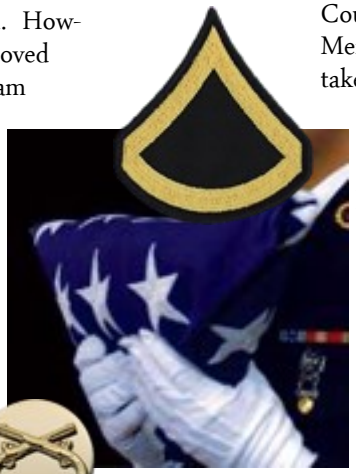
VOLUME 3, ISSUE 7 SEPTEMBER 2013

PUTNAM VETERAN'S BULLETIN

Special Event On Gold Star Mothers Day

There is no reason that we need to hold a "Special Event" on Gold Star Mothers Day on September 29th of this year at 10:00 AM at Putnam County Veterans memorial Park. The simple fact that we are honoring those mothers who lost a child that was serving in the United States Military is more then enough reason to have an event honoring them. However this August we lost a beloved Gold Star Mother from Putnam County; Hazel Martinez.



This year the event will be especially in her honor. Also we will be honoring Vietnam Veterans since her son, PFC Robert Garcia, was killed in Vietnam. Where he served as a Military Policeman. This will be the first event in a series of events we will hold as a commemorative partner with the Department of Defense to honor Vietnam Veterans as we move toward the 50th anniversary of that war.

As is the case the life is often capricious and we are left to deal with that fact and the results. At our wonderful Veterans Residence we lost the last original member of our family that resides there, World War Two Navy Veteran George Gisondi. It was the intention of the Putnam County Veterans Service Agency to launch a quarterly ceremony to honor those Veterans Residing in Putnam County . While we are saddened by the death of George we will hold our first ceremony honoring those who have left our ranks. While we hope not to miss any Veteran who passed this year we may indeed overlook someone. If any of the readers have the names of those Veterans who died this year please contact this office. If, sadly we do miss a name it will be added to the list in subsequent ceremonies.

We ask that you take the time to come to Putnam Count Veterans Memorial Park to take part in this special event.

I will leave you with a quote from Lincoln that is a letter he wrote to a mother who had lost her sons in the Civil War. The quote is part of the monument honoring Gold Star Mothers at our park:

Executive Mansion, Washington, Nov 21, 1864.

To Mrs. Bixby, Boston, Mass.

Dear Madam,

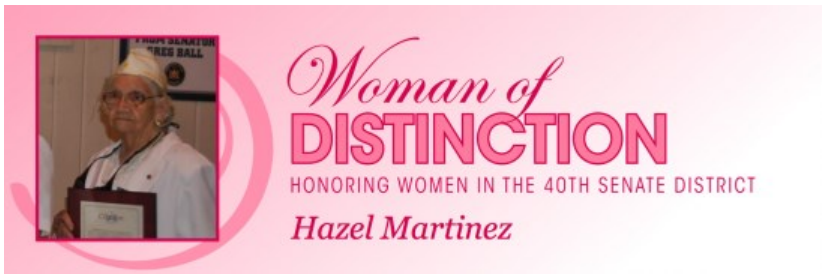
I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five (5) sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.

I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,

A Lincoln.

Karl Rohde, Director



Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Medical Centers

Castle Point & Montrose, NY

CONTACT: **Michael Stern, Psy.D.** Acting Public Affairs Office

914-788-4328 or 845-838-5234

September is Suicide Prevention Month, Show Veterans They Matter

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a chance for Veterans and their loved ones to focus on the things that matter. And, anyone who knows a Veteran can help.

