

The Bulletin

Blinded Veterans Helping Blinded Veterans



January-February 2020



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Cover Photo: DC Skyline in Autumn featuring the Washington Monument, the Capital Building, and the Lincoln Memorial, courtesy of Washington.org

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President's Page

by Tom Zampieri



Everyone here at BVA headquarters and the Board of Directors are working to make our 75th anniversary memorable and exciting for our membership. The board and Executive Director have been diligently interviewing for staff positions to help move us forward. Our Executive Director and staff worked with the board on multiple strategic planning initiatives and our Communications subcommittee have been updating the accessibility and content of BVA's website.

Our Director of Government Relations, Don Overton, has utilized his extensive background in advocacy with Congress to advance our legislative priorities. In collaboration with our government relations committee, Don is preparing for the annual BVA President's testimony on February 25th and prioritizing key pieces of legislation that will impact our membership and caregivers moving forward.

I've been in contact with various historians to gather additional archives on our founding World War II BVA members who formed us on March 28, 1945. Our friendly staff at Hines Blind Center, the National Archives, an Army historian, and a few retired military ophthalmologists are all searching records and photographs for BVA. We will be updating our historical content on the website and including articles in our Bulletin and newsletter all year.

Our BVA board and staff need your help in finding cost-saving solutions, new fundraising

approaches, and mutual corporate partnerships in order to increase donor participation and alternative sources of revenue.

Dr. Renata Gomes, Blind Veterans UK Director of Research and Innovations, visited our headquarters staff in conjunction with her appointments with various vision researchers in D.C. about the emerging Veterans Research Foundation; founded in London, this foundation will involve international partnerships, extend our external relationships with other professional medical and research associations, and help us build new connections with pharmaceutical and technology corporations.

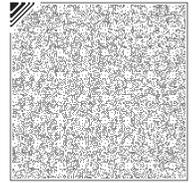
This year, we also want to develop services such as a BVA caregiver guide, which provides emotional support and recognition of depression that will benefit the entire BVA membership and our caregivers in the future. We are excited to develop our first BVA educational "app" for our membership that will feature key BVA organization information, policy documents, the Regional Group manual, bylaws and resolutions, and other important references.

We encourage all regional groups to plan an event or National Blinded Veterans Day on March 28 to recognize our 75th anniversary, and then please share those stories with our BVA communications staff. Work to get local news media to attend any official BVA functions that your regional groups plan on that day to help raise awareness of BVA.



Executive Director's Message to Members

By Joe Bogart



Happy New Year to all of our BVA family and friends! What a year we had in 2019; we made new friends, bade farewell to old ones, and purchased and moved into our new headquarters. As we look forward to 2020, we know we will have our ups and downs as we move into our 75th year of serving as advocates and peer mentors for all veterans and families coping with sight loss.

February has our annual testimony and March has our Mid-Winter Board meeting and BVA's 75th birthday. In May, we honor the fallen, while in July, we celebrate our independence. August is a great time to reunite with friends and family at the annual convention in Washington, D.C., and in November, BVA is the host of Veterans Day 2020 at Arlington National Cemetery.

Through all of these exciting events, we will continue to take BVA to the next level by improving the services, mentorship, programs, and advocacy we provide. The strategic plan will be unveiled and implemented. Our caregivers will receive more support and know how much we appreciate all they do for us.

Our systems and procedures at headquarters continue to be reviewed for efficiency and productivity. Your BVA headquarters is truly the team of teams.

Those teams are everywhere in this great organization; from the teams of blinded veterans watching out for each other to the BVA chapters and regional groups being teams on the frontlines that form each district. Those districts are represented by a team of directors and board members giving guidance to the headquarters team. Then we all come together at our annual convention to decide on the future of BVA as a team.

I am, personally, deeply humbled and truly honored to be part of your team heading into this historic 75th anniversary year of 2020. It is a remarkable year of vision; vision of the past history, vision for the future of this organization, and the vision to make it all happen in the present. Though we may be blind this year, all of BVA has 2020 as our vision.

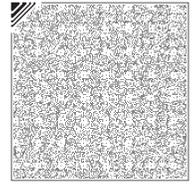
Did You Know? DARTH VADER ADORNS THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL.

- This iconic building has many gargoyles and one of them is the sculpted head of Darth Vader. <https://www.trolleytours.com/washington-dc/facts>



Legislative Update

By Don Overton



As we prepare to deliver our annual

testimony to the joint Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees, let's briefly reflect on all we've accomplished together last year in our fight for veterans.

Whether fighting to amend VA's antiquated Specially Adaptive Housing (SAH) program, protecting the employment opportunities of blinded veterans within the AbilityOne program, ensuring Blue Water Navy veterans receive their benefits, or working to eliminate the Widow's Tax – we've successfully fought to ensure that the benefits you earned are protected. But none of 2019's successes could have been achieved without you! Your dedication and support are what allow BVA to impact the lives of those who deserve our support the most.

BVA is one of the most respected voices in Washington, D.C. and within local governments across America. We advocate for justice for our nation's veterans, caregivers, and service members on an array of issues – and continue to be the voice for blinded veterans everywhere. We regularly testify before Congress, meet with elected officials, and rally our national network of members and patriotic supporters to ensure our lawmakers put veterans first. When those who have served their country and those that support them stand together, we cannot be ignored!

We don't wait to hear how legislation will affect veterans, caregivers, service members,

and their families; we help shape it from the beginning. We actively lobby Congress and the administration on current veterans' issues and needs.

In 2020, BVA will be launching new grassroots advocacy efforts. Located in communities across the globe, our ambassadors will work to inform and educate veterans and service members on the initiatives and policies that affect them – and take the voice of blinded veterans to local, state, and national lawmakers.

A successful advocacy campaign is a joint effort that requires numerous people and tools to reach critical mass. Many people have become jaded about politics and advocacy. They rationalize staying out of the process, but that is the problem. If you don't participate in the process, then your voice won't be heard, and you will not create change.

There are many ways to participate and have a huge impact on our organization. While it's true that meeting your legislator in D.C., or in their home state, requires time – you can call their office or write a letter about BVA priorities. You can blog. You can tweet or post on Facebook about the importance of a bill or issue and share this with them. All these things make a huge impact and do not require a significant amount of your time.

BVA will be deploying its new OneClick Politics Action Alerts platform soon. Together we will make a difference!

On behalf of BVA, thank you for your continued membership and we look forward to everything we'll achieve in the year to come.

Respectfully,
Your BVA Government Relations Team

BVA Announces Washington, D.C. as 75th Convention Site



Blinded veterans and their families may now begin planning to attend BVA's 75th National Convention in Washington, D.C. The five-day event will convene on Monday, August 17, and culminate on Friday, August 21, 2020.

To make your hotel reservations, please call the Hyatt Regency Capital Hill Hotel at <https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/WASRW/G-BVA9> and identify yourself as part of BVA's event with code **G-BVA9**.

Information on registration and room rate will be available at a later date.

