

RAY!
MAY 26 2015

Title: Veteran's Services Advisory Board

19 Mar 2015

From: Veteran's Agent

Subject: Meeting Minutes -- 19 March 2015

1. The thirty-seventh meeting of the Veteran's Services Advisory Board (VSAB) was called to order at 6:00 p.m., 19 March 2015, in the VSA office area.

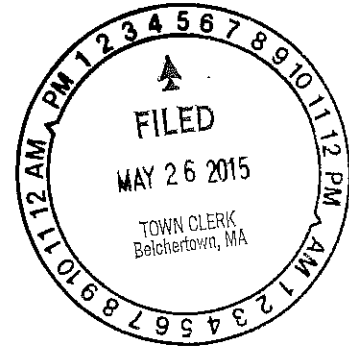
2. **Members in attendance were:**

Mr. Ray Janke
Mr. Vincent Viglione
Selectman Archie Archible

Mr. Larry Raines
Mr. Edward Dice

Members Absent were:

Mr. Michael Czech
Mr. Gerry Desilets
Mr. Bill McClure
Mr. Michael Ross
Mr. Bill Bowen
Ms. Jan Jourdain



3. **Old Business:**

- a. Mr. Janke had the committee review the upcoming Memorial Day activities and the agenda. The guest speaker and clergy are still being pursued. **(OPEN)**
- b. Mr. Viglione briefed that flagging dates are still be reviewed. **(OPEN)**
- c. Mr. Janke briefed on an open old business item regarding the issue of town organizations reserving dates a local businesses for sale of items. This has been resolved. See attached letter. **(CLOSED)**

4. **New Business:**

- a. The committee is reviewing a draft letter to the Parade Committee. This is in response to their request to change the beginning protocol for the Color Guard formation. **(OPEN)**
- b. Mr. Janke advised the committee that at our April meeting, representatives of the Ware DAV will brief on their plans for a ceremony at the Quabbin Cemetery, honoring Civil War Veterans. **(OPEN)**
- c. Mr. Edward Dice, Veterans Agent intern, has been appointed associate member of this committee. **(CLOSED)**
- d. Mr. Janke advised that he is reviewing a letter received in regards to the flying/non-flying of the POW flag at the Town Hall. **(OPEN)**

5. **Public Input/Concerns/Comments:** None

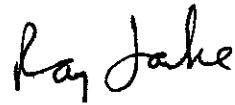
6. **Good of the VSAB:**

a. There was a brief committee discussion on Agent Orange Issues.

7. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m. All documents that were provided during the meeting will be attached to the original minutes on file in the Town Clerk's office. The next meeting will be held on 16 April 2015.

Vincent Viglione
VSAB Recording Secretary

Approved

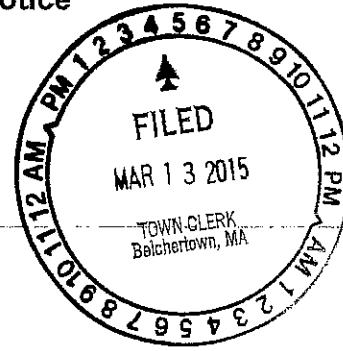


Ray Janke
Veteran's Service Agent
Co-Chairperson

Cc: Town Clerk
Town Administrator
Board of Selectman
Committee members



Veterans' Services Advisory Board Meeting Notice



Meeting Date: 3-19-2015

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: Adjacent to Veterans' Agents Office

Agenda:

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| #1 | Old Business | #1a | Granby AL Post letter of resolution |
| #2 | New business | #2a | Sentinel article update/review |
| #2b | Memorial Day planning/review | #2c | Letter BT Parade Committee- CG |
| #3 | Public input/concerns | #4 | Good of the VSAB |
| #6 | | #7 | |
-

**For Immediate Release
May 13, 2015**

**Contact: Ray Janke
Phone: 413-323-0409**

*****Press Advisory*****

2015 Belchertown Memorial Day Events

Ray Janke, the Belchertown Veterans' Agent, announces the annual Memorial Day events set for this year's Memorial Day weekend beginning Saturday May 23.

Please come out and participate in one or more of the planned Memorial Day events to remember and honor our nation's men and women who fell in battle. Gold Star parents planning to attend Monday's parade and ceremony should contact Mr. Janke at 323-0409.

