

THE VETERANS VOICE P.O. Box 844 Sanford, ME 04073

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New legislation would recognize nine more diseases caused by Agent Orange

By NIKKI WENTLING | STARS AND STRIPES

Published: April 17, 2019

WASHINGTON — A group of lawmakers introduced legislation that would add nine more diseases to a list of conditions presumed to be caused by the chemical herbicide Agent Orange, giving veterans who suffer from them a fast-track to Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation and health care.

The Keeping Our Promises Act, introduced last week, adds prostate cancer, bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension, stroke, early-onset peripheral neuropathy, AL amyoloidosis, ischemic heart disease and Parkinson-like syndromes to a list of diseases presumed to be caused by Agent Orange exposure during the Vietnam War.

Researchers with the National Academy of Medicine released findings in November that there was "suggestive" evidence that eight of the diseases could be caused by Agent Orange. For hypertension, researchers found that "sufficient" evidence exists.

"American heroes affected by Agent Orange deserve the peace of mind knowing that the federal government recognizes the existing link between their exposure and illness," said Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-

Penn., one of eight lawmakers who banded together to introduce the legislation.

VA experts have begun a "formal, deliberative review" of the National Academy of Medicine's latest report, VA Press Secretary Curt Cashour said Tuesday. The review is expected to be complete in the summer, at which time the agency will make recommendations about presumptive conditions, he said.

During a Senate hearing March 26, Richard Stone, the executive in charge of the Veterans Health Administration, guessed the review would be complete within 90 days.

"We're working our way through that right now," Stone said of the national academy report.

Recommendations would be sent to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, who would choose when – and whether – to act on them.

The VA previously recommended that some of the conditions be added. After the last National Academy of Medicine report in 2016, the VA took 20 months before it sent recommendations to the White House that bladder cancer, hypertension, hyperthyroidism and Parkinson's-like tremors be added to the list.

The recommendation hasn't made it past the White House's Office of Management and Budget. Last year, VA officials told the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs that the Office of Management and Budget is waiting for results of ongoing mortality and morbidity studies, which could provide more evidence of a connection between the diseases and Agent Orange.

On Tuesday, Cashour said some of those results will be published as early as mid-2019.

But some lawmakers don't want to wait on the executive process.

Fitzpatrick, along with Reps. Annie Kuster, D-N.H., Bruce Westerman, R-Ark., Scott Tipton, R-Colo., Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., Joe Cunningham, D-S.C., Brendan Boyle, D-Penn., and Mike Thompson, D-Calif., are trying to use a legislative route.

Boyle estimated it would help tens of thousands of Vietnam War veterans.

"This bipartisan legislation makes good on that promise by ensuring all servicemembers exposed to these herbicides and chemicals as a part of their military service get the health care they need," Boyle said in a statement. "Not one more servicemember should be forced to suffer in this way without the best care our federal government has to offer."

The bill is likely to face an uphill battle in Congress, where veterans and advocates have fought for years to prove toxic exposures and secure VA benefits.

Attempts failed in Congress last year to approve benefits for "blue water" Navy veterans — sailors who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam and argue they were exposed to Agent Orange. The veterans could be close to getting VA benefits, but the victory was won in court, not Congress.

The VA opposed the legislative effort to approve benefits for blue water Navy veterans, citing high costs and insufficient scientific evidence. The agency has not yet issued an opinion on the Keeping Our Promises Act.

A LESSON TO REMEMBER

Back in September, on the first day of school, Martha Cothren, a social studies school teacher at Robinson High School, did something not to be forgotten. On the first day of school, with the permission of the school superintendent, the principal and the building supervisor, she removed all of the desks out of her classroom.

When the first period kids entered the room they discovered that there were no desks.

'Ms.. Cothren, where're our desks?'

She replied, 'You can't have a desk until you tell me how you earn the right to sit at a desk.'

They thought, Well, maybe it's our grades.'

'No,' she said.

'Maybe it's our behavior.'

She told them, 'No, it's not even your behavior.'

And so, they came and went, the first period, second period, third period. Still no desks in the classroom.

By early afternoon television news crews had started gathering in Ms.Cothren's classroom to report about this crazy teacher who had taken all the desks out of her room.

The final period of the day came and as the puzzled students found seats on the floor of the desk less classroom, Martha Cothren said, Throughout the day no one has been able to tell me just what he/she has done to earn the right to sit at the desks that are ordinarily found in this classroom. Now I am going to tell you.'

