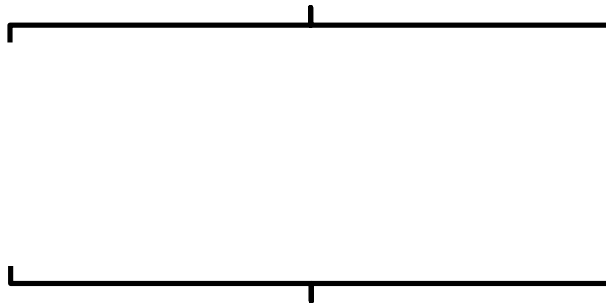


VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA THOMAS J TORI CHAPTER 421



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VVA CHAPTER 421
PO BOX 100097
STATEN ISLAND, NY 10310
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

General Membership Chapter meetings are held at
The Elks Lodge
3250 Richmod Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10312 at 7:30pm
every 4th Monday of each month

Board Meetings held at
645 Forest Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10310 at 7:30pm
every 3rd Thursday of each month

Comments and contributions are encouraged.

Send contributions to:
VVA Chapter 421
PO Box 100097
Staten Island, NY 10310

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of this organization. Individuals with different viewpoints and opinions are invited to submit them to the Chapter by the deadline described in the newsletter at the Chapter meetings.

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John Billotti — Stephanie Creech — Victoria Creech — Gene DiGiacomo

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[CALENDAR OF EVENTS]

- May 17** Board Meeting
- May 19** Am Vets are sponsoring a day for Walter Reid Veterans and a picnic at the VFW North Short Post. We will be there to serve and assist.
- May 26** Coast Guard Service at the Tottenville Marina
- June 4** A very important matter will be discussed, it is ***your*** chapter so make sure you attend!
- June 10** Day of Remembrance at the Vietnam Veteran Memorial Park — service starts at 11am
- June 28** The Moving Wall will be in Queens, Middle Village
- July 4** Travis 4th of July Parade — show up at 11, we have a new trailer so if you can't walk we have you covered!
- Sept 3** Our 24th birthday meeting — come and celebrate with us!
- Sept 21** Greg Perrillo will be dedicating 40 paintings at the New Jersey Vietnam Memorial Park



[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE]

It is springtime and as usual a lot has happened since our last newsletter! We just recently celebrated our 4th Annual Vietnam Veterans Day at Tottenville HS, it was once again sponsored by Senator Lanza and Assemblymen Titone. In attendance was State Representative Michael Cusick, Lee Covino, our own his Honor Michael Brennan and a host of others representing other public officials. The turnout was great and I notice every year more and more of our brothers and sisters come out.

The Day of Remembrance DVD has been completed, for those interested in one please reach out to Nick Castoro. We are also in the process of getting one copy out to each family of our 84.

Elections were held at our April meeting, up for election were the whole executive board, 3 board members, and our new addition to the board -- an assistant secretary. We switched it up a bit; we felt it important to have a back up to our secretary because of the importance and work load of the position. The results are as follows: the Executive Board stayed intact and our new assistant secretary/ board member is Al Halfenger. George Sullivan took his name off the ballad because of the extra time he has to put in with his family. The three board members elected into office are John Bellotti, Frank Mullholland and our newest member Glen Hall. I want to thank George Sullivan for all his work while he was with us, and we all truly understand that family must come first. He will retain his job as Membership Chairman. George you were always the nay saver, I think you did that to see if my hair would grow! I will miss you at the meetings.

On April 18th at the Excelsior there was a Night of Honor; it was to honor our own Vito Giobbe for his endless work over the years keeping Fleet Week a day to remember for all who came to see our sailors and their ships. Staten Island Project Home Front was also honored for their work servicing our troops overseas. We represented the chapter with a whole table and presented them with a check from our VHV program.

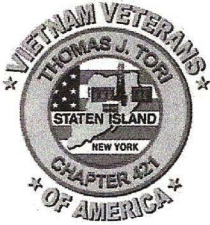
At our May meeting we invited Alex Morocco to attend so we could also present him with a check from our VHV Program. This is for the Brendan Morrocco Trust Fund; it has been put in place to help offset the costs of the maintenance of his house. We also brought in the owners of Greenside Up to say thank you and present them with a plaque for their generosity donating a Christmas tree for our Memorial every year.

On May 19th the Am Vets are bringing in some of our veterans from Walter Reid Hospital. They do this every year, a day that shows them how proud we are of them. The day finishes with a special barbecue at the VFW North Shore Post. The members of Chapter 421 will be there to assist and serve them.

Now I would like to go back to Vietnam Veterans Day, a day we celebrate on March 29th. When the movement started the 29th was not picked because it was some random date, it was picked because of historical value. Lester Modelowitz wrote the letter explaining all of this. Senator Lanza and Assemblymen Titone graciously sponsored this and most all of our public officials signed off on it. That is why today we have just celebrated our 4th Vietnam Veterans Day. Unfortunately we have one Congressman {Michael Grimm} who sees fit to ignore this and go off on his own trying to put an HR bill proclaiming March 30th "Welcome Home Vietnam Veteran". The reason I am bringing this to your attention is, despite our efforts in trying to make him understand that the 30th is not the historical date, or the fact that we the Vietnam Veteran want that date; he continues to ignore our wishes. Recently New York 1 upon their request asked us if they could meet with us and try to understand why the discrepancy in dates. The result from that interview was they edited out all that I said. Upon contacting NY1 their reply to us was if you didn't like it then you should not have done the interview -- I have attached my letter to the Congressman so you can read it. I also forwarded a copy to Senator Lanza, Assemblymen Titone and Representative Cusick. The bottom line here is our Congressman has to understand that he has to honor what his constituents want not what his own agenda is.

