



American Legion Post 1758 Newsletter

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June 2012

American Legion Post 1758,
Junction, NY 12533

PO Box 92,

Hopewell

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Our next meeting will be **July 10, 2012** at 7:00 PM at the Whortlekill Rod and Gun Club. We don't normally have a July meeting but we agreed to have one this year due to the amount of items we have to

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A successful person is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him.

[David Brinkley](#)

New Officers for 2012-2013 are:

Commander - James Reynolds
1st Vice Commander - Neil Klock
2nd Vice Commander - Joe Green
Adjutant - John Pizzuti
Treasurer - Dan Briscoe
Chaplin - Norm Dauerer
Historian - Evert Munning
Sergeant-At-Arms - Mark Baaden
Membership Chairman - John Polasko
Service Officer - Dan Oberhauser
Homeland Security - Mark Baaden



Outgoing Commander
Neil Klock
hands over the reins to
new Commander
Jim Reynolds with
County Commander
Louis Humphries.

This is a photo of the brick we had installed at the new rehabilitated Schlathaus Park at the corner of All Angels and Myers Corners Roads.



Living space available for Veteran in need. *Do you know a homeless Veteran? Neil Klock has room in his home and is willing to take in a Veteran. Contact Neil at 845-227-6091*

/A offers a wide array of special programs and initiatives specifically designed to help homeless veterans live as self-sufficiently and

Castle Point is always **looking for volunteers in a variety of positions. Call (845) 831-2000**

We had an excellent day distributing Poppys on a very hot and muggy Saturday, May 26th. Members were at Stewarts on Lake Walton Road and ShopRite in Fishkill. Thanks to Niel Klock, John Pizzuti, Carlos Baez, and Cosmo



ans Support Organization Investigated

11, 2012

Patty Murray (D-WA), Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee recently joined rs Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Bill Nelson (D-FL) in sending two letters regarding the 'Veteran Support Organization' (VSO), addressing potential violations of federal law and abuse of tax exempt status by the 501(c)(3) organization. The first letter was sent to Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of the Treasury Timothy Geithner, requesting an audit and, where appropriate, an investigation of the VSO for potential violations of federal law. The second letter was sent to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki. The full texts of both letters are available on the [U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs website](#). **NOTE:** VSO is usually associated with the term 'Veteran Service Organization' which refers to any veterans' service organization named the 'Veteran Support Or



Special
veteran
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You have probably all seen these guys, driving Walmart, Stop & Shop, etc. Most are ex-military and the money doesn't go where it is needed. It's just some time. Below is just one report about



The group, which solicits at grocery stores, Walmar to help veterans across the U.S. During November and December, it negotiates for space in local malls, often collecting upwards of \$1,000 a day from holiday shoppers.

But the VSO's [most recently-submitted IRS documents](#) reveal only 6.6 percent of the group's \$5.7 million in revenues go toward the grants and veteran assistance programs they tout to donors.

Last year, the group's founder, Richard Van Houten, kept 4.4 percent of revenue himself. He earned a salary of \$255,698.

The VSO also spent \$240,995 on office expenses, \$154,332 on travel, and \$71,860 on uniforms for solicitors.

It spent over \$1.1 million on "other salaries," presumably for many of the people who solicit donations. A prominent community activist in Tampa tells the 10 News Investigators that workers get to keep **30 percent of daily donations**. He called the group "professional panhandlers."

Legion applauds DoD review of PTSD cases

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta revealed at a June 13 congressional hearing that he has ordered a review of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) cases handled by the military since 2001. The U.S. Army began such a review last month, after an investigation at the Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash., revealed that hundreds of soldiers with PTSD were misdiagnosed or accused of faking their symptoms.

Panetta broke the news while being questioned by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., at a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing. Murray heard complaints last fall from soldiers who said their PTSD diagnoses had been purposely changed to lesser maladies. She spurred the Army to launch its review and found out about Panetta's decision after telling him, "this is not just an Army disability evaluation system. This is a joint Department of Defense and VA program (that) covers all of the services."

American Legion National Commander Fang A. Wong said that Panetta's decision will provide a much-needed expansion of the Army's initiative. "We don't want our servicemembers being denied care and benefits because someone in the DoD system says they have personality disorders or some other misdiagnosis, just to save some money," said Wong, referring to [a May 16 story in the New York Times](#) that mentioned an internal Army memo that came to light last February. The memo quoted a Madigan doctor who said that Army clinicians needed to be "good stewards" of taxpayer dollars, and that a servicemember could collect up to \$1.5 million in disability benefits if diagnosed with PTSD.

"We stand behind Secretary Panetta's prudent decision to go through every PTSD case in all branches of the military and reassess the decisions to make sure they were made properly – not as cost-cutting measures," Wong said. "And we also want to thank Sen. Murray for her hard work and leadership on this critical issue. Without her persistence, these reviews might never have happened."

During the hearing, Murray said the Pentagon and VA "are losing the battle on mental and behavioral health conditions that are confronting a lot of our servicemembers" and noted that, on average, military suicides have been occurring once a day in 2012.

Wong said he agreed with Murray that, five years after the health-care scandal at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, DoD has been slow in its response. "Secretary Panetta said that part of the problem is bureaucratic, that he's in charge of a very big bureaucracy," Wong said. "We need to find a way to cut through all of that and make it clear to DoD's leadership that our troops who suffer from PTSD need to be helped as quickly as possible. Issue an order, replace incompetent people, eliminate some positions. Whatever it takes, DoD should do it now," he said.

In October 2010, The American Legion formed the Ad Hoc Committee on Traumatic Brain Injury/PTSD. Over the course of nearly two years, the committee heard from various experts – military, federal and civilian – in the field of mental health, as well as servicemembers. Viable alternative treatments for both TBI and PTSD were discussed, as well as improved screening, research, diagnosis and treatment for both conditions. The committee prepared a list of recommendations for DoD and VA that are being reviewed by Legion leadership.

On Flag Day, Thursday, June 14th our Post retired United States Flags during ceremonies held behind the East Fishkill Library on Rte. 376. We had an excellent turn out as you can see by the photo below



We also were able to use our new “burn pit” built by Eagle Scout Zachariah Biondo and his team. The pit works much better than the barrels we have had to use over the years.

Strong Response for New VA Benefit

Within two weeks of being announced, the Veteran Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) has received over 12,000 online applications. The program allows qualifying Veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 to receive up to 12 months of education assistance. Maximum payments are equal to the full-time rate for the Montgomery GI Bill ? Active Duty, currently \$1,473 monthly. For more information, read the [Military.com VRAP GI Bill Factsheet](#) or call VA National Call Center toll free at 1-800-827-1000. Veterans may also access the VRAP application online through [eBenefits](#) or sign-up at their local Career Center. Find your nearest Career Center at www.servicelocator.org.