



County of Albany Veterans Service Bureau Newsletter

January/February 2020

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

I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday season. As we move into the new year there are several state and federal initiatives underway so we will do our best to keep you updated on these and changes to any other benefits.

There are some months towards the end of 2020 that are still available for the Albany County Honor A Veteran program. If you would like to submit a Veteran for consideration, please contact us or use the links on the next page in the Honor A Veteran section.

In this issue we will discuss Blue Water Claims and the rest will be dedicated to New York State benefits. On Veterans Day 2019 Governor Cuomo signed several pieces of legislation for Veteran benefits within New York State and we will provide a brief description of these.

Thank you to all Veterans for your service.

Blue Water Claims

On January 1, 2020, Secretary Wilkie's "stay" of adjudicating claims from Blue Water Navy Veterans comes to an end.

The United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has declared that the stay must end on January 1, and the VA itself has issued written statements affirming that processing of Blue Water Navy claims, following the new standards of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, will commence on January 2.

The Blue Water Navy Act extends the presumption of Agent Orange exposure to Veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles off the coast of Vietnam and Cambodia between January 6, 1962, and May 7, 1975. In addition, it extends the presumption to Veterans who served in the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between January 1, 1967, and August 31, 1971.

Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act 2019 fact sheet can be found at:
https://www.va.gov/Blue_Water_Navy_Factsheet.pdf#

A list of frequently asked questions can be found at:
https://www.va.gov/Blue_Water_Navy_FAQs.pdf#



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>

New York State Benefits Update

Governor Cuomo Signed a Package of Bills

The package consists of 14 bills that protect the rights of active duty military members and veterans in a number of areas, including access to education, employment, voting, discharge status protection, and general services and benefits. The 14 bills are listed below by category.

Education

S.1660A / A.4654A Enacts Program for Veterans to Receive High School Diplomas - allows NY Veterans who deployed in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan who joined military service prior to graduating from high school to be awarded high school diplomas.

Employment

S.3300 / A.6297 Requires Employers to Prominently Indicate if a Work Opportunity Is Set Aside for Disabled Veterans - Section 55-c of the Civil Service Law authorizes 500 positions for disabled Veterans and this requires employers to prominently display if the job posting is 55-c eligible.

S.6474 / A.8282 Adds an Additional Year of Service Credit an Applicant Can Use to Deduct from Their Age When Applying for Certain Public Service Positions - allows for a Veteran to deduct up to seven years of military service from their age in order to qualify to sit for placement exams for certain public service positions, such as NYPD or FDNY.

Health and General Services

S.4049A / A.5660 Mandates a Report to Determine How Many Homeless Veterans Are Living in New York State - the study would gather information on the number of homeless Veteran, including their children, so advocates and policy makers can develop solutions to address this problem.

S.5285A / A.1093B Allows More Veterans to Have Paid Leave for Health Reasons - allows municipalities to offer Veteran employees the same opportunity as State employees to get additional paid leave from work to receive health-related services without loss of pay.

S.4477A / A.6792A Requires the New York State Division of Veterans' Services Mobile App Be More Easily Accessible - requires the Division of Veterans' Services to easily direct Veterans to the app through its website. The App has been helpful to Veterans across NY by providing a multitude of material on federal and state Veterans benefits, programs and 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.

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

<http://www.albanycounty.com/Government/Departments/DepartmentofMentalHealth.aspx>

Governor Cuomo Signed a Package of Bills (cont.)

Health and General Services (cont.)

S.5991 / A.7594 Updates the Duties of the Women Veterans Coordinator at the New York State Division of Veterans' Services — ensure the coordinator effectively addresses the needs and challenges faced by women Veterans.

Voting

S.5184 / A.7293 Makes Military Voting Provisions Available for School District Elections - makes military voting available for all school district elections for which absentee ballots are already authorized.

Discharge Status

S.6467 / A.8095A Requires Division of Veterans' Services to Maintain a Discharge Upgrade Advisory Board Program - Division staff would review the evidence submitted by Veterans seeking to appeal their discharge status and issue written, non-binding advisory options to assist Veterans during the United States Armed Forces' appeals processes.

S.6527 / A.8096 Requires Local Veterans Service Agencies to Assist with the Completion of the Discharge Upgrade Application — requires these agencies to assist Veterans in submitting an application for a discharge upgrade.

Taxes and Other Fees

S.1681 / A.7289 Extends the Real Property Tax Exemption to Active Members of the Armed Forces - Veterans with serious service-related disabilities were already eligible and this will extend the tax exemption to seriously injured active members who stay in service despite their disability, so they can take full advantage of it when making modifications to their property.

S.6260 / A.7234 and S.6306 / A.8109 Authorize Specified Counties to Waive Fees for the Construction and Improvement of Veterans' Organizations - Veterans' organizations in NY play an important role in ensuring Veterans experience a sense of community. These organizations have been required to pay certain fees when building or making capital improvements to their facilities, and have been placed in a position of having to increase dues and potentially discourage Veterans from participating. S.6260 / A.7234 authorizes Nassau and Suffolk counties to waive for Veterans' organizations certain fees for construction of and capital improvements. S.6306 / A.8109 authorizes Washington and Saratoga counties to do the same

More information regarding these bills can be found at:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-package-bills-enhancing-services-and-bolstering-protections-new-york>



The Albany Housing Coalition Inc.