For additional information, visit www.bva.org/convention

Major Events of the convention already scheduled are:

- National Presidents Reception and Dinner: Tuesday, August 18
- Official Business Meetings: Wednesday, August 19
- Father Carroll Memorial Luncheon: Thursday, August 20

A special invitation is being extended to all potential exhibitors and sponsors to come to Washington, D.C.

Registration for the convention will open online in May. If required, an electronic or printed copy of the registration packet can



Marine Corps War Memorial Iwo Jima Flag Raising in the foreground with the Washington Monument and the Capital Building in the background, courtesy of Washington.org

be provided to you. Please contact Charles Reynolds at creynolds@bva.org if you require an electronic or print copy of the registration packet.

Formal Official Notice

Pursuant to the provisions of section 3b of Article IX (National Convention) of the BVA National Bylaws, all members of the Blinded Veterans Association in good standing are hereby notified that the BVA 75th National Convention will be held at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill Hotel, 400 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, D.C., 20001

from Monday, August 17, through Friday, August 21, 2020.

Periodic updates regarding the convention will be posted to the convention page within the News and Events section of the BVA website.

BVA National Headquarters will host the 75th National Convention

BVA members in good standing who wish to vote by proxy may request a special proxy by writing or calling the Administrative Director at BVA National Headquarters no later than 45 days before the opening day of the 75th National Convention. The 45th day falls on Friday, July 3.

In compliance with Section 2c of Article IX, the proxy form must be completed and returned to BVA National Headquarters (ATTN: Administrative Director). To be considered valid, the envelope containing the form must be postmarked no later than 21 days before the opening date of the convention. The due date is Monday, July 27.

Jones Announces Dates for Required Actions

Administrative Director

Brigitte Jones has announced the following schedule of administrative actions that must be accomplished by regional groups and individuals leading up to the opening of the BVA 75th National Convention in Washington, D.C. on August 17.

BVA National Headquarters will distribute notices during the month of January regarding nominations for Certificates of Appreciation, the Maas and Diener Awards, and the David L. Schnair Volunteer Service Award. These actions will also occur in compliance with articles within the BVA National Bylaws.

A reminder will be mailed to regional group presidents and secretaries on March 20 regarding the due date for submission of bylaw amendments for consideration at the convention. A mailing to all BVA members in good standing and residing in Districts 5 and 6 will also occur on or before Friday, March 20 (150 days leading up to August 17th). The mailing will call for nominations for District Director.

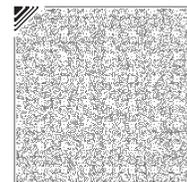
Three copies of the credentials form will also be mailed on April 19 to all regional groups.

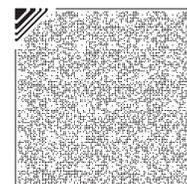
Both regional groups and individuals should refer to the following timeline in preparing for the convention.

Items listed include actions required by the Association's national headquarters, regional groups, and individuals.

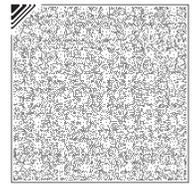
Questions can be addressed by calling 800-669-7079. Asterisks indicate actions required by BVA National Bylaws.

1. **March 20*** (No later than 150 days before convention): Mail call for nomination of





- Directors of Districts 5 and 6 to members in good standing from each of the two districts (Article VI, Section 3d, also published in March-April BVA Bulletin).
2. **March 20***: National Headquarters sends reminders to regional group presidents and secretaries that proposed bylaw amendments to be considered at the 75th National Convention must be postmarked no later than 90 days before the convention (**May 19**).
 3. **April 17***: Mail credentials forms to regional group presidents, vice presidents, secretaries, and treasurer (three copies each, Article XIV, Section 12c).
 4. **April 17***: Nominations for BVA Certificates of Appreciation, the Melvin J. Maas and Irving Diener Awards, and the David L. Schnair Service Award all due at National Headquarters.
 5. **May 8***: (No earlier than 100 days before convention): Earliest date to mail pre-registration package and official convention notice to potential attendees. Actual 100-day mark before the convention is **May 9**, which is a Saturday this year, requiring a **May 11** mailing.
 6. **Mid-May***: 75th National Convention pre-registration package prepared and sent to printer.
 7. **Mid-May***: 75th National Convention proxy forms mailed but only by request to National Headquarters Administrative Director.
 8. **May 19** (No earlier than 90 days before convention): Earliest date to distribute ballots to Districts 5 and 6 (Article VI, Section 3d).
 9. **May 9** (no later than 90 days before convention): Envelopes containing proposed bylaw amendments must be directed to National Headquarters and postmarked (Article XIX, Section 1b).
 10. **May 19** (no earlier than 90 days before convention): Earliest date to mail proposed bylaw amendments to members in good standing (Article XIX, section 1b).
 11. **May 19** (90 days before convention and 60 days following the original mail call referred to above): Nominations for regular elections of Directors of Districts 5 and 6.
 12. **June 3** (No later than 75 days before convention): Latest date to mail pre-registration official convention notice.
 13. **June 8** (No later than 70 days before convention): Latest date for National Headquarters to mail ballots for regular elections of Directors of Districts 5 and 6 (Article VI, Section 3d).
 14. **June 15***: National Headquarters mails annual financial report forms (three copies) to treasurers of regional groups.
 15. **July 3** (No later than 45 days before convention): Ballots for regular elections of Directors of Districts 5 and 6 due at National Headquarters.
 16. **July 3** (No later than 45 days before convention): Latest date to mail proposed bylaw amendments to members in good standing.
 17. **July 8** (no later than 40 days before convention): Regional group meeting notices to elect convention delegates must be mailed to group members. A copy of the notice must also be mailed to National



Headquarters at the same time it is mailed to the group membership.

18. **July 13** (35 days before convention):
National Headquarters counts election ballots for regular elections of Directors of Districts 5 and 6.

19. **July 27** (21 days before convention):
Completed delegate credentials forms and proxy forms must be postmarked no later than midnight.

Award Submissions Highlight Convention Preparations

This year marks 75 years of “Blinded Veterans Serving Blinded Veterans.” Each year, BVA recognizes at the national convention those who have sacrificed and excelled extraordinarily in their lives. Awards include the Major General Melvin J. Maas Awards, the Irving Diener Award, the David L. Schnair Award, and Certificates of Appreciation. These awards were established in order to recognize the honor that these individuals brought to the organization and the effort and dedication that were required to do so.

The Major General Melvin J. Maas Achievement Award was initiated by the late Baynard H. Kendrick, a renowned mystery writer and author of *Lights Out*, the story of a World War II Blinded Veteran. The award seeks to honor the individual who has contributed to the positive image of the blind community through his/her professional achievement. In honor of Maas, nominations should be individuals who have found success in their employment despite their vision loss and who have also helped other blinded veterans find independence.

Before his death, Maas was quoted in the New York Times: “A handicapped person who

lives up to his potential leads a more successful life than the so-called normal person who uses only 50 percent of his capabilities.”

