



**From
Patrick Welch
Director**

September brings Labor Day, National POW/MIA day on September 18 and the first day of fall.

Articles this month cover Gen. Colin Powell's visit for the dedication of the new Veterans' Memorial in the Town of Tonawanda; a Vietnam legacy to his fellow veterans by leaving a portion of his estate to Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 77 to assist homeless veterans; information on the Veterans Opportunity Fair our office is sponsoring in November and a fund raiser for our friends at Bunkers to Baghdad. This organization has now distributed over 600,000 golf balls and over 15,000 golf clubs to our military personnel all over the world and provided free golf balls to all veterans playing at Erie County Golf Courses this season. Your support of this event is greatly appreciated.

The Veterans Radio Show on Hometown WECK 1230 AM and www.weck1230.com continues and we are getting very good reviews. The show is about Information – Advocacy – Action relating to veteran and military issues. At this time we are on the air every other Monday at 11:00 AM EST and there will be a break for the Labor Day Holiday September 7, so the next show will be September 21, 2009. Please tune in on your radio or PC and support this show by veterans for veterans. Also we are looking for sponsors, so any businesses that have some advertising money to spend and would also like to get a tax deduction can contact me at 716.858.6363 to discuss this opportunity to support us.

Please distribute this newsletter to your email distribution list. Anyone who would like to receive this each month can email me at patrick.welch@erie.gov

Remember my mantra: "If you do NOTHING, then someday when you need the VA, then NOTHING is just what you may get." ©

Shinseki Moves to Simplify PTSD Compensation Rules

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking steps to assist Veterans seeking compensation for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

"The hidden wounds of war are being addressed vigorously and comprehensively by this administration as we move VA forward in its transformation to the 21st century," said Secretary Shinseki.

The VA is publishing a proposed regulation today in the Federal Register to make it easier for a Veteran to claim service connection for PTSD by reducing the evidence needed if the stressor claimed by a Veteran is related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity. Comments on the proposed rule will be accepted over the next 60 days. A final regulation will be published after consideration of all comments received.

Under the new rule, VA would not require corroboration of a stressor related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity if a VA psychiatrist or psychologist confirms that the stressful experience recalled by a Veteran adequately supports a diagnosis of PTSD and the Veteran's symptoms are related to the claimed stressor.



Photo: www.army.mil

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Previously, claims adjudicators were required to corroborate that a non-combat Veteran actually experienced a stressor related to hostile military activity. This rule would simplify the development that is required for these cases.

PTSD is a recognized anxiety disorder that can follow seeing or experiencing an event that

involves actual or threatened death or serious injury to which a person responds with intense fear, helplessness or horror, and is not uncommon in war.

Feelings of fear, confusion or anger often subside, but if the feelings don't go away or get worse, a Veteran may have PTSD.

Born of Controversy: The GI Bill of Rights

It has been heralded as one of the most significant pieces of legislation ever produced by the federal government—one that impacted the United States socially, economically and politically. But it almost never came to pass.

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944—commonly known as the GI Bill of Rights—nearly stalled in Congress as members of the House and Senate debated provisions of the controversial bill.

Some shunned the idea of paying unemployed veterans \$20 a week because they thought it diminished their incentive to look for work. Others questioned the concept of sending battle-hardened veterans to colleges and universities, a privilege then reserved for the rich.

Despite their differences, all agreed something must be done to help veterans assimilate into civilian life.

Much of the urgency stemmed from a desire to avoid the missteps following World War I, when discharged veterans got little more than a \$60 allowance and a train ticket home.

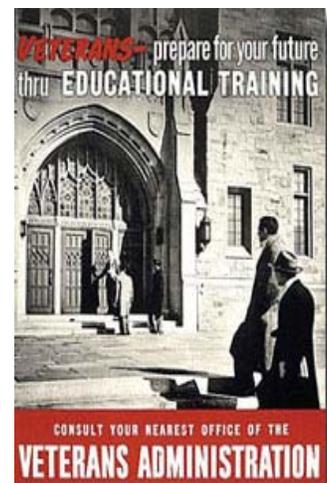
During the Great Depression, some veterans found it difficult to make a living. Congress tried to intervene by passing the World War Adjusted Act of 1924, commonly known as the Bonus Act. The law provided a bonus based on the number of days

served. But there was a catch: most veterans wouldn't see a dime for 20 years.

