



County of Albany Veterans Service Bureau Newsletter

November-December 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)

Call (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

The leaves have fallen and before we know it, the snow will be here. Before that, we have some great news and events coming up.

We received state funding this year for a Veteran Peer Support Program. A full description is on the next page but the main purpose is to help Veterans transition to civilian life, mental & physical health, establish peer support, and reduce Veteran suicide. We have been doing quite a bit of planning and coordinating to get this program up and running. On October 20th, we started weekly hot yoga sessions which will be conducted every Thursday evening at 6pm at the Hot Yoga Spot in Stuyvesant Plaza. It's free for Veterans and one guest (member of the Veterans support chain such as spouse, child, significant other, etc.). Class space is limited so you must make a reservation each week to attend. These sessions will continue for the rest of this year (2022) and if successful, we may renew for next year. A big thank you to the Hot Yoga Spot for their support of this program and our Veterans. We will have more events, activities, and programs which will be announced around Veterans Day by the County Executive Daniel P. McCoy. More good things are on the way!

There will be lots of Veterans Day events happening. Some are listed on our calendar. I will be at several of these events and hope to see you. Also, there are Veterans Day discounts listed on page three. This is our day! Enjoy it!

Our monthly Honor A Veteran ceremonies are being conducted and have been well attended. Please see the calendar of events on our webpage for the most recent details that include locations and honorees. We are planning ceremonies for 2023 and there are dates available. If you would like to nominate a Veteran for this honor, please contact me (518-447-7710 or kenneth.secor@albanycountyny.gov) with the Veteran's name and point of contact for the family.

As always, thank you to all my fellow Veterans.

Disabled Vets & Retirees See Record COLA Increase

Disabled Veterans and retirees will see an 8.7% increase in their benefits for 2023. This is the largest annual adjustment to the federal Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) due to inflation since 1981.

Veterans will see increases in compensation rates for certain VA benefits, including disability benefits and dependency and indemnity benefits.

The increase will go into effect on Dec. 1, 2022.

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

ALBANY COUNTY
Cares about our veterans



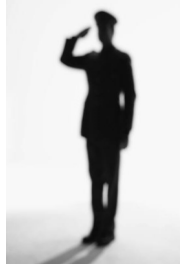
Return The F.A.V.O.R. Discount For Veterans

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. A County Proclamation is presented to the Veteran's family and an American flag that was flown over our Nation's Capitol is raised 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

Albany County Veteran Peer Support Program

This program is funded through a grant named to honor the memory of Joseph P. Dwyer, a US Army Medic. During the earliest days of the war in Iraq, in 2003, PFC Dwyer was pictured cradling a wounded boy while his unit was fighting its way up the Euphrates to Baghdad. PFC Dwyer's post-war struggles with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) resulted in his untimely and tragic death in 2008.

The Peer Support Program brings United States Armed Forces Veterans, service members and their families together through Veteran-to-Veteran collaborative services, social activities, and community service, easing the transition from military to civilian life and dealing with issues related to PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

This is a peer-based Veterans program with the following goals:

- Pursue outreach and education
- Encourage a connection among family, friends, and community
- Provide peer support
- Build resiliency among peers
- Provide access to suicide prevention/intervention initiatives; and
- Foster hope

The Albany County Veteran Peer Support Program is operated through the Albany County Veteran Services Bureau and supported by the Albany County Department of Mental Health.

New VA Benefit Gives Guaranteed Life Insurance

Starting in January 2023, VA-rated disabled veterans - with a 0 to 100 percent rating - will be eligible to purchase guaranteed life insurance. The new life insurance benefit Veterans Affairs Life Insurance, or VALife, will be available to disabled veterans younger than 81 years old. Some veterans who are older also might be eligible, according to a VA press release. VALife will give an option of life insurance for veterans who may not have qualified for insurance in the past. The new program was created through the passage of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, or P.L. 116-315. The new service, according to VA, will feature a way to enroll online. VA also claims insurance approvals will be "instant." Also, there will be "no medical requirements" to participate in the new service.

COVID-19 & Flu Vaccinations at VA

The Albany VA Medical Center is still providing COVID-19 and flu 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/>.



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>

Burn Pit Registry Enrollment

We encourage all veterans who served in specific overseas operations to join the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

Veterans of the following operations are eligible to apply.

- Operation Desert Storm
- Operation Desert Shield
- Operation New Dawn
- Operation Iraqi Freedom
- Operation Enduring Freedom

Eligible veterans are encouraged to join the registry even if you don't believe you were exposed to specific airborne hazards or are not experiencing symptoms or illnesses believed to be related.

VA presumptive conditions for burn pit, or particulate matter exposure, are:

- Asthma
- Rhinitis
- Sinusitis

Exposure to burn pits may possibly be associated with:

- Asthma
- Emphysema
- Chronic bronchitis
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder

Any veteran who has not filed a claim for these conditions or had their medical records and previous VA disability claims reviewed to contact an accredited service officer for help, which is free for veterans.

To register, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp

Discounts & Free Stuff!

Veterans Day Discounts - November 11, 2022

110 Grill – Complimentary lunch entrée from a select menu.

Applebee's – Free meal from a limited menu.

Bruegger's Bagels – Free medium fresh-brewed hot or iced coffee with their breakfast.

Buffalo Wild Wings Free Wings – Free order of boneless wings and a side of fries.

Denny's – Free Build Your Own Grand Slam breakfast from 5am until noon.

Dunkin' Donuts – Free donut, no purchase necessary.

Hooters – Purchase a beverage & receive a free entrée from a special menu.

IHOP – Free Red, White and Blueberry pancake.

Ninety Nine Restaurant – Free entrée from special menu with purchase of an entrée.

Olive Garden – Free entree from a special menu.

Texas Roadhouse – Pick up a free meal voucher from 11am - 2pm.

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www.AlbanyCounty.com/veterans





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>



Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. Capital Region NY2

This chapter is located in the Capital District area of New York. They are mothers who now have, or have had, children honorably serving in the military. Their associate members are dads, relatives, friends, and supporters of our troops.

Their mission is to provide emotional support to our members in times of uncertainty, to support our military sons and daughters, our troops, our veterans, and our Gold Star families.

They are a 501(c)3 Congressionally chartered veterans service organization and are strictly non-political and non-partisan.

www.capitalregion2bsm.org/



Capital Region Marine Corps Reserve Toys For Tots

Their mission is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the area.

Marine Toys for Tots Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public charity.

(518) 595-9202

www.facebook.com/pg/capitalregiontoysfortots

www.albany-ny.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/Default.aspx

**American Legion
E.T. Ruane Post 476**

93 Oneida St.
Cohoes, NY 12047
(518) 235-4989

<http://americanlegionpost476.com>

Monthly meeting:
12pm on fourth Sun

**Veterans of Foreign War
Watervliet Post 729**

783 Broadway
Watervliet, NY 12189
(518) 273-4896

[www.facebook.com/watervlietvfw/](http://www.facebook.com/watervlietvfw)

Monthly meeting:
7pm on third Mon

**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
Legnard Curtin Post 927**

35 Cohoes Ave.
Green Island, NY 12183
518-272-1198

www.facebook.com/groups/180266731995356/

Monthly meeting:
1130am on first Sun

**Veterans of Foreign War
Ravena Post 9594**

12 Whitbeck St
Ravena, NY 12143
(518) 756-9594

www.facebook.com/VFW9594/

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
Zaloga Post 1520**

4 Everett Rd. Ext.
Albany, NY 12205
(518) 459-1520

<http://zalogapost1520.org>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on second Tue
(except Jul, Aug, & Dec)

**Veterans of Foreign War
Robert Weinger Post 8692**

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

www.vfwpost8692.com

Monthly meeting:
7pm on second Mon

**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

UPCOMING VETERAN EVENTS

On a monthly basis we will email a listing of Veteran events to anyone that is subscribed to our newsletter.

The most current listing of Veteran events can also be found on our webpage 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.