



Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc. ®

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VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Chairman's Remarks

First of all, welcome to two new board members - SKCM (SW) Kathy Montgomery USN (ret) and Donna Stratford, an Air Force veteran who has worked for the VA as a senior employee in communications departments. Kathy is replacing Brian O'Callaghan by taking over the At Risk/Widows portfolio. Donna is becoming Director of Marketing and Communications. Looking forward to working with both ladies.

Back to Washington in June where we pushed for enactment of the PACT Act. Everything seemed to be on track, until the Senate inserted a clause in their amendment that allowed for a tax waiver. Although the bill passed the Senate 84-14, the House Rules Committee blocked further consideration. Under the Constitution, revenue matters must originate in the House. The Congress recessed for the Fourth of July before they could resolve the problem. I understand it has now been solved. Hopefully the PACT Act will be passed by the time you receive this newsletter.

I was invited to the White House the first week of June for a bill signing. These bills included:

Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas SERVICE Act - named after Marine Corps Officer Kate Thomas, who served near a burn pit in Iraq and died of breast cancer - expands eligibility for VA mammography screening to veterans who served in locations associated with toxic exposures. (P.L. 117-133)

The Veterans Rapid Retraining Assistance Program Restoration and Recovery Act gives the VA the authority to restore important education benefits to veterans who were unable to complete a course or program as a result of the closure of an educational institution or the disapproval of a program by the state approving agency or the VA. (P.L. 117-138)

The Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act (MAMMO Act) strengthens and expands access to high-quality breast cancer screenings and life-saving cancer care for veterans nationwide. (P.L. 117-135)

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) Extension Act extends a program that compensates individuals who were exposed to radiation from atomic weapons testing, or uranium mining or processing, and who subsequently developed specified cancers or other medical conditions. (P.L. 117-139)

While at the White House I ran into Secretary McDonough. I reminded him that he owed us a meeting based on his promise back in March. His response: "I don't owe you anything." He said he would meet but frankly, I'm not holding out much hope. Besides, we can see him in court!

I keep getting negative feedback every time we ask you to communicate with Members of Congress and the Senate. Complaints normally argue that they receive no acknowledgment, or the acknowledgment does not address the

subject of the communication. Please do not be discouraged. Your communications do help. The way the process works is that staffers tally inquiries and communications and present a summary to the boss. We've seen this occur. House offices have only one Legislative Correspondent to answer the mail. This results in canned responses or no responses at all. The Senate is a bit better but not too much. But it does not matter if you get a canned response or no response. The important thing is that the communication is tallied. Don't let anyone tell you anything different. We have been told by Members, senior staff, and other staff that the communications make a difference. Look, we have been doing this for over a decade and it works. Keep those emails and phone calls coming.

We spent a few days in Orlando at the Panama Canal Zone Society Reunion. Most of the Society was unaware that Military-Veterans Advocacy® was pushing for legislation and rulemaking to cover herbicide exposure in the Canal Zone. The event was attended by around 2000 folks and we have gained new members.

It's almost Back to School time again! Amazon shoppers don't forget to use Amazon Smile for your shopping and designate MVA™ as your charity. Then when you sign on with Amazon Smile at <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/38-3890520> ½ percent of everything you buy will be donated by Amazon, at no cost to you, to MVA™.

The Fall Foliage trip raffle is underway. We are only authorizing 500 tickets. The 6 prizes will allow the winners and a guest to join the tour for a late October (Oct 23-27) tour of Southern New England. That gives you a 1.2% chance to win! You can purchase tickets on our site at: https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MTUyMjky The trip will include two nights in Newport RI, the site of many of America's Cup races, the Naval War College Museum, beautiful Ocean Drive, and shopping on the Newport waterfront. Dinner at the LA Forge Restaurant adjacent to the Tennis Hall of Fame is included. Traveling north, the tour will pass the site of the Revolutionary War Battle of Rhode Island, Battleship Cove in Fall River Mass., and a two night overnight stay in Boston. The tour will include Boston's Freedom Trail and the battlefields at Lexington and Concord. Airfare is not included. MVA™'s own Princess Susie Belanger, her Prince Ernie, and yours truly will accompany the tour to handle any problems and entertain the winners with sea stories. Tickets are \$100.00 each, but a chance at this tour is worth it. Come join us!

