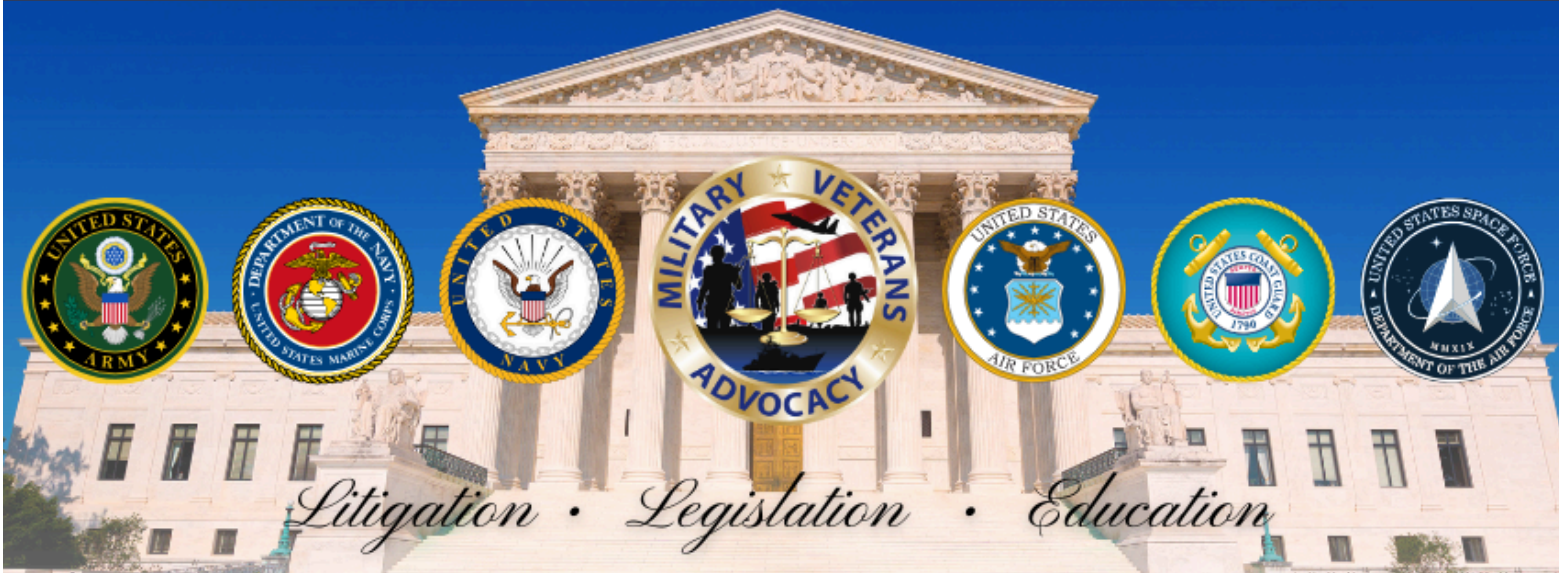


# VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

WWW.MILITARYVETERANSADVOCACY.ORG



## Spring 2025

Hafa Adai!

We have had a busy year so far. We have had several victories in court. The best one is the decision in MVA v. Secretary of Veterans Affairs that removed the requirement for your attorneys to agree to computer systems monitoring of their law firm to have access to your records in the Veterans Benefits Management Systems. While there is some more work to do, this is a huge win for veterans. Our Executive Director is fighting Louisiana in federal court to regulate attorneys and their practice, under the guise of reining in claims sharks,



**Brian Lewis**  
**2025 Chairman of the Board**

## Fighting for Veterans Benefits

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in representing veterans in their VA claims appeals.



We have brought aboard a new Director of Education. This is a big win for MVA as he has significant experience in preparing Continuing Legal Education

programs and will help us prepare those and other education outreach to several underserved communities. Please join me in welcoming Ron Bald.

We have had some tentative wins on the legislative front. We have fought changes in Minnesota to regulate attorneys and their practice in representing veterans, under the guise of reining in claims sharks, in their VA claims appeals. We don't believe state-

level lawmakers have any role to play in regulating a solely federal practice. We have had several trips to DC to engage with lawmakers and have had several lawmakers sign on to bills of import to MVA.

We also will host Veterans Get Outside Day 2025 in Niagara Falls on Flag Day. We encourage you to come up and join us so this worthwhile activity can continue in future years. Getting outside for even a few minutes a day can have a host of benefits for your health.

Our limiting factor is always money. Please consider joining MVA as a Member and consider donating to MVA. Doing either or both will help us do the work I've outlined above. MVA is a 501(c)(3) charity.

