

## Veterans Newsletter

Broome County Veterans Office  
PO Box 1766  
Binghamton, NY 13902

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# Broome County VETERANS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2019



## HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

### Broome County Veterans Service Agency

To provide assistance in determining eligibility and applying for VA benefits.

Broome County Office Building  
60 Hawley St., 5th Floor  
PO Box 1766 Binghamton, NY 13902  
Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm  
(Please make appointment)  
607-778-2147

### Binghamton Veterans Center

Providing counseling to combat veterans.

53 Chenango St. Binghamton, NY 13901  
Monday – Friday 9:00am-5:30pm & by appointment  
607-722-2393

### VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic Binghamton

Provides Primary Care. Can refer to additional services and provide transportation to Syracuse VA Hospital.

203 Court Street  
Binghamton, NY 13901  
Monday – Friday 8:00am-4:30pm  
607-772-9100

### Veterans Crisis Hotline

Confidential help for Veterans and their families.

1-800-273-8255 (press 1)  
www.veteranscrisisline.net  
Text 838255

### Clear Path For Veterans

Serving Veterans, military & their families by providing information, programs & resources.

Broome County Office Building  
60 Hawley St., 4th Floor  
Binghamton, NY 13902  
(315) 687-3300

### NYS Division of Veterans Affairs

To provide assistance in determining eligibility and applying for VA benefits.

Broome County Office Building  
60 Hawley St., 5th Floor  
PO Box 1766 Binghamton, NY 13902  
Monday - Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm  
(Appointments (607) 724-1299)

## Welcome from the County Executive

Please enjoy the 2019 spring edition of the Veterans Newsletter!

I cannot say thank you enough to our veterans in Broome County for your commitment to our country and our community. The Broome County Veterans Services Agency is here to help you and your family, providing services and connections to valuable resources in our county.

Broome County is always working to help our veterans and I have big news to share.

I am proud to announce that Broome County will be creating a new Veterans Complex in the Town of Binghamton! We have purchased the former Vestal Hills Country Club and will be renovating it to put all our veterans' programs under one roof.

The project will result in a considerable expansion of resources for Broome County's veterans including connecting veterans to service benefits, providing support for veterans through peer-to-peer services, canteen meals for veterans, community forums for veterans and employment and training workshops and more. Our plans are to have it open later next year.

As we progress with our renovation, we will continue to meet with veterans to get their input on what you want to see at our new facility, as we did by hosting the Broome County Veterans Luncheon in April of this year at Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Veterans Forum in November 2018 at the Broome County Library.

We are so excited about this project, and Broome County will always step up to the plate when it comes to supporting our veterans because you have done so much for us.

Thank you for serving our country. God Bless!

## Memorial Day was formerly known as Decoration Day.

A federal holiday honoring persons who have died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. While the first commemorative Memorial Day events weren't held in the United States until the late 19th century, the practice of honoring those who have fallen in battle dates back thousands of years.



The holiday's "founder", General John A. Logan, led the Union veterans' group known as the Grand Army of the Republic. In May 1868 issued a decree that May 30 should become a nationwide day of commemoration for the more than 620,000 soldiers killed in the recently ended Civil War. On Decoration Day, as Logan dubbed it, Americans should lay flowers and decorate the graves of the war dead "whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land." According to legend, Logan chose May 30 because it was a rare day that didn't fall on the anniversary of a Civil War battle, though some historians believe the date was selected to ensure that flowers across the country would be in full bloom.



The Uniform Monday Holiday Act of 1968 finally went into effect and moved Memorial Day from its traditional observance on May 30 to a set day—the last Monday in May. It didn't become a federal holiday until 1971. Many Americans observe Memorial Day by visiting cemeteries

or memorials, holding family gatherings and participating in parades. Did you know? Each year on Memorial Day a national moment of remembrance takes place at 3:00 p.m. local time.

Memorial Day, as Decoration Day gradually came to be known, originally honored only those lost while fighting in the Civil War. But during World War I the United States found itself embroiled in another major conflict, and the holiday evolved to commemorate American military personnel who died in all wars.



