



# American Legion Post 1758 Newsletter

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American Legion Post 1758,  
Junction, NY 12533

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## Our next 2012 at Rod and

begins in July 2012 in order to carefully review applications, interview homeowners, inspect homes and select the homeowners that display the most need for the 2013 projects. Interested individuals are encouraged to begin the process immediately. The deadline for completed applications is October 31, 2012. Selected homeowners will be notified in early March 2013.

Low-income Dutchess County homeowners, especially those who are elderly, living with a disability, veterans or parents with young children are encouraged to apply. Local volunteers, many representing their sponsoring employers, civic or fraternal organizations, churches, synagogues, or schools, do all the work on the homes. They are led and assisted by skilled trades volunteers, private contractors and other skilled individuals. If a home is selected for inclusion in the program, there is no cost to the homeowner.

The local organization is an affiliate of Rebuilding Together, the Nation's largest volunteer organization preserving and revitalizing low-income houses and communities.

For more information you can visit <http://www.rebuildingtogetherdutchess.org/> or call 845-454-7310

"Most folks are about as happy as they make their minds up to be."

Abraham Lincoln

**Rebuilding Together Dutchess County** is accepting applications now for 2013 home repair program (from July through September). The repairs are done at no cost to income qualified homeowners through the generous sponsorship of many area businesses, national sponsors, area churches and other grant programs.

The organization plans to complete approximately 15 projects total on its National Rebuilding Day in April 2013 and Fall Rebuilding Day in October 2013. Since its founding in 1992, over

## **'Total Force' Drill Pay Hit**

Defense officials can expect a fight if they embrace a plan from an internal study group that would urge Congress to cut [drill pay](#) and annual retirement points for Reserve and National Guard members in return for allowing retired pay to start years sooner than the current age-60 threshold.

The warning came Tuesday from Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Andrew B. Davis, executive director of the Reserve Officers Association.

Davis charged that the 11th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation "paints an incomplete picture" of drill pay purposes today and that its director, Thomas L. Bush, pushed unsuccessfully for the same "total force compensation" concept a decade ago as a senior policy official on reserve affairs at the Pentagon.

"This pitch was first brought up 10 years ago, by Mr. Bush, and was put on the shelf when Reserve and Guard members started taking heavy casualties in the war. Now is not the time to resurrect an old idea and try to ram it through Congress," Davis said a statement.

The QRMC proposes making Reserve and Guard compensation less costly and more flexible to meet recruiting and retention targets. To do that, it touts reserve compensation that is "more closely aligned with the approach used to compensate" active duty members.

The study, released in June, recommends replacing the tradition of paying two days' basic pay for a day of weekend drill with a new formula: one day of basic pay plus housing and food allowance for one day of drill.

To bolster its case that drill pay needs to be modernized, the QRMC notes that currently "reserve members are paid more for a day of weekend training than for a day serving in combat. "

Marshall Hanson, legislative director of ROA and a retired Navy Reserve captain, called this a "slogan" that obscures important facts. For example, reserve personnel in a war zone receive additional pays including hostile fire pay or danger pay and valuable tax exemptions.

Also, double basic pay for drill weekends compensates for the extra hours members spend on reserve business for which they receive no credit. It also helps to cover unreimbursed travel expenses that many members experience in getting to and from drill sites.

When all these factors are weighed, the relative value of service in combat rises and the relative value of drill pay falls, Hanson said.

The QRMC also proposes cutting retirement points earned per year by a drilling member from 75 down to 53 — or just a point for each of 24 weekend drill days, 14 more for two week's summer training and 15 annual participation points. This would represent a 30 percent cut in points earned toward future retirement pay calculations.

**For more you can check this web site:**

**<http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,247209,00.html>**

**SUICIDE PREVENTION 1-800-273-TALK**  
 suicidepreventionlifeline.org

**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*



**Special Notice: If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call this toll-free number 1-800-273-8255, available 24/7, and tell them you are a veteran. All calls are confidential.**

**Good Of The Legion:**

Juan Alfonso's name was pulled for the Pot Of Gold Drawing. Juan was not in attendance so the money was added to the POT.

