



Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc. ®

Volume 2, Issue 4
April 1, 2022



VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Chairman's Remarks

After a winter filled with travel it was nice to get back to MVA™ Headquarters in Slidell Louisiana for a bit. I do think that Robin, Chandra, and Quentin are hoping that I go back on the road again since I keep disturbing them with my latest ideas. Robin says she gets a lot of work done when I am not around, and I think she is right. But brainstorming with staff gives rise to some of my better ideas and quashes some ideas that are not so good. We are lucky to have these folks working with us. They have allowed us to grow as an organization.

What's going on with the PACT Act? Good question. It passed the House and went to the Senate. The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee held a legislative hearing on March 29. A lot of good information, but the bottom line is that the cost is still stopping it. MVA™ supports the PACT Act and has joined with several other veterans groups to promote it. If it does not pass the Senate, we will still continue to promote the Tester-Moran phased approach as reflected in S 3541/HR 6659. Additionally we are pushing for adoption of smaller, less expensive bills such as HR 3368, HR 2269/S657, HR 5026, HR 1585/S565 and HR 2580/S1151.

On St. Patrick's Day I gave an on-line presentation to 20 Pennsylvania attorneys to introduce them to VA law. The presentation was approved for Continuing Legal Education credit by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and we received good feedback on the presentation. Teaching VA law to attorneys is one of MVA's™ primary missions. Bringing more attorneys into the VA system is the key to winning additional benefits for veterans. By popular demand I did not include my infamous rendition of "When Irish Eyes are Smiling!"

On April 8 I will be participating in a seminar with Loyola Law School of Chicago on disability benefits including Social Security disability and veterans benefits. A video will be made available at a later date. On May 9, Brian Moyer and I will be presenting an update to the Central Florida Veterans rally.

The week of May 15 thru May 19 will see our return to Washington, DC. Chief of

Staff Mike Kvintus, Legislative Director Ernest Dillard and I will join Vice-Chairman Sgt. Major Jim Kuiken USMC (ret) and his service dog Freedom for visits on Capitol Hill. We expect to discuss the PACT Act, HR 3368, HR 2269, and HR 5026 as well as other critical legislation.

Our 4th Annual Rifle-Raffle (aka Rif-Raf) is now ongoing. This year we are raffling off a Remington 870 shotgun, a Model 1911 .45 caliber pistol, a steel target (donated by Brian Moyer), and \$250.00 cash. The drawing will be held on May 21, 2022 at the annual MVA™ "Breakfast with the Best." Tickets are available at: <https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/> under the Events tab. The breakfast will be held at T. Leblanc's Creole Kitchen, 797 Robert Blvd., Slidell, LA 70458. For those of you living along the Gulf Coast, you may find the travel worth your while. Look folks, Chef Warren makes a french toast casserole that is to die for. Space is limited, so sign up now. Sponsorships are also available.

No word yet on the promised appointment with the VA Secretary. Still waiting.

OK let's talk fund-raising. Why are we asking for money so often? Well because we need it. We have three employees now and we need to meet payroll. These three folks have been force multipliers and frankly our volunteers would collapse under the administrative responsibilities if we did not have them. Quentin has done a great job in the Marketing/Fundraising arena. He has also been essential in our social media communications program. Chandra has taken over scheduling duties from Susie as well as legislative/fundraising tracking. Robin, well Robin just does everything else. She keeps our accounts, ensures the IRS is happy, and coordinates Board and Executive Committee meetings. She also handles inquiries from members and processes all of our membership applications/renewals. She is a true Super-Woman.

Plus we have made a number of management upgrades. Our new QuickBooks upgrade costs us several hundred dollars per year. Our new web site fundraising will cost a few hundred dollars per year. Our legislative tracking software costs a few thousand per year. MVA™ is paying half the cost of the office rent. I pay the other half.

Look, I get it. Times are tough and once you have filled your gas tank and bought some food there is not a lot left over for charitable giving. But there are things you can do. Buy a rifle raffle ticket or by a chance for our Fall Foliage trip once we start selling those tickets. Or set up for a small donation every month.

Our new system allows you to contribute monthly or quarterly if you so desire.

Even \$10 a month mounts up. So please consider helping. Each trip to DC eats up about \$10,000 in airline fares, hotel fees, meals, and taxi/uber/metro.