## The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit rules 9-2 in favor of Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans

By Ann E. Marimow • January 29 at 4:46 PM • Washington Post

A federal appeals court in Washington sided Tuesday with thousands of Vietnam War veterans who were stationed offshore during the war and developed health problems linked to exposure to the toxic herbicide Agent Orange.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled overwhelmingly for these sailors, finding they are eligible for the same disability benefits as those who put boots on the ground or patrolled Vietnam's inland rivers.

The 9-to-2 decision reverses a decade-old ruling by the court and applies to an estimated 52,000 veterans nationwide. A court majority said Congress clearly intended to extend benefits to sailors who were stationed in the territorial seas and are known as "blue water" Navy veterans.

"We find no merit in the government's arguments to the contrary," Judge Kimberly A. Moore wrote for the majority.

The two dissenting judges warned against overturning the court's previous decision and said such policy decisions should be reserved for lawmakers.

Similar efforts in Congress to broaden benefits have stalled in recent years. Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie and four former secretaries opposed the legislation, citing cost and the need for further study.

"Recent debates in Congress, which required consideration of the significant cost of the proposed addition of Blue Water Navy veterans underscores why Congress, rather than the courts, should be the one to revisit our interpretation," wrote Judge Raymond T. Chen, who was joined by Judge Timothy B. Dyk.

[The 'blue water' Navy veterans of the Vietnam War battle Agent Orange]

The appeal was brought by Alfred Procopio Jr., who served on the USS Intrepid, an aircraft carrier deployed off the coast of Vietnam. Procopio, 73, was denied benefits for claims related to his diabetes and prostate cancer. Both are ailments the U.S. government has linked to exposure to the infamous herbicide the U.S. military sprayed to destroy crops and reduce cover for enemy forces.

An administrative board found him ineligible because he was not "present on the landmass or the inland waters of Vietnam."

The ruling Tuesday means Procopio and any other veteran who served within Vietnam's territorial sea will now be presumed eligible for disability benefits if they have one of the diseases that is linked to the herbicide.

Procopio's attorney Mel Bostwick called the decision "crucial and long overdue."

"These Vietnam veterans sacrificed their own health and well-being for the good of the country, and the benefits that Congress provided --- and which the court's decision now secures --- are part of the debt of gratitude we owe them for their service," she said in a statement following the ruling.

"For years, Navy veterans have suffered with the effects of Agent Orange exposure while the VA remained recalcitrant," attorney John B. Wells, a retired Navy commander, who has led lobbying efforts in Congress, said in a statement Tuesday.

The Department of Veterans Affairs will have to assess Procopio's disabilities before calculating his benefits and evaluate other veterans like him with pending cases.

The government can seek review by the Supreme Court. A VA spokesman, Curt Cashour, said the department is "reviewing this decision and will determine an appropriate response."

During the war, those patrolling Vietnam's coastline like Procopio were referred to as the "blue water" Navy in contrast to the "brown water" sailors who operated on inland waterways.

**PEF Region 5 Annual Charity GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
Friday, June 14, 2019  
Shotgun Start—9:00 AM

to benefit  
**Southern Tier Veterans Support Group**

**Tall Pines Golf Course**  
558 Friendsville Hill Rd  
Friendsville, PA

For more information, to make a donation, or to become a sponsor, please contact:  
**Carolyn Lundgren**  
1-800-724-4998 - 1-607-785-1699  
clundgren@pef.org

The Endicott-Johnson Veterans Memorial was dedicated on Labor Day, 1920, and honors the 7,110 employees of the Endicott-Johnson Corporation who served in World War I, and the 43 employees who gave their lives in that war. The statues cost \$50,000 at the time it was constructed, and was donated by company co-founder George F. Johnson. Photo by Van Zandbergen Photography.



