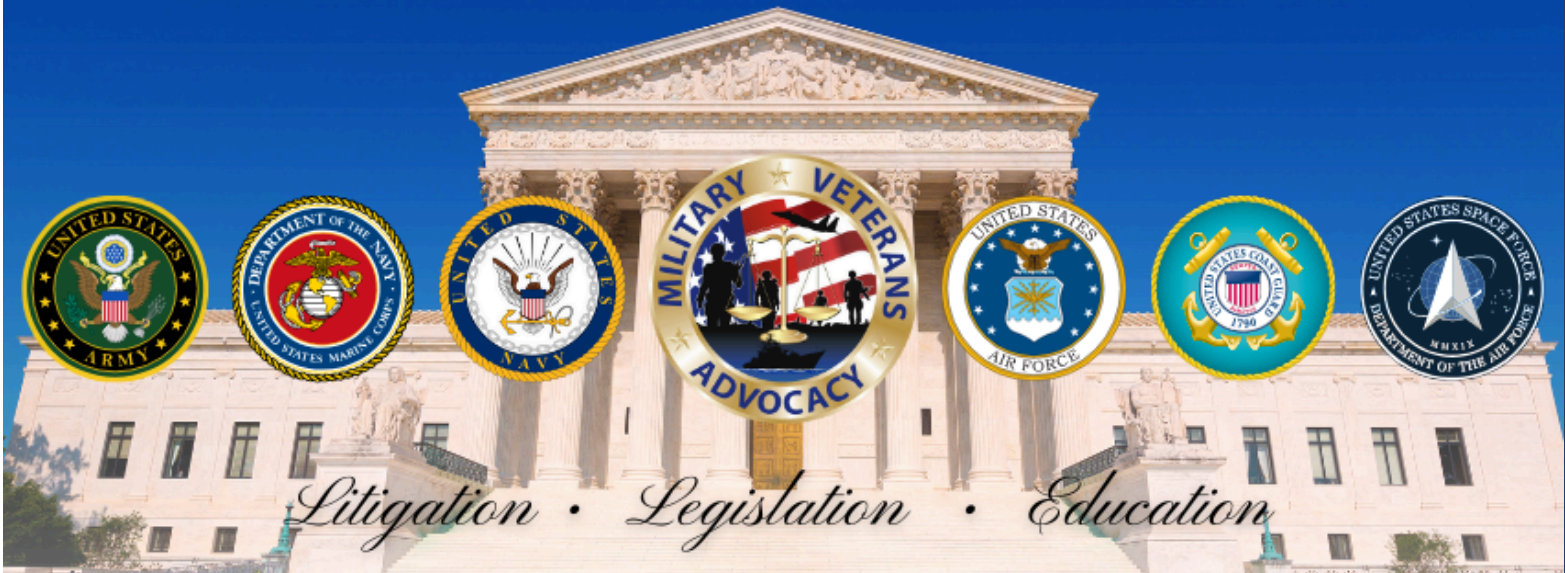


VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

WWW.MILITARYVETERANSADVOCACY.ORG



Summer 2025

Happy Fourth of July!

As we are gearing up for the great cookouts, or the great reunions, or the great fireworks, let us not forget the people who are still hurting or dying from the effects of Agent Orange or other deadly chemicals. It doesn't matter whether those chemicals were deployed in Vietnam, or in Panama, or in Iraq, Military-Veterans Advocacy is about all of them.



Brian Lewis
2025 Chairman of the Board

Our legislative push is in full swing. You can read more about those in the litigation

Fighting for Veterans Benefits

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report.

Our litigation push has born fruit. We received another favorable decision for veterans.

Our education program is gearing up fast. Our new Director of Education is working fast to ensure that we have a solid Continuing Legal Education program to present to attorneys so they can help you win your claims.

One thing I do want to mention is our social media groups. When in one of our groups, we ask that you conduct yourself as though you are interacting face-to-face with your fellow members. Our social media administrators are fully empowered to act as they see fit regarding misconduct, harassing conduct, or people who simply have forgotten their manners.

Also, our Deck Log project is back on its feet after a brief interruption in service. However, if a positive outcome can't be

achieved, that is not the fault of our people. That is the fault of the log entries. Our people can only plot what is on the log. What no one should do is harass our folks because they will not "fudge" a plot. Such conduct will not be tolerated.

What we need more of is green slips of paper with pictures of dead people on them. In case no one knew, my favorite color is green, in increments of Benjamin Franklin. I would like to say that we have enough of them to do all the things we need to do, but we don't. We didn't receive the level of support we expected from the Veterans Get Outside Day event in Niagara Falls on Flag Day. We will have some other fundraisers coming up in the late summer and early fall. Please help us continue our efforts and support these fundraisers as you are able.