You can donate to MVA [HERE](#)

You can join MVA [HERE](#)

In Service,

*Brian*

## 2025 Board Members *Thank you for your service*

**Brian Lewis** Chairman of the Board

**Michael Kvintus** Vice Chairman

**Commander John B. Wells**  
Executive Director & Secretary  
(U.S. Navy - Retired)

**W. Hope Bald** - Treasurer

**Mike Yates**  
Blue Water Navy Chief of Staff

**Master Sergeant Donna Stratford**

Director of Marketing and Communications  
(USAFR - Retired)

**Sgt. Major Jim Kuiken (USMC - Retired)**

Director, Native & Indigenous American  
Veteran Outreach

**Anthony West**

Board Member at Large

**Cheryl Cox** - Guam & Central Pacific Islands

**Susie Belanger** - Board Member at Large

**Jacqueline Bloom** - Board Member at Large

**Cheryl Causey Cox** - Board Member at Large

**Eric Burns** - Board Member at Large

**Jimmie Scott** - Board Member at Large  
(U.S. Army - Retired)



# Veterans in the Legal Field

March 13, 2025



## Topics covered:

- Advice Related to the JAG Corps
- Veterans Affairs Education Benefits
- Leveraging Military Experience in the Job Process
- The Difference Between Studying Law and Practicing Law
- Advice on Implementing Veterans Law



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Mike Yates  
Blue Water Navy Chief of Staff  
[Mike.Yates@mvadvocacy.org](mailto:Mike.Yates@mvadvocacy.org)

We are working hard to try get more ships cover that service in Vietnam. We are doing this by trying to get the Line set back to where it was before 2002, and that is the Vietnam Service Medal Line. It's going to take some hard work so we will be asking for your help.

As far the Deck Log Project, for a few month I was running way behind on answering the Deck Log request. As of now I am all caught up and should be able to respond to those in a timely matter.

Part of the Deck Log project is adding ships to the list. For the last couple of months, I developed a new way to search for Deck Logs. I have added many more Ships to the list. I did provide a list on the Web Site for Members, but while doing that I decided to change the format on the list a little for the next update. I think so people may focus on only Vietnam but forgot that their ship stopped in either Thailand, Guam, American Samoa, or Johnston Island. So, what I am doing is adding all those to the same list and

you will be able to see it at a glance. This is going to take me a few more weeks to complete, since it is very time-consuming, and I have other things I need to stay on top of. I will make a post when it is ready.



One other item to note is that back in December I was a witness for one of our fellow Veterans at a hearing. Because we had provided him with a Dead Reckoning Plot that showed his ship was within the Territorial Sea, the case was won.

One of the items I need to mention, it is very disappointing to see that we have over 6100 on the Open page, yet we only have about 1100 due paying Members. Remember, if we can get your support by paying dues or making donations, we can't do much advocating for you in Washington DC. It costs money to go there. We don't stay in costly hotels, we

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use the transit system to get around, and we don't eat at fancy restaurants. We penny pitch as much as we can. So please support us.



I am sure we have helped many Members receive their benefits, many of you have in turned made a donation to us,



Thank You, but the feeling is there are many that received their money and just decided they no longer needed us, that is sad that they aren't there to help their fellow Veterans. Please make donations and show your appreciation.

One other item to note is that back in December I was a witness for one of our fellow Veterans at a hearing. Because I had provided him with a Dead Reckoning Plot that showed his ship was within the Territorial Sea, the case was won.

*Mike Yates*



# FIGHTING FOR VETERAN BENEFITS. CHANGING LIVES.

-  **1ST PRIZE** LR Golden Boy HR 0004 3 with 251st Anniversary of 1st Continental Congress Engraved on Stock & the MVA Logo on Left Stock
-  **2ND PRIZE** 586 Smith and Wesson Distinguished Combat Magnum
-  **3RD PRIZE** Battle Horse Knife, Model: Bronco, Flat Grind with a black handle
-  **4TH PRIZE** \$250 CASH

**1 Ticket for \$20**

**5 for \$80**

**6 for \$100**

**Drawing on May 24, 2025**

**@ 10:30 am**

T LeBlanc's Creole Kitchen, 797 Robert Blvd. Slidell, Louisiana



[militaryveteransadvocacy.org](http://militaryveteransadvocacy.org)

Gaming Lic #G4201 • Not required to be present to win • Winners must comply with all federal and state firearm laws.

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# Honoring a True American Hero: Everett Alvarez Jr. Receives the Congressional Gold Medal



On January 17, 2025, Everett Alvarez Jr., a decorated Navy pilot and the longest-held prisoner of war in North Vietnam, was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal

— one of our nation’s highest civilian honors.