**MOBILE CANTEEN**

Sponsored by New York State Senator Fred Akshar  
**SEFCU** and American Legion Post 1645

Inspired by the famous Canteen in North Platte, Neb., during World War II, Clear Path Southern Tier is offering a free lunch, coffee and beverages to all Veterans and their families coming "thru."

**THURSDAY, JUNE 20**  
11 AM to 1 PM

**American Legion Post 1645**  
(177 Robinson St., Binghamton)

Hosted by

For more information, contact  
Venecia at (413) 464-3407  
Jon at (315) 687-3300

**Clear Path FOR VETERANS Southern Tier**

**THE MEMORY MAKER PROJECT**

Art, culture and advocacy for people living with memory loss

**PROGRAMS INCLUDE**

- Mobile Culture: art, poetry, and other kinds of cultural workshops at local care communities.
- Out & About: shows, tours and guided discussions at local museums, galleries, theaters, and other cultural organizations.
- Lectures, professional development, and workshops advocating for art as an intervention for dementia.

**LEARN MORE**

Web: MemoryMakerProject.org  
Phone: 607.240.6204  
Gallery Address: 215 State St., Binghamton NY  
Open First Friday, 6-9 pm & by appointment

The Memory Maker Project is a small, grassroots project of The Center for Transformative Action, a non-profit organization.

## Oxford Veteran's Facility

With all the bad press the veterans' health care system has been receiving I thought it was my responsibility to voice my opinion on the subject. In September of 2016 I had to finally put my father's health care in the hands of a medical facility. I did my research and my decision was based upon weeks of research. I decided to put dad in the Oxford's Veteran's care facility. I had my reservations because I had sworn to myself that I would keep dad with us until the end. I swore I would never put in in any facility if I was still standing. That all came to a halt when I realized that I did not have the medical knowledge to keep my promise. It was a hard decision, but it was one I had to make. I had heard some good things about Oxford as I am the Commander of the Disabled Americans in Binghamton. I have been the Commander for about six years and had many trips to Oxford to visit some of the veterans that were members of my chapter. The chapter also has a bingo once a month for all the veterans that would like to attend. I have personally seen the way the doctor's and the nursing staff care for our veterans. The staff goes over and above all me expectations. They treat the veterans as if they were family. Nothing is too good for them, and personally sometimes they can be a handful to say the least!



Dad was there almost a year and taps called for him on September 11th of last year. My dad was just a few weeks from his 98th birthday. Even in death he was treated with the upmost of respect. To this day some of his nurses stay connected to see how I'm coping with his passing. Dad and I spent our time in the military in two different wars (Conflicts). He was with General George Patton on D-Day and I spent 1967 to 1968 in Vietnam. He was a medic and I was an infantry soldier. We only found out how much we had in common later in life, but now back to Oxford.

Dad started a whole new life when he arrived in Oxford, he played bingo, twenty-one, he started painting small models and communicating with other veterans of his age group. I saw a change in him, his faced lit up for the first time since my mom passed in 2005. Since my mom died, he was kind of lost and not happy. He became friends with a navy veteran who's name I am not allowed to mention, but he'll know who he is when he reads this. His nurses all knew my wife and I by our first names and were always happy to see us and our puppies, Abby and Sammi.

I was a little apprehensive about the menu's because dad was used to home cooked meals and the few little extra's that he liked to have. I got a real surprise when he like the food so much, he gained back most of the weight he had lost when he got sick. All in all, if I have to go anywhere when my time comes it will be my wife's mission to get me into the Oxford's Veteran's Facility!

Jeff Largue, Commander • Bill Gasper Chapter 60 • Disabled American Veterans

## Korea War Veterans of the Southern Tier

We meet the 3rd Friday of each month for an informal 8am breakfast at the Blue Dolphin restaurant in Apalachin. Dress is casual and spouses are welcome! Members are responsible for their check. Veterans from other eras are welcome!

There are no dues or meetings and the only agenda is to reinforce the common bond of service through camaraderie.