A group of veterans marched on Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1932 to demand full payment of their bonuses. When they didn't get it, most went home. But some decided to stick around until they got paid. They were later kicked out of town following a bitter standoff with U.S. troops. The incident marked one of the greatest periods of unrest our nation's capital had ever known.

The return of millions of veterans from World War II gave Congress a chance at redemption. But the GI Bill had far greater implications. It was seen as a genuine attempt to thwart a looming social and economic crisis. Some saw inaction as an invitation to another depression.

Harry W. Colmery, a former national commander of the American Legion and former Republican National Chairman, is credited with drawing up the first draft of the GI Bill. It was introduced in the House on Jan. 10, 1944, and in the Senate the following day. Both chambers approved their own versions of the bill.





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But the struggle was just heating up. The bill almost died when Senate and House members came together to debate their versions. Both groups agreed on the education and home loan benefits, but were deadlocked on the unemployment provision.

Ultimately, Rep. John Gibson of Georgia was rushed in to cast the tie-breaking vote. The Senate approved the final form of the bill on June 12, and the House followed on June 13. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed it into law on June 22, 1944.

In 1984, former Mississippi Congressman Gillespie V. "Sonny" Montgomery revamped the GI Bill, which has been known as the "Montgomery GI Bill" ever since, assuring that the legacy of the original GI Bill lives on, as VA home loan guaranty and education programs continue to work for our newest generation of combat veterans.

In 2008, the GI Bill was updated once again. The new law gives veterans with active duty service on, or after, Sept. 11 2001, enhanced educational benefits that cover more educational expenses, provide a living allowance, money for books and the ability to transfer unused educational benefits to spouses or children.

Source: http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/history.htm



Did You Know...

- Before the war, college and homeownership were, for the most part, unreachable dreams for the average American. Thanks to the GI Bill, millions who would have flooded the job market instead opted for education. In the peak year of 1947, veterans accounted for 49 percent of college admissions. By the time the original GI Bill ended on July 25, 1956, 7.8 million of 16 million World War II veterans had participated in an education or training program.
- Millions also took advantage of the GI Bill's home loan guaranty. From 1944 to 1952, VA backed nearly 2.4 million home loans for World War II veterans.
- While veterans embraced the education and home loan benefits, few collected on one of the bill's most controversial provisions—the unemployment pay. Less than 20 percent of funds set aside for this were used.

What is the Post 9/11 GI Bill?

The Post 9/11 GI Bill provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of aggregate service on or after September 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. You must have received an honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill will become effective for training on or after **August 1, 2009**. The amount of support that an individual may qualify for depends on where they live and what type of degree they are pursuing. For a summary of Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits, see [the benefit comparison chart](#).

Approved training under the Post-9/11 GI Bill includes graduate and undergraduate degrees, and vocational/technical training. All training programs must be offered by an institution of higher learning (IHL) and approved for GI Bill benefits. Additionally, tutorial assistance, and licensing and certification test reimbursement are approved under the Post- 9/11 GI Bill.



[Pamphlets and factsheets about the Post-9/11 GI Bill can be found here.](#)

Establishment of Vietnam Veteran's Assistance Fund

David R. Limburg was a United States Navy Veteran of the Vietnam War. Dave was very proud of his Vietnam service and knew that there were Vietnam Veterans and their families who are in need. Dave passed away last year and left a portion of his estate to Western New York Chapter 77 of the Vietnam Veterans of America. In his Will, Dave stated that "It is my wish and request that this bequest be used for providing for indigent Vietnam Veterans and their Families."



