



**COUNTY OF ROCKLAND  
VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY**

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



**A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS....**

## MARINE CORPS “TOYS FOR TOTS” PROGRAM

This year “Toys for Tots” turns 65. It’s a great program that over the years has provided millions of toys to kids who otherwise might not get any. If you’d like to donate a new, unwrapped toy you can drop it off at our office or many other locations around the County. If you would like information on other drop off points, please call (845) 269-9610. You can also donate online at <http://www.toysfortots.org> - or if you wish to keep it local, you can send a check to the Rockland County Marine Corp League – PO Box 1775, Haverstraw, New York 10927. In light of Hurricane Sandy we encourage you more than ever, to be generous this year.

At the same time, we would advise you to be careful. If you have questions about veterans’ or any other charities, you can check them out at [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org).

**The Rockland County Detachment of the Marine Corps League will be at the Palisades Mall collecting Toys for Tots on each of the weekends in December. You will also see drop-off boxes placed around the County for this program. Please donate new, unwrapped gifts. Your help is appreciated.**



**For further information, visit the Rockland Chapter Marine Corps League website at: [www.rocklandusmc.com](http://www.rocklandusmc.com).**

## PEARL HARBOR COMMEMORATION

**Friday, Dec 7, 2012**

The Village of Suffern will commemorate Pearl Harbor on Friday evening, December 7, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Suffern Village Hall. All are invited to attend.

## **NAM KNIGHTS WREATH-LAYING SERVICE**

**Mt. Moor Cemetery - Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012**



The Nam Knights – Hudson Valley Chapter – will once again honor the military service of black Americans by having a wreath laying ceremony at Mount Moor Cemetery. This will take place on Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.. The public is invited to attend.

Mount Moor has been a long-time burial place for members of local African-American families — with veterans buried there as long ago as the Civil War. For further information, contact Charlie Maushardt at 845-359-4005 or visit their website at: [www.namknightsmc.org](http://www.namknightsmc.org).

## **TOY DRIVE FOR PEOPLE TO PEOPLE**

### **Drop-Off Stations Noted**

The Nam Knights (Hudson Valley Chapter) is also setting up a Holiday Toy Drive to benefit People to People. In addition to age appropriate toys, non-perishable foods and monetary donations are now being accepted through the holiday season.

All toys, food, items and donations collected will be given to "People to People" for needy families in Rockland County. The following four drop locations are available:

BJ'S in West Nyack

Modern Automotive, 1 Western Highway, Tappan 10983

Backstreets Bar and Grill, 545 Western Highway, Blauvelt 10913

Rockland County Court House, 1 South Main Street, New City 10956.

**The Nam Knights MC is a 501-(C)3 organization comprised of Military Veterans, Law Enforcement Officers and Patriots. For more information contact Chapter President Charlie Maushardt at 845-359-4005 or visit their website: [www.namknightsmc.org](http://www.namknightsmc.org).**

## VET CHARITY WATCH

Here are some resources for evaluating a charity before deciding where to give your money:

- <http://www.charitywatch.org>: A watchdog group that grades charities and offers advice on how to evaluate them
- <http://give.org>: Charity ratings by the Better Business Bureau. Donors can also file complaints here.
- <http://www.charitiesnys.com>: New York State Attorney General's office site, where donors can look up charities' tax forms, audits and telemarketing costs. Donors also can file complaints here.
- <http://www.guidestar.org>: Provides access to charities' tax documents for free.
- <http://www.charitynavigator.org>: Rates charities and gives advice on evaluating charities.
- <http://www.givewell.org>: Recommends specific questions a donor should ask a charity based on the type of charity it is.
- <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Exempt-Organizations-Select-Check>: IRS web tool for verifying a charity's tax status

[Source: Times Union | Cathleen F. Crowley | 10 Nov 2012 ++]

## COLA 2013 UPDATE

On their first day back in session the Senate passed S.2259, which gives a 1.7% cost-of-living-adjustment to compensation benefits paid to disabled veterans and survivors. The bill had previously been passed by the House of Representatives back in July. The bill's sponsor, Senator John Tester (D-MT) said: "Veterans fought hard for this country and earned all their benefits. It's my job to make sure those benefits keep pace with economic realities, and I will fight to improve the lives of veterans across Montana and the country." Tester estimated that the increase would mean an additional \$500 in benefits for veterans and their families next year. The president signed S.2259 into law in late November. The new COLA will take effect on 1 DEC and is expected to be included in the checks sent in January.