Professional football fans: MVA™ has received two donated season tickets for terrace level end zone seats to all home games for the New Orleans Saints. If you live on the Gulf Coast or your local team is playing at the Superdome, you can purchase raffle tickets here: https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MTUzMjA4. Only 100 tickets for the two tickets will be available for each game.

We have had a little spurt in membership and are approaching 1800 members. We still have a number of non-renewals however. We also have a number of gift memberships available and service-connected widows can receive a free life membership. Contact Robin Barr at Robin.Barr@mvadvocacy.org.

Got your benefits? Hey, remember who helped you. Please consider making a donation at https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MTQ1MjEx.

Please check out the MVA Marketplace on our website <https://military-veterans-advocacy.square.site/>

So, until next month, stay steady on course.

John B. Wells
CDR USN (ret)
Chairman



MVA™ representatives at the Panama Canal Zone 90th Anniversary
L-R: Brian Moyer - Agent Orange Survivors of Guam, Donna Tornoe - Veterans of Panama Canal Zone, John Wells - Chairman, Mike Kvintus - Chief of Staff



BILL OF THE WEEK

Please support the MVA™ bill of the week. It takes a minute to register and seconds to send the pre-written email to your Member of Congress and Senators. This allows you to provide your input to Congress, support MVA™, and support your fellow veterans. Please scroll through and support all or some of our bills of the week.

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

Your MVA Board has put in over 5800 hours so far in 2022

Freedom



Above: MVA™ Vice-Chairman Sgt. Major Jim Kuiken and his service dog Freedom

Freedom retired this year on his 9th birthday, July 4, due to health issues.

Please click the link below to read Freedom's story.

<http://www.jameskuiken.com/sergeant-major-musings/my-service-dog-freedom>

Is there tax on tea in Boston?

Americans are mostly coffee drinkers and tea has become an iced drink (always sweet in the South). But 249 years ago, the American Colonists got their caffeine from tea just like the Mother Country. On December 16, 1773, Bostonians used the harbor to mix the tea because they did not like the tax. But what about 2022? Is there a tax on tea in Boston? Military-Veterans Advocacy® is giving you a chance to find out. Our Military History Fall Foliage tour will allow you and a guest to spend five days/four nights seeing the New England fall foliage and military landmarks around Rhode Island and Boston. We are now selling raffle tickets for \$100 a ticket that will allow six winners plus a guest each of their choice to enjoy such a trip from October 23 to October 27, 2022! Tickets are on sale now through September 4, 2022, with the drawing being held live on our Facebook page on Labor Day (September 5). NOTE: airfare is not included, and don't forget to ask whether there is tax on tea in Boston.

For more information click here:

https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MTUyMjky

VA Mobile Check-Ins for Appointments

[Check-in](#) for your next VA appointment might be different next time you come in. Beginning this summer, some VA facilities will allow Veterans to do one or both of these:

- Start the check-in process up to seven days in advance of the appointment.
- Check in at the clinic using your smartphone on the day of your appointment.

As part of how VA is modernizing the way Veterans receive care, VA received extensive feedback from Veterans and caregivers about how the checking-in process can be made better, especially for those who use assistive technologies to access their benefits online.

VA's Office of Information and Technology, partnering with VHA, has applied this feedback to the design of the new, modernized patient check-in application coming soon to your location.

At all VA locations by the end of August 2022 VA is deploying the application at facilities geographically. Deployment within all VISNs will occur by the end of August 2022.