Chapter 77 will use the bequest from their deceased brother to establish the Limburg Memorial Veterans Assistance Fund. The Chapter's Board of Directors has been charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the Fund is disbursed as the will directs. Additional donations to the fund can be made by mail to Chapter 77, Vietnam Veterans of America, 57 Main Street, Tonawanda, NY 14150.

Dr. Patrick Welch, Erie County Director of Veterans Affairs, looks on as Paul E. Rudnicki, Esq. presents a bequest from the estate of David R. Limburg to Tom Konopka, Chapter 77 President, and Jack Michel, Chapter 77 1st Vice-President. Dr. Welch and Attorney Rudnicki are also Chapter 77 members.

Making Area Campuses More Veteran-Friendly

In an effort to provide for veteran-friendly environments at local colleges and universities, New York State Assemblyman [Mark Schroeder](#) and the state Division of Veterans' Affairs hosted a roundtable for administrators from 16 area schools at Erie Community College's South Campus.

"Thanks to the Post 9/11 GI Bill, area campuses will most likely see a significant increase in the number of veterans pursuing higher education," said Schroeder. "This conference will help those colleges and universities adapt to better address the needs of our veterans."

Schools participating include: Erie Community College, University at Buffalo, Buffalo State College, Niagara University, Canisius College, Fredonia State, Empire State College, Trocaire College, Hilbert College, D'Youville College, Medaille College, Villa Maria College, Bryant & Stratton, ITT Technical Institute, and Niagara County Community College.

The goal is to help make area campuses more veteran-friendly and properly implement changing state and federal education benefits. The roundtable agenda included:

- Tips for administrators on becoming a veteran friendly campus.
- Attracting veterans to your campus.
- State veterans tuition benefits.
- The Post 9/11 GI Bill
- State and local resources for campus veterans.

"With more veterans returning to campus using the Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits, schools can expect to see their student veterans' financial needs more closely met than at any other time in recent history," McDonough said. "In light of reported dwindling endowments, eligible veterans will walk on campus with their own financial aid package. It just makes sense for our campuses to become more veteran-friendly, given the economic incentive to do so."

To help eligible veterans understand the Post 9/11 GI Bill, the New York State Division of Veterans' Af-

fairs has launched an enhanced education benefits calculator and an entire page dedicated to Veterans Education on its web site. This calculator will allow eligible veterans, as well as educational institutions, to calculate the approximate value of the Post 9/11 GI Bill. This tuition calculator is also able to factor in New York State's Veterans Tuition Award (VTA). The State VTA may provide veterans using the Post 9/11 GI Bill with financial assistance to offset remaining tuition and fees.



According to information provided by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs, schools can expect to see a twenty five percent increase in the number of veterans going to colleges and universities in the next two to three years.

In the coming months, members of the legislature and the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs will continue to host regional veteran-friendly campus forums with local college administrators to help inform schools of changes in veteran education benefits and programs. These forums will also provide college administrators with information on how their campuses can become more veteran-friendly.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill will help more than 1.8 million veterans nationwide who served since September 11, 2001.

Veterans interested in applying for the Post 9/11 GI Bill are encouraged to apply online at the United State Department of Veterans' Affairs application center at :

<http://vabenefits.vba.gov/vonapp/main.asp>

or by locating or calling the nearest
NYS Veterans Counselor at

http://www.veterans.ny.gov/counselor_location.html

or by calling 1-888-VETSNY (1-888-838-7697).



The Erie County Veterans Service Agency

Presents:

The Veterans Opportunities Fair

Providing veterans with Education, Employment and Business opportunities

**Buffalo Convention Center
Thursday, November 5th, 2009
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM**

A *free* continental breakfast will be served.

Erie County Executive Chris Collins will be delivering the opening remarks.

Proceeds will benefit:

WNY Heroes, Inc. and The Buffalo Renaissance Foundation.

If you wish to participate in this event, please contact:

Alyssa at 716-858-6363 or email: Alyssa.Gingerich@erie.gov

Gen. Colin Powell with Tonawanda NY Veterans



General Colin Powell (shown above with Tonawanda veterans) was the keynote speaker at the dedication of the Town of Tonawanda Veterans Memorial on Tuesday August 18, 2009.

