



In Service to America

Western New York
Chapter 77
Tonawanda, New York

Mail Call:
October November, December 2011

President's Message

By: Mike Walker

Well summer is over. It started out wet, but became beautiful. We at the chapter had a busy time.



It started with Canal Fest and ended with the Labor Day Car show. At Canal fest the stand didn't do as well as in other years, but it wasn't that bad. Thank all of you that worked at the stand and helped at the museum.

A Big thanks goes to Paul's daughters for selling roast beef sandwiches the nights of parade and car show. The color guard looked great in the parade, but didn't take any prizes.

We also had the food tent at three concerts at the canal. They were on Saturday nights. We did well at two of them, but the other we should have stayed home. Once again a thank you goes out to the men and ladies who came out to help.

The convention in Reno was very informative. John Rowan was reelected as president and Fred Elliott of Rochester was elected to Vice President. The sad news is that Ted Wilkinson did not get elected to Director at Large. Many changes were voted on to our national constitution, the book with the changes is at the chapter.

The weather didn't help us when it came to the car show. The wind was cold and it looked like it was going to storm at any moment. The total number of cars wasn't as many as we'd like, but 118 cars did show up. The coffee at the food tent was a big hit.

Now winter is coming. The museum should be open Wed and Sat from 9am - 1 pm. Come on in for a coffee and if you know a Vietnam Veteran that doesn't belong, bring him in.

We need your help. The Homeless Vets Committee is in need of a chairman. It is a great way to get involved and I'm sure that you will get a lot of satisfaction from helping a vet in need.

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.

VVA CHAPTER 77 LEADERSHIP

(Terms of office are from April 2010 to April 2012)

Officers

President	Mike Walker	693.4479
1st Vice President	Jack Michel	693.4479
2nd Vice President	Bill Parmentier	693.4479
Secretary	Ron Sdao	694.4411
Treasurer	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
Service Officers	Delores Garcia, NYS Council	857.3344
	Patrick Welch	858.6349
Pres.: Associates of VVA	Linda Sopic	683.0051

Directors

Fred Bansmer	693.4479	Tom Konopka	694.0857
Ken Berger (Hon.)	693.4479	Mike Marchese	693.4479
Ed Bodine	864.6247	Joe Pasek	693-2622
Jim Burns	693.4479	Jack Toth	693.4479
Jerry Caira	693.4479		

Special Duties

NY State VVA Council Delegates	Paul Pietrowski	Patrick Welch
	Bill Parmentier	Al Brusetti
	Jack Michel	
Newsletter Editor	Jerry Caira	
Associate Editor	Paul Pietrowski	

Standing Committees

Agent Orange/Veterans Affairs	Al Brusetti	636.0338
Color Guard:	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
Community Affairs:	Ron Pilozzi	694.6052
	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
Constitution Committee:	Larry Covert	823.9118
Economic Affairs	Al Brusetti	636.0338
Education:	Jerry Caira	693.4479
Employment Training & Business Opp.	Tom Konopka	694.0857
Golf Tournament:	Al Schreier	693.3441
Government Affairs:	Al Brusetti	636.0338
	Patrick Welch	688.0129
	Patrick Welch	688.0129
Grant Writing:		
Homeless Vets:		
Information Technology:	Mike Walker	695.2420
Membership:	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
	Jack Michel	693.4479
Minority Affairs	Ron Polozzi	693.4479
Museum Curator	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
POW/MIA Affairs	Paul Pietrowski	693.4479
PTSD	Jack Michel	693.4479
Public Affairs:	Patrick Welch	688.0129
Nominating Committee:	Larry Covert	823.9118
Vets History Project:	Patrick Welch	688.0129
Veteran Benefits	Jack Michel,	693.4479
	Tom Konopka	694.0857
Women Veterans	Kathy Cromwell	693.4479

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 77,
57 Main St. Tonawanda, New York, 716.693.4479, www.VVA77.org

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

(Board of Director meeting dates are subject to change. Please call the office to verify dates and times.)

