

PUTNAM VETERAN'S NEWSLETTER

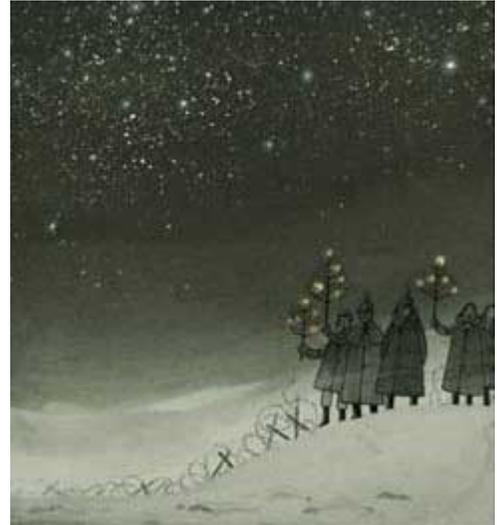
An E-mail Newsletter of the Putnam County Veterans Service Agency

A Carol from Flanders

by Frederick Niven (1878-1944)

In Flanders on the Christmas morn
The trenched foemen lay,
the German and the Briton born,
And it was Christmas Day.

The red sun rose on fields accurst,
The gray fog fled away;
But neither cared to fire the first,
For it was Christmas Day!
They called from each to each across
The hideous disarray,
For terrible has been their loss:
"Oh, this is Christmas Day!"
Their rifles all they set aside,
One impulse to obey;
'Twas just the men on either side,
Just men — and Christmas Day.
They dug the graves for all their dead
And over them did pray:
And Englishmen and Germans said:
"How strange a Christmas Day!"
Between the trenches then they met,
Shook hands, and e'en did play
At games on which their hearts were set
On happy Christmas Day.
Not all the emperors and kings,
Financiers and they
Who rule us could prevent these things —
For it was Christmas Day.
Oh ye who read this truthful rime
From Flanders, kneel and say:
God speed the time when every day
Shall be as Christmas Day.



In 1914 there was an unprecedented and unofficial Christmas truce between the British and German Troops. The US had not entered the war, in fact the war was only a few months old. Perhaps the troops knew that it was going to be a long and bloody war, they were people who were doing the actual fighting after all. There was never another Christmas Truce. Although Garth Brooks, in his classic song "Belleau Wood", created an American Christmas Truce. The only problem is that the Battle of Belleau Wood took place in June of 1918 not Christmas time. Notwithstanding creative history let each of us embrace the spirit of that Christmas Truce and pray for peace and keep close to our hearts those who even now guard the gates of freedom. Re-read the last two lines of this poem-how true!

From the Veterans Services Staff,

Kim, Richie, Brennan, Art, Karl



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HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

As Veterans most of us spent at least one Holiday Season away from our family and friends. No matter when or where we served; during conflicts or peacetime; deployed or in the Continental United States; duty kept us from being able to be with the ones whom we loved back home. Everyone worked hard to make the holiday as good as possible for us, the chow was a step up from the daily offerings, the mess hall (if there was one where you were) might have some decorations, alcohol was little easier to come by and there may even have been some entertainment via the USO or your service branch's MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) office. However, it still was not

home.

For those who spent a Holiday deployed, times have changed. It used to be rereading old letters we carried and if mail arrived in a timely fashion opening a box full of goodies to share with our buddies. Later some would be

lucky enough to get a call through using the MARS (Military Auxiliary Radio System) to actually speak to those at home for up to three minutes. However, it still was not home.

Today, if they are lucky enough to be at a base with an internet connection the service member has the ability to not only speak to but to see those at home via "Skype" or "Face Time". However, it still is not home.

As we gather with family and friends to celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas and New Year, we all need to be mindful that there are service members serving in not only areas of combat, but also all around the globe, who will not be able to be with their loved ones. Likewise



we need to be aware of those at home who are missing their service member. Remembering what it was like when we could not be home, we need to reach out, to make sure, that both the service members and their loved ones at home have the best possible holiday under the circumstances. Send cards and packages to those who are serving, invite that neighbor who is missing their son, daughter, husband, wife, mom or dad to be part of your holiday celebration. It will not just make it better for them but for you as well.

We also need to remember that for many the Holidays are a time of increased depression. Those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress may be thinking of the friends who did not come home and are no longer able to join in any celebration. The older Veterans may be missing those who have passed on due to age and are feeling all alone. Please check in on these friends and neighbors. Do not let them slip into the shadows. While they may not reach out to you, many will welcome your call or your invitation.

Remember that the **Crisis Line for Veterans** operates 24/7. It takes the courage and strength of a warrior to ask for help! Call **1-800-273-8255** and Press **1** for Veterans. Again, that is **1-800-273-TALK** and Press **1** for Veterans.

From my family to you and yours, we wish you a Happy Hanukkah, a Merry Christmas and a Happy & Healthy New Year!

