

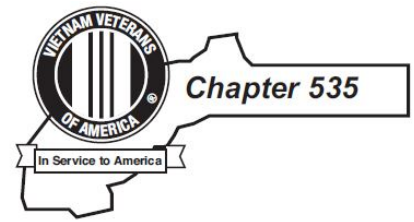


INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

CHAPTER 535

Website: www.vva535.org



Volume 26 Issue 7

October 2016

President's Message

The 2016 Nevada County Fair is over and your Board had further discussion regarding our booth and member participation. It seems we need better coordination as to who will sit the booth, and when, and what the hours of operation must be, according to our contract with the Fair management. In general, more help is needed, and though the daily Captain concept worked well, one person should not be expected to pull a double shift, or more.

Commentary from the Board members who worked the booth: Lots of people asked about VA benefits; one person apologized for protesting the Vietnam War while it was ongoing; many said, "Thank you for your service." And, a lot of people shared stories about their own military service.

I want to thank all the people that worked on the fair. We had a few holes in the work schedule but that can be corrected with a little more effort. Thanks to the guys that had to work more than one shift and especially the ones that ended up working alone. We can fix all these things and we will.

I want to thank all of you that showed up for the service for Nick at memorial park. We even got a surprise visit from Fred and Margie; it was good to see them. In all we

had 13 members from our chapter there and that was a good turn out.

I want to thank Bill and Ralph for stepping up to cover the picnic, I was remiss in not telling everyone of my prior commitment. I hope everyone has a good time.

We are trying to have a presentation from the newly formed chopper rescue folks at our next meeting. Mike Laborico has been working on this for weeks and he has a commitment for them to come on Oct 6th.

Harold Graves

Matters of interest as outlined at Board Meeting of September 15, 2016:

See President's message.

Upcoming Events

Sept. 24, 2016 - Summer picnic – Lake Wildwood

December 2016 – Victorian Christmas. (New Leadership is needed. Harold Graves shared at the conclusion of the 2015 Project that it was time to pass the torch. Planning for this event is but a short time away. Kindly give this Project some consideration and step up to the cause.)

VVA 535 Picnic – September 24th

The long-awaited VVA-535 Picnic will be staged at 12:00 o'clock noon at Hideaway Park on the north shore of Lake Wildwood in Penn Valley on Saturday, September 24, 2016. Dick Corn has coordinated this effort and the Chapter expresses its appreciation for his behind-the-scenes effort. Kindly RSVP your attendance, or lack of attendance so the appropriate shopping for hotdogs, burgers and ribs can be undertaken. This is a family event and the whole family is welcome. Do telephone Dick Corn at 530-277-8856 or email him at dick@dickcorn.com

Last names, A – L – bring a salad to share; M – Z – bring a dessert to share.

American Legion Post 130 2nd Amendment Sweepstakes

Raffle tickets remain available for a Mossberg 500 Tactical 12 gauge shotgun and a Glock 19 semi-automatic 9 mm pistol. Tickets are \$10 each or 11 tickets for \$100. Winner need not be present to win. Contact Dick Corn at 530-277-8856 for updated information.

Chapter 535 Officers

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Harold Graves 470-8507

Vice-President
Al Hernandez 864-2480

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Ralph Remick559-7716

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Dave Johnson887-8297

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Al Hernandez 864-2480

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Bart Ruud 823-1368
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Nominations Dick Corn
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NCCVCKen Farmer
Web MasterRalph Remick

Quartermaster Kent Hawley

Nevada County Veterans Affairs Rep.

Kevin Edwards (530) 273-3396

ncvso@co.nevada,ca.us

VVA 535 Jackets

President Harold Graves has reported that jackets for which VVA members have submitted unit patches have been delivered to a seamstress. Completed price of each jacket will be \$100. Members who have committed to purchasing a jacket will be responsible for obtaining their unit patches and promptly getting those patches to Harold. It is suggested that one peruse the patches available from **Medals of America**, or a supplier of choice, as found on an Internet website. Unit patches from Medals of America cost around \$6.95 each and shipping is similar. Timely accommodation will assist in moving forward with this project.

Recollections of a Vietnam War era draftee: Part 1, offered by David M. Chaix: How Did I Get Here?

July 20, 1966 – Oakland Induction Center, Oakland California:

While working for Pacific Telephone Company in Placerville, CA, I was making my 3rd trip to the Oakland Induction Center. The two previous trips I had been able to present physical issues and minor scrapes with law enforcement, and then return to my normal life. This would be a different day.

It began the same with a drive from Placerville to Sacramento and continued with a ride on the Greyhound Bus to Oakland. All the while I was wondering how I would arrange for an earlier return trip to Sacramento, along with the other rejects.

I started by telling anyone who looked like they could give me a bye about any and all issues that had worked in the past. Surprisingly, no one seemed to listen or care. There was no physical or interview regarding run-in's with the law – just follow the green line downstairs and join the others.