The following Memorial Day events are planned for May 23, 24, and 25:

- Saturday, May 23: The American Legion and its Auxiliary will sell poppies at local Belchertown businesses 8:00 am to 12:00 noon.
- Sunday, May 24: Belchertown Veterans Council, in conjunction with the Friends of the Quabbin and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, invites everyone to attend the traditional memorial services at Quabbin Park Cemetery. Please begin gathering at 10:30 am for the 11:00 am ceremony.
- Monday, May 25: 8:30 – 8:45 am South Cemetery, a salute to the veterans interred at Belchertown's South cemetery. Everyone is invited.
- Monday, May 25: People marching in the Belchertown Memorial Day Parade are asked to gather at the Town Hall starting at 9:30 am. The parade will step off at 10:00 am beginning at the town hall and ending at the town common, followed by a ceremony. The guest speaker will be XXX XXXX
Organizations and individuals that would like to march in the parade must contact parade coordinator Ray Janke at: rjanke@belchertown.org or call 323-0409 before Friday, May 22.
- Anyone wishing to retire old flags may drop them off at the VFW, the Selectmen's office, and/or the Veterans' Agent office.

BELCHERTOWN MEMORIAL DAY PARADE AND CEREMONY
25 May 2015

Order of events

10:00 am Parade steps off and proceeds to the common

Mr. Poulin: Welcome, statement of purpose

Invocation: Pastor/Priest XXX XXX

Welcome: Chairman of the Belchertown Board of Selectman

Pledge of Allegiance

Music selection: Jabish Brook Middle School

Salute to Fallen Comrades:

Presentation of memorial wreaths and reading of KIA names

Firing Detail fires three volleys

Taps

National Anthem: Belchertown High School Band

Raising of the U.S. Flag during National Anthem

Politicians' Comments: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Keynote Speaker: XXX XXXX

Musical Selection: Belchertown High School Band

Benediction: Pastor/Priest XXX XXX

Adjourn

Memorial Day

Preparation

1. **February:** Arrange/invite guest speaker.
2. **April:**
 1. Order 4 new wreaths for the monuments; flag pole (WWI/WWII/Korea), Grand Union, Viet Nam, and Middle East.
 2. Procure new flags from Sentry Uniform (paid for by Vet Council funds);
 1. 8x12 all-weather Stars & Stripes and 5x8 dbl-sided POW/MIA for flagpole on the common.
 2. 5x8 all-weather Stars & Stripes and 3x5 dbl-sided Gold Star/Blue Star Family flag for Town Hall pole.
 3. At South Cemetery: a 5x8 all-weather Stars & Stripes, 3x5 of the following flags- US Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, Merchant Marine, and POW/MIA.
 4. At Lake Vale: a 4x6 all-weather Stars & Stripes.
3. **Early May:**
 1. Send invitations to: school bands, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts/Brownies, Selectmen, Fire, EMS, and elected officials.
 2. Notify B'town police of parade route and required traffic enforcement.
 3. Notify B'town DPW re: events for grounds keeping and decorations.
 4. Coordinate with Graves Officer to flag veterans' graves.
 5. Arrange for Color Guard/firing squad from Am Legion, VFW, and DAV.
 6. Send request letter to each place of worship in town, for a special acknowledgement in their service the Sunday before Memorial Day, for the Veterans who died for our country.
4. **Three weeks prior:** Have either the Commander Co-Chair of the VSAB or the Veterans' Agent write/submit an article of the Memorial Day planned activities to the Sentinel, Hampshire Gazette, Republican newspapers; and Belchertown-news.com inviting all to participate and to gather for the parade at 9:30am in the parking lot of the Town Hall. (Have gold star parents contact my office if they wish to participate in the ceremony) Confirm Invitations and offers to speak for the State and Federal representatives associated with our town, district, and/or state. Distribute this article to the Selectmen's office for a **Channel 5** update and to send out notices of the ceremony to the appropriate town departments. Also have all groups email the parade coordinator at: rjanke@belchertown.org so the parade lineup can be worked out.

5. Day before parade/ceremony:

1. Replace old flags with new ones purchased from Sentry Uniform (Friday before).
2. Replace wreaths with new- place on stands and store in gazebo.
3. Stage-PA system components in gazebo.