Hundreds of local veterans from World War II to OIF/OEF veterans and their families were present for the ceremony to honor all from the town who have served our nation. Color Guards from Veteran Service Organizations, reserve/guard units and active duty participated and Kenney Field was covered in red, white and blue along with all the service flags.

Vietnam Veteran and world renowned artist Ralph Sirianni designed the 7-foot V-shaped granite monument that anchors the memorial. Sirianni designed the V as a symbolic representation of Veterans, but says other words such as Valor can be interpreted.

1812 Legacy Council—

The Bicentennial: Niagara 2012-2014

An Urban Battlefield?

It's hard to believe that this nondescript two-story brick industrial building located at 1270 Niagara Street (at the corner of Auburn Avenue), is one of Buffalo's most historic sites. It is, and it perfectly represents the challenge that volunteers face as they plan the commemoration of the War of 1812 in Buffalo and Erie County.

It was on this site where Peter Buell Porter lived, one of Black Rock's most famous residents. While most people know that the British burned Buffalo to the ground in December 1813, fewer know that the British invaded in July 1813, but were successfully repelled during what is referred to as the First Battle of Black Rock.

Peter Porter was an American lawyer, soldier and politician who served as Congressman, member of the Erie Canal Commission, and as U.S. Secretary of War. When Porter's house was located on this site, it was set back from the street and had two entrances. The back of the house had grounds that extended all the way to the Niagara River. The front of the house faced Niagara Street.

The British landed near Squaw Island and invaded the military outpost located along the Scajaquada Creek. They continued to march south towards Buffalo. The British entered Porter's house from the back, but Porter was able to escape through the Niagara Street side wearing only his linen nightshirt. Porter, who was 40 years old at the time, ran down Niagara Street to the home of Robert Franklin near Connecticut Street. Franklin, an African Ameri-



Peter Buell Porter, oil painting by Daniel Huntington

can, loaned his horse to Porter so he could ride on to Buffalo and assemble a militia of Buffalo citizens and Seneca Native Americans to fight along with army regulars. It was the first time that the Senecas fought alongside the Americans.

The U.S. assembled defense met the British on Niagara Street near Albany Street and drove them back before they could get to Buffalo. The British retreated after suffering heavy losses (between 100-300 men) and their commander, Col. Cecil Bisshop, was killed.

Porter's house was destroyed six months later when the British returned to burn Buffalo and Black Rock. The house was rebuilt after the war (although not occupied by Porter) and occupied until it was demolished in 1912 to construct the building currently on the site.

Currently, the Erie County War of 1812 bicentennial commemoration planning group is working with planning groups from Canada and Niagara County (US). The Erie County group is determining how to re-create a sense of place for historic places such as 1270 Niagara Street that were so extensively redeveloped during the late 19th and 20th centuries.

The commemoration of the War of 1812 and its legacy of two centuries of peace between the U.S. and Canada will be a significant event for the Niagara region. How do we make sure that Buffalo and Erie County do not miss out?

The Western New York Connection...

Pfc. William J. Grabiarz



Pictures and other items from the display commemorating Pfc. Grabiarz at the Buffalo City School named in his honor.

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illiam J. Grabiarz (March 25, 1925 – February 23, 1945) was a United States Army soldier and a recipient of the United States military's highest decoration—the Medal of Honor—for his actions in World War II.

Grabiarz joined the Army from his birth city of Buffalo, New York, and by February 23, 1945 was serving as a private first class in Troop E, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. On that day, in Manila, the Philippines, he voluntarily braved enemy fire in order to rescue a wounded officer who lay in an exposed position. After being wounded himself and trying unsuccessfully to drag the officer to safety, he used his body to shield the man from hostile fire. Grabiarz was killed by the intense fire, but the officer survived.

