

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS



McHENRY COUNTY CHAPTER



"The Chapter with a Heart"

September 2008

McHenry County Chapter of ViêtNow
"THE CHAPTER WITH A HEART"

MEETING: General Meetings are open to the public and are held on the **fourth (4) Tuesday of each month** at 7:30 P. M. at the McHenry VFW – 3002 W. Route 120, McHenry.

.....

**** BOARD OF DIRECTORS ****

PRESIDENT:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Bobby Jones	847-409-1947
SECRETARY:	Tony Bilus	815-648-2826
TREASURER:	Steve Rucki	847-458-9850
DIRECTORS:	Rick Cross	815-403-3613
	Joe Ferrenti	815-653-4114
	Mike Wisniewski	815-344-5873
	Bill Richards	815-344-9591
	Harry van Beetz	847/516-9722

ADVISORS: All Past Chapter Presidents

****COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS ****

BYLAWS:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
CHAPTER PROGRAM		
GRANTS:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
CONVENTION:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
"JIM TOBER BASKETS":	Rose Lewis	815-568-8939
MEMBERSHIP:	Rose Lewis	815-568-8939
NEWSLETTER:	Rose Lewis, Editor	815-568-8939
	Billie Blair Asst. Editor	815-385-2905
NOMINATION/ELECTION:	Joe Kersten	815 338-1796
POW/MIA:	Steve Rucki	847-458-9850
PTSD:	Alan Belcher	815-344-0411
CHAPTER VETERAN		
SERVICE OFFICER	Ted Biever	815-338-9292
"RAP" GROUP INFO:	Alan Belcher	815-334-0411
VAC: Delegate:	Joe Kersten	815-338-1796

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS: All Chapter Board Members and Membership

****NATIONAL OFFICERS ****

PRESIDENT:	Rich Sanders (Mary)	DIRECTORS:
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Jim Stepanek (Marcia)	John Davis (Sandy)
SECRETARY:	Darrell Gilgan (Linda)	Gary Eisenhower (Sue)
TREASURER:	Terry Buscher (Linda)	Augie (Katie)
		John Bates (Dawn)

National Office Telephone: 815-227-5100 and E-mail: vnnatl@inwave.com

EDITORIAL POLICY: The Newsletter Staff will evaluate all articles submitted as to appropriateness and Relevancy. Newsletter items must be submitted to the editorial staff by the Chapter meeting each Month.

VA COLA 2009: The House cleared a cost-of-living bill Wednesday that would provide an increase for veterans with service-connected disabilities, as well as dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for families of deceased veterans. The Senate passed the veterans' COLA measure in July. The COLA bill, S 2617, provides for a Dec. 1 increase in disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, and pensions that will match whatever increase is provided in Social Security benefits. The increase, which applies to about 2.8 million veterans and survivors, would first appear in January paychecks. The Social Security increase won't be known until mid-October, but is expected to be a minimum of 6 percent. The Social Security COLA automatically applies to military and federal civilian retired pay, but veterans' disability and survivor benefits and pensions increase only through the enactment of new legislation. The COLA bill now awaits the President's signature. [Source: VFW Washington Weekly 12 Sep 08 ++]

VA VOTER REGISTRATION BAN UPDATE 02: The Department of Veterans Affairs said 8 SEP that it would no longer ban voter registration drives among veterans living at federally run nursing homes, shelters for the homeless and rehabilitation centers across the country." Back in May, the VA "said such drives would violate the prohibition on political activity by federal employees and would be disruptive. The reversal came after months of pressure from state election officials, voting rights groups and federal lawmakers who said that such drives made it easier for veterans to take part in the political process." In a press release, VA Secretary James Peake commented on the reversal, saying his agency "has always been committed to helping veterans exercise their constitutional right to vote." The Department will welcome state and local election officials and non-partisan groups to its hospitals and outpatient clinics to assist VA officials in registering voters at VA facilities. Such assistance, however, must be coordinated by those facilities in order to avoid disruptions to patient care. The policy requires that information about the right of VA patients to register and vote, and other patients' rights, be posted in every VA hospital, and that all VA patients be provided a copy of these rights when they are admitted to a VA facility.

Every hospital is now also required to publish a written policy on voter assistance, allowing patients to leave the hospital to register and vote, subject to the opinions of their health care providers. Patients unable to leave the facility must be assisted to register and to vote by absentee ballot. In their written policies, VA hospital are required to establish the criteria they will use to evaluate requests from outside agencies to register voters, and to determine where, when, and how such registration activities will be conducted. They will also develop procedures to coordinate offers of assistance from state and local governments and from non-partisan organizations, and how to work with VA's Regional Counsel offices to determine whether or not groups offering registration help are non-partisan, as required by law. Voluntary Service Program Managers at each of VA's 153 hospitals will be responsible for implementing the new policy, and for providing timely and accurate voting information to veterans cared for at their facilities. They will also obtain and maintain materials that are needed to assist veterans with voter registration requirements. [Source: VA Media Relations 8 Sep 08 ++]