At this point, Martha Cothren went over to the door of her classroom and opened it.

Twenty-seven (27) War Veterans, all in uniforms, walked into that

classroom, each one carrying a school desk. The Vets began placing the school desks in rows, and then they would walk over and stand alongside the wall... By the time the last soldier had set the final desk in place those kids started to understand, perhaps for the first time in their lives, just how the right to sit at those desks had been earned..

Martha said, 'You didn't earn the right to sit at these desks. These heroes did it for you. They placed the desks here for you. Now, it's up to you to sit in them. It is your responsibility to learn, to be good students, to be good citizens. They paid the price so that you could have the freedom to get an education. Don't ever forget it.'

By the way, this is a true story.

Please consider passing this along so others won't forget that the freedoms we have in this great country were earned by War Veterans.





Chapter President's Comments

Hello Everyone

I was sitting here at my computer wondering what I would write about this month when a song came on the radio that I think sums up what we are all about (Brotherhood/Sisterhood). Was it by chance that this particular song came on the radio at this particular time? I don't know but what I do know is that I could not sum up what we are about any better than this song. I would like to share the lyrics of the song with you. The song is entitled "LEAN ON ME" Remember we need to be there for each other.

Respectfully Joseph Armstrong President

Sometimes in our lives We all have pain, we all have sorrow But if we are wise We know that there's always tomorrow Lean on me when you're not strong And I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on For it won't be long 'Til I'm gonna need somebody to lean on Please, swallow your pride If I have things you need to borrow For no one can fill those of your needs That you won't let show You just call on me, brother, when you need a hand We all need somebody to lean on I just might have a problem that you'll understand We all need somebody to lean on Lean on me when you're not strong And I'll be your friend, I'll help you carry on For it won't be long 'Til I'm gonna need somebody to lean on You just call on me, brother, when you need a hand We all need somebody to lean on I just might have a problem that you'll understand We all need somebody to lean on If there is a load You have to bear that you can't carry

From the desk of the 1st Vice President

Hello,

I hope that everyone had a great Easter. That being said I just want to thank everyone that turned out for our elections of officers and voted.

I also want to say congratulations to all of the newly elected officers. Hopefully now with the elections behind us, we can all move forward and make this an even greater chapter.

As your newly elected 1st vice president I will my best to fill the shoes of the out going 1st vice president Richard Doyle. Richard did a great job.

I'm sure that we can both work together as a team and help to make things work smoothly.

As I get my feet wet in this new position, I will be giving you all more information. As for now I hope that everyone has a great month

See you all next month.

Conrad Letellier



MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT

Conrad Letellier Membership Chairman

Another month has gone by. Hopefully everyone had a good Easter. With elections behind us we are looking for a good year.

As far as membership goes we have picked up a couple of new members bringing our membership up to 179. It is a good start and hopefully we can bring it up some more.

Also some good news from National, as far as our membership goes we are now able to send 4 delegates to the yearly convention should we ever be able to afford to do so.

We also have picked up a couple of new AVVA members bringing their total up to 22.

Have a good month and I'll See you next month.

Conrad

Membership Chairman

From The Desk of The Chapter Secretary

Letter from the Secretary

First off I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation to those who served as an officer or on the Board of Directors. I will strive to continue your efforts for the good of the Chapter.

Should anyone find the need to contact me, my contact information is:

Home Phone - 207-283-4682

Cell Phone - 207-423-3285

E mail - mgibney@maine.rr.com.

I have a part time job and am regularly scheduled 5am to 3 pm, Tuesday and Thursday each week; one Saturday a month, 9am to 5pm. With that said, my hope is to be available at the R & R center Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Looking forward to working with you all in continuing the efforts for improvement of our Chapter.

M. Gibra -

A STOREY ABOUT BOB

My name is Carl, I have a son named Bob I have stories of past hunts with my son Bob which always seems to turn into some kind of adventure. I am in my 60s and due to ill health, I cannot hunt any longer but continue to by a hunting licence.

Bob is now is 40 and hunts without me. Bob is one heck of a hunter. He is one of those guys that can fall asleep in the woods and deer will wake him up so he can take one, he is very lucky that way. Seems Bob gets his deer every year.

I am reminded of a hunt way back in the late 80's. Bob was I believe 16 on this hunt and very green. I will call this the thanksgiving day hunt.