Winners of the Maas Award are men and women with service connected blindness who have overcome their disability to become independent in their daily living. The Irving Diener Award was initiated by a former member of the BVA National Advisory Committee who continuously supported BVA. As an individual, Diener sought to empower those who were dedicated to the organization. The award seeks to honor those who have made an outstanding commitment to their BVA regional group and the organization as a whole rather than for their personal achievements in rehabilitation or employment. Diener saw that by recognizing one individual, he was motivating BVA members to focus on helping veterans located close to them geographically.

World War II blinded veteran David L. Schnair was an early member of BVA and a member of the National Board of Directors for more than 40 years, including Director of District 1. During those same years he was a volunteer at the New York City Regional Office. Today, BVA continues to honor David’s volunteerism through the Volunteer Service Award. Recipients of this award should be exemplary volunteers locally and/or nationally. They should have an understanding of the VA system and serve as a spokesperson for the needs of all blinded veterans.

The Certificate of Appreciation is in place to acknowledge those who have positively influenced the blinded veteran community and the achievements of its members. To be eligible for this award, the individual cannot

be a BVA member or a relative of a BVA member. The award is limited to those in the field of blind rehabilitation who serve veterans with vision loss.

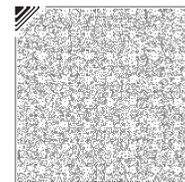
Nominations for each of the aforementioned awards are currently being accepted. All awards nominations are due April 19. Further information as well as nomination guidelines and criteria can be found on the BVA website.

Those selected will be honored at the convention. The venue for the Maas, Diener, and Schnair Awards is the Friday Awards Banquet, the culminating event of the

convention week. The Awards Banquet also recognizes the regional groups who have earned the Gold, Silver, and Bronze Gavels for the past fiscal year.

Certificates of Appreciation are awarded at the Thursday Father Thomas Carroll memorial Luncheon following the event's keynote address.

Have any questions, comments, or suggestions? We want to hear them! Send any and all correspondence to Charles Reynolds at creynolds@bva.org.



BVA HISTORY: Do You Remember?

This is a historical article from the BVA March 1947, Vol. 2 No. 3 Bulletin. It is a pure and unedited re-creation. Please enjoy reading a little bit of BVA history.

Do you remember a cool March morning at Avon when the air in the Quadrangle was fresh and crisp and the 8:30 gripe session hit a new high in attendance? Did you realize that the BVA was to grow out of that meeting? Do you remember the new atmosphere of interest in the gray stone Red Cross Lounge when Pinky Hoffman yelled for attention? Everyone will remember that particular 8:30 meeting as the birth of the BVA and the morning on which Virgil Coleman did not cuss out the Old Farms officers over his laundry

Do you remember how the BVA lived at Old Farms because it was poverty-stricken and very light on the membership side - - the first office the BVA could call its own . . . And how it consisted of a desk in one corner of Baynard Kendrick's kitchen at the Gundy Tea Room And remember the many dreams

about the future of the BVA which were discussed in that same kitchen

This was about the time when the by-word at Old Farms was "Who Dat?" And Dick Freeling held "constructive discussions" on any and all subjects on the Quadrangle lawn under the protective branches of Big Bertha. It was then that Big Bertha acquired many of her dents And the era when the rear of Father Carroll's automobile was adorned with a sign proclaiming: DANGER, THIS CAR IS DRIVEN BY A BLIND PRIEST and just before the time when Captain Moriarty stimulated several cases of heart failure by almost stepping out of the second story window of Dorm I. This was the time when Tommy Boyle enjoyed his heyday as Commander in Chief of the E. T. I.

Then came the era of marriages. Everyone seemed to decide to have a crack at it at the same time. Everyone of course, but Pat Adams and a few other die-hards It must have been shortly after this that somebody got a typewriter. This caused quite a sensation until it was discovered that the fellow's uncle was Senator Goofus of Pennsylvtucky. Of course, things have changed now and even dark glasses and white canes are within the realm of possibility – if you know the right people.

Do you remember the BVA's removal to a tiny office on 17th Street in New York – an office loaned by Baynard Kendrick and staffed by Mrs. Kendrick and when more than three of us congregated there, we overflowed into the Teamster's Union office next door.

Do you remember the first regional group meeting in Baltimore in the spring of 1946 when Irvin Schloss organized the men of

Baltimore into a regional unit? The regional groups began to form in all parts of the country shortly after that. And then the BVA moved into it's present office at 80 Warren Street, New York where everyone sweltered through the summer and dreamed about electric fans and venetian blinds

Do you remember the annual membership meeting at the Hotel Lincoln in New York, where members attended from as far away as Chicago and even South Carolina? All the old stories were re-told; civilian clothes had changed the general appearance of the membership – a few Seeing-Eye dogs and new wives made their appearance.

Months have passed – and this was many miles of red tape ago By the next anniversary, the BVA will have many more things to remember. Let's hope the remembering in 1948 will be as pleasant



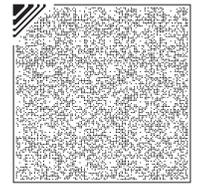
Responding to the 2020 Census is Critical for the Nation's Veterans

Responding to surveys and questionnaires from the Census Bureau helps ensure that we continue to have an accurate picture of our communities and responding to the 2020 Census will be particularly important.

In March 2020, households will receive a mailed invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. Most people will have the option to respond online from any computer device—such as a laptop, smartphone, or tablet—as well as by phone or by mail. If veterans are unclear as to how they should count themselves or the people in their home, they should visit Who to Count on 2020census.gov. Generally speaking, veterans need to complete a 2020 Census questionnaire unless they live in group housing, a hospital, or another “group quarters” facility. In that instance, a representative of the building will fill out the census questionnaire for everyone who lives in the facility.

To learn more about the 2020 Census and how it will shape the future for veterans, service members, and their families, visit 2020census.gov.

Operation Peer Support (OPS) News



Operation Peer Support (OPS) is a program designed by the Blinded Veterans Association to assist blind and visually impaired veterans and their families with educational resources and adaptive sports in order to regain independence, social skills, and confidence through rehabilitation.

Upcoming OPS Events

January 2020

Skiing/Snowboarding with OPS and Steamboat Adaptive Recreational Sports

Operation Peer Support will unite with *Steamboat Adaptive Recreational Sports (STARS)* in Colorado to give BVA members an opportunity to learn how to snow ski or snow board. This event will take place in January 2020. The event consists of the following: all-inclusive flights, lodging, ground transportation, all lift tickets, ski guides, ski equipment (with exception of



Picture of member Robin Robinson after conquering the slopes in Colorado last year.

clothing), meals, and any other necessary items. This event will host a **total of 10-participants (8 members of the Blinded Veterans Association and 2 sighted guides)** for the group.