MILITARY STOLEN VALOR UPDATE 10: Former Army serviceman Randall Moneymaker was sentenced to three years in prison 5 SEP for embellishing a brief military career into that of a decorated combat veteran. Moneymaker is part of the growing problem of "phony war heroes," across the nation, Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig "Jake" Jacobsen said. "As the wars drag on in this country, you have more and more wannabes" who make claims of sacrifices never suffered and medals never earned, Jacobsen said. Unlike other imposters who seek only bragging rights or political gain, Moneymaker was motivated mostly by greed, the government contended -- making his false claims to collect more than \$18,000 in disability and military benefits. Moneymaker was sentenced by Judge James Turk following a March trial in U.S. District Court in Roanoke. After hearing testimony that Moneymaker made up tales of firefights, Ranger missions and hundreds of parachute jumps, a jury convicted him of six charges of fraud and theft. "I'm sorry for what I've done," Moneymaker told the judge, apologizing to his family, his country, his fellow soldiers and "anyone else that I've done wrong."

After spending just two years in the Army in the mid-1980s, Moneymaker would later claim to be a decorated Army Ranger with more than 20 years of service that included tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Panama and Grenada. But during the years when he told of suffering post-traumatic stress disorder from seeing his fellow soldiers killed beside him, Moneymaker was actually attending college and working in the telecommunications field. And the scars on his back that he attributed to shrapnel wounds were actually the result of liposuction, federal prosecutors said. Moneymaker was "someone who obtained respect, sympathy and benefits based on the sacrifices and the blood of other veterans who went through what he claimed he went through but didn't," Jacobsen said. Although Moneymaker wore Ranger badges and a Purple Heart he never earned, the charges he was convicted of were limited to the paperwork he filled out to receive benefits from the U.S. Army and Veterans Affairs. The charges included five counts of making false statements on forms he filed or in claims he made while applying for disability benefits or inquiring about a military pension. He also was charged with theft for receiving \$18,449.32 in disability payments to which he was not entitled.

Money maker, a 44-year-old who now lives in North Carolina, was ordered to pay the \$18,449.32 back to the government, plus another \$600. Money maker spoke only when asked by the judge if he had anything to say just before his punishment was announced. Looking across the courtroom, he apologized to Jacobsen, who as a veteran of the war in Iraq has said he takes the case especially seriously. Defense attorney C.J. Covati questioned Jacobsen's statement that Money maker's crimes were among the worst he has seen in his 17 years as a federal prosecutor. "To say that it's one of the worst ever is to let moral indignation get a little bit ahead of the facts in this case," Covati said. Following the hearing, Money maker was allowed to remain free on bond until he is ordered to report to prison, which Covati said will probably be in two or three months. [Source: The Roanoke Times Laurence Hammack article 6 Sep 08 ++]

VA RETRO PAY PROJECT UPDATE 13: In SEP 06 the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) identified more than 133,000 recipients of Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) or Concurrent Retired Disability Payment (CRDP) potentially eligible for additional retroactive compensation. Since then the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) in coordination with the DVA have processed all of the original cases as of 8 JUN 08. Throughout the project DVA identified additional retirees that were prospectively eligible for retroactive payments. The agency also resubmitted accounts, from the original 133,000, for potential supplementary entitlements. Those accounts, classified as "new and returning," were processed as of 29 JUN 08. Those people identified with potential eligibility for retroactive payment after JAN 08, were placed in a category referred to as "On-Going." The On-Going category documents the most recently received new and returning VA Retro cases. Those accounts as of 20 JUL 08, have been processed. To date a total of more than 230,000 accounts have been processed. Going forward, plans are to process all incoming claims within 30 days. While certain accounts may have received payment from DFAS, you may also be eligible for payment from the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA). Once your account has been processed at DFAS, the information is forwarded to the DVA for additional validation and possible payment. There may often be a lapse of time between the payments from the two different agencies. Questions concerning the VA can be addressed by calling 1-800-827-1000. [Source: DFAS <http://www.dfas.mil/retiredpay/retroactivepayment.html> 5 Sep 08 ++]

VA RETRO PAY PROJECT UPDATE 14: The Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008, signed into law on 17 JUN 08, changed the federal income tax filing deadlines and the length of the look-back period for amended tax returns when retirees are affected by a retroactive VA disability compensation determination. Amended tax returns usually are required when you have paid income taxes on past retirement income that later becomes tax-free income as a result of the award of retro-VA compensation. For retro-VA compensation determinations as of 18 JUN 08 or later, retirees have up to one year to file their amended return from the date of the VA determination. The retiree now can amend tax returns going back five years. It used to be a three-year look-back. There also is a transition period allowed in the tax code change. For retro-VA compensation determinations from 1 JAN 01 through 17 JUN 08, retirees have until 17 JUN 09 to file amended returns for tax refunds for tax years 2001 to the present. Consult your tax specialist for more detailed information about how these changes affect you. Refer to H.R. 6081, Section 106, which amends the IRS Tax Code Section 6511(d) by adding a new paragraph (8). For a technical explanation of H.R. 6081 on the House of Representative's Web site refer to www.house.gov/jct/x-44-08.pdf. additional reference can be located at www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-6081 and frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_bills&docid=f:h6081enr.txt.pdf . [Source: MOAA News Exchange 10 Sep 08 ++]