**The new membership year has begun!** As usual the Post would be glad to process your renewal but you can also renew your membership online to continue to receive the many discounts and benefits of your membership in The American Legion for 2013.

Your many benefits include a one-year subscription to *The American Legion Magazine*, access to special insurance offers, discounts on prescriptions, savings on eyewear, travel, computers, plus a lot more.

Take this opportunity to renew quickly and easily online.

Your membership also supports important services for you and all veterans, including:

- FREE expert assistance from Veterans Service Officers when you file and pursue claims, pension benefits and appeals to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- Representation in Washington, D.C., to protect your interests, including our work with the present administration to protect healthcare benefits for veterans.
- Emergency assistance for veterans and their families.
- Support to your community, including blood drives, hospital services, and youth programs such as baseball and scouting.

Please, renew your membership today and continue to enjoy all that The American Legion membership offers.

To renew online go to this URL: [Renew Online](http://www.legion.org/renew) <http://www.legion.org/renew>

**Many** of you have probably been involved in Scouting – either as participants years ago, or by supporting it as a Scoutmaster or by sponsoring one of the more than 2,500 Scout troops that Legion posts sponsor each year. You’ve witnessed up close the positive influences Scouting has on young men, the character it builds and the sense of personal obligation to community it fosters.

Each year The American Legion presents an Eagle Scout of the Year Award, along with a \$10,000 scholarship, to a deserving young man who completes his Eagle Scout project. Eagle Scout is the highest rank advancement in Scouting and requires – among multiple other achievements – planning, developing and leading a service project for a religious organization, school or community.

When Boy Scout Christopher Petrovski needed to come up with a project, he didn’t have to look any farther than his own neighborhood and Merle Guild Post 208, in Arlington Heights, Ill.

"I live three houses away from the post, so every time I walk to school or go outside I see it," he said. "It’s so close. I looked at it and said, ‘Why not do this?’"

But more than location factored into the decision. Christopher’s father, John, is a member of Post 208’s Sons of The American Legion squadron, while his grandfather, Charles, is a World War II Navy veteran and longtime member there. In fact, Charles and his wife will be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary in July – at Post 208.

"I thought this was a way I could honor our veterans," Christopher said. "That was another big reason for doing this."

Christopher and a group of volunteers spent two Saturdays this spring power-washing, scraping and repainting three sides of Post 208’s exterior, along with cleaning and staining the long wooden fence around the building. As part of the project, Christopher was responsible for obtaining all the necessary tools, materials and refreshments for the two days, as well as ensuring that the project was completed in a satisfactory and timely manner. Funding for the project came in the form of \$100 from his Scout troop and \$180 that Christopher had earned last fall.

The results of the project impressed Post 208’s membership. "I am amazed at how a young man can do such a big project so well from start to finish," Post 208 Commander Ellen Janda said. "He has really enhanced the image of our post building in the community."

After finishing the project, Christopher had to submit a written report and go before a review board before he was awarded the rank of Eagle Scout. That happened June 20. The rank brings a sense of pride to the soon-to-be Marquette University freshman – as did the project.

"There is definitely a sense of accomplishment that goes with it," Christopher said. "When I walk by it, I look at it and say, ‘Yeah, I painted that.’ But I had other volunteers who helped, and I’m thankful for that. It was an important project."

Dad also beams a bit when talking about his son’s project. "I’m very proud of my son Chris to organize and complete such a project to help out the local Legion hall," said John, who doubles as Scout Troop 132’s assistant Scoutmaster. "It’s always great to be helping others, and doing something for the vets and the post was very satisfying."

## VA Completing Agent Orange Claims

The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced that nearly all of the 230,000 disability claims related to Agent Orange presumptions have been completed. Over \$3.6 billion has been paid to Vietnam veterans and their survivors as a result of Agent Orange exposure. For more information, read VA's [VAntage Point Blog](#). VA has established its Agent Orange Fast Track Claims Processing System website at [www.fastrack.va.gov](http://www.fastrack.va.gov) to assist veterans in filing claims for the three new conditions related to the effects of Agent Orange exposure. It guides Veterans through automated, program-assisted menus to capture the information and medical evidence needed for faster claims decision.

