

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BOROUGH OF THE BRONX
COMMUNITY BOARD 7



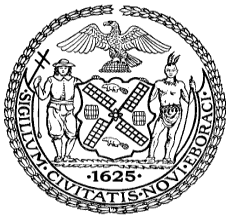
HON. VANESSA L. GIBSON, BOROUGH PRESIDENT YAJAIRA ARIAS, CHAIRPERSON KARLA CABRERA CARRERA, DISTRICT MANAGER

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Chair:	Chad Y. Royer
Meeting Date:	October 16, 2024
Meeting Time:	6:30PM
Meeting Location:	Kittay Houses, 2550 Webb Avenue, Bronx, NY 10468
Members In Attendance:	✓ Chad Royer ✓ Jean Hill ✓ Bernard Wright ✓ Tobie Buford
Minutes done by:	Chad Royer

Minutes:

- I. Guidelines & Code of Conduct for the meeting were read**
- II. Introductions/Attendance - Quorum was met**
- III. Review of Previous Minutes -** In June 2024, the committee met jointly with Public Safety and Quality of Life. The committee did not meet in May 2024 or September 2024.
- IV. No Follow-up from Previous Month**
- V. New Business**
 - A. Project Welcome Home Troops Update (PWHT)**
 - 1. Last week, there were two Bronx Veterans Sky Breath workshops.
 - 2. The next 5-day sessions of online training are November 6-10 and November 13-17 with the following times:
 - a) Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 6:30pm to 9:00pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00am to 1:00pm. Veterans can contact Leslye Moore for information at leslye.moore@pwht.org.



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B. Bronx Victory Memorial

1. The Bronx Victory Memorial will have a flagging event on Saturday, November 9, 2024 at 10:00am. All are welcome.

C. Review Of FY25 Capital and Expense Budget Requests

1. The community board will host a public hearing on Tuesday October 22, 2024 at 5:00 pm to discuss the FY25 Capital and Expense Budget. The general meeting will follow at 6:30 pm on the same day. All are welcome to attend and to provide input on what some of the community needs are. The Veterans Committee did not have any additional requests to submit at this time.

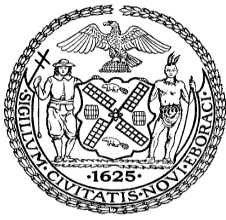
D. Veterans Advocacy Project: Coco Culhane, Esq.,

1. The Veterans Advocacy Project meets with clients at the Bronx Veterans Center every first and third Thursday of the month. They are also starting monthly intakes at Co-op City with the American Legion 156 organization in hopes to expand outreach.
2. There were many questions about the PACT ACT, where veterans inquired about claims involving exposure to burn pits.
 - a) It is the equivalent exposure to Agent Orange where veterans would experience symptoms.
 - b) The PACT ACT allows veterans to file based on 23 presumptive conditions and the geographic locations where veterans served.
3. Veterans are recommended to get a diagnosis from their doctor prior to filing a claim. They can also raise the inquiry as to whether or not they have any of the 23 presumptive conditions.
4. Regarding the Camp Lejeune Justice Act, veterans who were exposed could receive disability benefits starting in 2017. The

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229-A EAST 204TH STREET ♦ BRONX, NY 10458 ♦ PHONE: (718) 933-5650

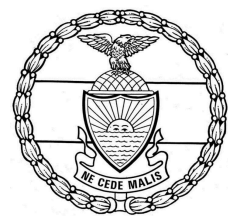
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government created a two year window where veterans can sue for compensation, but that time frame expired in August 2024. Any lawyer who is assisting with a Camp Lejeune claim is not allowed to charge over 25% in fees from the proceeds in the lawsuit per the Department of Justice.

5. Regarding levels of honorary discharge, there are 2 types of boards in each branch:
 - a) The Discharge Review Boards (DRB): With DRB, there is a 15 year period from separation of service where you can file for an upgrade, and there are specific legal grounds that a veteran should use to state their argument. The average win rate of cases involving mental health issues is around 30%, and having an advocate would strengthen the case.
 - b) Correction Boards. With correction boards, there is usually a three year statute of limitations, but that can be waived in the interest of justice. Code of Regulations 38 CFR 3.12 covers benefit eligibility based on the discharge status.
6. An inquiry was raised about veterans who served the country as non-citizens, but could not become a naturalized citizen.
 - a) There are no laws or mandates where a person who served the military as a non-citizen, regardless of discharge status, can automatically become a naturalized citizen.
7. Coco Culhane, Esq. can be reached at culhane@veteranadvocacy.org

VI. Next Meeting Date: November 20, 2024

VII. Discussion on Next Agenda: TBA

VIII. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn meeting by Jean Hill, seconded by Bernard Wright

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