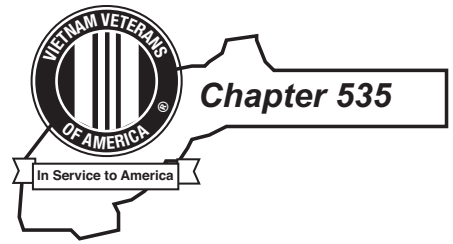




INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER 535



Chapter 535 Web Page www.vva535.org

"It Feels Good to Get Involved"

Volume 24 Issue 2

In Service To America and the Gold Country

February 2014

President's Message

February Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker at our next chapter meeting on February 6th will be John Price. John and his wife Dee with their band the Rhythm Riders bring the music of Patsy Cline and Johnny Cash to fans all over the west. John will speak about his concerts, including their help in raising funds for Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage for the past four years as well as their work in support of both active duty troops and veterans. Their next concert in support of the orphanage will be on February 15 at Thunder Valley Casino.

Should our Chapter support attendance at the VVA's California State Convention and the National Convention?

Every quarter the VVA's California State Council meets in Fresno for two days. In order to maintain their charter, Chapters are required to send a representative to at least two of the four quarterly meetings. To assist in covering travel expenses the State Council pays \$125 for each day of attendance, or \$250 for the weekend. This comes close to covering the expense of one delegate.

In the case of the California Convention and the National Convention, although Chapters are encouraged to send one or more delegates we are not obligated to do so. Our Chapter, based on our size, is currently authorized to send up to two delegates. The cost of sending delegates is absorbed by the Chapter and/or the delegate.

Should we send delegates to these two conventions? If so, why?

Vietnam Veterans of America is a "member" driven organization. Unlike many other veterans' organizations, our members set the agenda and decide the organization's priorities. This is done through discussions at Chapter meetings and State Council meetings.

At the State Convention proposals that start with a member are presented to the relative state committee. If

supported by the committee the proposal, in the form of a resolution, goes before the convention. Approved resolutions become the marching orders for the State Council. Issues sent to the National Convention follow a similar path with the added requirement that before the issue goes to the National Convention it must be supported by one or more of the State Council's.

On alternating years there is either a State Convention or a National Convention. Last year the National Convention was held in Florida. This year the State Convention will be held in Fresno.

I periodically send you articles about issues the VVA is working on. A case in point is the VVA's Legislative Agenda that I sent out last Spring. Members will recall an important component of our Legislative Agenda is ensuring adequate health care for victims of Agent Orange and other toxic substances. Last October, Senate bill 1602 was introduced by Mr. Blumenthal. Currently under review by the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, this bill contains several of the recommendations included in the VVA's Legislative Agenda. While there is still a lot of work

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to be done to get this bill passed by the Senate and the House, the VVA is making progress. Our voice is heard.

So, should our Chapter support attendance at the VVA's California State Convention and the National Convention? If we want our voice to be heard, the answer is yes. We should participate in discussions at the State and National level.

Get Involved

When issues are being looked at by our local government, in Sacramento or Washington that are important to us, I encourage you to call or email your supervisor, councilman, representative or senator and share your views. It is easy to get skeptical about how the political process works. Constituent pressure does make a difference. Make sure your voice is heard.

Fred Buhler, President 265-4878

Military Trivia The Zippo Lighter Story

In 1932 George G. Blaisdell invented the Zippo lighter in his garage. He wanted to design a lighter that was sturdy and that you could light in the wind using one hand. He named his windproof lighter after the word "zipper" because he thought it sounded "modern". The first Zippo's were square cornered and formed from rectangular brass tubing with the top and bottom pieces soldered to the hollow tubing to form the lid and bottom of the case. The hinge was soldered to the outside and the lighter was chrome plated. It sold for \$1.95 and came with a lifetime guarantee. The original design called for a shiny metallic nickel-plated case, but with WW II came shortages, including the brass and chrome used for Zippo lighters, so porous steel coated with black paint was used instead. The result was a black, crackled paint job, so today's collectors refer to these rare models as "black crackle" lighters.