Five facts Veterans should know about VA's patient check-in application

1. Veterans will always have the option to check in for an appointment with a staff member. Using the new mobile app therefore is not a requirement. VA staff are honored to check Veterans in for appointments and to answer questions.
2. Veterans will need to check-in at the facility with a staff member on appointment day if they require changes to demographic (contact, next of kin, emergency contact) or insurance information.
3. The patient application has two options:
 - Pre-check-in helps Veterans confirm demographic information is

up to date prior to an appointment. If a clinic offers pre-check-in, Veterans will receive a link through a text message appointment reminder after confirming an appointment.

- Mobile check-in allows Veterans to check-in for an appointment on a smartphone when they arrive at the facility. Upon arrival at a clinic offering mobile check-in, Veterans should locate the poster titled, "Have an appointment? Check in with your phone" prominently on display. They should then text or scan the QR code as directed in the poster to start the process.

4. To use the mobile app, Veterans must have a smartphone that is connected to Wi-Fi or cellular service and the phone number on file with VA, as this is how VA verifies your identity. Veterans can [update their contact information online](#).

5. The national contract for VetLink kiosks will expire at the end of September 2022. After that date, Veterans should:

- Use the patient check-in application for self-service check-in or check in with a staff member.

- Submit your travel reimbursement claims through the [Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System \(BTSSS\)](#), mail, fax and/or in-person at a VA medical center

Defense Department Announces Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal JULY 5, 2022

From U.S. Department of Defense

Today, the Secretary of Defense established the Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal to commemorate the service and sacrifice of veterans who were instrumental in the development of our Nation's atomic and nuclear weapons programs.

Our Nation's long-standing nuclear deterrence capability resulted from the service and sacrifice of Service members (now known as Atomic Veterans) who participated in the initial testing and development of our Nation's atomic and nuclear weapons programs.

Notably, the dangerous and important work these veterans performed was often done in secret due to national security requirements.

The Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal recognizes that the service and sacrifice of the Atomic Veterans directly contributed to our Nation's continued freedom and prosperity during the period following World War II, and was pivotal to our Nation's defense during the Cold War era.

Veterans eligible for the medal are those who, while performing official military duties during the period of July 1, 1945, to October 1, 1992:

- (1) directly participated in the detonation of an atomic weapon or device;
- (2) directly participated in the cleanup of radioactive material resulting from any such atmospheric detonation;
- (3) directly participated in the cleanup of radioactive material resulting from an accident associated with an atomic weapon; or
- (4) were exposed to ionizing radiation resulting from the operational use of atomic weapons during World War II.

The Director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) will manage the

Department's Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal program.

DTRA anticipates it will have medals on-hand to award to eligible individuals by the end of the year. In the interim, eligible veterans and the next-of-kin (NOK) of deceased eligible veterans will be able to apply for the medal online in the near-future. Applications will be processed so that when DTRA receives its initial supply of medals they can be provided to eligible veterans or their NOK in a timely manner.

A pictorial depiction of the medallion-only commemorative medal is shown below.

Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal



Watch for Scammers

Got a suspicious call from the VA? Or someone claiming to be from the VA? Did the caller guarantee a lucrative payout for your disability compensation or pension claim for a “small fee?”

Yeah, that could be a scam. If so, you may be a target of a scam called pension poaching. There has been a recent increase in fraudsters and non-accredited representatives who are targeting the pension benefits of elderly Veterans, their dependents and survivors.

What is Pension Poaching? The VA calls it a financial exploitation by an advisor who profits by artificially qualifying a claimant for VA pension benefits. The scheme often involves financial maneuvers such as advising claimants to hide their assets in trusts or annuity products sometimes resulting in lost investments and lucrative fees paid to the advisor. Pension Poaching is rapidly evolving as a preferred method used by criminals to defraud elderly Veterans, survivors, and their families who are eligible for VA benefits.

To avoid being a victim to these tactics, the VA has provided the following helpful tips:

- Be suspicious if someone offers to shift your assets around to qualify for VA pension. You may be required to repay benefits to the government.

- NEVER share eBenefits, VA.gov, or other VA login credentials with anyone.

- DO NOT deposit VA benefits directly into a third-party bank account unless the person is court appointed or a VA accredited fiduciary.