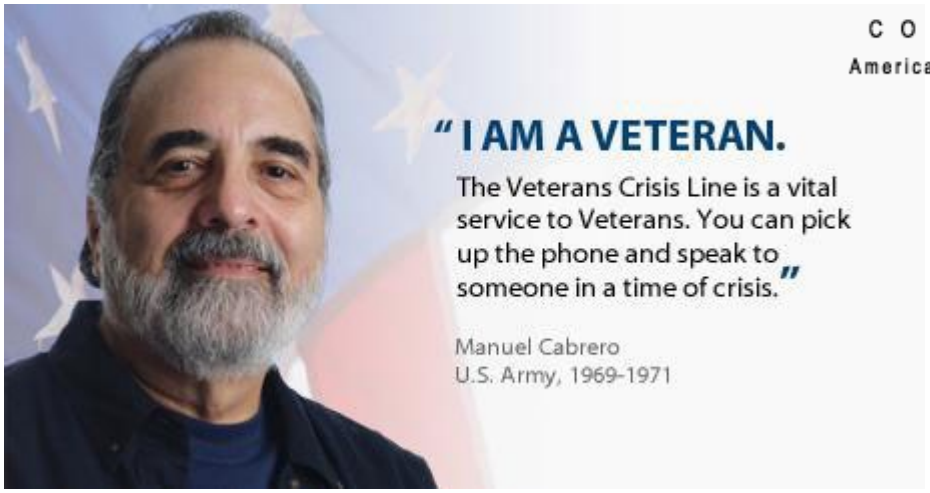
Whether a Veteran has just returned home, or served years ago, their experiences remain with them. Their wounds might not be visible, but they need our attention. We can support Veterans who are dealing with challenges of all kinds; we're in this together.

VA Hudson Valley Healthcare System urges groups and individuals nationwide to stay alert for signs of crisis in the Veterans they care about. If you're concerned, call the Veterans Crisis Line: a free, confidential resource that Veterans and their friends and family can
access any day, any time.

Out of the DARKNESS

COMMUNITY WALKS

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention



Art and I will be taking part in the "Out of the Darkness Walk" in Carmel on October 20, 2013.

Any one who would like to sponsor us in this walk please contact our office at 845-808-1620.

THANKS!!!!!

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

(ASIST)...Our Community Working Together

October 2nd and 3rd, 2013

8:30am-4:30pm

$75 per person for both training dates (includes breakfast & lunch)

The Michael T. Weber Auditorium-Putnam Hospital Center-670 Stoneleigh Avenue-Carmel, NY 10512

ASIST

ASIST is intended for all community members. Through our personal or work lives we may each recognize someone who is in distress; who may have thoughts of suicide. ASIST prepares us to recognize that distress, to connect with that person, and help them connect with ongoing community and professional support as needed. ASIST may be particularly useful for clergy, nurses, police officers, resident assistants, bartenders, hairdressers, librarians and security guards.

ASIST is suicide first aid. Just as a person trained in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can intervene if they observe a person in cardiac distress, so too can a person trained in ASIST intervene to assist a person at risk of suicide.

This evidence-based course is two full days in length, and certificates will only be awarded to those who complete the course.

This training is sponsored by the Mental Health Association in Putnam County, Inc.
in partnership with Putnam Hospital Center and the Westchester Putnam Suicide Prevention Coalition
For more information about ASIST...please go to www.livingworks.net

Directions to Putnam Hospital Center
(845) 279-5711
www.health-quest.org

From I-84:
Get off Exit 19 (Carmel). At end of ramp, turn right onto Route 312 and drive a little over a mile to the light. At light, turn right onto Route 6 and drive approximately 1-1/2 miles to third light. Turn left at light onto Stoneleigh Avenue and hospital is two miles up on the left.

From I-684:
Get off at Exit 8 (Hardscrabble Road/Croton Falls). At end of ramp, follow directions to Croton Falls and drive a little over 1 mile, going through the town of Croton Falls to sign indicating Brewster straight ahead/Lake Mahopac left. Turn left and go .1 miles to light. At light, turn right onto Route 100/202 and go .1 mile. Turn left onto Stoneleigh Avenue and go approximately 2-1/2 miles and hospital is on the right.

Blue hospital signs (H) indicate directions from exits off both interstate highways.

Registration-$75 per person

(Includes all materials, continental breakfast and lunch for both training days)

Payment must be made prior to day one of the training-NO WALK-INS ACCEPTED

Name _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please make checks payable to MHA in Putnam and mail with registration form to MHA in Putnam-1620 Route 22-Brewster, NY 10509

fax-(845) 278-0600 email-mcastellano@mhaputnam.org

Registration deadline-September 20th, 2013-registration is strictly limited to 40, please register early

- scholarships may be available, please call (845) 278-7600, ext. 202 or more information

"You're Back — What's Next?"

EXCELSIOR COLLEGE WEBINAR SERIES FOR VETERANS

How to Improve Your Writing

Wednesday, September 18, 2013 | 7 to 8 PM ET

AS A VETERAN, the transition from the military to student roles can be difficult. One of the challenges you may encounter is how to effectively convey your thoughts and ideas in writing to fulfill class assignments. During this presentation you'll hear from Excelsior College staff and veteran students about what it takes to apply writing skills in college to be successful.