On Memorial Day

1. Early morning:

1. Lower Town Common, Town Hall flags, and all the flags at South Cemetery to 1/2 staff.
2. Position podium, wreaths in front of gazebo.
3. Prep/position PA system.
4. Have seats for the gold star parents, politicians, and speaker.
5. Bouquet(s) of flowers for gold star mom's staged.

2. At 8:30 am:

1. A salute to the fallen at South cemetery (color guard + firing squad)

3. At 9:30am:

1. Gather at the Town Hall
2. Arrange for wreath placers (two for each wreath) with local Brownies, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts.
3. Get the names of buglers from band and designate the positions where each bugler should stand.

4. 9:55am: Form up parade in street.

5. 10:00am: Parade steps off. Proceeds up Main, around common down Park Street, onto the center of the common in positions around the gazebo and monuments for the ceremony. (Firing squad, salute, taps...)

Note: Have the DPW raise the flags at various Town locations after the Memorial Day ceremonies.

- Name of unit** **Yr** **mo** **established by directive of:**
- 1 Official Color Guard** Stars & Stripes on Far R
w/ flags of decreasing rank (as listed below) to Left.
1a If used, Armed Guard on outside ends Color Guard flag rank.
1b Each unit below may have their own Colors, following above flag order
-
- 2 Military:** Each unit below may have their own Colors, following above flag order
- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|------|----|------------------------------|--|
| 2a | US Army | 1775 | 6 | US Congress of Confederation | |
| 2b | US Navy | 1775 | 10 | Continental Congress | 1790 decommissioned, 1797 recommissioned |
| 2c | US Marines | 1775 | 11 | Continental Congress | |
| 2d | US Coast Guard | 1790 | 8 | Continental Congress | |
| 2e | US Army Natl Guard | 1903 | 1 | U.S. Congress | |
| 2f | US Navy Reserve | 1915 | 3 | U.S. Congress | |
| 2g | US Marine Reserve | 1916 | 8 | U.S. Congress | |
| 2h | US Merchant Marine | 1936 | 1 | U.S. Congress | civ aux of USN, except in war 1941-45 |
| 2i | US Air Force | 1947 | 9 | U.S. Congress | |
| 2j | USAF Natl Guard | 1947 | 9 | U.S. Congress | |
| 2k | USAF Reserve | 1968 | 6 | U.S. Congress | |
- 3 Veteran Organizations:** Each unit below may have their own Colors, following above flag order
- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|------|----|---------------|--|
| 3a | USMC League | 1911 | 4 | | |
| 3b | Am Legion | 1919 | 11 | U.S. Congress | |
| 3c | DAV | 1920 | 9 | U.S. Congress | |
| 3d | VFW | 1936 | 5 | U.S. Congress | |
| 3e | VietNam Vets | | | | |
| 3f | SW Asia Vets | | | | |
- 4 Elected officials**
- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 4a | U.S. President | | | | |
| 4b | U.S. Vice Pres | | | | |
| 4c | U.S Cabinet Mbrs | | | | |
| 4d | U.S Senate | | | | |
| 4e | U.S House Rep | | | | |
| 4f | State Governor | | | | |
| 4g | St. Cabinet Mbrs | | | | |
| 4h | St. Senate | | | | |
| 4i | St. Rep | | | | |
| 4j | City/Town Mayor | | | | |
| 4k | City/Town Mgr | | | | |
| 4l | City/Town Selectmen | | | | |
- 5 Clergy**
- 6 Police, Fire, EMT**
- 7 Organizations:**
- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 7a | Scouts | | | | |
| 7b | Clubs/Organizations | | | | |
| 7c | Professional | | | | |
- 8 Schools**
- 9 Citizen Participants**



**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
VETERANS' SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



Lawrence Memorial Hall
2 Jabish Street, Post Office Box 670
Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007-0670
(413) 323-0409

Raymond J. Janke
Veterans' Agent

November 21, 2014

American Legion Post 266
74 Pleasant Street
Granby, MA. 01033

ATTN.: Post Commander, Treasurer, and Adjutant

RE: Resolution of Belchertown fundraisers

At a recent Veteran's Services Advisory Board meeting, it was agreed that local organizations be pro-active in reserving the dates and time with local businesses for their events and fundraisers ASAP. Procrastinating could jeopardize desirable dates coinciding with national holidays or Veteran events.

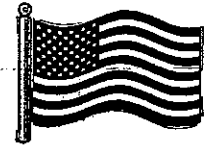
I thank your for Post for working with me in bringing this concern to a positive resolution.