Meeting Location

Chapter and Board of Directors meetings are held at the museum/office located at 57 Main St. in the City of Tonawanda. The office/museum is open every Wednesday & Saturday from 9 AM - 1 PM. Telephone is 716-693-4479 or visit the website at www.vva77.org

Oct 20 st	Thursday	<u>BOD Meeting</u> : 5:30 PM., Members Welcome - (Date subject to change) <u>General Membership Meeting</u> : 7:00 PM
Oct 29 th	Saturday	<u>Orange Blossom Sales</u> , 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Gander Mountain, 800 Young St., Tonawanda
Nov 5 th	Saturday	<u>Orange Blossom Sales</u> , 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Premier Group, 3445 Delaware Ave
Nov 8 th	Tuesday	<u>ELECTION DAY</u>
Nov 10 th	Thursday	<u>VA Hospital Veterans Day Program</u> : 2:00 PM, Room 301, Freedom Hall
Nov 11 th	Friday	<u>Veterans Day Ceremony</u> : 6:00 PM, Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the Naval & Servicemen's Park, Buffalo, NY
Nov 17 th	Thursday	<u>BOD Meeting</u> : 5:30 PM., Members Welcome - (Date subject to change) <u>General Membership Meeting</u> : 7:00 PM
Nov 24 th	Thursday	<u>THANKSGIVING</u>
Nov 20 th	Sunday	<u>Thanksgiving Dinner</u> : for the needy and homeless at the VA Hospital, 11:00 AM-1:00 PM, in the cafeteria
Dec 7 th	Wednesday	<u>Pearl Harbor Day</u>
Dec 10 th	Saturday	<u>Food Pantry Food Distribution</u> : 10:00 AM, Day 1 of 3
Dec 15 th	Thursday	<u>BOD Meeting</u> : 5:30 PM., Members Welcome - (Date subject to change) <u>General Membership Meeting</u> : 7:00 PM <u>Christmas Party</u>
Dec 17 th	Saturday	<u>Food Pantry Food Distribution</u> : 10:00 AM, Day 2 of 3
Dec 21 st	Wednesday	<u>Food Pantry Food Distribution</u> : 10:00 AM, Day 3 of 3
Dec 25 th	Sunday	<u>CHRISTMAS</u>

PETER TYCZ SCHOLARSHIP DINNER:

Jan 26 th	Thursday	4:00 PM – 7:00 PM, American Legion Post 264, 60 Main St. Tonawanda, NY 14150 \$3.00 children, \$7.00 adults \$6.00 seniors, call 693.4479 for reservations
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Any other activities will be communicated during the Board, General Membership meetings and e-mail distributions.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The winners of Chapter 77's sixth annual Peter P Tycz II Memorial scholarship have been selected by the education sub-committee. Along with me, the sub-committee consisted of Tom Konopka, and Linda Sopic. I would like to thank them for the many hours that they spent sorting and rating the applications; their help was greatly appreciated.

This year, we received over 70 applications from superbly qualified students from schools throughout Erie and Niagara Counties. There continues to be a tremendous need for financial assistance by students in Western New York.

Our fund raising efforts this year have again been exceptional. This was due in part to an increase in donations from individuals, labor unions and our spaghetti dinner fund raiser which included a Chinese raffle. Because of this, a total of 18 scholarships were awarded with a total value of \$4500. Our future goal continues to be to expand the scope of the scholarship to help even more deserving students. The winners have been notified and their awards have been mailed. I would like to

By: Jerry Caira

congratulate each of the winners and I hope that they will each have a very successful college career.

2011 WINNERS AND SCHOOLS

Mackenzie Adamson	Lewiston Porter
Kimberly Alexander	Lewiston Porter
Michael Banko II	West Seneca West
Maron Brauer	Royalton-Hartland
Greg Bullock	Niagara Falls H. S.
Courtney Corbetta,	Lewiston-Porter
Robert Freeman	Williamsville South
Alyssa Hughes	Tonawanda
Taylor Jaszka	West Seneca West
Amy Lanighran	Newfane Central
Stephanie Lanza	West Seneca West
Alexis Lewis	Iroquois Senior H. S.
Nicholas Penberthy	Williamsville North
Katherine Rivard	Buffalo Academy of the Sacred Heart
Jonathan Runkel	Lancaster Central
Marissa K. Schultz,	Newfane High School
Craig Schmidt Jr.	Williamsville East
Bridget Shanahan	Royalton-Hartland

M.V.P. PROJECT & VETERANS HEALTH (Part 1)

By: Jack Michel

The VA Office of Research and Development is currently in the process of collecting data from 1,000,000 veterans across the United States. The reason is to help researchers to study genetic material (blood samples) from hundreds of thousands of veterans. The VA will use this information to try to answer the questions about the role genetics play in who gets what disease, who doesn't get what disease and how possibly to prevent diseases.