This webinar will address a number of key areas including:

- **Generating topic ideas both with and without research**
- **Developing a thesis and/or focus**
- **Essay organization**
- **Integrating and citing source material**
- **Using appropriate language and formal tone**
- **Effective revising and editing habits (and knowing the difference)**

In addition, Excelsior experts will outline educational writing resources freely available to the general public, including **Grammarly**, the **Excelsior College Online Writing Lab (OWL)** and the **ESL Writing Online Workshop (ESL-WOW)**, as well as **Smarthinking**, which is open to Excelsior students.

Excelsior has been recognized by G.I. Jobs as a "Military Friendly College" every year since the publication's inception.

Military Times Edge has designated Excelsior among the top 5 "Best for Vets: Business Schools" for 2013.

Register for free at **bit.ly/WritingforVets**
(case sensitive)

Center for Military Education
Excelsior College
7 Columbia Circle, Albany, NY 12203-5159
www.excelsior.edu

Each newsletter will include a page about the PFC Joseph Dwyer Veterans Peer-to-Peer Program. We are currently working very hard and with a great deal of excitement putting the program together. We have been in contact with the Mental Health Association in Putnam County. Executive Director Meghan Castellano is helping us to set up a preliminary Peer-to-Peer training course. She is also helping to arrange a suicide training that will be open to Veterans and family members at no cost. The “”safeTalk” and “Asist” training programs is an invaluable tool for Veterans or family member who would like to be a facilitator in the Dwyer Program.

We are proud to announce that On Saturday September 7 at Veterans Memorial Park we held our first event to help Veterans get involved in a function that will bring both camaraderie and good physical exercise. Team RWB, who were showcased in last months newsletter, came to Putnam with team members from both West Point and Danbury . Our County Executive came to the park at 8:00 AM and took part in the exercise program. The participants were overwhelmed by the beauty of Veterans Memorial Park. They thanked us for what they called a “world class location” that they would like to come back monthly. We are in the process of setting up another event for the early part of October. Once the weather forces the event indoors they would still like to be in Putnam monthly.

Please enjoy the pictures of the event, taken by Art Hanley. I tried to show the spectrum of the types of exercise and also our County Executive.

We will announce the next event soon. Please try to stop by it should be amusing as I have pledged to take part in the next event.

Karl

L to R: Karl Rohde, Jess Mazzucco, Organizer of the event, County Executive MaryEllen Odell, Art Hanley

A Brief History of PTSD: The Evolution of Our Understanding

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a relatively new label for a condition as old as combat itself

By Joshua A. Jones

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a relatively new label for a condition that has plagued combat veterans throughout the history of warfare. Looking at the evolution of our understanding of PTSD helps us to learn how we can better support individuals who are affected by it.

Symptoms demonstrative of the deteriorating psychological state of troops can be found in accounts from the Battle of Marathon (490 B.C.) and the infamous Spartan stand at Thermopylae. A 14th century treatise was even uncovered wherein a knight instructs young soldiers on how to defeat the melancholy and stress associated with combat hardships.

Master Sgt. James Haskell was an aerial gunner for most of his 21-year career in the U.S. Air Force. Now, he struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder and says putting on a happy face to get through a day is like wearing a mask. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Kevin Milliken/Released)

Military doctors made the first concerted attempts to categorize and diagnose the manifestations of acute combat stress for which Johannes Hofer championed the term "nostalgia" in his 1688 medical dissertation. Through the Seven Years War, the symptoms were believed to be associated with soldiers' longing to return home and unrelated to actual battlefield experience.

Military physicians were barely able to discharge the most severe cases of psychological breakdown during the first few years of the American Civil War. Sadly, most afflicted troops were corralled into train cars with the names of their home towns or states pinned to their clothing. Others were left to wander the countryside until they succumbed to exposure. The number of these wayward veterans was sufficient to prompt a public outcry that led to the establishment of the first American military hospital for the insane in 1863, where patients were expected to remain until they could be claimed by a family member.

Jacob Mendes Da Costa first described "disorderly action of the heart" during a lecture on cardiac strain in 1874. His original explanation of the condition was based on his observations of soldiers during the Civil War. Physicians were merely trying to explain in etiological terms what they were observing in veterans: increased pulse rate and blood pressure, breathlessness, palpitations, dizziness, and fatigue. This led to the condition becoming colloquially known as "soldier's heart."