For complete guides to all veterans benefits, visit the [Military.com Benefits Center](#).

## Vietnam Veterans of America Congratulates Colonel Forrest R. Newton on His 33 Years of Service and Upcoming Retirement

By Jim Vale and Patrick G. Corcoran

In December 2011, Col. Forrest R. Newton—one of the **last Vietnam veterans still on active duty**—met with VVA staff to seek assistance with a Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claim. Col. Newton, 6'4", is an imposing figure, a fact not lost on his younger brother, who noted at Newton's recent retirement ceremony that nobody ever mistook Barbara Newton's eldest son as the "runt of the litter." Nonetheless, Newton's physical stature is dwarfed by his wry sense of humor—apparent whenever conversation turns to the Department of Veterans Affairs' fuzzy benefit calculation math and when he recounts the air of bewilderment that sweeps over VA employees as they wrap their heads around a benefits claim concerning an active-duty Vietnam veteran: "*Agent Orange in '69 ... and Iraqi burn-pits in '07?*"

The BDD Claims Process, one of the VA's latest claims initiatives, aims to completely adjudicate benefit claims before a service member leaves the service. After having sifted through thousands of pages of Newton's records and hundreds of regulations; after having hounded VA employees from across the country over the telephone and by e-mail; and after careful consultation with VVA claims expert Marc McCabe and VVA's other experienced service officers, VVA succeeded in consolidating Newton's complicated decades of records into a simple narrative with accompanying primary-source documents, organized to help VA adjudicators locate and resolve any issues raised.

Thanks to the efforts and hard work of the Newtons, VVA, VA employees from regional offices around country, and many others, Col. Newton's BDD claim is off and running, and hopefully it will be among a rare handful of BDD claims that are, in fact, adjudicated prior to separation from active duty.

### ***9 Presidents, 14 Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 3 Wars, and 33 Years of Service***

Newton's impressive military career began in June 1968, when, as a 17-year-old high school graduate from Brighton, Michigan, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. A year later, Newton was deployed to Vietnam. In August 1969, he was awarded his second Purple Heart after sustaining shrapnel wounds to his forehead, arm, and right thigh. After his recovery, Newton served on President Nixon's Security Detachment at Camp David until his honorable discharge in the summer of 1971.

Prior to leaving the Marine Corps, Newton received several letters of commendation. An evaluation report—enthusiastically endorsing promotion—described the young non-commissioned officer as an “outstanding sergeant.” Newton’s platoon leader described his conduct as “above reproach” and praised Newton’s habit of performing tasks with “thoroughness and enthusiasm.” His platoon leader described in full detail a mishap in which Newton attempted an especially complex bayonet maneuver and inadvertently stabbed himself in the chest. According to this account, Newton remained stoic, ignoring the pain, and he “perform[ed] the drill that day before thousands of spectators.” Newton received additional praise for heroic, lifesaving, and selfless actions taken in the aftermath of a serious motor vehicle accident, in which he came to the aid of a stranger who was gravely wounded.

After leaving the Marine Corps, Newton earned his bachelor’s degree. In April 1979, he accepted his “butter bar” — that most dubious of honors — in the U.S. Army Reserve, transferring to active duty as a Captain in October 1982. This was the start of a remarkable Army career--as a paratrooper, a mentor, and coach to the Army’s brightest at West Point; as Brigade commander in Korea; and with several combat deployments to the Middle East as part of Operation Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Newton will retire on September 1, 2012, having served 33 years and 26 days in uniform. In addition to countless military decorations, Newton was honored with the Distinguished Service Medal at his retirement ceremony on June 8, 2012. The DSM, the Army’s third highest award, is the Army’s most prestigious service award.

Newton’s awards also include the following: Three Legion of Merit Medals; Bronze Star Medal; two Purple Heart Medals; Defense Meritorious Medal; nine Meritorious Service Medals; Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon; Vietnam Campaign Medal; Vietnam Service Medal; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry; and the Vietnam Civil Action Medal.



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

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