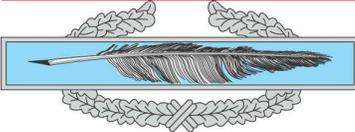


Volume 4, Issue 1

Extra Holiday Issue



# PUTNAM VETERAN'S NEWSLETTER

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



**NOW HEAR THIS!**

Brewster Board of Education  
Public Hearing Tues. Feb 11, 2014 6:30 PM  
Regular Meeting to follow

Brewster HS Performing Arts Center  
50 Foggintown Rd, Brewster  
**APPROVAL OF VETERANS  
EXEMPTION ALTERNATIVE TAX**

Carmel Board of Education  
Public Hearing Tues. Feb 11, 2014 7:30 PM

Carmel High School Library  
30 Fair Street, Carmel  
**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE  
PROPOSED ADOPTION OF  
THE VETERANS TAX EXEMPTION**

A new state law authorizes School Districts to determine if they want to give Veterans a partial exemption on School Taxes, exactly like Veterans receive from their town property taxes. Each School Board has to hold a public hearing to determine the feasibility of such a change. After the public hearing they vote on the issue. This is not an mandatory tax reduction, each School Board decides if they want to give this to the Veterans. The fiscal impact will be one of the deciding factors. We will be helping the local Veterans in each school district with what they may need to say to at the public hearings. Please try to attend one of these meetings, The more Veterans and their supporters who attended the better. It does not matter if it is your school district or not. The Pine Plains Board of education unanimously approved the Veterans Exemption at their February 4, 2014 meeting. This makes them one of the first school boards to approve this exemption.

The following will be my remarks at the Carmel Public Hearing:

Dear Members of the School Board and the Taxpayers of the School District,

We as Veterans as Veterans ask little from our government. We went into the military service with an abiding faith that we were doing the right thing and that we would receive the compensation that we earned through that service. We hung up our uniforms and got on with our lives. Well we were deceived. We are the 7% of the population that has to go hat in hand every year to beg congress to do the right thing. There is a backlog of over 400,000 disability claims that are over 125 days pending decision. The Bipartisan Balanced Budget Act cuts 1% off the COLA for working aged retired service members. Way to go congress balance the budget on the backs of Veterans. I could go on and on about the inequities that my 7% suffer but I will not. I urge each of you on the board to vote in favor of this exemption because it is the right thing to do. Those of you who feel that this is unfair think about a friend, a relative or an acquaintance from your youth who is no longer with us because of the supreme sacrifice that service member made for your freedom. Thank you and God Bless America!

Karl



**DONALD. B. SMITH GOVERNMENT CAMPUS  
110 OLD ROUTE 6, BLDG. 3  
CARMEL, NY 10512  
PHONE (845)808-1620  
FAX (845)808-1940  
KARL ROHDE, DIRECTOR  
ART HANLEY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR**

Letter from County Executive MaryEllen Odell:

*Happy February!*

*On Monday I went to see the movie, "Lone Survivor." It's a remarkable movie – based on the true story of Marcus Luttrell, a Navy SEAL Team 10 sniper who participated in Operation Red Wings, a scheme to capture or kill a high-ranking member of the Taliban. While "Lone Survivor" certainly portrays the harrowing experiences and raw brutality of war, it also portrays the heroism and professionalism of our trained military and show-*

*cases the will of the human spirit to survive in the worst possible of circumstances.*



*Luttrell was the lone survivor of this particular operation and while I won't give away any more of the movie's plot, it is amazing to me that following his physical*

*recovery, Luttrell returned to Afghanistan and completed another tour before retiring. He then wrote the book, "Lone Survivor" to share not only his story but to also honor his brothers-in-arms who made the ultimate sacrifice.*

*I highly recommend you either see the movie or read the book. You won't be disappointed.*

*Happy Valentine's Day to all of you!*

*Stay warm and stay well.*

MaryEllen Odell



**2014 Northern Westchester / Putnam**

**Saint Patrick's Day Parade**

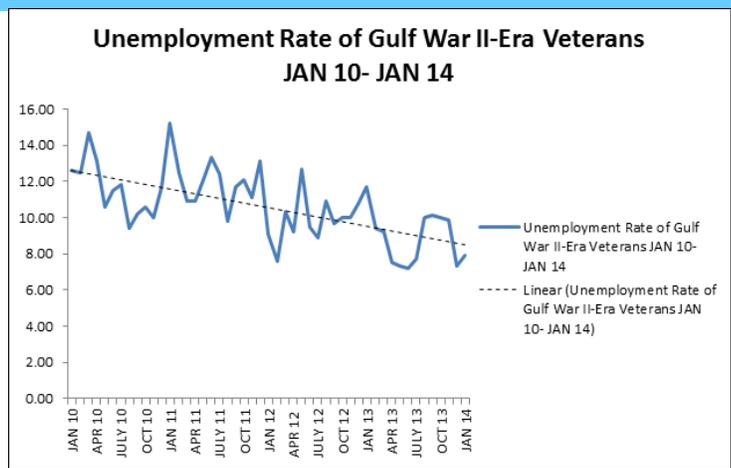
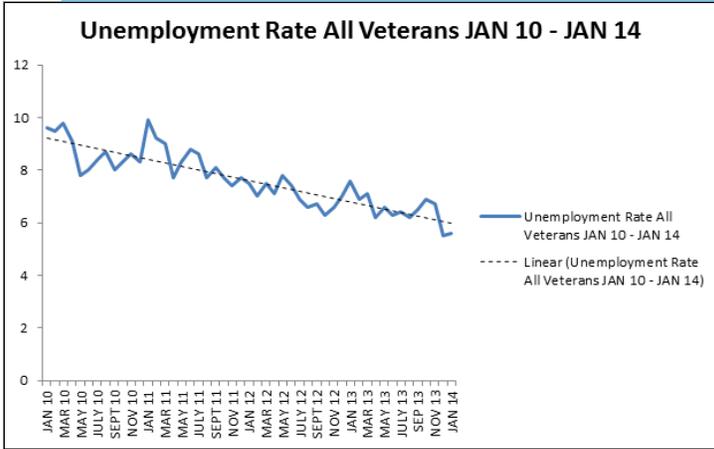
**Sunday, March 9, 2014**

**Route 6  
Mahopac, New York**

**Step Off Time: 2:00 PM**



**\*\* The 2014 Saint Patrick's Day Parade is Dedicated to the American Flag \*\***



With the release of the January 2014 unemployment data this week, we see Veteran Unemployment numbers have largely held steady with a slight increase in post 9-11 Veteran unemployment. We've included some graphs that display Veteran unemployment since January 2010.

In December 2013, the Veteran unemployment rate was 5.5 percent, rising a fraction to 5.6 percent in January 2014 (see graph at top of page.) The post-9/11 "Gulf War II" era Veteran population (graph below) saw a small rise, from 7.3 to 7.9 percent. While the Gulf War II-era Veteran data is slightly higher than the national average of 6.6 percent, overall Veteran unemployment remains a point lower.

Statistics aside, we know the job hunt can be challenging. Many of us are Veterans who have been out of work at one point or another in our lives. I came to VA last August after nine months of unemployment and a job search that lasted 18 months total. It was difficult and at times quite disheartening, but knowing my family needed me helped keep me motivated. Whether it's your family or yourself, find that motivation and keep looking for jobs.

VA and its federal and state partners are here to help. First, check out our [employment services](#) page. You'll find information on vocational rehabilitation, and educational and vocational counseling. Or, maybe you want to go back to school, get some training or certifications. Check out our [educational services page](#) to see what benefits you are eligible for.

But you'll find resources beyond VA, too. Every state – [Northern Virginia](#) to [North Carolina](#), [Missouri](#) to [Washington](#) to [Texas](#) to show a few – has programs to help Veterans with training and job search. To find your state, do an online search for the "state name + Veteran employment resources."

Government agencies also focus on the importance of hiring Veterans, including the Departments of [State](#), [Labor](#), and [Justice](#) and you'll find resources for potential employees and employers at the [Feds Hire Vets site](#). And, Veterans can always find assistance at the [USAJOBS.gov](#) website.

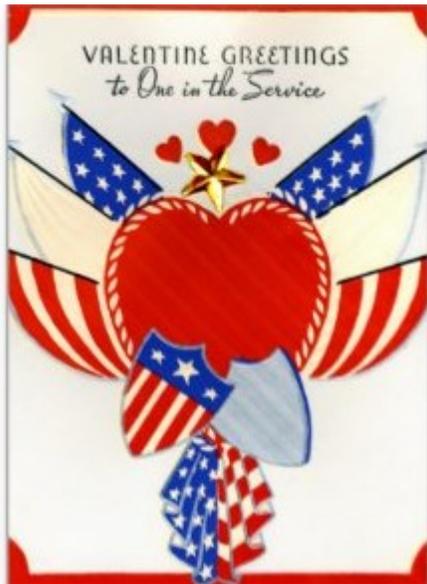
A variety of Veterans service organizations, non-profits organizations, and other groups also provide employment-related assistance to Veterans. For example, the VFW offers help through its [National Veterans Employment Assistance Service](#); you can find online information at the [Military and Veteran Career Center at Military.com](#).

The bottom line is:  
Don't give up.



## Veterans: Develop Your Knowledge and Job Skills

- Featuring experienced career consultants and employment professionals
- Workshop topics to include:
  - Effective Interview Skills
  - Resume Development
  - Networking and Social Media Job Search Tools
  - How to Transfer Your Military Skills to a New Job
- Learn how to develop a career plan and connect with fellow Veterans
- Find out how to match your service experience with what today's employers are looking for
- Includes lunch featuring presentation by area hiring managers



We should remember our Veterans at home this year!

Make or bake something for our Putnam County Veterans Residence.

We will get it to the guys!

Also if you want to send anything to the hospitalized Veterans in the area we will make sure they get it.

Thanks!



## SOLDIER BLOWN APART BY WAR STAGES STIRRING COMEBACK

The United States Military is full of up-standing men and women who do whatever it takes to keep us safe every single day. But in the dangerous environment of war, life altering injuries are a distinct possibility and they can happen without warning.



Sgt. Joseph Grabianowski was in the wrong place at the wrong time when he accidentally stepped on a pressure plate, triggering the IED underneath. The bomb tore through his body, severely injuring his left leg beyond repair. By the time he arrived at [Walter Reed Hospital](#) in Washington D.C., he had already undergone several surgeries to try and save the remainder of his body from infections, and the outlook was grim.

Joe was suffering with a fungal infection. Before long, the growth spanned the length of his right leg and on Father's Day, his doctors made the decision to amputate. Unfortunately, the fungal infection didn't stop and doctors began to come to the realization that Joe would not make it longer than a few weeks without drastic help. To keep him alive they offered him one last surgery, a rarely used procedure that would remove the remainder of his body from the waist down.

But Joe had already been through so many surgeries. Unable to speak because of his ventilation tube, he scrawled his response

to his doctors on a whiteboard, "No more surgeries please ... I'll die comfortably here ... Let me pass if heart stop." Joe and his family began to prepare themselves for the inevitable.

And then, something amazing happened. During the course of his time at Walter Reed,

Joe's doctors had also tried an old WWI era treatment called Dakins, where diluted bleach is applied directly to the wounds that are infected. As the days passed, doctors and nurses continued to clean and care for Joe's infected wounds, despite his prognosis. One day they noticed that something was different. There was hardly a trace of the fungus or any infection and the once moldy wounds were now much healthier looking.

Doctors still aren't quite sure what happened. Their best guess is that somehow the diluted bleach treatment, combined with medication and Joe's own immune system, had killed off most of the fungus.

Rough patches lay ahead — among them a threat of blood clots and fluid in Joe's chest. But he left intensive care in July. Joe went through a period in the fall of that year when he was very angry. It was many things, he says. The blast. The wounds. The lost portions of his body. How events replayed in his mind — what might have gone differently.

"I knew what kind of person I was when I

had my legs. I could run fast. I was going to be in the (U.S.) Marshal's. I was going to protect people still my whole life," he says. "And it was all gone." Making it worse, Joe said, were those well-meaning people who broke down in tears at the sight of him.

"That made me realize maybe some of these people don't think I have what it takes," he said. He allowed a sign written by A.J. to be posted on the door to his hospital room at Walter Reed: "To all who enter here. If you are coming into this room with sorrow or to feel sorry for my wounds, go elsewhere ..."

By October, Joe was living in an apartment in wounded warrior housing at Walter Reed. In the months ahead, tired of the negativity of his emotions, he began to accept what happened and think about how he could chart his future.

(edited article from Gregg Zoroya of *USA Today* and Chelsea Grimm of *Hasco Medical*.)