Modern war casualties

Not surprisingly, the uniquely brutal nature of trench warfare during the First World War resulted in a significant number of psychological casualties. However, Western commanders seemed oblivious to any instances of combat stress. Researchers of the era attributed the condition to the new weaponry of war; namely large-caliber artillery and explosives. The unfounded belief that the impact of shells produced concussions capable of disrupting neural function birthed the term "shell shock."

Still under the impression that the condition only afflicted men of weak character, physicians contended that the solution was to develop more thorough military entrance screening processes, particularly in sifting through draftees to mediate the potential for emotional breakdown. With the aid of psychiatric testing, the military rejected some five million men from service on this presumption.

Of the 800,000 American troops who actually saw combat during the Second World War, 37.5 percent displayed such severe psychological symptoms that they were permanently discharged.

Since obviously it's not that so many men of the Greatest Generation were not encumbered by a weak character, the military adopted a subtle change in terminology that birthed the practice of describing wartime stress reactions with euphemistic language. Ergo, this stigma-laced condition was subsequently referred to as "battle fatigue" or "combat exhaustion."

By the time the United States intervened in Korea, the humanity of combat stress had been almost completely removed and its perceived seriousness diminished. Those displaying symptoms of traumatic reactions were said to have suffered from "operational exhaustion," which further distanced observers from the reality of the disorder. One-quarter of all soldiers who saw combat during the Korean War were classified as psychiatric casualties.

It is no longer a topic of debate that the fighting during the Vietnam War was demonstrably more intense than was ever experienced in previous American conflicts. As the war progressed and the public began to question its legitimacy, instances of psychological breakdown increased.

The American Psychiatric Association first codified post-traumatic stress disorder and included it in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders III in 1980. The oft-cited National Vietnam Veterans' Readjustment Study concluded that nearly one-third of Vietnam veterans have had PTSD at some point in their lives.

Researchers have estimated that about 30 percent of the 2.5 million troops who have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from PTSD. The psychological effects of combat have long been a silent plague throughout the country, crippling families and robbing communities of their greatest citizens. Suicide is now the leading cause of death among active duty service members. This is a heart-wrenching tragedy.

What lies ahead

With America's latest global campaign, the two longest wars in its history, nearing an end, we take stock. We bury our dead, patch our wounds, and begin the process of healing. It is now that we begin to recognize the social problems that were hidden for so many years behind yellow ribbons and gun smoke. At the end of any given day in the United States, 53 veterans have died while awaiting a decision on their VA disability claims, 22 of them by suicide, while more than 300,000 sleep on the streets and in shelters throughout the land they gave so much to defend.

Our modern understanding of PTSD and its effects put us in a position to truly help those who are afflicted. As we enjoy a time of relative peace in the developed world, it is important that we do not forget our veterans or the effects of their service that can persist long after the end of hostilities.

NYS Senator Greg Ball invites you to:

THE 2013 VETERANS' THANKSGIVING DINNER

Saturday, 11/23/2013 • Seatings at 1pm, 3pm, and 5pm

Putnam National Golf Club • 187 Hill Street, Mahopac, NY 10541

This is a seated dinner so space is limited and RSVPs are required.

Reserve your space no later than October 20th by contacting Suzi McDonough: 845-279-3773 or mcdonoug@nysenate.gov

~ and ~

THE 3RD ANNUAL VETERANS' HALL OF FAME

Thursday, 11/21/2013 • Registration 5pm / Start 6pm

Mahopac High School • 421 Baldwin Place Rd, Mahopac, NY 10541

For additional information, please contact Senator Ball's office at 845-279-3773 or kgobins@nysenate.gov

Received This wonderful picture and note from my friend Willy Nazario who is the current State Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Thought you would all like to see this!

Karl

Greetings Patriots & Proud MOPH Supporters,

I have received inquiries as to the Empire State Building being lit up on August 7th in Purple & White in commemoration of the

Purple Heart Birthday. I have attached a photo for those of you who missed it.

This lighting was a collaborative effort between the Military Order of the Purple Heart's Dept. of New Jersey & Dept. of New York.

Dept. of NJ Cmdr. Neil Van Ness was the point man on this joint project. We hope to make this lighting an annual event.

Thank you all for your support and enjoy the photo.