- Remember, VA does not charge for processing a claim or request a processing fee. Use VA accredited organizations to help file your claim.

- VA does not threaten or take adverse actions such as jail or lawsuits on claimants. If in doubt, call VA directly at 1-800-827-1000.

To report suspected activity, please contact the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) by calling 1-800-488-8244. You may also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission by visiting www.consumercomplaints.fcc.gov.

Dependent's Indemnity Compensation Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veteran survivors

If the VA denied your Blue Water Navy Veteran's service-connected disability claim in the past, you may be eligible for DIC benefits based on the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019.

Learn more about DIC eligibility information at

<https://www.va.gov/disability/dependency-indemnity-compensation/#am-i-eligible-for-va-dic-as-a->

Veterans who served on a Blue Water Navy vessel offshore of the Republic of Vietnam, or on another U.S. Navy or Coast Guard ship operating in the coastal waterways of Vietnam between November 1, 1955, and May 7, 1975, are now entitled to a presumption of service connection for illnesses related to Agent Orange exposure. This is a result of Public Law 116-23, also known as the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019.

VA Automobile Allowance and Adaptive Equipment

If you have a disability related to your military service that prevents you from driving, you may be eligible for additional benefits dealing with automobiles. At least one of these must be true for you:

- You have loss, or permanent loss of use, of 1 or both feet, or
- You have loss, or permanent loss of use, of 1 or both hands, or
- You have permanent decreased vision in both eyes: 20/200 vision or less in your better eye with glasses, or greater than 20/200 vision but with a visual field defect that has reduced your peripheral vision to 20 degrees or less in your better eye, or
- You have a severe burn injury, or
- You have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or
- You have ankylosis in 1 or both knees or hips

Note: This qualifies you for an adaptive-equipment grant only

For more information see
<https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/special-claims/automobile-allowance-adaptive-equipment/>



BLUE WATER NAVY ASSOCIATION™

Update on the Deck Log Project.

Right now, I have over 17 Gigabytes of Deck Logs saved. This is NOT the whole month of Deck Logs, most are only for one day or for the consecutive days that shows the ships qualify for benefits. That is a whole lot of Data saved. That represents over 7000 entries on the Spreadsheets.

As I said before, right now I am concentrating on Deck Logs that show a Boat/Ship was in Guam. I can tell you that by the time we are done with it, I believe we will have OVER 3000 entries on the Spreadsheet.

Now I am sure that you have heard that a Submarines Deck Logs has very little information while at sea. It usually only says "Special Operations". I am here to tell you that it is very true.

While working on the Ship's Deck Logs for the Territorial Sea, all you have to do is keep an eye out for the Latitude/Longitude listed. Mostly it's easy, you look at the top of the page and mostly they are there. Sometimes you actually have to look at the Officer of the Deck writing to find a Latitude/Longitude, but they usually stick out.

Now with a Submarine they usually don't have any Latitude/Longitude unless they are going to the states or heading to Guam. Within the Deck Log entries, I need to look for things like Mooring or Setting the Maneuvering Watch. But you can't just assume the Boat is going to Sea. They have a bad habit of moving to a new Wharf. Sometimes they do go out into International Waters in the morning and go back into Port at night or it seems like that they go into the harbor and submerge for a while. Like I said, you really need to read the Deck Logs closely. With a Submarines Deck Log, you really need to take the time to read it all.