Vietnam era Zippo lighter



Carried on helmets to keep them dry

Zippo Continued on page 4

Congressional Medal of Honor

BALLARD, DONALD E.

- Rank and Organization: Hospital Corpsman Second Class, U.S. Navy, Company M, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, 3d Marine Division
- Place and Date: Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, 16 May 1968
- Date of Issue: 05/14/1970



Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life and beyond the call of duty while serving as a HC2c. with Company M, in connection with operations against enemy aggressor forces. During the afternoon hours, Company M was moving to join the remainder of the 3d Battalion in Quang Tri Province. After treating and evacuating 2 heat casualties, HC2c. Ballard was returning to his platoon from the evacuation landing zone when the company was ambushed by a North Vietnamese Army unit employing automatic weapons and mortars, and sustained numerous casualties. Observing a wounded marine, HC2c. Ballard unhesitatingly moved across the fire swept terrain to the injured man and swiftly rendered medical assistance to his comrade. HC2c. Ballard then directed 4 marines to carry the casualty to a position of relative safety. As the 4 men prepared to move the wounded marine, an enemy soldier suddenly left his concealed position and, after hurling a hand grenade which landed near the casualty, commenced firing upon the small group of men. Instantly shouting a warning to the marines, HC2c. Ballard fearlessly threw himself upon the lethal explosive device to protect his comrades from the deadly blast. When the grenade failed to detonate, he calmly arose from his dangerous position and resolutely continued his determined efforts in treating other marine casualties. HC2c. Ballard's heroic actions and selfless concern for the welfare of his companions served to inspire all who observed him and prevented possible injury or death to his fellow marines. His courage, daring initiative, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of extreme personal danger, sustain and enhance the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

Chapter 535 Information Center

VVA Belt Buckles For Sale:

Eagle with Flag and Vietnam Service Ribbon: \$25 Or, MAKE YOUR OWN! Buy an "Eagle only" buckle and add your choice of insignia. They glue on fairly easily. Price for the "Eagle only" buckle - \$12.



Call Margie (530-265-4878) or e-mail at margie95959@earthlink.net

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Nominations	Dick Corn
Christmas Year Round	Harold Graves
Shredding Program	Dan Davis
NCCVC	Margie Buhler
Web Master.....	Ralph Remick

Nevada County Veterans Affairs Rep.

Eric(530) 273-3396

February Birthdays

2	1	Hernandez, Al
2	3	Chuck Holmes
2	7	John Spencer
2	9	Dennis Sanders
2	10	English, Phil
2	23	Kelly, Patrick
2	28	Pete Burrelle

The Vinh Son Orphanage, has a new web site

www.friendsofvso.org

Membership Facts Chapter 535

VVA

Individual members 31

Life members 39

A Total 70



Upcoming Dates and Events

February 6 Chapter Meeting 6 pm

Veterans Directory

Congress

Senate - Veterans Affairs Committee	202-224-9126
House - Veterans Affairs Committee.....	202-225-3527

Department of Veterans Affairs

Board of Veterans Appeals	202-233-3001
Central Office	202-233-4000
Freedom of Information/Privacy Act	202-233-3616
Personnel Locator.....	202-233-4000
Public Information	202-233-3056
Veterans Health Administration	202-535-7010
VA Telephone Care Program.....	800-733-0502
Cemetery, Burial, & Headstone Info.....	800-697-6947

Agencies

Department of Defense	703-545-6700
DEERS Information (California).....	800-334-4162
CHAMPUS (California).....	800-741-5048
Office of Management and Budget Veterans Affairs.....	202-395-4500
Small Business Administration Office of Veterans Affairs	202-205-6773

Locator & Reunion Services

Army Worldwide Locator.....	317-542-4211
Navy Times Locator Services	703-750-8636
Service Reunions	703-998-7035
Vietnam Veterans Locator.....	319-388-9023
Veteran's Locator Service	800-449-VETS