[Source: TREA News for the Enlisted 16 Nov 2012 ++]

## MILITARY VETS IN CONGRESS

The 113th Congress that takes office in January 2013 will have the fewest military veterans since World War II, although the number of members who served in the Afghanistan or Iraq wars is growing. Nineteen percent of the next Congress will be veterans, with 85 in the House and 18 in the Senate, 34 according to a tally compiled by the American Legion (see chart on next page.)

In the current Congress, there are 91 veterans in the House and 25 in the Senate. The decline isn't completely surprising. The 95th Congress of 1977 and 1978 -- just after the draft ended in 1973 -- had 412 veterans. The percentage of members who served in the military has steadily fallen since. "There are two things that are leading to fewer veterans in Congress," said Jon Soltz, co-founder of VoteVets.org. "First, the last conscription force to fight a war is at retirement age, and they are leaving Congress. Second, the new generation of veterans makes up a smaller percentage of the overall population now, and many of them are just getting into politics for the first time. Many of them aren't yet ready to run for Congress, because they have no political base in their communities."

As many of the veterans from World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War retire, Afghanistan and Iraq veterans are beginning to take their places. Rep. elect Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a double amputee from the Iraq War, is one of the highest-profile new members. Including Duckworth, there are a total of nine new House members who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan, according to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. Republican Martha McSally, who served in both wars, is still waiting for the outcome of her race to be decided against Rep. Ron Barber (D-AZ). No new senators are veterans. Seven Iraq and Afghanistan veterans were reelected. "While the total number of veterans in Congress has decreased, we will see a record number of post-9/11 veterans in Congress this year," said Tom Tarantino, chief policy officer for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. "Sixteen veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan have won their races and will be part of the House of Representatives next year." Committee assignments in both chambers are still being figured out. More than 1 million new veterans are expected to return home within the next five years, meaning these issues will become increasingly important for Congress.

## AMERICAN LEGION DATA - MILITARY VETS IN CONGRESS

**Number of veterans in Congress since 1975, according to the American Legion:**

CONGRESS	HOUSE (435 Members)	SENATE (100 Members)
94th (1975-1976)	306	73
95th (1977-1978)	347	65
96th (1979-1980)	242	58
97th (1981-1982)	269	73
98th (1983-1984)	248	56
99th (1985-1986)	181	57
100th (1987-1988)	175	52
101st (1989-1990)	202	49
102nd (1991-1992)	161	51
103rd (1993-1994)	126	44
104th (1995-1996)	154	55
105th (1997-1998)	141	48
106th (1999-2000)	135	44
107th (2001-2002)	130	38

108th (2003-2004)	114	35
109th (2005-2006)	107	29
110th (2007-2008)	97	28
111th (2009-2010)	96	28
112th (2011-2012)	91	25
113th (2013)	85	18

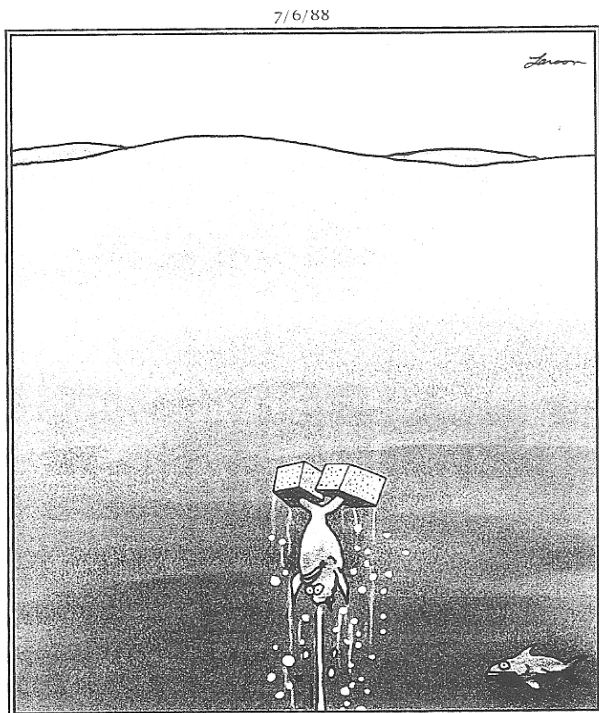
[Source: Huff Post Politics article 19 Nov 2012 ++]