Remember, none of your board members take a salary.

Tentatively we are looking at mid to late August for an online veterans law CLE.

It will be open to members, non-members, and attorneys. More information on that to follow.

So until next month, stay steady on course.

John B. Wells
CDR USN (ret)
Chairman



Fourth Annual Military-Veterans Advocacy

“Rif-Raf” Rifle Raffle “Rif-Raf”

Tickets on sale now for \$40
Visit militaryveteransadvocacy.org to
purchase your tickets today!

First prize: Remington Model 870 shotgun with
a box of shells



Scan here for
Breakfast with the
Best tickets



Second prize: Model 1911 .45 caliber pistol with
box of ammo



Scan here for Rifle
Raffle tickets

**Winners
must
comply with
all federal
and state
firearm
laws.**

Third prize: Steel shooting target

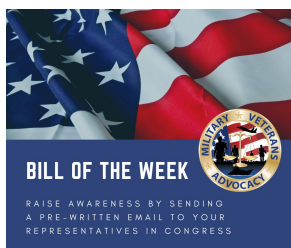


Fourth prize: \$250.00



**Drawing will
take place on
May 21, 2022 at
Breakfast with
the Best.
Not required to
be present to
win.**

MVA is a non-profit tax exempt organization. Please follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter (@MVAdvocacy), and Instagram (@MVAdvocacy).
If you have any questions, please contact Chandra Klein at (504) 701-3671 or chandra.klein@madvocacy.org
Images of prizes are examples, real prize may look different



BILL OF THE WEEK

The Bill of the Week works! But it works best if there are a large number of folks who use it. We have helped raise awareness on a number of issues including toxic exposure, transparency, ALS, PTS, TBI, and bills to streamline VA procedures. There have been over 11,000 bills introduced during this Congress, and frankly, Congressional staffs have difficulty tracking them all. The Bill of the Week reminds Members, Senators, Committees, and their Legislative Directors of veterans' bills and helps push them over the finish line. The squeaky wheel does get the grease and all offices have legislative correspondents and interns who track the numbers of letters, e-mails, and telephone calls they receive. You may receive a canned response or no response at all, but staffs provide a summary of contacts to their boss. So how do we know that our Bill of the Week works? Because staffers tell us that it does. Please take the minute to register and spend a few seconds every week to send the pre-written email. We need to keep Congress focused on the needs of veterans.

Please support our priorities by signing on at

<https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/bill-of-the-week.html>

Your MVA Board has put in over 1500 hours so far in 2022

MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHIEF OF STAFF

MVA™ has been extremely busy with all sections involved. I want to take some time to make sure everyone is aware of all MVA™ sections and those who lead in making it happen. Blue Water Navy and Deck Log Plotting Expert - Mike Yates, Guam - Brian Moyer, Panama - Donna Torno, Southeast Asia/Thailand - Bill Rhodes, and Okinawa - Jerry Balmes. These individuals are a driving force for MVA™ and our quest to ensure our veterans get their earned and deserved benefits. Please take the time to acknowledge these individuals. This Advocacy group is contacting congress by emails, letters, and calls all day, every day. Some are on committees dealing with bills for all toxic exposures. I ask you to support MVA™ by signing on to the Bills of the Week and contacting all of congress on a regular basis. You cannot contact them too much. Help us grow our membership. Ask all of your family and friends to join. Don't forget our yearly fundraiser raffle on May 21, 2022 at T LeBlanc's Creole Kitchen 797 Robert Blvd. Slidell, LA 70458. You can join MVA™ and get your raffle tickets on any of our section sites or the MVA™ site <https://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/> The MVA™ yearly breakfast will also be on May 21, 2022 at T LeBlanc's. Come join us and meet some of the Military-Veteran's Advocacy® board members.

Mike Kvintus
Military-Veterans Advocacy® Chief of Staff

LEGISLATION

New Legislation

Rep. Jack Bergman (MI-01) and Rep. Colin Allred (TX-32) introduced "Gerald's Law", H.R. 7176, to close a loophole that denies certain terminally ill Veterans their VA burial allowance if they do not pass away at a VA facility.