Join Us! Contact Ralph Luciani (607) 748-2205



Member Ray Novitske is the honorary recipient of the first piece of cake at our recent luncheon as the senior Veteran present at the luncheon



## Memorial Day Sequence of Events

On Sunday, May 26th, the Broome County Veterans Memorial Association will commemorate Memorial Weekend by providing a 21 gun salute followed by TAPS at the following cemeteries:

- 1st 8:00am - Floral Park Cemetery at JW Thurstons's grave
- 2nd 8:25am - Spring Forest Cemetery Veteran's section
- 3rd 8:45am - Spring Forest Cemetery at Gen. John C. Robinson's grave (Medal of Honor) Civil War
- 4th 9:05am - Veteran's section of Glenwood Cemetery
- 5th 10:30am - St. Michael's Church following services
- 6th 11:10am - Vestal Hills Cemetery at grave of Marine Cpl. Mark Payne, KIA Beirut, Lebanon
- 7th 11:20am - Vestal Hills Cemetery at grave of Navy 3rd Class Lawrence E. Johnson KIA Vietnam
- 8th 12:15pm - Chenango Valley Cemetery Veteran' section. Grave of Sgt. Lester R. Stone (Medal of Honor) Vietnam and grave of Sgt. Lawrence D. Peters (Medal of Honor) Vietnam

The public is welcome to attend.

Advocates for the blue water sailors point to studies that show exposure to Agent Orange occurred through contaminated water funneled into ships' distillation systems and used for drinking, laundry and cleaning. Much of the spraying was on low-lying swamps of the Mekong River Delta that flows into the South China Sea, where they were stationed.

A three-judge panel of the court previously heard Procopio's case but did not issue a decision. Instead, the court took the unusual step of rehearing the case as a full panel in December.

[Agent Orange's reach beyond the Vietnam War]

The question before the full court was whether Congress intended to give the blue water sailors the benefit of the doubt when it comes to showing their medical conditions are connected to toxic exposure.

One disputed line in the statute that was persuasive to the majority says the presumption, entitling veterans to disability benefits, applies to any "veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served in the Republic of Vietnam."

In her 19-page opinion, Moore wrote that the inclusion of that language reinforces "our conclusion that Congress was expressly extending the presumption to naval personnel who served in the territorial sea."

## Blue Water Veterans and Agent Orange Exposure



Veterans who served on open sea ships off the shore of Vietnam during the Vietnam War are sometimes called "Blue Water Veterans."

Some of the open sea ships docked to the shore of Vietnam, operated in Vietnam's close coastal waters and sent smaller vessels ashore, or conducted operations on the inland waterways of Vietnam. These Blue Water Veterans, who set foot in Vietnam or serve aboard ships that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam anytime between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, must show on a factual basis that they were exposed to herbicides during military service to receive disability compensation for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure. These claims are decided on a case-by-case basis.

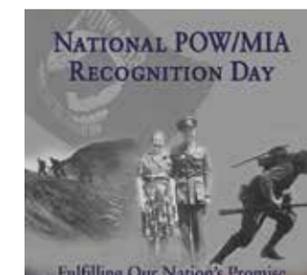
VA maintains an evolving list of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships associated with military service in Vietnam and possible exposure to Agent Orange based on military records. Find the latest version of the ships list on the Agent Orange Exposure on U.S. Navy or Coast Guard Ships Web page, va.gov.

Exception: Blue Water Veterans with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma may be granted service-connection without showing inland waterway service or that they set foot in Vietnam. This is because VA also recognizes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma as related to service in Vietnam or the waters offshore of Vietnam during the Vietnam Era.

Eligible Veterans may receive the following VA benefits:

- Health care benefits: A full range of medical benefits. There are many ways that a Veteran may qualify for VA health care benefits.
- Disability compensation: A monthly payment for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure. Blue Water Veterans who did not set foot in Vietnam or serve aboard ships that operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam must show on a factual basis that they were exposed to herbicides during military service in order to receive disability compensation for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure (other than non-Hodgkin's lymphoma).
- Other benefits: Home loans, vocational rehabilitation, education, and more

Surviving spouses, dependent children and dependent parents of Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and died as the result of diseases related to Agent Orange exposure may be eligible for survivors' benefits.



