleaning), polishing, fluoride treatment
- Radiographs for a low-cost including bitewings, full-mouth series, and Panorex
- Sealants for a low cost
- Dental Nutritional Counseling

Call Now for Appointments Starting in January 2021

Hudson Valley Community Dental Hygiene Clinic: 518-629-7400

www.lvcc.edu/dept-academic/health/dhy-clinic



VETERANS & FRIENDS

BREAKFAST CLUB

WHERE: Alexis Diner, 294 North Greenbush Road, Troy, NY
(518-286-2603)

WHEN: Every Tuesday at 8:00 am

WHERE: Bellevue Cafe, 2630 Broadway, Schenectady, NY
(518-393-7720)

WHEN: First and Third Wednesday at 9:00 am

WHERE: Schodack Diner, 1842 Columbia Tpke., Castleton, NY
(518-477-5014)

WHEN: Every Thursday at 8:00 am

WHERE: Malta Diner, 2476 Rt. 9, Malta, NY
(518-899-5099)

WHEN: Third Thursday of every month at 9:00 am

WHERE: IHOP Restaurant, 611 Plank Road, Clifton Park, NY
(518-348-1892)

WHEN: Every Thursday at 9:00 am

WHERE: Gateway Diner, 899 Central Ave., Albany, NY
(518-482-7557)

WHEN: Every Friday at 8:00 am

All Veterans and their friends are welcome to join us at any time
for a breakfast near you.