## **EQUINE ASSISTED PROGRAMS OFFERED**

### **FREE OF CHARGE TO VETERANS IN OUR AREA**

Pony Power Therapies has been providing both mounted and un-mounted equine assisted programs since 2000. Through funding through The Wounded Warrior Project, they have expanded their programs to Veterans in our area. Pony Power Therapies is located at Three Sisters Farm, Mahwah, NJ and is the only facility in the area solely devoted to equine assisted programming. Please contact Dana Spett or Bonnie Malajian at 201-934-1001 or ([bmalajian@verizon.net](mailto:bmalajian@verizon.net)) to inquire about this program.



Embedded in Styrofoam "shoes," Carl is sent to "sleep with the humans."

## **FOLLOW-UP TO CONCERNS ABOUT SCAMS**

Last month we noted that there were scams perpetrated in the name of "veterans," specifically the Veterans Service Organization which we, and others, have been investigating. We sent letters and information to some of the merchants the Veterans Service Organization was soliciting and received this note back from Emily Schmid of Walmart Executive Communications:

Emily Schmid writes: "Thank you for writing to Mike Duke. We appreciate your feedback and the information you shared regarding the Veterans Support

Organization. I'm responding to let you know that last month, Walmart issued a store-wide communication informing local management about these investigations. The communication also notes that we now prohibit solicitation or distribution of literature by VSOs on Walmart property. Thank you again for taking the time to write."

## MANY YOUNGER VETS ARE AMONG THE RANKS OF UNINSURED

According to an article by Chris Adams for the McClatchy Newspapers, published on November 19, more than a quarter of all veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan don't have health insurance and aren't part of the Department of Veterans Affairs health system, according to an analysis of VA data. The uninsured rate among these recent veterans is higher than for other war periods and for veterans as a whole, raising concerns that veterans recently back from the wars might not be taking advantage of care to which they are entitled. Veterans' advocates and some lawmakers have pushed to automatically enroll veterans in the VA health care system, which could fill in the gap for some of the veterans not

now covered by the VA or the private market. To read Adams' article in full: <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2012/11/19/175066/many-younger-vets-among-the-ranks.html>.

## MORE THAN 50% OF VETS DON'T UNDERSTAND THEIR EARNED BENEFITS

According to a McClatchy Newspapers investigative report, more than half of America's veterans say they have little or no understanding of the benefits due them, despite efforts over recent years to match returning soldiers with the help and services they need. Even among post-9/11 veterans, 40 percent say they have little or no understanding of their benefits, a figure that climbs to two-thirds for those unfamiliar with life insurance benefits available. **To read the report, click here.**

**If you are a veteran and haven't registered with our office, we strongly**

**encourage you to do so to learn more about the benefits you have earned. Call Jerry at 845-638-5244, send a note via e-mail: [jerry@rockvets.com](mailto:jerry@rockvets.com), or visit our website at [www.rockvets.com](http://www.rockvets.com).**

### Many veterans aren't sure what's due them

An analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs survey data shows many veterans say they have little or no understanding of the benefits due them. Highlights of the survey:

Period of service	Health care benefits		Education benefits		Life insurance benefits	
	Understand a lot, some about benefits	Understand a little, none	Understand a lot, some about benefits	Understand a little, none	Understand a lot, some about benefits	Understand a little, none
World War II Dec. 1941-Dec. 1946	38%	62%	42	58	34	66
Korean War July 1950-Jan. 1955	36	64	41	59	27	73
Vietnam era Aug. 1964-April 1975	37	63	43	57	18	82
Persian Gulf War era Aug. 1990-Aug. 2001	42	58	43	57	29	71
Afghanistan, Iraq wars September 2001 or later	48	52	59	41	35	65

Source: Analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs National Survey of Veterans, 2010  
Graphic: Judy Treible

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## MAJOR THOMAS KENNEDY REMEMBERED

On Friday, November 30, 2012, family members, friends, veterans, neighbors and others, gathered to dedicate Arden Place in New City, for Major Thomas Kennedy. Major Kennedy was killed in Afghanistan on August 8, 2012. The street dedication was the first of several weekend events honoring him.

“For us it’s a time to recognize and pay tribute to a Clarkstown son that has paid the ultimate sacrifice in fighting for and protecting our liberties around the world,” said Clarkstown Supervisor Alex Gromack.