Miscellaneous

Vietnam Women's Memorial Project	202-328-7253
Sons & Daughters In Touch CA	805-872-4035
Retired Pay - Cleveland DFAS.....	800-321-1080
Navy Lodging.....	800-NAVY INN
Army Lodging.....	800-GO ARMY

Zippo from page 2

From 1943 through 1945, Zippo lighters, with that distinctive click they made when flipped open, were available only to Military personnel at U.S. Army exchanges and naval ship stores around the world. Soldiers liked to personalize their Zippos by scratching the surface of the lighters with their names, places they'd been, messages to loved ones or simple pictures. The lighter was so popular that it was named "the GI's friend", and after the war, the vets came home to civilian life as dedicated Zippo customers. The company's archives are filled with letters from GIs detailing the services a Zippo lighter was called to perform, such as heating rations in a helmet, lighting campfires, sparking fuses for explosives, hammering nails and even signaling to fellow soldiers with the famous Zippo click. On several occasions, a Zippo lighter in a shirt or pants pocket even saved a life or prevented a wound by deflecting enemy bullets or shrapnel. It would be nice to say that George Blaisdell sent all his lighters to the military because he was super patriotic, but that was only part of it. George, being the smart guy that he was, didn't want the Zippo Manufacturing Plant shut down for the war's duration as "unnecessary to the war effort" or refitted to make para-

Newsletter Submissions

Please ensure that submissions for the newsletter reach us no-later-than the 15th of the month before the meeting. They may be mailed to:

VVA Chapter 535

Attn: Newsletter Editor

18455 Augustine Rd, Nevada City, CA 95959

e-mail to bholman@succeed.net or

call Bill Holman at (530) 265-8387

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of Vietnam Veterans of America National, State Council, or Chapter 535 or the newsletter editor, but those of the author of the comments.

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Please let us know before the Post office quits forwarding your newsletters. If you find your not receiving your newsletters or hearing from us, please contact Bill Holman at 265-8387.

chutes or fatigue caps. By working with the government, he could keep his factory at full production levels.

Blaisdell became "Mr. Zippo" with the help of war correspondent Ernie Pyle, who hung out with the front line troops in England, Italy, Sicily, Africa and later in the Pacific. Pyle's columns dealt mostly with the civilian soldiers and their day-to-day lives. Blaisdell enjoyed the column and sent the correspondent a Zippoo lighter with Pyle's signature engraved on the side. He sent 50 more for Pyle to give away, even though as George wrote in his letter, "You probably know nothing about the Zippo lighter." Fact was, Pyle knew all about the Zippo, as did every other American GI. "If he only knew how soldiers coveted them! Why, they're so popular I had three of them stolen from me in one year," wrote Pyle in his column. He finished the column by giving Blaisdell his nickname: "The fifty other lighters went like hot cakes. I found myself equipped with a wonderful weapon for winning friends and influencing people. All fifty-one of us were grateful to Mr. Zippo." The tradition from WW I of decorating lighters with coins and crude engravings, or "trench art" continued on the Zippo in WW II. The GIs soldered coins or unit insignia to them or even scratched or engraved maps and names of places they had been to personalize their prized Zippos.

IRS Withdrawals

For those of you who have IRA accounts, you are required to start withdrawing from your IRA account when you turn 70 1/2 years old. Below is a chart to help you figure out how much you need to withdraw each year from your account.