I woke up Bob thanksgiving morning early as we had to drive 45 minutes to hunt on Abbot MT. in Shapliegh ME. We had been hunting all month long on Saturdays only.

We had several stands on the mountain but was not seeing deer. I could hear deer every time I sat on my stump but never saw them. I was getting frustrated so on thanksgiving morning I told bob he was going to sit on my stump to see if he would have any better luck. I parked the truck in a small sandpit below the mountain and told Bob to get on the stand and wait.

I was to go up the road and cut in 300 yd's down and head up to a second stand we had on the mountain. It was now legal shooting time so Bob took off in a hurry as only a young eager hunter would. I started up the road. When I got to where I was to head up.I heard a shot from where Bob was suppose to be at my stump. Bob was using my 12 gauge pump shotgun with double 0,s. after about 30 seconds I heard 3 more shots. By now I was pumped.

My 2 way radio crackled and my son Bob said dad, I got him! well I ran up to him as fast as I could. I saw Bob with a strange look on his face. I said where is he? Bob said he ran off towards the top of the mountain. He then told me what happened. As soon as he sat down, he heard something coming his way. Bob said after a minute a huge deer came over the knoll

and was walking right towards him less then 20 yards with his head down sniffing the ground.

Bob said the deer had so many points that he could not count them all. One tine was pointed down and was dragging in the ground. Bob fired a shot and the deer went head over heels and laid there. Then the deer lifted its head and wobbled before getting up and bounding off in the direction of the top of the mountain.

Bob said he didn't want to shoot again as he was sure the deer would pile up after a few leaps. When he realized the deer was not going to drop he fired several more desperate shots towards the fast departing deer. Of course no hits with these shots. Bob looked like he was going to be sick. He kept telling me the deer was as big as a horse, swollen neck with so much headgear.

We started taking up the trail but was very difficult as there was only scattered drops of blood. The deer would backtrack numerous times trying to lose us as he was fully aware we were on him. Up the mountain he went only to backtrack again and start circling again.

He took us through some of the best hunting areas on the mountain, he took us through bedding areas full of deer tracks. We followed up, down around and on the other side of the mountain. The only blood we would find is when the deer would stop he left a few drops of blood in his track.

By now it was getting into the afternoon and we were to be home for dinner. I told Bob that was it. We would not get this deer. Bob would not quit. I went back to the vehicle to wait hoping Bob would quit if he was alone. But with the buck fresh in his mind, he continued till dark.

Bob came back and said soon after I left he found where the buck started bleeding bad, I'm not sure if he didn't pick up on a different blood trail but as he followed he met up with a hunter that saw the deer run by and Bob tracking so he helped Bob track.

The hunter told bob that the way the deer was bleeding he would be pilled up soon. After trailing for an	
hour together the hunter told Bob he had to leave.	
Bob stayed with it till it was too dark to continue. We never did get that buck but it will be brought up every hunting season. I believe Bob shot this deer in the antlers and 1 pollet bell hit him high in the shoulder	
antlers and 1 pellet ball hit him high in the shoulder. Not a kill shot and I'm sure the deer lived for many more seasons.	



GOLD STAR WIVES By Sandy Taylor



Some of you know me as a Gold Star military widow. I would like to share my experience of being responsible for burial arrangements on two occasions and how they differed. Death and funerals are not subjects that are easy to discuss but doing so in advance may make life easier in times of difficulty. The first was my military husband's funeral. I met with the undertaker in advance to explain our wishes and make whatever decisions I could.. The contractor friend Bruce had asked to build him a pine box declined so I rented a nice casket from the funeral home. After cremation Bruce's ashes were placed in a metal ammo box. I know that made him happy! Along with my parents we had purchased our niches alongside Daffodil Hill in Laurel Hill Cemetery overlooking the Saco River in 1985. Planning ahead was a sound financial decision. When death came I was relieved to know that so many of the decisions had been made, preventing emotional stress from influencing my thinking. My daughter left a note instructing the undertaker that the brass on his uniform must be bright and shiny. A beautiful service was held at our church. The local funeral home took care of death certificates, applying for the military payment portion, acquiring the American flag, etc.