Bergman's bill would expand eligibility for the VA benefit, applying the burial allowance to terminally ill Veterans that were discharged from receiving care at a VA hospital or nursing home to pass comfortably at home under hospice care. "Veterans who have sacrificed for our Nation should not have to sacrifice their surviving family's burial benefit for choosing to pass away in the comfort of their own homes. This happened to Gerald but is inexcusable and should never happen again."

MVA™ supports HR 7176.

Litigation



Our cases at the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit are still waiting a decision. Normally decisions are rendered 3-5 months after oral argument, however it can take longer. Ours is a complicated case and we have to recognize that the Judges are taking their time to try to get it right. At issue is herbicide relief for Guam, Johnston Island, American Samoa, Thailand, the airspace over Vietnam, and the extension of the Blue Water Navy line to include the entire Vietnam Service Medal area.

RULEMAKING

MVA™ currently has three major rule making requests that have been approved by the VA. These requests will cover herbicide exposure in Thailand, Okinawa, and the Panama Canal Zone. Our problem is that there is no timeline required for the VA to issue the notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register. In other words, the approved requests can sit in the VA hold baskets forever. We have reached out to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee staff on both the Majority and Minority sides and asked them to include a timeline not to exceed 27 months for completion of action on rule making requests. Both sides are amenable to further discussion on this issue. Under our proposal, the VA would be required to decide whether or not to approve the request within 15 months and complete action within 12 months thereafter. We will keep you up to date on the progress of this request. If a rule making request is denied or we do not like the rule, we will be able to seek judicial review.

VA Life Insurance for Disabled Veterans

From Veterans Benefits Newsletter April 2022

[Service-Disabled Veterans' Insurance \(S-DVI\)](#) provides life insurance to Veterans with service-connected disabilities with basic coverage up to \$10,000 and supplemental coverage up to \$30,000. Interested Veterans should apply for S-DVI by December 31, 2022. S-DVI enrollees may also consider [VA Life Insurance \(VALI\)](#), a new program taking effect in January 2023.

Voter Assistance at VA facilities

Message from the VA

As part of a government-wide effort to tackle barriers to voting that many Americans face, VA announced a new initiative this week to provide voter assistance to Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors at VA facilities across the country. VA is doing this because we recognize that advocating for all Veterans include advocating for their ability to exercise the rights they fought for and to participate in the civic life that they defended in uniform. During his speech at the 57th anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Selma, AL, Deputy Secretary Donald Remy said, "For too long, too many Americans have fought too hard around the globe to protect our rights and freedoms only to fight brutal battles here at home for their own rights and freedoms." This work ensures "Veteran access to that most sacred right they fought for and so many died for."

As part of this effort, our goal this year is to establish a pilot voter assistance program in select facilities in six states where Veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors can go to receive voter assistance information and support.

We invite you to visit <https://www.va.gov/initiatives/vote/>, which is our new online portal for resources available to Veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors on registering to vote. We encourage you to visit the site and we welcome any feedback you may have on how we can make the site more effective at meeting the needs of our customers.



BLUE WATER NAVY ASSOCIATION™

I want to give you an update on the Deck Log Project. So far, since we started the new procedure, I have had 156 new requests. I have had 64 from Due Paying Members and 92 from Non-Dues Paying Members. I have been able to fill the request for 30 Members and am still watching for the other ones.

I want to remind everyone that we will only fill the request for One Day ONLY. That is all you need for your claim.

As you go to other Facebook pages, you may see that I am trying to get the word out to the different ships' Facebook pages to let them know what we are doing. I can't do it alone. I need help. The reason is that if I post the same thing on too many pages in one day, I will wind up in Facebook Jail. So please feel free to help by letting others know about our groups.

Remember we are working hard to grow our Membership so we can work even harder for you. We want to become a Registered Veterans Organization. To do that, we need OVER 2000 Members. Family Members, Friends, Co-Workers, Enemies, and others can join to help us.