February 2020

Paddling Clinic with OPS and Team River Runner

Operation Peer Support partners with *Team River Runner Outtasight Leadership and Paddling Clinic* to teach basic open water kayaking to 4 BVA members. This event will be held in Key Largo, Florida in February 2020. The goal is to develop TRR Leadership skills to enable participants to reach out to more veterans. This event will **support 3 members of our association.**

March 2020

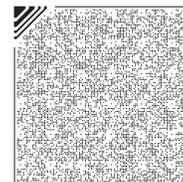
2020 Congressional Advocacy & Vision Research Conferences

Members of the Operation Peer Support Program will participate in the *2020 Congressional Advocacy & Vision Research Conferences*, which are two events in Washington, D.C. The future dates for visits will be between February and March 2020. During these events, a total of **5 OPS**

veterans (2 for the first event and 3-for second event) will advocate for DOD vision research with Legislative Representatives, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and make visits to Walter Reed Hospital. This event will include airfare, lodging, ground transportation, and meal expenses for OPS veterans.

April 2020

OPS and Heroes New Hope Foundation Turkey Hunt



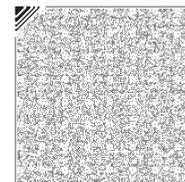
Operation Peer Support will sponsor members of the Blinded Veterans Association to participate in the *Heroes New Hope Foundation turkey hunt*. This event will host **2 blinded veterans of our association** for an all-inclusive turkey hunt which will include travel, lodging, license fees, tags, and meals. All attendees will have a professional guide to assist them in all aspects of this event.

For the fourth year, the LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired in San Francisco is soon accepting submissions for the Holman Prize for Blind Ambition.

The Holman Prize is an international competition that is awarded annually to three blind individuals who wish to push limits and change perceptions about blindness around the world. It is named for James Holman, a 19th century blind explorer, who was the most prolific traveler of any private traveler before the era of modern transportation. Each winner will receive up to \$25,000 to fund an adventure. From teaching blind people to be beekeepers in Uganda, to hosting the first conference in Mexico for blind children and their families led by blind professionals, to creating a travel documentary about navigating public transportation around the globe, our nine winners so far (hailing from five countries on four continents) have each found unique ways to make an impact.

And if you know an ambitious blind person who will be 18 or older by October 1, 2020, we ask you to encourage them to apply for the Holman Prize.

Applications opened January 15, 2020 and close March 15, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. Applications are accepted here: holmanprize.org/apply.



Choose a version of The Bulletin

Would you like to receive a Word, PDF, or CD version of the Bulletin as well as a physical copy? Or a mix of all of the above? Please let us know by calling BVA Headquarters where you may choose the version(s) of the bulletin that work best for you. Are you signed up for our monthly email newsletter? If you are not and would like to be, you can sign up for that while choosing your preferred methods of reading The Bulletin.

Renee Feldmann Scholarship Open

Application submission is now open for the Renee Feldman (BVAA) Scholarship for the 2020 – 2021 higher education school year. The deadline for applications is January 31, 2020. Applications may be found at the Blinded Veterans Association Auxiliary website, www.nbvaaux.org, and are open to spouses and children of legally blinded veterans. We encourage all spouses and children of blinded veterans continuing their education beyond high school to apply now.

Louisiana / Mississippi Regional Group Updates

The LA/MS RG is still abuzz about our recent trip to the National World War II Museum. Over 40 blinded veterans, most members of BVA, roughly 40 escorts, and VA Personnel celebrated Earl Forstal's 100th birthday. The party had a hands-on tour of the museum and a fantastic 4D movie. A couple of our members were drawn to the German 88, anti-aircraft / anti-tank weapon and were

debating on whether or not they could get it to move on its swivel. Fortunately, security came by and dissuaded them from their adventure; otherwise, it would have been very embarrassing to have our national and regional presidents thrown out of the museum. Joe Burns and other members were admiring the German BMW and the American Harley-Davidson motorcycles, one with a sidecar, when Joe was overheard saying, if they could find the keys, or at least hotwire them, we could throw Earl in the sidecar and make it to Bourbon Street before anyone missed us. The same security woman asked how they could join the BVA because it seems like we have lots of fun.

With 2020 being the year of perfect eyesight, the regional group is looking to have proclamations from as many cities as possible declaring March 28th as Blinded Veterans Day. Bronze Braille American Flags and accompanying plaques will be donated to the Biloxi BRC and various VA Hospitals to honor the World War II vets that started BVA. Overall, our mission is to make as many municipalities and individuals aware of BVA and what we do for the visually impaired veteran.

Plans are underway for the LA/MS RG annual banquet, which will be held on the last weekend of April.

The Louisiana / Mississippi Regional Group is looking forward to an exciting and prosperous 2020 with activities throughout the region, the national convention in Washington, D.C., and culminating with the

National Veterans Day Ceremony hosted by BVA.

We wish a Happy New Year to all of our fellow BVA members and friends.

Georgia Regional Group Save The Date

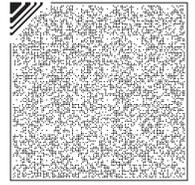
Greetings to all blinded veterans, families, and friends.

This is your SAVE THE DATE advance notice of this year's BVA State Convention scheduled for FRIDAY THROUGH SUNDAY MARCH 27-29, 2020 at the DoubleTree Hotel, 5351 Sidney Simon BLVD, Columbus, GA 31904.

This convention marks the 75th Anniversary of BVA and we promise an exciting schedule for you. In the 75th observance of the Blinded Veterans Association becoming the first Blind Veteran Congressional Association, we plan to have various guest speakers devoted to our well-being, vendors displaying their products, and an array of interesting activities such as a silent auction. There will be other developing projects in the next letter.

As our second fundraising convention, now is the time for YOU to assist in preparations for a successful and profitable event. It is time for you to SEEK supporters in your area for donations and/or items for the silent auctions, program booklet ads, and to assist your regional/chapter officers with your own ideas. Further details will be arriving soon.

Remember, this is an election year for our regional group. Take the time to get to know the membership. We plan to see you at this year's convention.



Did You Know?

- In 1941, more than 3 million cars were manufactured in the US. Only 139 more were made during the entire war.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/21-rare-and-weird-facts-about-world-war-2-2015-8#6-in-world-war-ii-british-soldiers-got-a-ration-of-three-sheets-of-toilet-paper-a-day-americans-got-22-6>



SAVE
THE DATE
MARCH 28, 2020



LIGHTUP

THE DARKNESS



A CHARITY CONCERT FOR
BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION

RICHARD J. ERNST
COMMUNITY
CULTURAL CENTER
ANNANDALE
VIRGINIA

Save the date for BVA's 2nd Light Up the Darkness Charity Concert on March 28, 2020 at the Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center in Annandale, Virginia.



Chaplain's Corner

by Chaplain Johnnie E. Busch, Sr.



Happy New Year and blessings to all! As we welcome the New Year, I feel called to speak about taking time to volunteer and to use your blessings and gifts God gave you to encourage and inspire others. I frequently volunteer with the VA Medical Center in Georgia and enjoy helping veterans by giving them information about benefits they can receive and by providing a listening ear. It's important to realize that you don't know everything and to listen as you can learn a lot from people from all walks of life.

I encourage my fellow veterans to not let their situation stop them from doing all that they can do because YOU can do anything you set your mind to. By getting out of the house and being active, we can encourage those around us to do better and not let their situation stop them from pursuing their dreams. They look at us and think: "They're blind, but they're out here living their life and being active; if they can, then I can." Everyone should be the best person they can be regardless of their situation and should encourage others to do the same.