In the United States, National POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed on the third Friday in September. It honors those who were prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action.

American Legion Post 1700 located at 305 Maple Steet, Endicott, NY will be holding a ceremony commemorating this day on Friday, September 20th, 2019 at 6pm.

The public is welcome to attend.



DO YOU LIKE FISHING OR HUNTING?

Would you like to join us for an expense-paid fishing or hunting trip?

Each year, Mountain Trail Bowhunters sends a group of 3-4 Veterans on guided fishing and hunting trips. We are looking for Veterans who would be interested in joining us this fall.

Contact Bob Acquisto at 607-760-9855



Mountain Trail Bowhunters  
331 West Chenango Rd. Castle Creek, NY  
www.mountaintrailbowhunters.com

## The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day 1944-2019

*“You are about to embark on the great crusade toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you... I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle.”*

– Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower



Operation: Neptune, commonly known as D-Day

The Normandy landing operations on Tuesday, 6 June 1944 were part of Operation Overlord during World War II. Codenamed Operation: Neptune, it is often referred to as D-Day. It was the largest seaborne invasion in history. The operation began the liberation of German-occupied France from Nazi control, and laid the foundations of the Allied victory. Planning for the operation began in 1943. For months leading up to the invasion, the Allies conducted military deception, codenamed Operation Bodyguard, to mislead the Germans as to the date and location of the main Allied landings.

After years of meticulous planning and seemingly endless training, for the Allied Forces, it all came down to this: The boat ramp goes down, then jump, swim, run, and crawl to the cliffs. Many of the first young men (most not yet 20 years old) entered the surf carrying eighty pounds of equipment. They faced over 200 yards of beach before reaching the first natural feature offering any protection. Blanketed by small-arms fire and bracketed by artillery, they found themselves in hell. When it was over, the Allied Forces had suffered nearly 10,000 casualties; and 4,414 souls were lost. Yet somehow, due to planning and preparation, and due to the valor, fidelity, and sacrifice of the US and Allied Forces, Fortress Europe had been breached.

Utah Beach	Omaha Beach
VII Corps	V Corps
4th Infantry Division	1st Infantry Division
90th Infantry Division	29th Infantry Division
4th Calvary Regiment	
82nd Airborne Division	
101st Airborne Division	

## Welcoming home all of America’s veterans with online shopping benefits.

After four years of coordination with the Departments of Defense, Army and Air Force as well as several other federal agencies, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) will welcome home approximately 15 million veterans on Nov. 11.

“AAFES is honored to offer this well-deserved benefit to those who raised their right hands, took the oath and served our Nation with honor,” said AAFES Director/CEO Tom Shull. “There are many generations of service members who have not been properly recognized for their sacrifices. The Veterans Online Shopping Benefit (VOSB) acknowledges their service and welcomes them home.”

Extending online shopping (shopmyexchange.com) privileges to all honorably discharged veterans will directly improve family and support programs for Soldiers, Airmen and their families. Consistent with each exchange’s dividend policy, increased earnings as a result of VOSB are expected to generate tens of millions of dollars in increased annual dividends to Quality-of-Life programs for the military community including contingency operations, Army child development centers, youth services and fitness centers, Air Force outdoor recreation, combat uniforms, overseas school lunches and more.

U.S. law revises definition of Reserve Component veterans. Retired National Guard and Reserve Service members in the U.S. Armed Forces are ‘legally’ recognized as veterans if they have served at least 20 years of honorable service. However, this distinction by law still does not come with prescribed benefits.



**The Broome County Memorial Day Parade Committee Invites You to this Year’s Memorial Day Observance Monday May 27th, 2019 at 12pm, Binghamton, NY**

**How Will We Remember Them?**

Throughout our history millions have taken the oath to serve, support and defend our way of life against all enemies. Nearly one million have been killed fulfilling that oath. It is our solemn obligation to observe their sacrifice.....to set this day aside for one and only one purpose.... To Honor and Remember Them! We must never let their sacrifice be forgotten or taken for granted!