Much changed in the burial business during the eighteen years before I was responsible for carrying out Jerry's final wishes. The cost of funerals had increased and more types of services were under consideration. Options abound. Visiting hours combined with funeral? Graveside service? No service? Service at a later date? Because Jerry chose cremation with no services my inquiries led me to a burial service company in Portland that offered their service for \$1,000. (2015.) This included picking up the body, (they associate with a local funeral home; they don't have their own).) They arranged for cremation, letting me know when it would take place. Newspaper obituaries are very expensive which is why you often see a short notice referring you to the funeral home site for a full obituary at no cost. They arranged a time to meet with me at their facility on Deering Ave. to deliver the ashes to me in a sturdy vinyl type container. I was very pleased with their service and have my information on record with them also, as do several friends. I tossed some of Jerry's ashes from the top of a mountain in Acadia and later held a small gathering at the cemetery niche when his ashes were placed inside. Once you have received the ashes you can decide if you want to scatter them, keep them on your mantle, place them in a cemetery, place some of them in a locket, use them to plant a memorial tree - the choice is yours. Don't leave your family in a predicament. Let them know your wishes.

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1044

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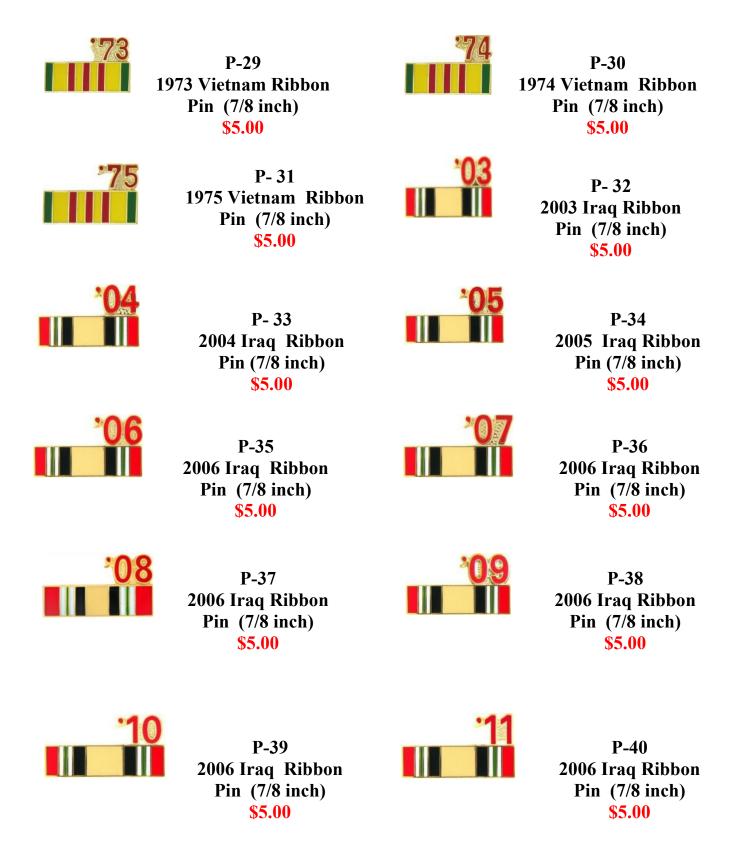
P- 26 1970 Vietnam Ribbon Pin (7/8 inch) \$5.00

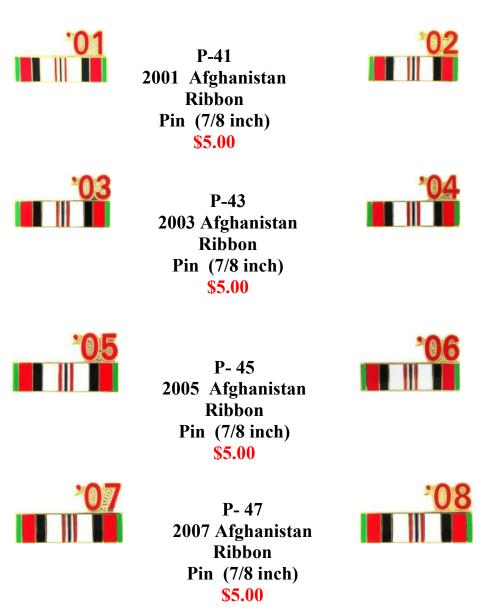


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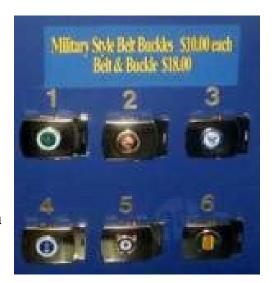


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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

All veterans should make sure that all documents associated with their military service are in a secure location and accessible to family members when the need arises. It is unfortunate that, all too often, veterans put their military papers in boxes or files and family members have no clue as to where to look to find them.