Uniform Lifetime Table

To calculate MRDs, use the following formula for each account:

Account Balance as of December 31 of the prior year (adjusted, if necessary, for any rollovers or transfer in process on 12/31 of the prior year) / Factor from New Uniform Lifetime Table* (use the divisor that corresponds to the age the account owner attained in the MRD year)

Example:
 Account balance as of December 31 of the prior year:
 \$100,000
 IRA owner's attained age in MRD year: 72
 MRD Divisor = \$100,000 / 25.6 = \$3,906.25

Uniform Lifetime Table			
Age of Account Owner	Divisor	Age of Account Owner	Divisor
70	27.4	93	9.6
71	26.5	94	9.1
72	25.6	95	8.6
73	24.7	96	8.1
74	23.8	97	7.6
75	22.9	98	7.1
76	22.0	99	6.7
77	21.2	100	6.3
78	20.3	101	5.9
79	19.5	102	5.5
80	18.7	103	5.2
81	17.9	104	4.9
82	17.1	105	4.5
83	16.3	106	4.2
84	15.5	107	3.9
85	14.8	108	3.7
86	14.1	109	3.4
87	13.4	110	3.1
88	12.7	111	2.9
89	12.0	112	2.6
90	11.4	113	2.4
91	10.8	114	2.1
92	10.2	115 and older	1.9

*The Uniform Lifetime Table can be used by all IRA owners, unless their sole beneficiary for the entire year is their spouse who is more than 10 years younger. In that case, the regular Joint Life Expectancy Table is used, which could reduce the MRD even further. Note: If you are taking MRDs from an inherited IRA, the formula, example, and table above are not applicable.

Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC, Member NYSE, SIPC, 900 Salem Street, Smithfield, RI 02917

538144.1.0



DON'T BE A VICTIM: BE AWARE OF PENSION POACHING SCAMS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pension exists to help financially disadvantaged wartime Veterans and their survivors.

Be cautious if someone offers to move your assets around for you to qualify for VA pension. This type of scam is often directed toward Veterans and family members who do not actually qualify for VA pension. You could be required to repay these benefits to the government.

Examples of possible pension poaching scams:

- Organizations that cold call Veterans, charge money for assisting with a VA pension claim, and take credit card information from Veterans over the telephone
- People who charge as much as \$6,000 upfront to represent claimants before VA, with a percentage of any eventual back payment from VA as a portion of the ultimate fee



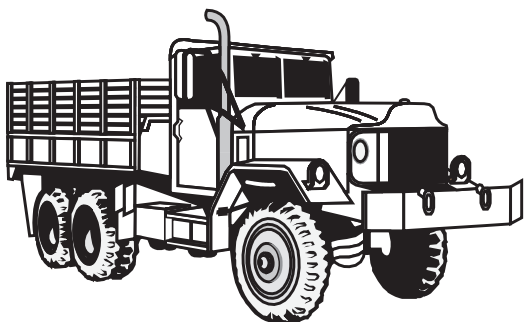
For more information about VA pension eligibility requirements—which include special monthly pension benefits—go to www.benefits.va.gov/pension or call **1-800-827-1000**.



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Obit James E. Empey

1 Nov 2013

Zippos from page 6

James W. Empey, who fought in two wars and earned the title of fighter ace, died at home Nov. 21. He was 89. His 30-year military career started in 1942 as an 18-year-old aviation cadet in the Army Air Forces. Empey was assigned to the 59th Fighter Group for training as a P-39 pilot and was then assigned to North Africa in 1943. By 1944, he was flying the P-51 over Europe and in a 30-day period shot down five German aircraft, making him an ace at age 20. "He was an accomplished fighter pilot before he could vote," longtime friend Col. Ward Boyce said. Empey returned to the United States in 1945 and became a training instructor. He met his future wife at a Veterans of Foreign Wars hall in New York a few years later, and they married in 1950. The couple would have celebrated their 63rd anniversary on Christmas Eve. After being released to the reserves, Empey was called back to active duty in 1952 and attended the Air Force's experimental test pilot school. He also was assigned to the U.S. airbase in Châteauroux, France for a time, and in 1962, was sent to Oklahoma State University to earn a degree in aeronautical engineering.