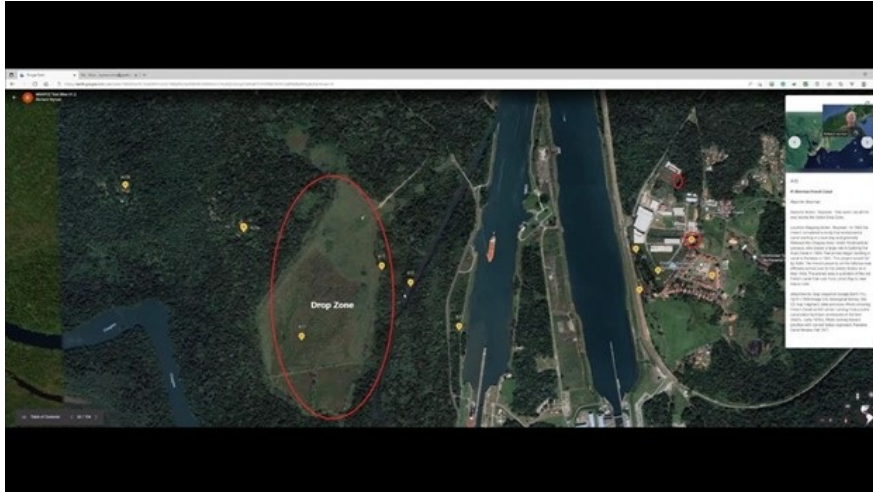
One thing I am finding is that I am getting leads on other Ships like the USS Long Beach, USS Fox, and USS Ticonderoga that stopped in Guam and should be covered under the PACT Act.

I need to remind everyone that we need your help to gain more Members. If you are on another page and someone is having trouble finding Deck Logs, please refer them to our page. Also suggest that they become Members. Remember what we have done for Blue Water Navy Veterans and what we are doing now.

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



VETERANS OF PANAMA CANAL ZONE™



Did you know?

We are posting more content on the YouTube channel The Travels of Orange? Make sure to subscribe to the channel so as not to miss content. To get directly there type in czveterans.com.

Boy, Fort Davis area sure looks different with the new canal and bridge. I guess people don't have to wait hours for ships to get across Gatun Locks. It wasn't so bad getting stuck on the Fort Sherman side coming back from the beach thanks to the "hole in the wall."

Our Panama veteran Richard Wyman who served with the 549th MPs and was all over Panama guarding our treasures, has been able, using Google Earth, to pinpoint locations on Google Earth of the old Canal Zone, where it might be a good place to test for FOREVER chemicals, should the U.S. Government do so

Personally, with all the shipments we have, the pictures of old AO barrels, and the VA Secretary grant, I'm not sure the testing is needed. But should anyone want to, we are producing a map of locations based on a Tropical Test Center map given to me by a veterans' spouse. Her husband worked as a Clerk at the Tropical Test Center.

Many of us came upon these weird sites in the jungle where the jungle was devoid and there were weird things on pedestals testing the tropical sun. I remember one such area out in the jungle, it was the size of a football field and had what seemed to be concrete lecterns and on the top was some kind of something. Some had paint chips, some had parts, just didn't make any sense at the time. But one thing for sure, to me at least, chemicals were used to keep it clear of jungle.

So tune in to czveterans.com. I found the picture of Fort Davis with the new canal particularly interesting as it shows our house where we lived, and about five pinpoints of areas to test very near to our quarters and about 1.35 miles from the edge of the Drop zone. A field right behind our quarters was used for helicopter repelling training. That field was kept clear by spraying. I asked them one day what they were spraying and the fellow told me, "Don't worry, lady, it kills bugs, not humans." Sadly, he had no idea and is probably deceased by now. The picture above shows the Drop Zone to the left. Our quarters are at the yellow pinpointed location to the right, and the red circle without the pinpoint was my husband's office at the back of the Motorpool next to the perimeter fence where the hand sprayers would come by often to keep the jungle back. As you can see there are about five pinpoints for possible testing very close to where we lived! I worked at Communications across the parade field, which also has a yellow pinpoint.

As we see in the Technical Manual used by all branches of service, 2,4-D & 2,4,5-T was used on parade fields to keep down the broadleaf weeds. I have veterans who are lining up to give statements or interviews, so if you subscribe (free) to the channel, as new content becomes available as a

subscriber you will be notified. I will be talking about the Olson/Tornoe paper soon and other things going on.