The process is short and painless (almost). You are required to complete a short survey, make an appointment to go to the VA and answer a few questions, (here's the almost part) give a, one blood sample. You will be required to sign a number of confidentiality and release forms and that's about it. The researchers who are working in this project will only know your blood sample by a code number. Your name address, SS number and any other identifying information is kept confidential.

A few VA top level researchers will be the only ones that will have access to your personal information and will only access your medical information if necessary for the research. Other safeguards include the Genetic Information Non-discrimination act (GINA) which makes it illegal to share your personal genetic information with just about anyone including employers and health care providers. Life insurance companies are exempt from this law.

This is truly a good thing for veterans and VA Health Care. The possibilities from the research may be far in the future and we as individuals may reap the benefits from the project but younger veterans and future veterans will be helped from what we do now.

M.V.P. PROJECT & VETERANS HEALTH (Part 2) By: Jack Michel

Please remember our creed and don't turn your backs on the future health care advances attained by the efforts of Vietnam Veterans of America. I know "Paranoia Strikes Deep" but what's the worst thing they can do to us? Send us back to The Nam!

If you would like more information on the M.V.P. Project you can call: Debra Sanfilippo at 716-834-9200 – 1 – then 5299, E-mail: debra.sanfilippo@va.gov or E-mail www.research.va.gov/mvp. This address will link you with most of the information you will need to know to make your decision.

AGENT ORANGE LAWSUIT By: Joe Pasek

For most Americans who lived through the 1960's and 70's, the tragedy of the war in Southeast Asia has become comfortably distant in their minds. However, for Vietnam veterans the horrors of the conflict in Vietnam and the lingering effects of Agent Orange are not easily forgotten. When we were sent to Vietnam we were among the healthiest people in America otherwise we would not have been sent there in the first place. It was either by luck or by Supreme intervention that we returned home, but many of us were not the same—physically or mentally.

In July 2010 I learned that former governor David Patterson signed into law a time extension (until June 16, 2012) that allows Vietnam veterans to initiate a lawsuit against the chemical companies who produced Agent Orange. So with the backing of Chapter 77 officers and board of directors I proceeded to do so. During the past year I have compiled legal arguments and gathered documents against the chemical companies responsible for the insidious herbicide. What I learned from my research was that in order for a case like this to materialize in court; four elements need to be attained which a reasonable jury might accept. They are:

1. We (the plaintiffs) must establish that the chemical companies (the defendants) owed us a duty of care.
2. It must be established that the defendant's breached that duty.
3. That the defendant's breach of duty caused the plaintiff harm.
4. That the plaintiffs sustained damages of the kind the law regards as compensable.

I believe a lawyer with experience in product liability could prove that Agent Orange was manufactured negligently and the chemical companies failed to warn the government of latent hazards. On August 2, 2011, I along with member Jack Toth, met with attorney John Lipsitz and presented him with hundreds of pages of pertinent information. Mr. Lipsitz said he would review the documentation and get back to us. Subsequently on August 25, 2011, I received a letter from Mr. Lipsitz informing me that his law firm respectfully declines representing us on any legal action concerning Agent Orange. He stated that the decision was based on the multiple hurdles involved and the necessary time and resources required for a case like this. He also indicated that this decision should not be interpreted as our case was without merit.

This development is disheartening to me. It has been my intent throughout this ordeal to settle accounts and in some way recover some portion of what was taken from us: our youth, our vigor and in some cases our future, all in the name of duty for our country.

Regretfully I have closed my book on Agent Orange and will no longer pursue this issue.

PAUL'S PAGE (Part 1)

By: Paul Pietrowski

CANAL FEST



Another Canal Fest over and done with! I think this was one of the hottest years we ever had. Parade night was just like being back in Vietnam. The city paved the road and that new blacktop was really hot! We didn't do as well as previous years, a lot of people but not many buying. As usual we had plenty of help and some FNG'S this year, hopefully we didn't scare them off. You all should know what FNG stands for! Thank you to all of our volunteers. Special thanks to Mary Cameron and Bob Lillis for taking care of the museum and selling the orange blossoms all week. Also thanks to the set up crew who were there every day to help take all of the products to the tent, Rick Topolski, Bob Gritzke, Mike Walker, Bob Sargis, Bill Parmentier, and many others who put in long hours all week.