The couple was living in California when Empey went to Vietnam. "The reason he volunteered to go to Vietnam and fly again was because he said too many 18-year-olds and 19-year-olds were coming back in body bags," said his long time neighbor and friend Diana Herrera. While there, Empey gained the nickname "the Red Baron" by flying missions wearing his World War II-era leather helmet, white scarf and goggles. After Vietnam, Empey worked at the USAF Systems Command launching communication satellites. He retired from the Air Force in 1972 as a lieutenant colonel. During his service he was awarded the Silver Star, two Distinguished Flying Crosses and 27 Air Medals, and was inducted into the Commemorative Air Force American Combat Airman Hall of Fame in 2009. For many years he and his wife traveled throughout the country and lived in Arizona and Florida, in addition to California. They moved to San Antonio in the late 1990s and bought a house in Universal City. Empey continued his participation in the American Fighter Aces Association. He especially enjoyed the association's annual convention. "He was a very good-natured, fun-loving individual," Boyce said. "One year we were honoring the Women Airforce Service Pilots and he came in a dress and a wig to put himself off as one of the WASPS." [Source: San Antonio Express-News | Mary M. Heidbrink | 30 Nov 2013]

According to collectors, over 200,000 Zippos were used by GI's in Vietnam. The Zippo played a part in almost every daily activity. The shiny top provided a handy mirror and the lighters flame warmed their food at meal time. GI's kept salt in the bottom cavities, called canned bottoms, of their Zippos, to replenish lost body salt. Other legendary Zippos were used to transmit signals or even provided a shield against enemy bullets. Staff Sergeant Naugle, who was saved because he was able to signal his position to the rescue helicopter, had a Zippo in his hand. Among men that had a close call with death, one of the luckiest was Sergeant Martinez, who kept a Zippo in his chest pocket. A bullet struck his chest, only to be stopped by his Zippo. This was reported in Life magazine and also appeared in various advertisements attesting the Zippos finest attributes

Zippos were also used in military operations, where Marines and Soldiers would spray gasoline over the area to burn enemy compounds and dwellings. A soldier would usually carry a Zippo in the chest pocket of his jungle fatigues. Some would insert one in the camouflage band of the helmet or put one into the magazine pouch of an M-16. Alcohol, diesel oil and even gasoline were substitutes for lighter fluid when this was not available. Zippos were made of tough stuff! Zippos were also used as IDs and canvasses. Post Exchanges in Vietnam carried a large amount of Zippo lighters, which explains the reason why there was so many Zippos in Vietnam. By this time, Zippo merchandise quickly found its way onto the black market. Soldiers were able to buy brand new Zippos without having to go to the PX store. Vietnamese craftsmen would engrave anything from pictures to phrases onto the Zippo. The most popular motif engraved on a Zippo was the map of Vietnam.

The Zippo company has produced more than 325 million lighters since its founding in 1934, so there is plenty to go around. Today the company produces several lighters for all the branches of the services and for all the specialty units such as SEALs and Rangers. Every Navy ship has had its own lighter that includes a picture of the ship, its name, and its number. Zippos commemorate leaders and Battles of WW II, the Wartime surrenders, the Civil War, the



Fly The Flag Day February 17th

Application For Membership
VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC., CHAPTER 535

P.O. Box 37, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Individual membership is open to all Vietnam-era veterans who served on active duty for other than training purposes between August 5, 1964 – May 7, 1975 and In-Country Veterans: February 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975.

Name _____ Sex _____ Date of Birth _____
Address _____ Apt. _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____ Email _____
Marital Status _____ Spouse's Name _____
Chapter No. **535** Sponsor _____ ID No. _____

◆ **Membership Type:** Individual – 1 year @ \$20 annual Individual – 3 years @ \$50
(select one) Life Member **Payment Plan** \$50 down, \$25/mo Until paid in full
Select Age Group Ages 56-60 \$200 Ages 61-65 \$175
 Ages 66 and over \$150 Ages 72+ \$100

◆ **Payment Method:** Check Money Order Visa MasterCard
(select one)

◆ **Card Number** _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____

In Service To America

Address Correction Requested