I get out and about by participating actively in my church and in my veteran community. I attend Elizabeth Baptist Church, where I am

in the men's choir, and I attend bible study two times a week. I've been volunteering with the VA three to four times a week since 1994. I go to Birmingham and play golf and bowl. I try to let my actions show the world how important it is to help your fellow man and support our veteran community.

I look forward to attending our national convention this year in Washington, D.C. It's always a great opportunity to fellowship with our blinded veterans and introduce new technology to the community to enhance their way of life and ensure they are still able to get out there and enjoy it. Carl Bard said: "Although no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending." I look forward to seeing all of you there and I encourage everyone to get out there and start something. Live the life you want because only you can.



Auxiliary's View

By Patricia Hail, BVAA Reporter (& Past President)



Caregivers and the Blinded Veteran

To advance the understanding of blindness, communication, and the individualized care helpful for our blinded veterans, “caregiver sessions” must be designed to aid both the blinded veterans and their caregiver; in other words, the BVA and the BVAA coming together for the benefit of both. Over the years, the BVAA has come to understand several ‘key’ concepts or ideas that are very different for each blinded veteran and their caregiver(s), and to present these concepts with both partners present is an advantage to both. The following is a starter list of these concepts and idioms:

- **Knowing** what kind of blindness affects the blinded veteran may be interesting to the family, but more important is veteran’s **Dignity** and **the way the blindness affects** the veteran, the family, and those of importance in the veteran’s life.
- **Acceptance** of the blindness is important so that it can be ‘dealt with’ in a manner that can be understood and supported by all.
- **Independence** of the blind individual is a primary factor that allows everyone to move forward positively. “How can I get around and continue doing what I like and want to do?”
- **Opportunity** is another of the primary factors important to the blind – and close family and friends. “How am I going to provide for my family?” “What about my retirement plans?” “What can I do and what does it take to get there?” ‘Opportunity’ differs depending on the age and situation of the once-sighted person who no longer has the useable sight they once had.

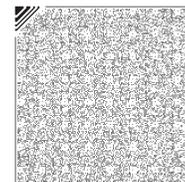
- Consider all **options**. Bucket lists are easy to change according to your desires.
- **Responsibilities** may have to be redistributed to adjust to the skills and accommodations within the blinded veterans, smallest circle (the family unit). Remember that states do not issue drivers licenses to those who have been determined “legally blind.”
- Be your own best **advocate**.
- “Toys” or aids for **accommodation** are only effective if you know how to use them and use them to your best advantage.
- And don’t forget your **social life** and **entertainment**. Again, this is a very individual thing.
- What about **education**? Veterans have educational benefits they can access. Use them wisely and to your new best advantage. Plus, scholarships are available for the whole family.
- **Several idioms** should be given some serious consideration:
 - Do not do for another what the individual can do for themselves.
 - To be an effective caregiver, one must first take care of him/herself.
 - Respect yourself – and respect your partner.
 - Counseling seldom hurts anyone.

As time goes on, this list will grow, even expand within itself. What it takes is, like Father Thomas J. Carroll supports: Knowledge, Understanding, Learning, Sharing, Communicating, and, especially, Respect and Dignity.



From the Veteran's Service Staff

By Claudia Belk



Survivors and Dependent Education Assistance (DEA) Program

This program is available for spouses and children of service-connected veterans who are permanently disabled, service members who died on active duty, or service members who died from a service-related condition.

Benefits may be used for a degree, certificates, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training. Spouses may take correspondence courses. If you began using the program before August 1, 2018, you may receive up to 45 months of education benefits. If you began taking courses on or after August 1, 2018, you have 36 months of education benefits. Effective October 1, 2013, some DEA beneficiaries may be eligible for 81 months of G.I. Bill benefits with survivors and dependent education assistance program in conjunction with another VA education entitlement program. The best thing to do is to contact the Department of Veterans Affairs education department for your eligibility for these programs.

To apply, take these steps depending on your situation:

Make sure that your selected program is approved for VA training. Take a look at the VA's GI Bill Comparison Tool for more information. Again, the VA can inform you and the school or company about the requirements.

You can apply online or by completing VA Form 22-5490, Dependents Application for VA Education Benefits. Send it to the VA regional processing office with jurisdiction over the state where you will advance your education and training. If you are a son or daughter, under the legal age, a parent or guardian must sign the application. If you are eligible for both the DEA and the Fry scholarship, you will be required to make an irrevocable election unless you are a child of a service member who died in the line-of-duty before August 1, 2011.

If you are not permanently disabled, work with your clinician in getting a medical opinion statement which states that your disabilities are permanently disabling and file this with the VA regional office to get your disability status changed. Veterans who are deemed permanent and completely disabled are entitled to additional benefits, such as Survivor's Dependent Education Assistance program; some states grant vehicle registration exemption benefits, property tax exemption benefits, etc. Check with your state's government to find out what additional benefits you may be entitled to for living in that state.



New Tax Filing information for Non-Profits

By Sunny Patel, CPA, SmtihBucklin

All tax-exempt organizations will soon need to file their tax returns electronically, thanks to the Taxpayer First Act (H.R. 3151), which was signed into law in July 2019. This new electronic filing will become effective for fiscal years beginning July 1, 2020. Therefore, for all BVA regional groups, this will apply to the June 30, 2020 year-end.

The new law applies to any tax-exempt organization filing Form 990, Form 990-EZ, Form 990-N, and Form 990-T.

For most BVA regional groups, in particular, this should refer to the 990-N or 990-EZ filing. 990-N's are filed for organizations that have less than \$50,000 in gross receipts. If the regional group's total assets are below \$500,000 and gross receipts are below \$200,000, a 990-EZ will be required for electronic filing. If either has been exceeded, then Form 990 must be filed electronically.

The Taxpayer First Act requires the IRS to make the Form 990 filed by tax-exempt organizations available to the public in machine-readable format as soon as feasible.

The new law also requires the IRS to provide notice to tax-exempt organizations that have failed to file their Form 990, 990-EZ, 990-N, and Form 990-T for two

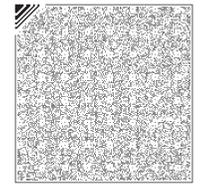
consecutive years. The notice from the IRS must include a statement that the organization's tax-exempt status will be automatically revoked if it fails to file its return for a third consecutive year by the required return's due date. For BVA regional groups, this again should mainly refer to the 990-N or 990-EZ tax return unless gross receipts exceed \$50,000.

Be sure to search the IRS's database of tax-exempt organizations at <https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/> to make the sure the IRS has your organization's current address on file. This will ensure that any potential correspondence goes to the correct address. If you have questions about how The Taxpayer First Act affects your tax-exempt organization, contact our tax department here or call 800-899-4623 for help.