The veteran's discharge papers — Form 100 Discharge, DD214 or NGD22 — are critical for any benefits for which a veteran or their family may be eligible. Do not keep the family in the dark on where they are located; make a list of all these documents and include a copy of the most recent "Federal Benefits for Veterans and their Dependents" pamphlet.

Too often, a situation arises in which the VA could provide valuable assistance and a delay is caused by a lack of essential documents to speed the process for medical coverage or dependent assistance. Make it is easy for your loved ones to assist you if the need arises.

I know that there will come a time when I will be in need of my family's assistance, and I want them to be able to find and use the documents to ease their stress and have access to all eligible VA benefits. There are many websites and information sources that are vital to veterans and their families; I recommend that they become familiar with these and make a list of these resources, so that the veteran and their family can have access to them immediately when needed.

Here is a list of information and details that veterans should have available to their loved ones:

- Name, Address, State, Zip Code;
- **■** DD214, DD215 or NGD 22, Form 100 Discharge;
- Date of Enlistment Location;
- Date of Discharge Location;
- Branch of Service Service Number:
- Date of Birth & Birth Certificate;
- Date of Marriage & Marriage Certificate;
- VA Medical Card & Medicare Cards:
- Government or Life Insurance Policies;
- VA Claim Number Social Security Number;
- Certificate of Eligibility (COE) Home Loan;
- Bank Accounts —Safe Deposit Box & Location;
- Records Location and any VA or Social Security Compensation;
- Other Documents Deeds, Mortgages, Will, Living Will instructions, and more; and

■ VA Office where records are located.

All of the above information is very important to have and can be included in one simple to use booklet called "THE PAPER SAFE". It has been designed by our sister organization The Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America.

If you would like to obtain a copy of this booklet you can stop by our R & R center located in the basement of the American Legion Post 26 508 Elm Street, Biddeford, Maine or call us at 207-494-9287. If by chance there is no answer please leave a message with you name address and we will make sure you get a copy.



VETERAN LICENSE PLATE DECALS

For FREE replacement of faded Campaign or Service decals:



Write to:

Secretary of State Bureau of Motor Vehicles 29 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333-0029

*Include a copy of your registration and a note requesting replacements

SUPPORTERS PAGE

Support Those That Support US!!

(Cost to have your company business card placed here in our newsletter as well as on our website is only \$25.00 per year)







Membership in VVA is the Right Choice

First I want to say "WELCOME HOME"

The goals of Vietnam Veterans of America are to promote and support the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans. To create a new identity for this generation of veterans and to change public perception of Vietnam veterans.

VVA is a "home of our own" - a community of fellowship with people who share our experiences, needs, and hopes for the future.

Be as active as your time, talents, and interests allow. Or, simply be a proud member of VVA, knowing that your membership helps VVA work for you and your fellow Vietnam veterans.

Membership includes a subscription to our award-winning newspaper, The VVA Veteran, bringing you updates on issues and legislation affecting veterans, as well as unique articles on the people, places, and history of the Vietnam experience.

Membership is open to U.S. armed force 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.

Our chapter is very active working hard to help our brothers and sisters, their families and veterans of today.

We meet once a month at the American Legion Post 26 located at 508 Elm Street Biddeford. Meetings start at 1:30 (13:30)

If you would like further information on joining our chapter please email me your mailing address at **president@vva1044maine.org** I will send the information to you.

May 2019

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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26	27	28	29	30	31	



05 May 2019 Chapter Meeting

Information on these and other events may be found on our web site at http://www.vva1044maine.org



Suggestion Form For

Fundraiser / Events Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1044

Date:
Name:
Phone Number: ()
E-mail Address:
Suggested Fundraiser / Event:
Date of Fundraiser / Event:
How would this benefit our Chapter?
For Board Use Only
Date Received:
Date Reviewed by Chapter Officer:Position:
Recommended to the BOD for Approval/Disapproval: YES NO
Date Reviewed by Board:
Recommend to be Present to Membership: YES NO
Membership Approval: Date: YES NO
Reason this should / should not be presented to the membership:

- If we, the board decide this would not be something to present to the membership we will provide you
 with our reason why.
- All suggestions submitted will be retained and become the property of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1044