



County of Albany Veterans Service Bureau Newsletter

May-June 2022

Daniel P. McCoy
Albany County Executive

Kenneth Secor
Director



Services for Veterans

Albany County Veterans Service Bureau provides information on the various Veterans benefits and 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 records
- Job referrals
- Return the FAVOR cards

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



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 and available every day, 24/7, to all Veterans, all service members, National Guard & Reserve, family members & friends.

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

Message from the Director

Spring is here and things are changing, like our office location. In May we moved our offices to a new location. We are now located at Shaker Place and the new address is 100 Heritage Ln, Albany, NY 12211. It is conveniently located across from the Albany Airport and has plenty of parking available. All phone numbers, emails, and webpages remain the same so we are conducting business as usual.

Memorial Day is rapidly approaching and there will be several parades and ceremonies. Some of these events are listed on our calendar of events. I hope to see many Veterans out supporting these events. Also with Memorial Day there is the placing of flags at cemeteries within Albany County. The flag placement is done by various organizations within the county and some of them need assistance. If you would like to assist one of these organizations or at a specific cemetery, please contact a local Veteran organization or call us (518-447-7710) and we will connect you with an organization.

Our monthly Honor A Veteran ceremonies have been conducted and well attended. Please see our calendar of events on our webpage for the most recent details to include location and honorees. We have already starting planning ceremonies for 2023 and there are dates available so if you would like to nominate a Veteran for this honor, please contact me (518-447-7710 or kenneth.secor@albanycountyny.gov) with the name of the Veteran and a point of contact for the family and we will make all the coordination.

As always, thank you to all my fellow Veterans.

Korean War MIA Returned

On May 12, Veteran groups from Albany, Columbia, Greene, and Rensselaer counties paid tribute to SGT Howard R. Belden, from Hague, NY. SGT Belden was in Korea at Chosin Resvoir where after intense fighting he was declared MIA on December 1, 1950 and presumed deceased on December 31, 1953. During a summit in 2018 several human remains suspected to be US Servicemembers were turned over to the US government and sent for identification. SGT Belden's remains were positively identified on October 14, 2021 and his family was notified soon after. SGT Belden, after being MIA for 71 years, will finally be interred at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors on May 12, 2022.

COVID-19 Vaccinations at VA

The Albany VA Medical Center is still providing COVID-19 vaccinations. To schedule an appointment call 518-626-7228, option 2. More information can be found at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>.

100 Heritage Ln, Albany, New York 12211 | (518) 447-7710 | FAX (518) 447-7714
www.AlbanyCounty.com/veterans

ALBANY COUNTY
Cares about our veterans



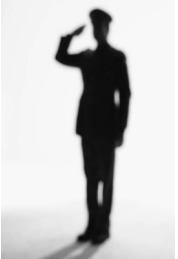
Return The F.A.V.O.R. Discount For Veterans

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> or call 518-447-7710

American Legion Condemns For-profit Claim Companies

American Legion Deputy Director Marty Callaghan testified April 27 at a congressional hearing focused on ensuring quality representation during the process of filing a claim for veterans' benefits.

Initiating a claim for VA benefits can feel daunting and overwhelming. The American Legion (TAL) provides experienced personnel to assist veterans with their claims free of charge. VA-accredited attorneys and agents provide vital services and work in close coordination with TAL and other veteran service organizations to ensure veterans have qualified representation for more complex cases. They provide critical services to veterans.

Veterans are facing a serious and growing threat to the claims process as unaccredited, for-profit claims companies that charge for their services prey on veterans, Callaghan told the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs (HVA).

These companies often charge veterans five or six times the amount of whatever future increase in monthly benefits they receive — violating the intent of federal regulation, which prohibits payment of fees based on future benefits compensation. Because these companies are not accredited by VA, their activities cannot be monitored by VA's Office of General Counsel. They don't work in the best interests of veterans. It is overwhelmingly clear these unaccredited companies want to make as much money as they can, while doing as little work as possible without considering the veterans. The unaccredited, for-profit companies fail to comply with VA and professional guidelines and inflict serious financial harm on veterans due to fees they charge.

"Providing claims assistance should not be about the money," Callaghan told lawmakers. "It should be about service to veterans and their families. The American Legion has been assisting the veterans' community for more than a century, and we are thoroughly invested in that community. Our dedication goes far beyond filling out some paperwork."

Callaghan commended VA for recently launching a Fraud Protection Campaign to protect veterans from these for-profit companies, but noted there is much more to be done to protect veterans from profiteering organizations who refuse to abide by VA regulations.

To find an accredited American Legion service officer in your area, please visit www.legion.org/serviceofficers.

All personnel in The Albany County Veteran Services Bureau are accredited by TAL and also receive training from NYS Department of Veteran Services.

Some other organizations that provide accredited Service officers include The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), and NYS Department of Veteran Services.



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.



Albany County's suicide and warning prevention app for your smartphone. A source of information if you need help or if you know someone that does. It provides warning signs, what to say, help for Veterans, teens/young adults and adults, resources, contacts, and assessments.