Thomas Zampieri stated: *"I have filed the 990 EZ online and usually it takes five minutes because there is no itemization. Now the limit has changed to \$200,000 from the old level of \$50,000 so I would expect that the majority of BVA regional groups won't need to do anything more than file the 990 EZ form going forward. But the stricter time limit now is two years and then they revoke the status afterward for failure to comply."*

Important Veterans and Caregiver Information

By: Charles Reynolds



All veterans with service-connected disabilities and some authorized caregivers are now authorized to utilize base facilities. The Department of Defense (DoD) and Homeland Security have been working on implementing the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018 and this is what they decided. This means that as of January 1, 2020, service-connected disabilities and some authorized caregivers will be able to use the following base facilities:

- Base Commissaries
- Exchanges
- Golf Courses
- Bowling centers
- Recreational lodging
- RV campgrounds
- Movie theatres and more.

Homeland Security and DoD had to then decide who would be authorized to utilize the facilities. The Department of Defense Expanding Access to Military Commissaries, Exchanges and Recreation Facilities Fact Sheet was created and the following categories were granted these privileges:

- Purple Heart recipients
- Former POW's
- All veterans with service-connected disabilities that are rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs at 0% to 90%
- Family caregivers that are authorized by the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Veterans must ensure that they are rated by the VA by going through the Compensation and Pension (C&P) process with a benefits coordinator. Once they complete this process, they will be issued a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC). The card will say "service connected" under the photo. This is how the Commissaries and Exchanges can identify that these veterans are authorized patrons.

Veterans must ensure that their family member's information and who is authorized to be their caregiver is current with the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Then the veteran and caregiver will complete the VA form 10-10CG and send it to the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Once they are granted to be part of the program, the regional VA office will create a letter of authorization. With this letter the caregiver will be able to utilize the facilities with, or without, the veteran. As of today, only those veteran caregivers authorized to be part of the program are those caregivers of service-connected veterans that have been injured and departed from the service after 9/11.

The bases have been preparing for this for the last three months. To gain access to the bases, the veteran will be able to use his/her VHIC with the barcode and the bases have updated the software to allow the barcode to read the same as a Common Access Card (CAC) and retired military card. Some bases may require the veteran to register their VHIC card with the base Military Office so they can

upload the veteran's data to read on the card readers they use at each gate. Caregivers, who do not go on base with the veteran, can use their authorization letter and another valid form of identification.

The Commissaries and Exchanges have updated their systems through the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) and DEERS, which also includes new credit card and debit card usage fees for those patrons using their VHIC card. There is a 1.9% fee for paying with credit and a 0.5% fee for paying with a

card and pin number. Patrons who use electronic benefit cards or Military Star Cards will not incur a fee.



Please note that only the VA and the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers have the authority to grant, or deny, these privileges. So, for those 3 million more Veterans and caregivers who now have access to the base facilities, have fun.

National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament 2020

Dear Veteran and Family Member:

The Department of Veterans Affairs and DAV invites you to attend the 27th Annual National Disabled Veteran's TEE (Training, Exposure, Experience) Tournament (NDVTEE). This annual event promotes rehabilitation, fellowship, and camaraderie among veteran participants and will provide an introduction to the game of golf and alternative activities and sports.

Participation in the NDVTEE Tournament is open to male and female military service veterans with qualifying disabilities such as: visual impairment, spinal cord injuries, amputations, certain neurological problems and certain life-changing disabilities. Veterans who currently have inpatient or outpatient status at a VA medical facility will have priority.

The goal of the event is to provide veterans with qualifying disabilities an opportunity to develop new skills and strengthen their self-esteem through golf. In addition to the

game of golf, there is also an opportunity for veterans to be exposed to and experience a variety of rehabilitative, adaptive sports such as: bowling, kayaking, horseshoes, tandem cycling, disc (frisbee) golf, air rifle, and horseback riding. All participants are expected to possess good mobility and independent living skills.

If you are interested in this week-long event full of therapeutic, adaptive sporting activities, we encourage you to fill out the application at www.tee.va.gov or contact BVA headquarters



**SEPTEMBER 13-18, 2020
IOWA CITY, IA**

for an application and return it to the address listed. Be sure to fill the application out completely and note the following changes concerning this year's event:

- We need you to provide us your full SSN, date of birth and complete name to record your participation at the event in your medical record.
- There is a \$100 lodging commitment to attend.
- Checks/money orders for registration should be made out to: **DAV/TEE Tournament**.
- Provide all required forms and documents. **Only complete applications will be reviewed for consideration.**
- Refunds due to a cancelation must be made **14 days prior to the event** to confirm/secure that a refund will be returned.
- Participants are required to attend the entire week and attend scheduled events.
- Due to demand, you may only golf in the morning **OR** the afternoon on Wednesday, September 16.
- Non-service dogs are not allowed at the NDVTEE Tournament. If an animal is brought that is not a certified service animal, you will not be allowed to participate in the NDVTEE Tournament. Please arrange care for your non-service animal in your community and do not bring it with you to the event.
- There has been some confusion in the past over the difference between a Companion and a Volunteer.

- A “*Volunteer*” is someone who assists the Veteran during the event and has filled out a “Volunteer Application”. In most cases they are “Golf Buddies” on the golf course.
- A “*Companion*” is someone who pays \$100 to attend a “Companion Program”. The Companion Program is specifically designed for spouses and caretakers of veterans. The Companion does not golf with the veteran and attends a different program each day, while their veteran is assisted by someone else on the golf course. The \$100 goes to support the Companion Program events.
- If a volunteer (golf buddy) is attending with you, they must fill out a volunteer application. Volunteer applications can be found at www.tee.va.gov

The NDVTEE Tournament will be held in the Iowa City, Iowa area September 13-18, 2020; all participants will register on **SUNDAY**, September 13th. We look forward to having you as a participant, experiencing the unique and exciting challenges of this special event. Each day will be full of opportunities to meet new people and enjoy the friendly atmosphere of the area. Each evening will have an activity offered, with the closing banquet on Thursday, September 17th. The banquet will be an evening of camaraderie and entertainment to end this special week.

I hope that you can be a part of National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament this year.

Sincerely,

Nick Beelner

Acting Director, NDVTEE Tournament



Traveling Veteran Coordinator – Traveling for the Winter? Call ahead to ensure seamless care

By: Tim Hudak



Retrieved from:

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/67572/traveling-veteran-coordinator/>

How to ensure seamless care while traveling.

If you are enrolled in health care with VA, you will receive the same care while traveling as you would at home. A Traveling Veteran Coordinator will help coordinate with the alternate facility, but you need to tell your care team about your plans before you travels.

It's easy. Veterans can continue their VA health care in a different location while traveling. Even if you've temporarily relocated, simply tell your VA Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) of your travel destinations, a temporary address, updates to phone numbers, arrival and departure dates and specific care concerns while you are traveling. Then, a Traveling Veteran Coordinator ensures care is coordinated per your provider's request, appointments scheduled, and eligibility are transferred to the alternate VA Medical Center.

Prescriptions during travel should also be discussed with your care team, prior to travel.

Most VA Medical Centers have a Traveling Veteran Coordinator. To notify VA of your upcoming travel, call your local VA facility and ask for your VA Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT). Notifying VA 4-6 weeks in advance of travel is preferred to ensure seamless care.