Alvarez was shot down over North Vietnam on August 5, 1964, just days after the Gulf of Tonkin incident. He was captured and spent eight and a half years — 3,113 days — enduring brutal conditions as a POW in Hanoi, including years in the notorious Hỏa Lò Prison, known as the “Hanoi Hilton.” His incredible strength, courage, and resilience became a symbol of American perseverance during one of our most difficult conflicts.

Following his release in 1973, Alvarez went on to serve in numerous federal leadership roles, including Deputy Director



## Susie Says

Hello MVA Members,

*“When the original Agent Orange Act passed in 1991, it included the combat zone — but that boundary changed in 2002, cutting out many who served just offshore. These Blue Water Navy veterans, now in their late 70s and early 80s, are still fighting for the care and recognition they deserve. Time is of the essence.” –Susie*

We are urging every MVA member to contact their U.S. Representative and both U.S. Senators and ask them to sponsor or support legislation that restores the Vietnam boundary to its pre-2002 coordinates. It’s a simple correction — but it could be life-changing for those who were exposed and forgotten.

Let’s make this right before time runs out!

Let’s  
Connect



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**JUNE 14, 2025**



**NIAGARA FALLS, NY**

# VETERANS GET OUTSIDE DAY

In Partnership with:



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation



## **Attend! Schedule:**

Opening ceremonies at 11 am at  
Old Falls Street

- Visit vendor, VA and nonprofit booths
- Goat Island fun walk/run
- Entertainment throughout the day
- Food trucks
- & More!

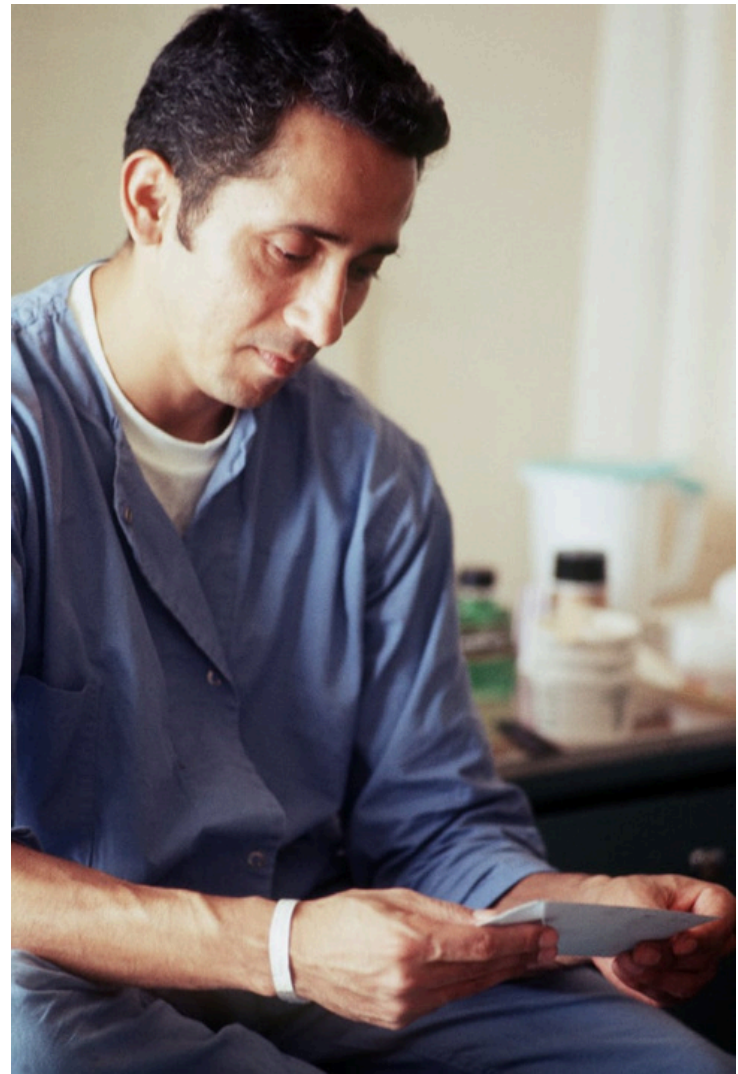
Closing ceremonies at 4:30 p.m.

## **Get Involved! Become a Sponsor**



of the Peace Corps and Deputy Administrator of the VA. He also served on the Board of Regents for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

In receiving the Congressional Gold Medal, Alvarez joins the ranks of other historic figures who demonstrated extraordinary service to the nation. This honor recognizes not only his personal sacrifice but the experience of all Vietnam POWs who endured unimaginable hardship in service to our country.



As Everett Alvarez Jr. accepted the award, he humbly reflected, "It's not just about me — it's about all the men who were there with me. We never gave up." His legacy is a reminder of why we must continue to advocate for all who have worn the uniform, especially those whose service stories remain under-recognized.

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