Clarkstown Police Chaplain Rev. David Lothrop, who led the service, said, “The renaming of this street will always remind us that freedom has a high price and Major Thomas Kennedy paid that price so that all of us can continue to enjoy the freedom we richly enjoy.” Major Kennedy’s family appreciated the community support and this recognition of their son, brother, husband, and father.



## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE WEBSITE

Information to add to your research list



We’ve recently come across this website that has useful information on Post Traumatic Stress. Check it out when you get a chance: [Real Warriors http://www.realwarriors.net](http://www.realwarriors.net).

Also visit VA website: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/AboutFace/>

Confidential Veterans’ Crisis Intervention Line 24/7

Dial 1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

Text to **838255**

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### DEPARTMENT OF LABOR VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVE

Natalie Hernandez, our local Veterans Representative with the NYS Department of Labor, sent this information:

For those of you who are post- 9/11 Veterans with an honorable discharge who are unemployed, this program might be for you. <http://missioncontinues.org>. The Mission Continues is a fellowship program that if you complete 20 hours a week of community service at your choice of a local nonprofit organization for 26 consecutive weeks, you will receive a basic housing allowance a month in military terms BAH, which for New York is not a bad penny! Some of you might already know about this program. There are other requirements and qualifications that you must meet to participate. You can find the application and more information about the program at this website: <http://missioncontinues.org/> .

You can reach Natalie Hernandez at: NYS Department of Labor, Local Veterans Employment Representative, 1 Perlman Drive, Spring Valley, NY 10977. 845.356.5429. E-Mail: [Natalie.Hernandez@labor.ny.gov](mailto:Natalie.Hernandez@labor.ny.gov). Twitter at @NatDOLVetRep. Natalie served in the United States Army, SGT 2000-2008 and during Operation Iraqi Freedom. You can contact Natalie for available job opportunities, and also to sign up for her monthly newsletter.

#### **Some of the positions that are currently available include:**

**Vocational rehabilitation Counselor Assistant: vacancy ID: 5530**

**Salary: \$38,934 to \$49,821 annually. Full-time/Permanent position in Brooklyn, NY**

**Habilitation Specialist: vacancy ID: 5672**

**Salary: \$41,170 to \$52,552 annually. Full-time/Permanent position located in Nyack**

**Our local veterans' representative (LVER) can also give you information about upcoming Civil Service jobs and jobs available for New York State, as well as information about the "Veterans Roadmap to Federal Employment" resource for veterans who would like to pursue federal Employment.**

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### LOCAL POSITION AVAILABLE FOR VETERANS

#### **AAA Refrigeration Service, Inc.**

AAA Refrigeration Service, Inc. — [www.aaarefrig.com](http://www.aaarefrig.com)

This company is currently looking for refrigeration technicians and refrigeration apprentices in the tri-state area. All positions are full time positions (40 hours a week) with the possibility of overtime on nights and weekends. You need to have a clean driver's license, and within 3 months of employment with this company, will need to become CFC Certified. This is a DEP requirement to handle refrigerant.

If you are interested in applying or would like to get further information, please contact AAA Refrigeration Service:

In the New York area: Jennifer Varga – [jvargo@aaarefrig.com](mailto:jvargo@aaarefrig.com) or call (718) 324-2231.

New Jersey area: Tim Dehardt – [tdehardt@aaarefrig.com](mailto:tdehardt@aaarefrig.com) or call (973) 882-3500

In Connecticut: Ron Sarasin – [rsarasin@aaarefrig.com](mailto:rsarasin@aaarefrig.com) or call (860) 793-8825

### INFORMATION FOR VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS

The number of veterans early in their careers is on the rise: 74 percent of service-disabled veterans over the last 10 years is under 30 years old. They are equipped with unique skills as a result of their service, and their veteran status offers distinct business advantages. For those veterans and their family members with the entrepreneurial spirit, there are now several programs aimed at helping them leverage their skills and talents and start a business. With the help of these initiatives, veterans have a greater chance of achieving success and once again, providing critical support for our country as one of the many small businesses that are the backbone of our nation.