GREYHOUND MILITARY DISCOUNT: Greyhound Bus Company is offering a fare discount to active duty and retired military personnel and their family members. The offer is a 10% discount off the Greyhound walk-up (unrestricted) fare and a maximum fare of \$198 round trip anywhere in the continental U.S. The following terms apply:

1. Fares are valid on Greyhound schedules and those of participating interline carriers. Not available on Greyhound Canada routes.
2. This fare applies only to active and retired members of the United States Armed Forces, which includes the U.S. Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy; members of the National Guard, reservists and bonafide identifiable spouses and dependents of the above. A valid military picture identification card must be presented upon request.
3. A 40-percent discount for children of military personnel is available. This discount not available with \$198 maximum military fare. No other discounts apply.
4. Only totally unused tickets may be refunded to the location of the original purchase. A 15% penalty fee applies upon refund. No refund will be allowed if any portion of the ticket has been used.
5. Departure date and time may be changed for a charge of \$10 per ticket provided that the advance purchase requirement is not violated.

6. Advance purchase tickets purchased over the phone require a minimum of ten days for delivery by mail and for online orders.
 7. Casino, commuter, Discovery Pass, student or other special military fares do not qualify for the military discount.
 8. Fares are subject to change until purchase and may be higher during peak holiday travel periods.
 9. Ten-percent discount may not be used in conjunction with the \$198 maximum fare.
- [Source: NAUS website <http://naus.org/benefits/travel.html> 5 Sep 08 ++]
-

HAVE YOU HEARD: Harold was an old Retired Navy Chief Engineman. He was sick and was in the VA hospital. Anyway, there was this one young nurse that just drove him crazy. Every time she came in, she would talk to him like he was a little child. She would say in a patronizing tone of voice, "And how are we doing this morning, or are we ready for our bath, or are we hungry?"

Harold had had enough of this particular nurse. One day, Harold had received breakfast, and pulled the apple juice off his breakfast tray, and put it on his bed side stand. He had just been given a urine bottle to fill for testing. So.....you know where the juice went.

Well, the nurse came in a little later and picked up the urine bottle. She looks at it. "My, but it seems we are a little cloudy today....." At this, the Chief snatched the bottle out of her hand, pops off the top, and drinks it down, saying, "Well, I'll run it through again, and maybe I can filter it better this time."

The nurse fainted..... Harold just smiled.....Typical Chief!

September 11, 2008

President Joe Lewis
McHenry Co. Chapter of VietNow

Dear President Lewis:

Transitional Living Services will hold its Third Annual Dinner/Fundraiser on October 11, 2008. Thanks to the veterans and veteran organizations in our community, the first two annual dinners were overwhelmingly successful. Additionally, we raised much needed monies for New Horizons, our homeless veterans' shelter.

The Board of Directors and staff of Transitional Living Services would like to cordially invite you to attend the Third Annual TLS Dinner and Raffle. Once again, the Woodstock Moose graciously is donating the use of their building for our event. The dinner will be held on October 11, 2008. Cocktails will begin at 6:00 p.m. Dinner will be at 7:00 p.m. followed by a very brief program. The evening will be capped off by dancing beginning at 8:30 p.m.

As in years past, we will also be drawing the tickets for the raffle winners. The grand prize this year is a \$6,000.00 vacation package for two, and second prize is a 50" flat screen T.V. There also will be a silent auction with several valuable prices including cruise tickets.

Please join us and support TLS and the New Horizons homeless veterans program. Tickets for the dinner are \$20.00 each in advance and \$25.00 at the door. We welcome you and everyone at your post. Please call 815-648-2203 to make your reservations.

Sincerely,

Alan Belcher, President of the Board



**McHenry County Chapter
P.O. Box 998 McHenry, IL 60051**

postage

Next Meeting
Tuesday, September 23, 2008
@ 7:30 pm

McHenry County Chapter VietNow Membership Application

DATE _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____
NAME _____ PHONE () _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
SEVICE BRANCH _____ DATES OF DUTY (1957-CURRENT) _____

_____ **I am a veteran and want to be a FULL MEMBER OF VietNow**

_____ **I am not a veteran but want to be an ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF VietNow**

Enclosed is my check for _____

**Memberships are \$15 annually renewable June 30th.
Veterans must enclose a copy of their DD214 form.
Send with check payable to: McHenry County Chapter of VietNow
PO Box 998, McHenry, IL 60051**

For a sum of ten (10) times the yearly dues , one can become a LIFE MEMBER