Panama Canal Society 90th anniversary

I joined the Society and Military-Veterans Advocacy® was able to set up a table at the Panama Canal society 90th anniversary to introduce ourselves to the Zonians about what we are doing. We had many people stop by our table which was at the door to the vendors room. Hopefully that will equate to new membership. There are many civilians from Panama also sick, including the President of Panama with a rare blood cancer, which some of our Panama veterans also have. What are the chances that our veterans and civilians alike who both lived in the same place could have this rare blood cancer? I'd say very suspect.

Looked like a good time was had by the Zonians. I met some of you who are also members of MVA™. I appreciate your membership. And it was sure nice meeting all of you.

We were at our table and I didn't get to all the activities, besides the wedding, museum, and vendors store where I picked up some Christmas gifts. Got some of that good Boquete coffee and a beautiful picture book put together by a pilot. My husband is really enjoying it.

Also brought home COVID. I knew I would be risking coming down with COVID in my travels. This is how important this mission is to me. I just pray my husband does not catch it from me. Pretty sick the first couple days but seem to be improving and I think on the mend.

We need your help

If congress would mandate a study on the Panama veterans, they would find many new diseases to connect.

I know I sound like a broken record. But here's the deal. Congress has known that 2,4-d & 2,4,5-t which was shipped to Panama was agent purple or orange depending on the year. The DoD would request funding through Congress for these shipments. We have 152 pages of shipping records, not counting the cablegram from Secretary Kissinger of the 400 tons there in 1976. Here is yet another link to a congressional hearing during the Vietnam battle for benefits which states again it was only a code name of these two chemicals.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015012330687>

I don't know why Panama DoD study was deleted from the final PACT Act, but I can see why the DoD does not want to hear from Panama veterans. It is really another Vietnam and a big headache for many who have covered it up all these years. Will we ever win? Not without your help. The truth needs to come out, but we must put the pressure on to make that happen.

Remember it took the Vietnam veterans almost 20 years to win. Notice too in 1978 at the congressional hearing they said agent orange was just a code name. If one looks at the MIL Standards, says the same. So does the Federal Pesticide Review Board. Congress has known all these years.

I need everybody's help. We won't get this done unless we can get front and center with congress and the VA, and for that we need an "army" of members.

So please, if you know anyone who may benefit from this work, please ask them to join forces by becoming a member and support our chairman and attorney Commander John Wells. He is willing to take the VA to task, we need to help him get there to do just that. Unfortunately, the VA Secretary can ignore us because we don't have a large enough class to represent and get the federal recognition.

Spreading the word

The more we organize our voices, the quicker we will get Panama recognized. The issue has been no one would write about my research. It is as if the narrative is being controlled.

Thank you, Dr. Wayne Dwernychuk for introducing me to Dr. Kenneth Olson. Our Olson/Tornoe paper "Long Term Environmental Impacts of Pesticide and Herbicide Use in Panama Canal Zone," is making waves around the world. Our paper can be found under our Panama section. Please share widely. Dr. Olson just told me our Panama paper was no. 1 in downloads in a recent week. Let's keep spreading the word!

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!

Help us get heard!!

It would be much, much easier to be heard by DC if we had the membership necessary to get Federally recognized. For that, we need members! And lots of them! We are doing all we can to get Panama's grant written into the CFR. Please help us by joining and/or donating today!

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

It's all most time to think about Back to School for the kids, grandkids, and great grandkids. You can show your support for Military-Veterans Advocacy® by easily donating to us with every Amazon purchase simply by adding us as your "Amazon Smile" charity! You can add us by clicking here: <https://bit.ly/MVASmile> then hit "Start Shopping" to have 0.5% of the price of your purchase donated to us! There are no extra fees or costs for you. To ensure all your future Amazon orders continue to count towards donations, be sure to go to [smle.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) whenever you're using an internet browser and turn on Amazon Smile in the settings of your mobile Amazon shopping app.

Thank you for your support as we continue #FightingForVets!

If you have questions about membership, contact Robin Barr at Robin.Barr@mvadvocacy.org

Be sure to visit our online marketplace. We offer a variety of products from all of our sections and are continuing to add new products. <https://military-veterans-advocacy.square.site/>