Before I close I would like to once again emphasize the importance of our Day of Remembrance. This year it will fall on June 10th and the time is 11:00. I cannot underline the impact your being there has on the families and friends of our 84. Make sure you take the time to share this service with all of us, like the wall it too is a healing process.

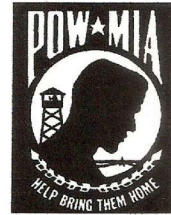
**Your Brother
Gene**



Vietnam Veterans of America

Thomas J. Tori Chapter 421

P.O. Box 100097 • Staten Island, NY 10310



*US Congressman Michael Grimm
265 New Dorp Lane 2nd Floor
Staten Island, NY 10306*

I am writing this letter of disagreement on behalf of my entire organization, their families and friends.

Here in New York State we have recently celebrated our 4th Vietnam Veterans Day at Tottenville HS. In attendance were Senator Lanza, Assemblymen Titone, Michael Cusick and a host of others representing different officials across the Staten Island. As you are well aware this day has been set aside to honor Vietnam Veterans. Its purpose is just to bring all Vietnam Veterans together and say thank you for service.

There are proclamations from New York State declaring March 29th Vietnam Veterans Day. This proclamation was introduced and sponsored by Senator Lanza and Assemblymen Titone and has been signed by all our local officials. The National President of the Vietnam Veterans of America, John Rowan also endorsed this day.

I am not going to list all the reasons why March 29th is and always should be the official day. It is an historical fact dating back to President Nixon.

Your HR bill stating it is on March 30th and called "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" is way off the mark and shows a lack of concern over what the Vietnam Veterans want.

Recently New York I called us {we did not reach out to them} and wanted to interview Lester Modelowitz and myself to understand why there was a discrepancy in the dates. Lester Modelowitz stated very clearly why it is on the 29th. When I was interviewed they edited out most of my statement which are written in this letter. After calling them and trying to understand why their answer was "It is up to the editor and if that is the case why did we do the interview".

After that statement and your insistence on not working with us on this matter I felt compelled to send you this letter of disagreement.

In closing I would like to personally say that I always thought our public servants were all about doing what their constituents want not their own agenda.

*Sincerely
Gene Di Giacomo, President*

[VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE]

Sure hope as you read this column that all is well with yourself and your family. I have almost completed my acquisition of the photos of our "84" brothers killed in action in Vietnam. To date I have acquired eighty photos; I am attempting to get the other four by contacting the branches of service which they were enlisted in, so far I haven't heard from them. Our Honor Guard DVD has been completed and given to those members who paid for them. A family member of each of the "84" brothers will soon be receiving a copy of the DVD as well.

Unfortunately due to time constraints some photos of the eighty four either didn't make it on the DVD or their photo was not received in a timely fashion. Those photos received late have already been placed in frames and will be on display during our Remembrance Day Ceremony this year on Sunday, June 10th. As a point of information I have been in contact with three Gold Star parents since I began attempting to acquire the photos. Those Families are: Richard Stasio's mother, Frank Bush's mother and Raymond Flynn's parents. I have spoken to all three and with the help of God they will be at this year's ceremony along with other family members.

On a sad note, I noticed last week in the obituary of the Staten Island Advance the mother [Geraldine Mullens] of Robert J. Mullens, Jr. [one of our "84" KIA] passed away. She resided in Short Hills, NJ as well as Jupiter, Florida. Unfortunately neither I nor anyone else in the chapter knew anything about Mrs. Mullens. I will keep everyone posted when and if I receive the remaining photos of our missing brothers. For those interested they are: Bobby James Perkins, David Neives, Walter Burke and Theodore Moon, Jr. There are no available photos of these brothers either in their High Schools on Staten Island and no one responded to the S.I. Advance articles requesting photos on these four. In closing, sure hope everyone enjoys the gorgeous weather we are having. Also, don't forget our chapter Golf Outing this year is Wednesday, October 3rd, 2012 at LaTourette Golf Course on Staten Island. More information and golf flyers will be coming soon.

**Stay well,
Danny Ingellis**



[REPORT FROM THE HONOR GUARD]

Hello everyone,

We are pleased to announce that our DVD documentary "Honor Them All, A Day of Remembrance" is complete and ready for distribution! Many of the pre-ordered copies were given out at the April meeting. If you ordered a copy and did not receive it or if you wish to purchase a copy please see me at the May meeting. Copies will be available at all Chapter meetings! If you can't make it feel free to contact me for other arrangements, my contact information is available in the beginning of the newsletter. I think everyone will agree that we now have a first rate permanent record of our annual tribute to our beloved 84 fallen brothers.

The Honor Guard is now in the process of planning and preparing for this year's ceremony which will take place on Sunday, June 10th at 11am at Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Park. There is a large amount of unseen work that goes into this event and we will be asking for some help from the membership. (more information will be given out at our May meeting). Most of all we need you, the membership, to come out to this event and be there on the day of the ceremony. A strong presence really shows the family members how much we care about our 84 and how committed we are to keeping our promise of never letting them be forgotten.

We urge you to take time out on this special day that only comes around once a year, please join us. Be a part of the remembering. Be a part of the honor. Be a part of the pride.

ALL THE WAY!

Nicky Castoro, Honor Guard Captain



DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

JUNE 10, 2012



Major Michael Davis O'Donnell — January 1, 1970

If you are able, save them for a place inside of you

And save one backward glance when you are leaving for the places they can no longer go

Be not ashamed to say you loved them, though you may or may not have always

**Take what they have left and what they have taught you with their dying and keep it with
your own**

**And in that time when men decide and feel safe to call the war insane, take one moment
to embrace those gentle heroes you left behind**

Major O'Donnell was killed in action three months later in Dak To, Vietnam