Respectfully,

Raymond J. Janke



**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
VETERANS' SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



Lawrence Memorial Hall
2 Jabish Street, Post Office Box 670
Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007-0670
(413) 323-0409

Raymond J. Janke
Veterans' Agent

March 19, 2015

ATTN.: Belchertown Parade Committee

RE: Statement of Understanding

At a recent American Legion Post 239/Veteran's Services Advisory Board meeting, it was agreed without objection that the Belchertown Parade Committee run the annual Belchertown Fair Parade as your committee sees fit concerning the color guard or presentation of the start to the parade.

I thank your committee for working with the above mentioned groups in bringing the color guard concern to a positive resolution.

Respectfully,

Raymond J. Janke
Veterans' Agent
Co-Chairperson of VSAB



Office of
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

The Finnerty House
One South Main Street, Post Office Box 670
Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007-0670

Telephone: (413) 323-0403 • Facsimile: (413) 323-0494

Gary L. Brougham
Town Administrator

March 10, 2015

Mr. Edward Dice
147 Stebbins Street
Belchertown, MA 01007

Dear Mr. Dice:

I am pleased to inform you the Board of Selectmen, at its regular meeting on Monday, March 9, 2015, appointed you to the Veterans' Services Advisory Board as an associate member for a term to expire June 30, 2015.

Please visit the **Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall (2 Jabish Street; telephone: 323-0281)** at your very earliest convenience to be sworn in and receive your appointment card.

Congratulations of your appointment!

Sincerely,

Gary L. Brougham
Town Administrator

GLB/ap

cc: Board of Selectmen
Raymond Janke, Co-Chairman, VSAB

By the Numbers

1,500 to 2,100

The number of Air Force Reservists exposed to harmful levels of Agent Orange by contaminated C-123 spray aircraft after the end of the Vietnam War, according to a recent Institute of Medicine report.





From the NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR JAMES T. MARSZALEK

Fixing the Claims Process Must Include Appeals As Well

If you have ever filed a claim for disability compensation, you know how long it can take to get a decision from the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). And if your claim was denied and you appealed the decision, you know it can take even longer to get a final decision on an appeal.

DAV has always said that the best way to improve the appeals process is to ensure that claims are decided correctly the first time. We have worked closely with VBA and Congress to develop and implement several new claims processing initiatives: Fully Developed Claims (FDCs), Disability Benefit Questionnaires (DBQs), e-Benefits and the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS).

These innovations have resulted in significant progress, including a reduction of the number of backlogged claims by 60 percent.

But as the VA produces more claims decisions, the inevitable result will be more appeals. Unfortunately, while the VA focused more attention and resources on reducing the claims backlog, the appeals "backlog" has grown to over 350,000 in the past several years, potentially adding years to the decision process.

One alternative that veterans have now is the Decision Review Officer (DRO) program, which is a *de novo* review of the appeal performed locally at the VBA Regional Office (RO). In the DRO review, a veteran can request a hearing with the DRO and can have a representative, such as one of DAV's National Service Officers (NSOs), accompany them to present their case. Our NSOs frequently advise veterans to choose DRO review because it can result in a faster and better decision; and if the DRO decision is

not favorable, the appeal can still continue the traditional route to the Board.

But not all appeals can be resolved by DROs, so DAV has been leading a working group composed of VSO stakeholders and leaders of both VBA and the Board to develop new initiatives that could improve the appeals process. After months of discussion and negotiation, we were able to build consensus around a proposal called the Fully Develop Appeals (FDA) pilot program—modeled after the FDC program—and we are now working to get it approved by Congress.

In the FDA program, a veteran would agree to gather all the private evidence required to support their appeal and agree not to request a hearing. Their appeal would then be transferred immediately to the Board, eliminating a number of processing steps at the RO, and saving the veteran time on a decision.

The FDA pilot program would be a completely voluntary program and a veteran could withdraw from it at any time for any reason, retaining all of their appeal rights, including the ability to submit new evidence, have a hearing and continue their appeal through DRO review or traditional appeal to the Board.

The FDA program is not a replacement for either the DRO review or traditional appeal process; instead it could become a third option to give veterans more choices and more flexibility.

If you are considering an appeal, I strongly recommend that you consult with one of our highly-trained NSOs about the free representation services we provide all veterans to help with claims, and if necessary, appeals as well.