“Traveling Veteran Coordinators and PACT teams work together to ensure veterans receive the best possible planned care while traveling away from their home VA,” said Mallory Murray, Veterans Integrated Service Networks 8 Traveling Veteran Coordinator Lead.

For overseas travel (foreign), veterans are encouraged to contact the Foreign Medical Program.

Also, don't forget to update your address on file if your mailing address is changing. This can be done in minutes online on VA.gov.

While traveling, take advantage of the United States' 400+ National Parks – disabled veterans are eligible for a free National Park Service Lifetime Access Pass.

More information on seamless care for traveling veterans can be found at:
https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/access/seamless_care.asp

Laurie's Retirement

By Tracy Ferro, BVA Member

As time marches on...

It is an exciting, yet sad time here at the Biloxi Blind Rehab Center. For any members out there who have gone through our program in the last six years, you may remember one of our nurses: Laurie Fraiche. She is retiring, which is exciting for her but sad for us because she will be sorely missed.

Laurie and her husband of 20 years, David, have been closely connected to veterans, as David is an Army veteran himself. Together they have 2 children and 6 grandchildren. With all this personal history, it is no wonder she is such a great fit for us.

Laurie started her nursing career in New Orleans in the late 80s. In 1992, she was selected to participate in the VA's Valor program. This very prestigious appointment started her career with VA where, after



Picture of Laurie Fraiche laughing with a blinded veteran

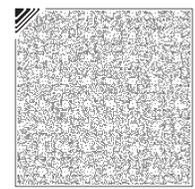
earning her nursing degree and license, she started at the Biloxi VA working in the Intensive Care Unit.

In 1998, she moved on to Fayetteville, Arkansas, where she continued her career with VA working in the ambulatory surgery center. In 2011, she transferred back to the Biloxi VA to work as an assistant manager in the ICU. She stayed there gaining knowledge and friendships. In 2014, she wanted to try something a little different with a bit of a more personal touch and off to the BRC she went.

She was surrounded by a great staff, made instant friends, and soon realized the lasting bonds she was making with the blind patients. As we looked forward to coming back and learning new things at the BRC, she looked with anticipation for us to return. That twangy cajun voice over the intercom announcing breakfast, lunch, or dinner, or the squeaky laugh that would erupt at the corniest of jokes, are sounds that will forever echo in the halls here.

On the bright side, she doesn't have any plans to move to Montana or other parts. She plans on staying here and working on her jewelry, crocheting for the grandkids, and doing her crafts. She won't be far and I suspect that we aren't through with seeing her just yet. As she means so much to us, we also mean so much to her and I'm sure she will pop in to say "Hi" and check on us.

So, Miss Laurie, on behalf of all blind veterans and the Blinded Veterans Association, we wish you the happiest of retirements and pray that you will always be blessed. You've left a lasting impression and will surely be missed.



VALLEY PATRIOT of the MONTH ~ Gerard Boucher US Marine Corp-Retired; Still Serving Brother & Sister Veterans!

By: John Cuddy – November, 2019

Retrieved From: <http://valleypatriot.com/valley-patriot-of-the-month-gerard-boucher-us-marine-corp-retired-still-serving-brother-sister-veterans/>

Haverhill's Gerard Boucher joined the US Marine Corp to avoid getting drafted by the US Army. On the wall of his home sits a Bronze Star and three Purple Hearts, so he certainly picked an unusual way to avoid the draft.

Talking to Gerard and his close friend Carolyn for an hour or so in his kitchen, I felt transported back to the Merrimack Valley in the 1960s. Gerard graduated from Haverhill Trade Class of 1966, found himself in Vietnam in 1967 with the 26th Marines, and is now retired from the US Marines. He currently serves as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Massachusetts Regional Group of the Blinded Veterans Association. Carolyn attended Newburyport High, and said she was glad she was not a young man back in the 1960s, as many of the young men in her class ended up in Vietnam. She later graduated from Smith College and was once roughed up by the Boston Police during an antiwar protest. Both enjoyed 50s and 60s music in their youth, and still do. Gerard following Doo Wop bands to this day, he and Carolyn recently attended a Doo Wop concert together in Plaistow, NH.

After he was wounded, a relationship with a blind veteran of World War II started Gerard on his lifetime journey of serving his fellow Veterans.



A current head shot of Gerard Boucher

Throughout our meeting, Gerard asked me to help him spread the word of the great work of the Blinded Veterans Association. Wounded three times in Vietnam, while serving with the US Marines, Gerard's only concern during our recent meeting was how many blind veterans I currently know, and can I help him locate more of these men and women, so he can help them lead productive lives.

Not one of the veterans from any branch of service or any era that I interviewed over the last two years, has ever boasted about their military service. Gerard is cut from the same cloth; he is focused on serving the needs of others. He took this spirit of humble service to our great nation to another level, with his

constant probing questions about who I knew in the veteran's community, and how I can get other blind veterans in touch with him, so he can assist them.

Barely out of his teens when he was blinded in combat, in Vietnam, during a mortar barrage on October 11, 1969. He recovered in the Chelsea Naval Hospital from his other wounds, but it was while there, he learned that his sight would not come back. His entire focus during our meeting was engaging me to help inform the public of the work of the Blinded Veterans Association, the benefits of joining, and the organization's goals.

Truly quite a hero, wounded three times defending our nation, he lives the spirit of "Semper Fi", focusing on how he can do more for his fellow Veterans. Not one to focus on what he cannot do, he is focused on what he can do. Gerard earned a BA from Bradford College, a MA from Thornwood in the Netherlands, and a PhD from Atlantic International University based in Hawaii. His thesis was on "Multicultural and Social Justice". This was written using JAWS speech software for the blind. He has written a book on his experiences in Vietnam and afterward, and both Gerard and I are looking for an editor and publisher for his book.

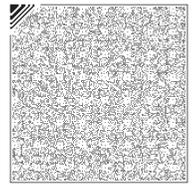
Meeting with Gerard made me question what, if anything, I am doing for my fellow veterans. After attending the wake and funeral last summer of a young veteran who died suddenly, leaving behind his small children I have been more focused on how the Veteran's Organization I belong to, the American Legion, can help prevent us from attending more wakes and funerals of our young veterans. How many problems can be solved by two veterans meeting for a cup of coffee, or going for a hike, catching a Red Sox game,

or even just having a beer together?

I remember about a year ago, a local veteran was going to lose his job because he needed brake work done on his car so his car would pass the Massachusetts State Auto inspection, and his family simply did not have the funds. Solvable problem, but if this veteran and his family cannot solve it, no car, means no job.

My Legion Post provided some of the funds to get this repair work done, the funds were sent directly to the mechanic, who did the work. Never was I more proud to be a member of the American Legion than I was hearing this story at our Post's monthly meeting. A few dollars from his fellow veterans prevented a job loss that would have created even more financial problems for his family. Dracut American Legion members Bob Page, Roland Provencher, both veterans of the US Air Force, and retired Dracut veteran's Services Officer Bill Zounes, a veteran of the 82nd Airborne, for years have been the "tip of the spear" when it comes to helping veterans locally.