They offer rapid response assistance to Veterans that are homeless or at imminent risk of losing their housing. Their goal is to eliminate homelessness among Veterans in the Capital District.

180 First Street
Albany, NY 12210
(518) 504-0293
<http://ahcvets.org/>



Their mission is to provide housing and support services to all homeless Military Veterans and their families and to advocate on behalf of all Military Veterans and their families to provide housing opportunities for low income households.

They are also the only organization in the region that provides support and services for homeless women Veterans.

20 Prospect Street
Bldg 2, Suite 313
Ballston Spa, NY 12020
(518) 885-0091
<http://www.vchcn.org/>



This is a dedicated all-volunteer not-for-profit organization that honors local Veterans by flying them to Washington, DC for a day to visit and reflect at the memorials dedicated to their service, sacrifices and memories.

PO Box 13776
Albany, NY 12212-3776
(518) 857-8881
<http://patriotflight.org/>

RESOURCES

- [Albany Housing Coalition](#)
- [ARTS4VETS / Support our Troops Committee](#)
- [Battlefield & Beyond](#)
- [Capital District Women Veterans](#)
- [Military Family Foundation](#)
- [Military One Source](#)
- [National Resource Directory \(NRD\)](#)
- [NY Connects](#)
- [NYS Division of Military & Naval Affairs](#)
- [NYS Division of Veterans Affairs](#)
- [NYS Industries for Disabled \(NYSID\)](#)
- [Operation At Ease](#)
- [Patriot Flight Capital Region NY](#)
- [Saratoga Nat Cemetery Honor Guard](#)
- [Soldier On](#)
- [STRIDE Adaptive Sports](#)
- [The Legal Project](#)
- [Veterans Business Outreach Center \(VBOC\)](#)
- [Veterans Crisis Line](#)
- [Warriors Haven](#)
- [US Department of Veteran Affairs \(VA\)](#)
- [VA/eBenefits](#)
- [VA/Saratoga National Cemetery](#)
- [VA/Stratton VA Medical Center](#)
- [VA/Vet Center](#)
- [Veterans & Community Housing Coalition](#)

- [Veteran Connect Center \(VCC\)](#)
- [Veterans Miracle Center](#)

VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS

- [American Gold Star Mothers](#)
- [American Legion](#)
- [American Legion Ruane Post 476](#)
- [American Legion Helderberg Post 977](#)
- [American Legion Blanchard Post 1040](#)
- [American Legion Voorheesville Post 1493](#)
- [American Legion Zaloga Post 1520](#)
- [American Legion North Albany Post 1610](#)
- [AmVets NYS Capital District Post 35](#)
- [AUSA Capital District](#)
- [Blue Star Mothers Capital Region NY2](#)
- [Disabled American Veterans \(DAV\)](#)
- [Jewish War Veterans](#)
- [Marine Corps League-W.D. OBrien Det 241](#)
- [Patriot Guard Riders New York](#)
- [Rolling Thunder New York 5](#)
- [Submarine Vets Albany-Saratoga Base](#)
- [Team RWB](#)
- [Tri-County Council Vietnam Era Veterans](#)
- [Veterans of Foreign Wars \(VFW\)](#)
- [VFW Watervliet Post 729](#)
- [VFW Sheehy-Palmer Post 6776](#)
- [VFW Wigand Post 8444](#)
- [VFW Weininger Post 8692](#)



Veterans of Foreign War Watervliet Post 729

783 Broadway
Watervliet, NY 12189
(518) 273-4896
<https://www.facebook.com/watervlietvfw/>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on third Mon



American Legion Voorheesville Post 1493

31 Voorheesville Ave
Voorheesville, NY 12186
(518) 765-4712
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/VoorheesvilleALP1493>

Monthly meeting:
7pm on third Thu



American Veterans 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)