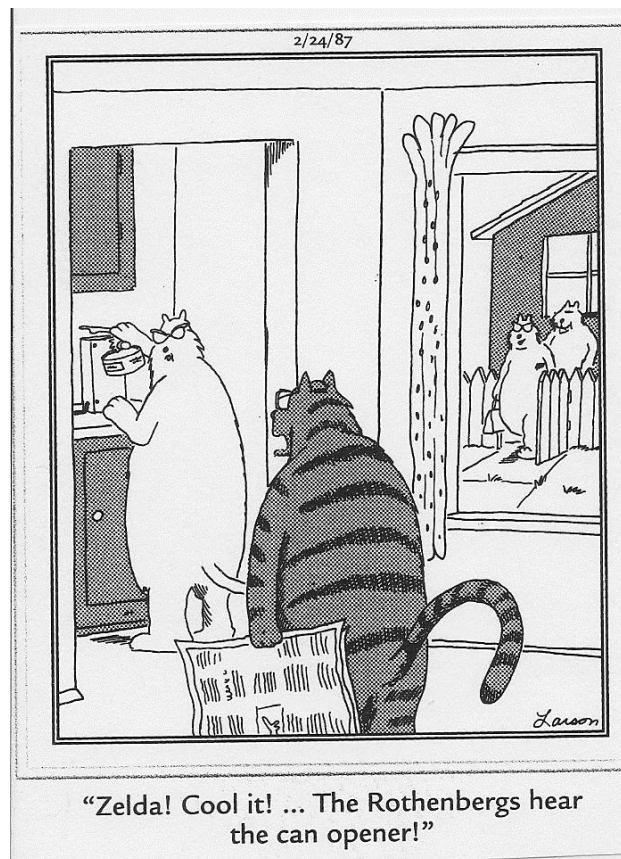
Veteran Fast Launch: Operation Boots to Business: .Veterans Business Fund: Operation Endure and Grow:

For further information, visit Small Business Authority's website: [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

## COMMUNITY EVENTS



If your organization has any upcoming events to benefit veterans and our military community, we can add the item to our newsletter. Our monthly circulation reaches out to many veterans, military troops, their families, and others who support our service members and veterans. There are no fees for this type of announcement - just get the information to us as soon as possible so we can add it to the newsletter in ample time for your event, before the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, for the following month's edition.



## ABOUT ROCKVETS - A PROJECT OF NY VETS ©

We would like to keep you up-to-date on events and matters of interest to veterans and will be sending these newsletters regularly. If at any time you no longer wish to receive them, please send a note to [info@rockvets.com](mailto:info@rockvets.com).

Your e-mail address will immediately be deleted from our newsletter mailing list. If you find any of this information useful or newsworthy, feel free to pass it along.



*We are here to help you and all who have worn the uniform of our nation. Thank you.*

## ROCKVETS - NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING

### A new feature – by request

We've had a number of requests from people with businesses or organizations who are interested in placing an ad in our monthly newsletter. We appreciate the confidence and positive responses to the newsletter so far and hope you continue to find items of interest and helpful links. If there are any particular topics you'd like to see us highlight, please let us know. If you would like information about placing an ad, please send an e-mail to [info@rockvets.com](mailto:info@rockvets.com) or click on the rate schedule link to view our ad sizes and fees: [Advertising Rate Schedule 2012 PDF.pdf](#)

## ROCKVETS - ON THE INTERNET AND AIRWAVES

You can find information, useful links, and view our webpage at [www.rockvets.com](http://www.rockvets.com). Previous copies of our newsletters are also available on our website at: [www.rockvets.com/newsletters](http://www.rockvets.com/newsletters). You can interact with us on our facebook page: [www.facebook.com/rockvets](http://www.facebook.com/rockvets) or e-mail us at: [info@rockvets.com](mailto:info@rockvets.com). On the first Friday of each month, just after the 10:00 a.m. news-break, Rock Vets has a live call-in talk show on Rockland County's local radio station – WRCR 1300 AM. We encourage you to call-in and ask any questions you may have relating to veterans or the military. This is also a good opportunity to promote any upcoming events for your organization that would be of interest to the veteran/military community. The call-in number is 845.362.0013. The show is also live on [www.wrcr.com](http://www.wrcr.com). So please listen in, and call if you have questions or information to share. The next RockVets radio show will be on Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 just after the 10:00 a.m. newscast.

R.C. Veterans Service Agency – if you plan to come to the office, please call to make an appointment so we can give you the time you need - 845.638.5244.

Jerry Donnellan, Director - Veterans Service Agency of Rockland  
20 Squadron Blvd., Suite 480, New City, NY 10956