Mike Yates
Director, Blue Water Navy™
Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc. ®



AGENT ORANGE SURVIVORS OF GUAM™

Attention Central Florida residents, Military-Veterans Advocacy® (MVA™) is pleased to announce that we will have two speakers provide updates on Congress, including the recent PACT Act that passed the House of Representatives, during the second Central Florida Veterans Rally on Monday, May 9, beginning at 1 p.m. EDT at American Legion Post 347 in Lady Lake, Florida. MVA™ Chairman of the Board Commander John B. Wells, USN (ret.), as well as MVA™ Director of Central Pacific Islands and Agent Orange Survivors of Guam (AOSOG) founder Sgt. Brian Moyer, USMC, will join a representative from Congressman Webster's office, a Heart of Florida senior representative, The Villages VA Clinic senior representatives, other Veterans Services Officers, and representatives from the Ocala Vet Center in speaking to veterans during the rally followed by a question and answer segment.

The public is invited to attend to learn about veteran issues and learn how they can get involved to help. You do not need to be a veteran or a family member of a veteran to attend. The Central Florida Veterans Rally will be the second time the Community Veterans Resource Group has hosted the event after the successful rally last October.

Those unable to attend the event in person can watch the speeches given by the MVA™ presenters on the Military-Veterans Advocacy® Facebook page. The speeches will be broadcast live on the page starting at 1:30 p.m. Eastern time and will be available to view anytime afterwards on the page as well.

American Legion Post 347 is located at 699 W Lady Lake Blvd, Lady Lake, FL 32159 and the rally will begin at 1 p.m. EDT.



VETERANS OF PANAMA CANAL ZONE™

Did you know?

The VA Secretary has granted our Rulemaking Request. Our Chairman and other Board directors have been in DC of late to work towards getting the VA Secretary to follow through on his promise of granting for not only Panama veterans, but also Okinawa and Thailand veterans. MVA™ is continuing to push for benefits for all those exposed to toxins.

House passes Congresswoman Newman's amendment on study of Panama Canal Veterans impacted by Agent Orange

As part of the Honoring our PACT Act, the House of Representatives on Thursday March 3, 2022 passed Congresswoman Marie Newman's (IL-03) amendment to require the Department of Defense (DOD) to conduct a study on veterans who served in or near the Panama Canal Zone and may have been exposed to deadly tactical herbicide, also known as Agent Purple or Agent Orange. We are hopeful that Panama veterans will finally be studied in the near future.

This Amendment builds on Rep. Newman's Panama Canal Zone Veterans Act, which would grant federal benefits to Panama Canal Zone veterans who were exposed to deadly tactical herbicide. Click [here](#) to watch Congresswoman Newman's floor speech on the amendment.

Membership...

Welcome new members!!! We appreciate your support! Thank you to all who continue to support our push to get Panama recognized as a place where dioxin was used.

We are all playing our part of History in the Making! Together we are changing lives!

Your membership means everything to us as we can't do it without you!

Please help us grow!

For my birthday, June 15th, I would like to double or triple the size of the Panama section. I need your help. If you are a current member, please find one, two, or three members to also join.

MVA™ has gotten us further than ever before to be heard, let's help them grow the numbers so they can become federally recognized. Please invite everyone you know to help by supporting what we are accomplishing. Thank you!

Donna Torno
Director, Veterans of Panama Canal Zone™
Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc. ®



Delayed Membership Invoices

When we upgraded our accounting program, 302 invoices that should have been sent were not sent. We have discovered the problem and these invoices are now in the mail or being sent by email. Sorry for the inconvenience. This new upgraded system should prevent this from happening again. But we all know about Murphy's Law. If you have not received an invoice for 2022, please contact Robin at <mailto:robin.barr@madvocacy.org>

Susie coin update

All of the Susie coins have been mailed to the Early Bird/Life Members as of January 1, 2022. We think it was a nice touch to honor our Princess who has done so much for veterans. God bless you Princess Susie.



If everyone who was a member of Military-Veterans Advocacy® in 2021 renewed their membership in 2022 we would have 1687 members. Not quite enough to get us to the point we can apply for recognition as a Veterans Service Organization, but it is more members than we have ever had. Please join our organization or renew for 2022. It is only \$25 per year, and we have life memberships available. For those who cannot afford it, we have a number of gift memberships available. Widows of members who have passed away are eligible for a life membership at no cost. Help us get to the 2000 mark.

[Membership](#)



MVA™ Marketplace

Spring is here. Show your support for Military-Veterans Advocacy® with a smart MVA™ windbreaker. The light jacket is made for Spring days with a little breeze and temps in the 60s.

These and other MVA/Section gear are available at the MVA Marketplace.

MVA™
Marketplace