**The Parade will form up at American Legion Post 80, 76 Main Street at 11am and step off at 12pm. The Parade will proceed to the Broome County Courthouse followed by a brief ceremony at approximately 1pm.**



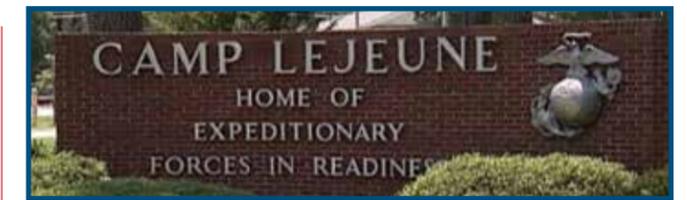
## The Story of Taps

The 24-note melancholy bugle call known as “taps” is thought to be a revision of a French bugle signal, called “tattoo,” that notified soldiers to cease an evening’s drinking and return to their garrisons. It was sounded an hour before the final bugle call to end the day by extinguishing fires and lights. The last five measures of the tattoo resemble taps. The word “taps” is an alteration of the obsolete word “taptoe,” derived from the Dutch “taptoe.” Taptoe was the command — “Tap toe!” — to shut (“toe to”) the “tap” of a keg. The revision that gave us present-day taps was made during America’s Civil War by Union Gen. Daniel Adams Butterfield, heading a brigade camped at Harrison Landing, Va., near Richmond. Up to that time, the U.S. Army’s infantry call to end the day was the French final call, “L’Extinction des feux.” Gen. Butterfield decided the “lights out” music was too formal to signal the day’s end. One day in July 1862 he recalled the tattoo music and hummed a version of it to an aide, who wrote it down in music. Butterfield then asked the brigade bugler, Oliver W. Norton, to play the notes and, after listening, lengthened and shortened them while keeping his original melody.

He ordered Norton to play this new call at the end of each day thereafter, instead of the regulation call. The music was heard and appreciated by other brigades, who asked for copies and adopted this bugle call. It was even adopted by Confederate buglers.

This music was made the official Army bugle call after the war, but not given the name “taps” until 1874.

The first time taps was played at a military funeral may also have been in Virginia soon after Butterfield composed it. Union Capt. John Tidball, head of an artillery battery, ordered it played for the burial of a cannoneer killed in action. Not wanting to reveal the battery’s position in the woods to the enemy nearby, Tidball substituted taps for the traditional three rifle volleys fired over the grave. Taps was played at the funeral of Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson 10 months after it was composed. Army infantry regulations by 1891 required taps to be played at military funeral ceremonies. Taps now is played by the military at burial and memorial services, to accompany the lowering of the flag and to signal the “lights out” command at day’s end.



## Camp Lejeune: Past Water Contamination



From the 1950s through the 1980s, people living or working at the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, were potentially exposed to drinking water contaminated with industrial solvents, benzene, and other chemicals.

Disability compensation. VA has established a presumptive service connection for Veterans exposed to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune from August 1, 1953 through December 31, 1987 who later developed one of the following eight diseases:

- Adult leukemia,
- Aplastic Anemia & other Myelodysplastic Syndromes,
- Bladder cancer,
- Kidney cancer,
- Liver cancer,
- Multiple myeloma,
- Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma,
- Parkinson’s disease

Presently, these conditions are the only ones for which there is sufficient scientific and medical evidence to support the creation of presumptions; however, VA will continue to review relevant information as it becomes available.

Veterans who are experiencing other health conditions that they think may be related to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune are encouraged to contact their primary care provider and to file a claim. VA reviews and decides disability compensation claims on a case-by-case basis. For more information about eligibility contact the Broome County Veteran Service Agency (607) 778-2147 to set up an evaluation.