Available through iTunes and Google Play stores.

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>

Albany County to Honor Distinguished Veterans

Veterans make a big impact in the community and Albany County Executive Daniel McCoy will be honoring some of these outstanding Veterans with a ceremony to be conducted at 10am on Thursday, June 9th at Crossgates Mall. Please come out and help us show these Veterans our appreciation for their continued service to their fellow Veterans, Veteran organizations, and the community.

DD Form 214

The DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, is the document the US Department of Defense issues upon Military service member's retirement, separation, or discharge from active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States (US Army, US Marine Corps, US Navy, US Air Force, or US Coast Guard). This document is the key to providing proof of service in the US Military when applying for Veteran benefits or services.

Copies of DD-214's can be requested from the National Archives by submitting a VA Form SF-180 (<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>). These requests may take up to 90 days to be processed. Therefore, we recommend Veterans have a copy of their DD-214 filed with the County Clerks office. Then if ever needed, the County Clerk can provide a certified copy of the DD-214 in a much shorter time. A certified copy of a discharge certificate is legally as acceptable as the original. Information about this service provided by the Albany County Clerk can be found at <http://www.albanycounty.com/Government/Departments/CountyClerk/Services/veteransdischargecertificate.aspx>.

Discounts & Free Stuff!

Discounts

[HULU](#) Service members can receive one free month plus 10% off each additional month for a year through [Exchange](#).

[Jiffy Lube](#) Active-duty and former service members can get 15% off all services at Jiffy Lube year-round.

[Sea World, Busch Gardens and Sesame Place](#) Through Sea World Entertainment's Waves of Honor Program, active-duty service members receive one free admission per year per member plus three dependents at Sea World, Busch Gardens and Sesame Place. Registration and verification through ID.me is required to receive the discount, and a valid military ID must be presented upon entry. Offers may vary by location. Veterans and retirees are also eligible for special ticket pricing including up to 50% off per ticket for up to four tickets for single-day admission to Sea World and affiliated properties.



RESOURCES & VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS

There are many resources and Veteran organizations within Albany County and a few are shown below. A larger listing is available on our webpage at:

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

VA



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/>

VA Nurse Helpline 24 hr medical advice for Veterans: 800-877-6976

American Legion Blanchard-Currey Post 1040

16 W. Poplar Drive
Delmar, NY 12054
(518) 439-9819

<http://nabpost1040.us/>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on first Mon

Veterans of Foreign War Boyd-Hilton Post 7062

11 Mill St.
Altamont, NY 12209
(518) 861-8323

www.facebook.com/BoydHiltonVFW7062/

Monthly meeting:
1pm on third Sun

Marine Corps League Capt. Wm. Dale O'Brien Det 241

(518) 237-1712

<https://www.facebook.com/CaptWmDaleOBrien241/>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on 2nd Wed at
Am. Legion Zaloga Post

American Legion Voorheesville Post 1493

31 Voorheesville Ave
Voorheesville, NY 12186
(518) 765-4712

www.facebook.com/pg/VoorheesvilleALP1493

Monthly meeting:
7pm on third Thu

Veterans of Foreign War Sheehy-Palmer Post 6776

525 Delaware Ave.
Albany, NY 12209
(518) 465-9349

<https://www.facebook.com/VFW6776>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on second Thu

Tri-County Council of Vietnam Era Veterans

PO Box 11100
Albany, NY 12211
(518) 465-6829

www.tccvev.com

Monthly meeting:
7pm on first Tue at
Am. Legion Zaloga Post

American Legion Colonie Post 1256

140 VFW Dr
Albany, NY 12205
(518) 456-7794

www.vfwpost8692.com/am_legion_1256

Monthly meeting:
7pm on second Fri

Veterans of Foreign War Wm. F. Wigand Post 8444

370 Central Ave.
Albany, NY 12206
(518) 465-6992

www.facebook.com/Wigand-Post-8444-117247008294450/

Monthly meeting:
6pm on second Tue

American Veterans (AMVETS) EJ Knapik Post 35

PO Box 4152
Schenectady, NY 12304

www.facebook.com/cdnaysa/

Monthly meeting:
7pm on fourth Thur
at Guilderland Elks Lodge



Their mission is to save military lives by linking Veterans and active duty service members with confidential counselors via Telehealth or by locating a local provider who can help them. Their critical task is to foster a safe environment where they can get the help they need.

501 (c)(3) Nonprofit #84-2612081
640 Grooms Rd, Suite 230
Clifton Park, NY
(518) 712-9820
<https://www.hicksstrong.org/>

UPCOMING VETERAN EVENTS

In order to provide a more detailed and current listing of Veteran events, we have made the Upcoming Veteran Events into a separate document and will be sending it on a monthly basis to anyone that is subscribed to our newsletter. This will also allow us to provide more updates to our event listing on our webpage which can be viewed at

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

If your organization has Veteran events that you would like added to our listing, please contact Ken Secor at 518-447-7710 or kenneth.secor@albanycountyny.gov.