In Service,
Brian
Chairman

2025 Board Members

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

Sgt. Major Jim Kuiken
Director, Native & Indigenous American
Veteran Outreach (USMC - Retired)

Mike Yates

Blue Water Navy Chief of Staff

Anthony West - Board Member at Large

Ron Bald - Director of Education (USCG - Retired)

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

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

*Thank you for
your service*

Veterans Get Outside Day

March Niagara Falls
June 14, 2025



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Hope Bald
By W. Hope Bald, Treasurer
hope.bald@mvadvocacy.org

After leaving the Coast Guard, I spent decades working in accounting and had long admired John Wells' work as an attorney. Last fall, John introduced me to the incredible mission of Military Veterans Advocacy (MVA), and I was honored to be invited to join the Board of Directors as Treasurer.

In addition to handling our tax filings, I serve on the Legislative Committee—which recently took me straight to Capitol Hill. Alongside John Wells and Jim Kuiken, I had the privilege of meeting with new members of Congress to advocate for MVA's legislative agenda. We propose, support, and oppose legislation that impacts current and former members of the armed forces.

John and Jim's passion in those meetings was infectious—and so was the pace! We dashed between the Senate and House buildings all day, and I was very glad I didn't wear heels. Each meeting lasted about 30 minutes, with half the time dedicated to discussing Agent Orange, herbicide exposure, toxic exposure for

dependents, and the importance of properly defining Blue Water Navy lines. The rest of our time was spent advocating for broader reforms, including improvements to the VA, the Coast Guard Parity Act, and alternative treatments for traumatic brain injury (TBI) and PTSD

A great deal of preparation goes into these meetings. MVA's staff creates folders for each Congressional office with issue summaries and visual aids—like a detailed map of the Vietnam combat theater—to help lawmakers understand the scope of our advocacy. Many Congressional offices told us we provide the best briefings they've received, especially appreciating our clear, one-page issue summaries. It's rewarding to see them gain understanding in real time, and even more fulfilling when they agree to co-sponsor the bills we support.

It is truly a privilege to stand alongside MVA and advocate for all veterans.

W. Hope Bald

**Fighting for
Veterans Benefits**

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Mike Yates
Blue Water Navy Chief of Staff
Mike.Yates@mvadvocacy.org

Help Us Keep Fighting for Blue Water Navy Veterans



As you know, we successfully helped pass the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 and the PACT Act. Some may have thought our work ended there—but it hasn't.

We're now focused on restoring the original Vietnam Service Medal boundary. Currently, the recognized line is 12 nautical miles from the Demarcation Line. We're fighting to move it back to where it was prior to 2002.

Just like with past victories, we need your help to make this happen. Please contact your members of Congress and urge them to support legislation to restore the original boundary. We're actively seeking a bill sponsor and will share the bill number on our Facebook page once it's available.

Your calls and emails matter. Let's make sure all Blue Water Navy Veterans get the recognition and coverage they deserve.

Veterans Get Outside Day



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Veterans Get Outside Day



**Susie
Says**

Legislation Update

Due to ongoing issues in D.C., progress on legislative matters has been slow. However, that hasn't stopped me from working with my senator. Her office has agreed to meet with John during his trip to D.C. next month. Senator Gillibrand has been a consistent and strong supporter of our veterans. While I can't share specifics just yet, we're hopeful for a positive outcome. More details will follow after the meeting.

S.1032 – Concurrent Receipt Bill

This bill has been reintroduced this year. It aims to amend Title 10 of the U.S. Code to allow for the concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay for those with combat-related disabilities. As Mike Yates emphasized, we need to expand our outreach to include more branches of service. I'll begin exploring legislation that, like the Blue Water Navy Act, includes specific language for each branch.

Let's
Connect



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Healing On Horseback: Veteran Board

Member Jim Shares His Story

Sgt. Major Jim Kuiken (USMC – Retired) Director, Native & Indigenous American Veteran Outreach

Marine veteran Jim Kuiken—who served across seven conflicts over a 30-year military career—found solace on LTR's 90-acre farm in Lovettsville, VA. After the



death of his service dog, Freedom, he felt emotionally adrift—until he met Cosmo, a gentle therapy horse. As Jim reflects, “These guys radiate love. They help you stay grounded... I don’t remember a lot of stuff. But I do remember the feeling I get when I’m with them, and that helps carry me through.”

Kate Baker, an Army veteran, explains that the horse-human bond creates a safe space for veterans, providing an emotional “safety zone” that helps restore trust and social connection.

If you or someone you know is a veteran experiencing emotional distress or crisis, confidential support is available 24/7:

- Dial 988, then Press 1 to connect to the Veterans Crisis Line
- You can also text 838255 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat
- For overseas callers, alternate numbers are provided by region (e.g. PACOM: +1844-702-5493, DSN 988). See VeteransCrisisLine.net for details.



DOUBLE DOWN FOR VETERANS



Your
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MATCHED!

up to \$7500.00

Every dollar helps
thousands of veterans
gain healthcare
benefits they
earned and deserved.



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Runs: July 4th – Labor Day

www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org

PUPS APPROVED!