Art Hanley

during his deployment. Then she concluded with a simple question: "Where were the people to help me and my family?" The room was silent.

Yes where were we? We have failed this family and we are failing countless other families of deployed service members. We pay homage and assist those who serve but we forget that when a person is deployed and serving, their entire family is in actuality serving. We must reach out and help the families of those deployed.

Perhaps we who are being protected by those who serve are too safe. We need to establish a "Homefront" mentality like there was during World War II.

Karl



We recently held a very successful Veterans Legislative Forum. With several speakers and a host of elected officials or their representatives from the national level to the county level. All guests were intent on gathering information regarding the needs of Veterans in our community. The event was sponsored by the Putnam County Veterans Task Force and the Putnam County Veterans Service Agency. A continental breakfast buffet was provided by the generosity of Assemblyman Steve Katz. The speakers wove a wonderful tapestry of Veterans needs. All were warmly received.

There was a person who stepped to the microphone stopped the show. She was an unplanned speaker who probably felt like Lincoln when he stated that his words at Gettysburg would not be remembered. She introduced herself as the daughter of a Veteran. A Veteran of a recent deployment. She and her siblings were still children coping with having a parent far away from home in a hostile environment. She explained how difficult it was for them

New York State Division of Veterans Affairs

Let Us Be Your Compass

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As a Veterans Counselor for New York State I am pleased to announce a COLA raise for Veterans who receive disability compensation and pension benefits:

Veterans to Receive 1.5 Percent Cost-of-Living Increase New Rates for Compensation and Pension Benefits in 2014

WASHINGTON (Dec. 4, 2013) – Veterans, their families and survivors receiving disability compensation and pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs will receive a 1.5 percent cost-of-living increase in their monthly payments beginning Jan. 1, 2014.

-living increase for Veterans, their families and their survivors,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “The increase expresses in a tangible way our Nation’s gratitude for the sacrifices made by our service-disabled and wartime Veterans.”

For the first time, payments will not be rounded down to the nearest dollar. Until this year, that was required by law. Veterans and survivors will see additional cents included in their monthly compensation benefit payment.

For Veterans without dependents, the

new compensation rates will range from \$130.94 monthly for a disability rated at 10 percent to \$2,858.24 monthly for 100 percent. The full rates are available on the Internet at www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/rates-index.asp.

The COLA increase also applies to disability and death pension recipients, survivors receiving dependency and indemnity compensation, disabled Veterans receiving automobile and clothing allowances, and other benefits.

“We’re pleased there will be another cost-of-

Under federal law, cost-of-living adjustments for VA’s compensation and pension must match those for Social Security benefits. The last adjustment was in January 2013 when the Social Security benefits rate increased 1.7 percent.



In fiscal year 2013, VA provided over \$59 billion in compensation benefits to nearly 4 million Veterans and survivors, and over \$5 billion in pension benefits to more than 515,000 Veterans and survivors.

For Veterans and separating Servicemembers who plan to file an electronic disability claim, VA urges them to use the joint DoD/VA online portal, eBenefits. Registered eBenefits users with a premium account can file a claim online, track the status, and access a variety of other benefits, including pension, education, health care, home loan eligibility, and vocational rehabilitation and employment programs.



Westchester-Putnam Veterans Virtual Job Fair

Where veterans and businesses connect
now through Thursday, December 12



Businesses: List your jobs at
westchesterveteranjobs.com

Job seekers: Register today at
westchesterveteranjobs.com

Westchester-Putnam One-Stop Employment Centers

Dedicated to connecting businesses to a skilled workforce

For more information, please call: (914) 995-3910
www.westchesterveteranjobs.com



Westchester
GOVERNMENT

Robert F. Antonino
Westchester County Executive



Mary Ellen Odell
Putnam County Executive



Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor



CONCORDE



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive
And MaryEllen Odell, Putnam County Executive

Invite Veterans to a
Veterans Town Hall Workshop

Hosted by the American Legion Post 1009
Commander Gerry Knapp
And the Westchester County, Putnam County and City of Yonkers
Veteran Service Agencies

Saturday December 14, 2013

American Legion Post 1009
375 Veterans Road
Yorktown Heights, NY 10592

TIME	PROGRAM
10:00 – 10:30	Greetings, Check-in, and Coffee
10:00 – 10:30	VA Health Campus Montrose/Castle Point: A.M. Session
11:00 – 12:00	<u>Workshops:</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veterans Service Officer Benefits/Claims
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veterans Organizations Membership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OIF/OEF/OND Information
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PFC Joseph Dwyer – Vet 2 Vet
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veterans writing workshop
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veterans Home buying network – loans
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch Break
12:30 – 1:00	VA Health Campus Montrose/Castle Point: P.M. Session
1:00 – 2:00	<u>Workshops:</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veterans Service Officer Benefits/Claims
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Veterans Organizations Membership
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Please call 914-995-2145/2146 with your plans to attend