For these actions, Grabiarz was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor ten months later, on December 8, 1945. Grabiarz, aged 19 at his death, was buried in Saint Stanislaus Cemetery, Cheektowaga,

In recognition of the sacrifice of Pfc. Grabiarz, the Niagara Frontier American Legion Post 1041, the West Hertel Community Association, and former North District Councilmember Joseph Golombek lobbied to have the new Northwest Academy named in his honor.

This was accomplished at the Buffalo School Board meeting on June 28, 2000.



PS 79, Pfc. William J. Grabiarz School of Excellence
225 Lawn Street, Buffalo 14207

September 2009
Veterans Advocate of the Month
2ND LT. MAURICE "CHIPP" NAYLON IV (USMC)

The Erie County Veterans Service Agency has recognized 2nd Lt. Maurice "Chipp" Naylon IV USMC as the September 2009 Veterans Advocate of the Month.

Chipp is a recent graduate of the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Chipp interned at our agency this summer, playing an active role in helping us to secure key event sponsors for our first Veterans Opportunities Fair this November. He has been instrumental to our agency and his hard work and dedication has not gone unnoticed.

Chipp is currently attending graduate school at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., for his Masters Degree in Security Studies. We wish this young Marine success in all of his future endeavors!



Chipp, surrounded by members of the staff, receives his award.

Help Support Our Troops

★ ☆ ★ **HAPPY HOUR** ★ ☆ ★

to benefit



Friday, September 25, 2009

6:00 p.m.— 8:00 p.m.

The Steer

3151 Main Street
Buffalo, New York

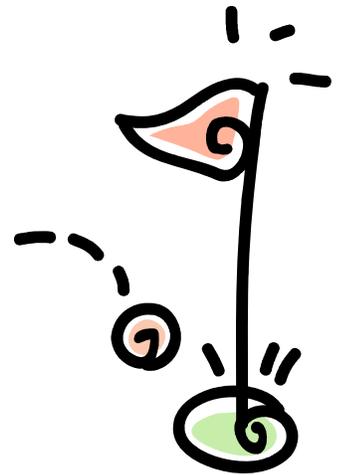
Food ★ ☆ ★ **OPEN BAR** ★ ☆ ★ Raffles

Tickets are \$25. Purchase in advance or at the door.

Contact Joe Hanna for more information at 716.566.5447
or visit our website at www.bunkersinbaghdad.com

Bunkers in Baghdad, Inc. is an officially recognized 501(c)(3) public charity that was founded with the mission of supporting our troops abroad and our veterans here at home. We collect new and used golf equipment to ship to troops serving in combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan to provide them with an outlet for stress relief and entertainment during their downtime. We also donate to various VA and Wounded Warrior programs across the United States to provide equipment for recreational therapy programs for veterans.

Raffle grand prize of two (2) roundtrip tickets generously donated by AirTran Airways.



Mission Statement of Erie County Veterans Services

To insure that every veteran in the county is registered in the VA System and is fully aware of all the benefits that they have earned.

To make veterans an economic force in education, employment and business development.

Call for Volunteers

Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

In association with the UB Department of Sociology and the Buffalo VA, Dr. Brenda Moore is conducting research to better understand the coping mechanisms associated with MST. The study is open to both male and female veterans who have screened positive for MST.

Volunteers will be required to participate in an individual one-hour interview with Dr. Moore. The interview will cover topics ranging from military experience, coping strategies, VA treatment and support networks.

Participants will receive \$25 in compensation.

Contact: Dr. Brenda Moore
socbrend@buffalo.edu
716.645.8470

Contact us at:

Erie County Veterans Service Agency

Rath Building - Suite 1254
95 Franklin St.

Buffalo, NY 14202

PH: 716.858.6363

Fax: 716.858.6191

<http://www.erie.gov/veterans/>

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Assistant Service Officer
- Judy Ehman, RSVP Volunteer
and Newsletter Editor



IT TAKES THE COURAGE AND
STRENGTH OF A WARRIOR TO
ASK FOR HELP...

If you're in an emotional crisis,
call 1-800-273-TALK (Press "1" for Veterans)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org