Meeting with them over breakfast at Lowell's Cameo Diner, they asked me to encourage veterans to visit their fellow



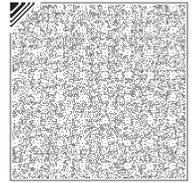
Headshot of BVA Member Gerard Boucher in his early Marine Corps days.

veterans, at the Bedford VA, in local nursing homes or assisted living centers, or simply stopping by their house for a cup of coffee. All three understand young veterans are correctly focused on family and careers, but all three believe in strength in large numbers of veterans banding together for a common cause and ask all veterans to join the American Legion.

Our challenge to all veterans, from all services, and all eras, to visit these two organizations online, the American Legion and the Blinded Veterans Association, email or call their officers, learn more about both veterans organizations, and how they are assisting veterans. If you are eligible, join either or both online as well.

Further challenging our brother and sister veterans is to find some small way to assist their fellow veterans. It does not need to become a full or part time job, it could be as simple as a job referral or helping with a home repair. How about taking a veteran to Muddy Waters in Methuen for a beer and a burger? Or down to Tripoli's at the beach for a slice of pizza? It does not take much to make a fellow Veteran's Day special! With that being said...

Happy Veteran's Day to all!



Tribute To A True Hero

By Michael Lewis, BVA Member

Terry N. King, July 18, 1940-July 2, 2019

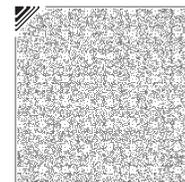
As we celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Blinded Veterans Association, I would like to take time out to remember and honor a true patriot.

Terry King was a totally blind Vietnam Era Veteran who passed away after battling Lou Gehrig's disease. He was a lifetime member of the Blinded Veterans Association for over 50 years and served as the President of the Florida Regional Group for over 12 years. Terry also served on the Florida Rehabilitation Council for the Blind and was one of the original founders of the Lighthouse of Southwest Florida, Inc.

He was a leader, patriot, and an advocate for all blinded veterans and was one of the kindest and most compassionate individuals I have ever had the honor and pleasure of knowing. His leadership, dedication, and diligence should be held up as an example for others to try to emulate.

Many people will walk in and out of your life but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart. Terry King is a true hero who left footprints in my heart, which has made me a better person.

May peace be with you, Terry.



Top Ten Things for Caregivers To Start Doing for the New Year

by Gary Barg, Editor-in-Chief of Today's Caregiver

1. Keep records of all medications and reactions: make notes about what works, what doesn't, and when you informed the physician of any problems.
2. Keep records of all doctor appointments: the reason for the visit, the doctor's responses to our concerns, any procedures performed, etc.
3. Start or continue to maintain copies of medical records for your loved one, and for yourself, as well. These will be beneficial should a grievance arise or if there are questions about medical histories.
4. Plan for the unexpected: discuss plans and wishes of everyone involved in the caregiving family. Talk about final resting places and what arrangements your family will want.
5. Have an Advance Directive filled out and given to the primary physician and all relatives who may need the form.
6. Have a Last Will and Testament completed or updated: without a signed Will, the courts will decide how to distribute the possessions of your loved ones.
7. Keep a record of where all-important documents are kept. When an emergency or tragedy occurs, locating information should not be where we spend our thoughts and energies.
8. Record all monetary involvements: investments, resources creditors, debtors, business transactions, etc.
9. Have an insurance analysis done: is your home, life and health insurance still appropriate for your family's needs? What about the insurance policies for your loved ones? Do you all have enough coverage to take care of any eventuality? Do you have provisions for Long-Term Care? For respite care? Is your house adequately covered given the state of the weather patterns?
10. Clean out the medicine chest. Look for expiration dates on all medicine and check with your doctor about previous medications which will either be harmful with current prescriptions or which are no longer effective for you or your loved one. Not only will you save space, you might also save a life.

Retrieved From: <https://caregiver.com/articles/top-ten-new-year/>

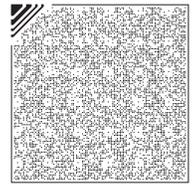
Did You Know?

- **Arlington is the only national cemetery to hold service members from every war in U.S. history.**

<https://www.history.com/news/arlington-national-cemetery-8-surprising-facts>

In Remembrance

The Blinded Veterans Association deeply regrets the passing of the following blinded veterans.



Connecticut RG

Richard Palmer

Florida RG

Morris Donald
James Gilmore
Lawrence Krebs
Leonard Mack
Wayne Nixon
Dennis Whittinghill

Georgia RG

Clinton Jones
Fred Lang

Long Beach Orange County RG

Malcom Levin

Louisiana RG

Michael Snyder

Michigan RG

Gene Atkinson
Raymond Bodak

Mid-Atlantic RG

Robert Brown

Minnesota RG

Marshall Shapiro

Mountain State RG

Clarence Blankenship

New Jersey RG

George Tash

New Mexico RG

Arthur Arias
Elizabeth Kenny
Frank Lujan
David Porter
Jack Seligman
Robert Stufft

New York RG

Clyde Boger
Seymour Brandler
Martin Kalfus

Northern California RG

Thomas Michalski

Pennsylvania RG

Carl Wernett

Rhode Island RG

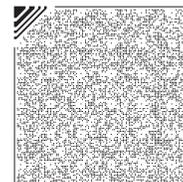
Paul Johnson

Rocky Mountain RG

C.E. Halstead
John Mcdaniel
Wallace Rodriguez
James Schulz
Robert Wencil
Henceford Wooden

BVA Members At Large

Thomas W. Pfister
Michael Sherman
Terry Ray Staggs
Aaron Winter



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Vice President – **JOSEPH MCNEIL**, Columbus, GA
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Treasurer – **ELIZABETH HOLMES**, Midland, GA
Director District 1 – **DENNIS O’CONNELL**, Long Beach, NY
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Director District 3 – **MONACA GILMORE**, Rocky Mount, NC
Director District 4 – **JHENNICEA MORROW**, Gilbert, AZ
Director District 5 – **PAUL KAMINSKY**, Middleburg, FL
Director District 6 – **KEVIN JACKSON**, Austin, TX
National Chaplain – **JOHNNY BUSCH SR.**, Atlanta, GA
Sergeant-At-Arms – **KENNAN HORN**, Edmond, OK
Trusted Advisory Council – **GARRET BOLKS**, Tulsa, OK

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Secretary – **SHERRI HARRIS-BATES**, Tulsa, OK
Treasurer – **BENJAMIN HOLMES**, Midland, GA
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LOREAL HAMILTON

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Final Thought

We're in a new and very special new year. It's 2020 and the perfect time for you to try new activities and take steps to better yourself, your life, and your family. Enjoy the journey as we continue through the year and as we celebrate 75 years of the Blinded Veterans Association, 75 years of Blinded Veterans helping Blinded Veterans, 75 years of advocating for the rights and needs of blinded and sighted veterans everywhere. Help us make this one of the best years for the Blinded Veterans Association.



Group photo of BVA first National Convention, September 1946, at the Lincoln Hotel in New York City.