Also thank you to my daughters JoAnne and Lynne who take off from work to handle the roast beef sale on parade night and the car show.

WELCOME HOME NEW MEMBERS

James Burton
Ted Kniazuk
Donald Vanwey

Dennis Dehn
Alan Koban
John Wilke.

John Dunlop
Eric Reimer

Thomas Gielow Jr
Eric Schultz

SICK CALL

I have been told the following members have reported to sick call. If you have time please send them a card. If you know of any member who may be ailing please let us know.

William Hicks, 218 Edward St. North Tonawanda, NY 14120
Dennis Eggers, 519 25th St. Niagara Falls, NY 14301
Kathy Cromwell 201 Kohler St. Tonawanda, NY 14150

CHAPTER MAILING LIST

Recently I received an email from a member asking if there was anyone knowledgeable at the chapter who could change their address as they moved several months ago. We have 650 people on our mailing list and sometimes I make mistakes, I'm not perfect. Our newsletter comes out every three months. I try to check the roster against the mailing list before each mailing and make the changes. Remember those of you who have access to the internet can view a quality copy of the newsletter at vva77.org.

SATURDAY CONCERTS AT GATEWAY

This past summer chapter 77 members ran the food concession at the Saturday night concerts at Gateway Harbor. We worked three concerts selling hamburgers, hotdogs, pop and water. After expenses the chapter made a profit of \$850.00. The crowds were small and we won't know until next year if there will be Saturday night concerts. It was a lot of work and thanks go out to all those who helped out

PAUL'S PAGE (Part 2)

By: Paul Pietrowski



LABOR DAY CAR SHOW

Despite the lousy weather our car show went well. We had 118 cars come out on a day that looked like rain. Thanks go out to our major sponsor Buffalo Engine and to our other sponsors Joe Armenia CPA and our very own Bob Lillis. As everyone knows Bob donates those beautiful light houses and bird houses for the various events the chapter is involved in, we presented a nice sponsors plaque to Bob at the awards ceremony, well deserved. Thank you to all who came out to help, we look forward to next year's show already!



CHAPTER GOLF BAGS

We now have golf bags with the Chapter 77 logo embroidered on the side of the bag. They are a carry bag and are \$85.00. I have two colors, black and blue; they also are available in red and green. I have two in stock, if you are interested call the office.

VALOR

Thanks again to Paul Rudnicki and VALOR for their continued support. Thanks to his efforts, in 2010-2011, we received \$17, 074.67 for our pantry.

TAPS

The following Chapter members have answered final roll call. May they rest in peace.

Earl "Larry" Clute

Leonard Gulczewski.



On Saturday, June 26th our color guard along with the Army Honor Guard participated in a memorial ceremony for Dennis McDonald, a recently deceased Vietnam Veteran. The ceremony was held at Klimek Veterans Park off River Road in North Tonawanda

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS: If you wish, your dues payment can be mailed directly to the chapter office. This will allow us to update the membership roster on a more regular basis.

THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR YOUR EFFORTS IN BUILDING OUR ORGANIZATION

Vietnam Veterans of America
WNY Chapter 77
57 Main St.
Tonawanda, NY 14150

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #2
Tonawanda, NY 14150

Application for Membership

Please send this application, with you dues payment and a copy of your DD-214 to: VVA Chapter 77, 57 Main St., Tonawanda, NY 14150

Name _____ Male Female Date of Birth _____
Address _____ e-mail address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone number _____ Sponsor (optional) _____
Membership Type: Individual – 1 year \$20 Individual Member – 3 years \$50
Life Member: \$250 (age 49 and under) \$225 (age 50 – 55) \$200 (age 56 – 60)
 \$175 (age 61 – 65) \$150 (age 66+) Time Payment Plan: \$50 down, \$25 per month

Eligibility: Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975. You must submit a copy of your DD-214 with this membership application.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- I am a spouse, family member or friend of a Vietnam veteran and would like membership information about the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America.
 I would like information on membership for permanently hospitalized Vietnam veterans.
 I would like information on membership for incarcerated Vietnam veterans.
 I want to help Vietnam veterans and their families. Please accept my tax-deductible donation: \$10 \$20 \$50 Other: \$ _____

(VVA is a non-profit, veteran's service organization. Programs and services are funded by member dues and public donations.)