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



UPCOMING VETERAN EVENTS

1-Jan	New Year's day		
3-Jan	Veteran Writing for Wellness/Art4Vets	930-1130am	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany
6-Jan	Albany County Honor A Veteran Ceremony Charles H. Peck Jr, US Navy	830am	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany
8-Jan	Albany County Veteran Mental Health First Aid	8am-5pm	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany
11-Jan	42ID (NYARNG) Deployment Ceremony		Siena College, Loudonville
11-Jan	Am Legion 3rd Dist. Oratorical Competition	10am	Lishakill Middle School, Colonie
12-Jan	Weininger Post Breakfast	8-1130am	VFW Weininger Post, Colonie
20-Jan	Martin Luther King, Jr Day		
22-Jan	Veterans Blood Drive	730am-2pm	Albany, VAMC
22-Jan	American Legion Dept. of NY Officers Visitation Dinner—Albany County	530pm	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany
24-26-Jan	American Legion Dept. of NY Mid Winter Conf		Desmond, Albany
26-Jan	Weininger Post Breakfast	8-1130am	VFW Weininger Post, Colonie
26-Jan	Blanchard Post Breakfast	9am-12pm	American Legion Blanchard Post, Delmar
30-Jan	UMAC Steering Committee Meeting	730-9am	NPTU, Ballston Spa
Feb	Black History Month		
3-Feb	Four Chaplains Day		
3-Feb	Albany County Honor A Veteran Ceremony Howard J. Johnson Jr, US Marine Corps	830am	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany
7-Feb	Veteran Writing for Wellness/Art4Vets	930-1130am	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany
9-Feb	Weininger Post Breakfast	8-1130am	VFW Weininger Post, Colonie
17-Feb	President's Day		
19-Feb	Coast Guard Reserve Birthday		
21-Feb	Iwo Jima (Pacific Theater) Ceremony/Breakfast	8am	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany
23-Feb	Weininger Post Breakfast	8-1130am	VFW Weininger Post, Colonie
23-Feb	Blanchard Post Breakfast	9am-12pm	American Legion Blanchard Post, Delmar
23-Feb	Four Chaplains Ceremony	230pm	First Reform Church, Schenectady
24-Feb	STRIDE 100k Vertical Challenge		Jiminy Peak Resort, Hancock, MA
2-Mar	Albany County Honor A Veteran Ceremony Catherine E. Provost, US Army Nurse Corps	830am	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany
6-Mar	Veteran Writing for Wellness/Art4Vets 9	30-1130am	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany
6-Mar	STRIDE Wounded Warrior Snowfest Ceremony	6-10pm	Franklin Terrace Ballroom, Troy
14-Mar	AUSA Capital Region Chap. 50th Anniv. Dinner		Elks Lodge #161, Saratoga
15-Mar	American Legion Birthday		
25-Mar	Medal Of Honor Day		
29-Mar	National Vietnam War Veterans Day		
6-Apr	Albany County Honor A Veteran Ceremony Raymond H. Brown, US Marine Corps	830am	TBD
Every Tuesday	Veterans Service Bureau at Westerlo	930-1130am	Westerlo Reformed Church
Every Tuesday	Veterans Service Bureau at ACCESS Hilltowns	1230-230pm	Berne Community Center
Every Friday	TGIV Breakfast	8am	Gateway Diner, Albany
Every Friday	Art4Vets	9am-12pm	American Legion Zaloga Post, Albany

Do you work with or support Veterans?

Get Trained Now In Mental Health First Aid

Zaloga American Legion Post, January 8th 2020, 8:00am – 5:00pm

Take part in Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. (MHANYS') Capital Region Project AWARE. This project provides FREE training to individuals who work with or support Veterans, Older Adults, and the General Public. Over the next three years, MHANYS will train 830 individuals in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties. Participants will improve their mental health literacy by learning how to identify and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health challenges.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an 8-hour training certification course which teaches participants a five-step action plan to assess a situation, select and implement interventions and secure appropriate care for the individual. The program introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds an understanding of their impact and overviews common treatments. This evidence-based CPR-like program improves trainees' knowledge of mental disorders, reduces stigma and increases the amount of help provided to others.

Do Not Miss this Opportunity

For more information or to take a free MHFA training within Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga or Schenectady, email or call Joelle Monaco, MHANYS' Director of Outreach and Workforce Development at jmonaco@mhany.org or (518) 434-0439.

MHANYS' Capital Region Project AWARE is supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).



Visit us at

www.MHANYS.org

Facebook [MHANYSinc](https://www.facebook.com/MHANYSinc)

Twitter [@MHAacrossNYS](https://twitter.com/MHAacrossNYS)





MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID FOR VETERANS

Nearly **1 in 4** active duty members showed signs of a **MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION**, according to a 2014 study.

*National Alliance on Mental Illness
via JAMA Psychiatry*

20

veterans die by **SUICIDE EACH DAY.**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

About **18.5%**

of service members returning from Iraq or Afghanistan have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) OR DEPRESSION.

*Substance Abuse and
Mental Health Services Administration*

Why Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid for Veterans, Military Members and their Families teaches you **how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.** This 8-hour training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to appropriate care.

WHAT IT COVERS

- A discussion of military culture and its relevance to the topic of mental health.
- A discussion of the specific risk factors faced by many service members and their families such as mental and physical trauma, stress, separation, etc.
- How to break down the stigma associated with substance use disorders and mental illnesses like anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and more.
- How to reach out to those who suffer in silence, reluctant to seek help.
- Community resource information and support.

WHO SHOULD TAKE IT

- Military members
- Veterans
- Families and friends of military members or veterans

The course will teach you how to apply the ALGEE action plan:

- Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies

TO FIND A COURSE OR CONTACT AN INSTRUCTOR IN YOUR AREA, VISIT

Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. www.MHANYS.org

"So many people are out there wishing for something better, hoping that help will show up. That's what Mental Health First Aid is — it is help to get people connected to care and ultimately to get them to a better place."

—Tousha Paxton-Barnes, U.S. Army Veteran



**MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID***