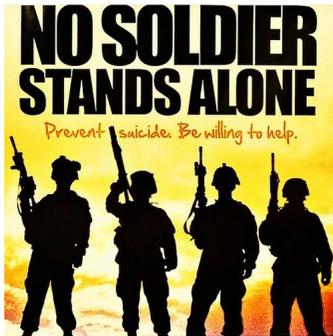


PUTNAM VETERANS NEWSLETTER



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

Starting off the New Year big. Talking about a subject that everyone wants to avoid. Suicide. People are clamoring and crying over the numbers of Veterans and Service members that die by their own hand. They are asking why. Why are there so many suicides? Well the numbers are important however one suicide is one too many. We also do not have time to find out the reasons. We have to prevent suicides. Not just among Veterans and Service Members but any suicide.



To further our understanding and our ability to provide help Art, Brennan Mahoney, NYS Veterans Councilor and I took a train the trainers class given by Livingworks. This training certifies us to teach "safeTalk".

Rather than me explaining what is learned in "safeTalk" please read the introduction to the class:

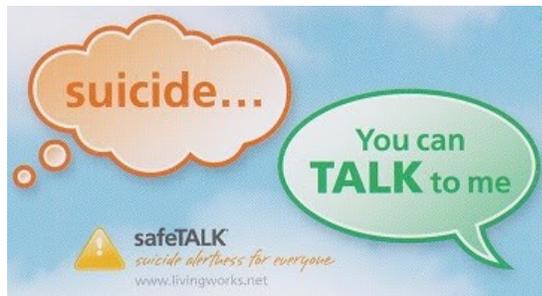
"safeTALK is part of a suicide-safer community plan. It will guide you when you have a chance to help persons with thoughts of suicide. The safe part of safeTALK stands for suicide alertness for everyone. Hopefully, many more people in this community will attend safeTALK and become aware of opportunities to help prevent suicide. In the training, you

others in your community who can complete the helping process by doing a suicide intervention. They provide the equivalent of CPR or first aid for persons whose life is threatened. Your role is to be aware of suicide's threat to life—thoughts of suicide—and to connect the person to these resources."

This is what we need in our community. It is great to have resources to help people who may be contemplating suicide but if there is no one to help, to listen and to get them to the help there no real help.

Our office in conjunction with the Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Program and the NYS Division of Veterans Affairs will be offering free "safeTalk" classes. Please contact this office for the time a place of these classes. This is for Veterans, non-Veterans, family members and anyone who would like to help prevent another suicide.

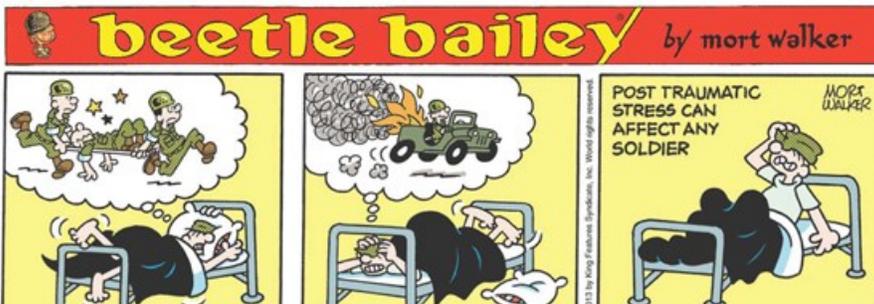
The Putnam County Veterans Service Agency has been invested in suicide prevention for several years. Twice we have sponsored "Out Of Darkness" suicide awareness walks. Both Art and I took courses given by Livingworks, a suicide awareness training organization. We took "safeTalk: suicide alertness for everyone" and ASIST: applied suicide intervention skills training". Both class put us more in tune with the overwhelming intricacies of suicide. Along with the daunting task of helping to prevent suicide.



will learn how to become suicide alert: to identify people who might be having thoughts of suicide and to connect them to persons trained in sui-

cide intervention. "As a suicide alert helper, you will connect persons with thoughts of suicide to

Karl



PUTNAM COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY

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



THE TRAVELING WALL COMING TO PUTNAM SEPTEMBER 24-27, 2015



THE VIETNAM TRAVELING WALL 3.0

This may be a bit premature but the Putnam County Veterans Service Agency and the Putnam County Joint Veterans Council are extremely proud to announce that this September we will be bringing the Vietnam Traveling Wall to Putnam County for the third time in 15 years.

When the wall arrives in our county it will be the centerpiece of our Vietnam War Commemoration. We are honored that our county is a 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemorative Community. The day the wall departs Putnam County will be on Gold Star Mothers Day. Each name on that wall represents not only a fallen service member but a Gold Star Mother and a Gold Star Family. So the closing ceremony will not just be bidding the wall good bye but it will be a dual ceremony honoring Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Families.

At the top of the page is our official logo of the event. You will see these at various stores and business through out the county. The owners of the business will sell cus-

tomers one of the logos and honor someone at the bottom and have them hanging up on a wall in the store. It is our hope that support for the Wall comes from the citizens of the county. If any readers have some place that will sell our logos please contact this office. If you just would like to purchase one stop by the Veterans office and we will hang yours in the hall way.





The Value Village Empire Cinemas in Brewster New York

Free soda and popcorn

Veterans, Service Members and their Families

Military or Veterans ID Required

February 14, 2015 at 10:00 AM

Call Jess for reservations (845)278-7600 ext. 214

Glaucoma: Silent Cause of Vision Loss

By Hans Petersen, VA Staff Writer

Monday, January 5, 2015 January is Glaucoma Awareness Month, a time to remind all Veterans to take action now to prevent this sight-stealing disease. One-and-a-half million Veterans have a vision threatening eye disease, including 285,000 with glaucoma. African-American Veterans should especially get their eyes checked regularly as glaucoma is six-to-eight times more common in African-Americans than Caucasians. Also, among Hispanic populations, glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness. Starts without Symptoms What is glaucoma? Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases in which the optic nerve, a bundle of over one million nerves that convey vision from the eye to the brain, slowly becomes damaged over time. In many cases, blood flow to the optic nerve is reduced and may be further reduced by increased fluid pressure inside the eyes slowly rising, leading to vision loss or even blindness. The highest risk group is those Veterans over 60. Other risk factors include hypertension, but also too-low blood pressure, especially during the hours of sleep. Some patients who take blood pressure medicine at bedtime, may be at risk of dropping their blood pressure too low during sleep, reducing blood flow to the optic nerves. In addition, patients with obstructive sleep apnea who are untreated may have further risk for glaucoma-related damage to their optic nerves due to drops in oxygenation when they momentarily stop breathing during sleep. Glaucoma usually starts without any symptoms. Later, there is some loss of side vision, where objects straight ahead are seen clearly, but objects to the side are missed. As the disease worsens, the ability to see objects on the side is increasingly lost and eventually the center of vision is affected. The test for glaucoma is painless. Your VA doctor will test the pressure in your eye by placing an instrument on its surface. If there is a suspicion for glaucoma, the

appearance and function of the optic nerve are tested with a visual field test and a special retina camera both of which can detect damage to the optic nerves. Glaucoma is treated with eye drops, but in some cases, eye surgery is necessary to optimally lower the eye pressure. These treatments work to either make less fluid or to improve its drainage out of the eye. Glaucoma is a life-long problem. Veterans should have regular check-ups by an ophthalmologist or optometrist to watch for changes in pressure and side vision.

Cutting Edge Research VA is working hard to help prevent Veterans' eye problems at the VA Center

for the Prevention and Treatment of Visual Loss based at the Iowa City VA. The Center conducts innovative research in the diagnosis of visual loss and works to understand the underlying mechanisms and causes of visual loss. With this research, the center can study new approaches toward rehabilitation and treatment of visual loss, while improving education and clinical care of our nation's Veterans. According to Dr. Randy H. Kardon, director of the center, "Glaucoma is one of the silent causes of vision loss. Patients are unaware that they are slowly losing vision until it is too late, at which time the loss is permanent. That is why it is so important for Veterans to have regular eye exams to check for any sign that glaucoma is

developing and to be treated, if glaucoma is detected." VA spends a significant portion of its medical care dollars toward detecting and monitoring of treatment of vision loss. Last year there were more than 2.9 million Veteran visits in VA eye care optometry and ophthalmology clinics. Remote Monitoring of Optic Nerve Structure and Function The Center of Excellence for the Prevention and Treatment of Visual Loss is working to reduce the cost of monitoring through new methods of detection, understanding the underlying mechanisms of disease, developing new molecular treatments to preserve vision, and telemedicine initiatives. Center Associate Director Dr. Mi-



The test for glaucoma is painless.

chael Abramoff and his colleagues, including investigator Mona Garvin, Ph.D., are developing portable digital eye cameras along with cutting-edge software that automatically analyze images of the optic nerve to diagnose glaucoma and determine if it is changing with time. Investigators from the Center are recording blood flow to the retina and optic nerve using a new research eye camera utilizing non-invasive imaging to quantify the blood supply to the optic nerve. Center investigators are also developing computerized methods of testing optic nerve function using the eye's pupil contraction to light, termed the "pupillary light reflex." Remote pupil testing is being developed to monitor optic nerve function and status of glaucoma outside of the eye clinic setting.

Christmas on the Road With Art

Over the holidays my wife and I took a road trip south. On Christmas Eve we stopped for the night in Arlington, VA. That afternoon we visited Arlington National Cemetery and on Christmas morning we drove into Washington DC to visit both the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the World War II Memorial. Walking the Mall brought back the memory of my last visit to the Memorials which was in June of 2004 shortly after the World War II Memorial was opened. On that trip I was lucky enough to be invited to accompany six World War II Veterans from Brewster as they traveled to see their Memorial. Over the course of the four days in Washington these members of the "Greatest Generation" were treated royally by everyone they encountered and in my opinion, deservedly so. However, one encounter more than any other stands out. Four of us, Tom, Bob, Lee and I, decided to walk from the World War II Memorial down to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. While Tom and Lee walked over to the book to look up a name of a soldier from Brewster who had been killed in action, Bob and I

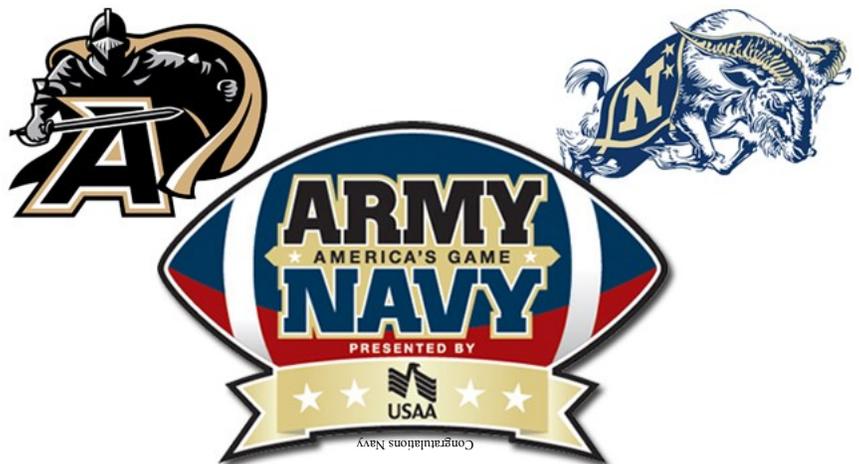


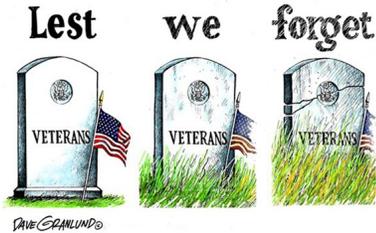
were looking at the statue of the three soldiers. A couple came up to us and asked if they could take our photo. We said of course we would be happy to pose. After they took the shot I told them that Bob was a WW II veteran who had served in Europe. The husband his eyes brimming with tears, looked at Bob and said, "You liberated us." He walked over and shook Bob's hand. While continuing to hold onto Bob's arm told him that they were Dutch and while his wife was only one year old when the Americans arrived to drive the Germans out, he was nine, his family was Jewish and he remembered everything. Tom came over at this point and he too was thanked. When Tom pointed out that he had not been part of the force that liberated the Netherlands, they said it did not matter. "The Americans gave us our lives; they gave all Europeans their lives and we can never thank you enough. You saved Europe. You saved the World!" The emotions of this encounter still engulf me when I think about it. It was as sincere a thank you as anyone could give. As my wife and I continued on our trip southward we stopped in North Carolina where we visited the battleship USS North Carolina but it was upon our arrival in Charleston SC to visit our son and his wife that I had an unexpected encounter. Both my son and daughter-in-law work selling luxury autos and were at work when we arrived in Charleston. We stopped by the dealership and when we drove in, Mike came out to greet us

accompanied by one of his co-workers, Thien Nguyen. Thien grabbed my hand and in a southern drawl, which I did not expect, thanked me profusely for what I did to help the people of Vietnam. When I told him I was a rear echelon soldier and really didn't do anything, he said it did not matter; anyone from the USA who served in Vietnam had tried to help. He went on to explain that he was born just after the fall of Saigon and by the time he was born, his father was already in a "re-education camp" where he remained until Thien was three years old. A year later, his family escaped and while he has few actual memories of his life just outside of Saigon, his parents and older siblings have told him all about what happened and how much they owed to the Americans. His thanks and the emotion he showed were sincere and he asked that I pass his thanks along to all who served. I can only hope that one day all of you receive this kind of profound thank you from an unexpected encounter with a person who came from wherever you served. It is something you will never forget. n I told him I was a REMF he said it did not matter, anyone from the USA who served in Vietnam had tried to help. He went on to explain that he was 4 years old when his family escaped and while he has few actual memories of his life just outside of Saigon, his parents and older siblings have told him all about what happened. His thanks and the emotion he showed were sincere and he asked that I pass his thanks along to all who served.



Art





WESTCOP
WESTCHESTER COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM, INC.

SUPPORT SERVICES

FOR VETERANS FAMILIES (SSVF) - SERVING THE HUDSON VALLEY

HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILIES AND SINGLE VETERANS THAT ARE CURRENTLY HOMELESS OR FACING HOUSING CRISIS. DIAL 211 FOR A SCREENING.

SERVING THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES:

- WESTCHESTER
- ROCKLAND
- PUTNAM
- DUTCHESS
- ORANGE
- ULSTER
- SULLIVAN

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN UNDER THIS PROGRAM?

A PERSON WHO SERVED IN THE MILITARY AT LEAST ONE ACTIVE DAY AND WHO WAS DISCHARGED OR RELEASED UNDER CONDITIONS OTHER THAN DISHONORABLE

CAN FAMILIES WHO HAVE A HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY BE SERVED?

NO, TO BE ELIGIBLE THE CUSTOMER MUST BE A VETERAN OR A MEMBER OF A FAMILY IN WHICH THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD, OR THE SPOUSE OF THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD, IS A VETERAN.

"AS WE EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE, WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT THE HIGHEST APPRECIATION IS NOT TO UTTER WORDS, BUT TO LIVE BY THEM."
JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY

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Hudson Valley Region
2-1-1
Get Connected. Get Answers.
Dutchess • Orange • Putnam
Rockland • Sullivan • Ulster • Westchester

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley
Protecting Rights Promoting Justice

A CHRISTMAS GIFT

In the Christmas issue there were pictures and a small article about the Christmas Cheer Program that sends Christmas Trees and all the decorations to service members in Afghanistan. There was a picture of a Christmas Card that VFW Ladies Auxiliary State President Irene Rohde had sent to the troops. It was signed by a large number of Ladies Auxiliary members throughout the state of New York. Well on December 22nd Irene got the following e-mail From Kathy O'Reilly, manager of commercial air aviation for DHL:

"Just wanted to send you a few photos before I go off to Ireland for Christmas. Attached is our very own 1LT Brandon Bailey with the VFW care packages that arrived and the signed card from the Ladies Auxiliary from New York State! You guys rock!" What a great Christmas gift to know you had the opportunity to make Christmas a little

better for those who guard the gates of freedom as we sit in the safe comfort of our homes!

Karl & Irene