This is where I met James (Jim) Rowe from Davis, CA. We found we had played high school baseball against each other and had much in common and he became US xxx xx 520 and I was US xxx xx 521.

The first order of business was an official looking Army guy asking if there were any volunteers for the Marines. Not paying much attention to what was going on in the world, I really didn't understand the request.

Well, no volunteers, so we were put in a line and told to count off by 4's. Every #4 became a Marine that day. Much pushing and shoving occurred and Jim and I were on our way to Fort Lewis, WA as new members of the US Army.

I was questioned about my interest in OCS, but I guess these minor scrapes with law enforcement, that kept me out of the service for so long, also kept me out of OCS – probably a good thing all the way around.

There is no need to describe basic training as we all went through it. Jim and I traded our way through as squad leaders and we both got caught up in the idea "Well we're here, so let's get involved." We were given 3 choices for our next assignment and both of us first went with infantry. My choices were (1) infantry (2) signal corps since I had experience and (3) transportation as I had a commercial driver's license.

As it turned out Jim went straight into AIT at Fort Lewis as an 11B20 and I was sent to B Company 5th S & T 5th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO as a 64B20 (Heavy Truck Driver). I guess experience in driving trucks trumped infantry that day.

I headed home on furlough and Jim went straight into Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Lewis.

Before getting on the bus for SeaTac airport, Jim and I had our goodbyes. He was sitting on his duffle bag waiting for a ride to his next training area. That was the last time I saw Jim. (See *Love to All, Jim: a young man's letters from Vietnam*, with commentary written by his brother, Gary Rowe Prescott).

After 15 days of leave, I reported in to Fort Carson. B Company 5th S & T wasn't ready for trainees, so after a week we were sent to the 557th Heavy Truck Company, who also were not ready for trainees. The 557th was the only heavy truck company in the continental US, with 10-ton tank retrievers, very cool old trucks, but really didn't have a mission. So, the months went by with not much to do but check the oil and tire pressure on trucks that were not going anywhere, rain, snow or shine. As trainees we were confined to the company

area and suffered through the freezing weather with the wind and snow blowing off the Rockies.

While there, a few of us were taken to the theater and given a presentation for flight school. We were told if we wanted to go, to pack our duffel bags and wait by the curb – a bus would pick us up for the ride to Texas. It was asked what the time commitment for flight school would be, and the reply was the duration of flight school plus 3 years. We were mostly draftees, so there no volunteers that day.

I was driving bus some of the time at the Fort and had taken a few groups that came down on levies to the airport after processing. My buddy, Parker, was the company clerk and the clerks knew everything. I told Parker to put me on the next levie to somewhere warm. I had already applied for Vietnam, but had not heard anything.

Parker told me there was a levie for Korea and I asked if it was tropical. Between us we decided it was, so orders were cut and I began the process. After clearing the Fort, Parker told me that my orders had also come through for Vietnam. I asked what the difference was. It turned out going to Korea got you 15 days leave and orders for Vietnam permitted 30 days of leave.

So, that was a no-brainer, and I opted for Vietnam. This meant I had to qualify with an M16, but Parker forged a signature and I was good to go. Transportation companies all used M14's so no harm here – right?

Three other drivers and I left as a group and met 30 days later at the Oakland Army Depot, Oakland, CA. Parker had arranged for the drivers to go to a transportation company and live in a hotel in Saigon. He was on his way to the 196th Light Infantry Brigade.

So, it was Oakland to Hawaii to the Philippines, then Bien Hoa, South Vietnam. I met Parker there – he was carrying a board. He had me pick up one end and said it was carrying the board or standing guard or burning shit. We carried the board for 2 days around the compound, but mostly to the club for beer. After 2 days we were called by name and given lines 1 through 7. The 3 other drivers went to a different gate than I did. I noticed the guys in my line looked like real soldiers, jump boots and all. I asked one of them if he was going to Saigon also; he said this line was for the 4th Infantry Division in the Central Highlands. I flagged down an NCO and told him I was in the wrong line. He checked my orders and said “no, right line”.

Kinda wished I had qualified with the M16. How did I get here?

To be continued in Part II.

AmazonSmile – Still A Work in Progress

At time of publication no update had been received but Board Member and Treasurer Ralph Remick is likely continuing his effort to set up an Amazon Smile account for VVA-535.

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

Every item available for purchase on www.amazon.com is also available on AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com) at the same price. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages.

For more information about the AmazonSmile program, go to <http://smile.amazon.com/about>

Service Dogs: The Dog Debate

A VA study will examine whether service dogs help Veterans with PTSD. (From The American Legion Magazine, October 2016.)

Can a service dog trained to sweep a building, turn on lights and fetch medications help Veterans with PTSD?

After two false starts, the VA hopes to have scientifically defensible answers to these and other questions by the end of 2018. The VA is pairing 220 Veterans with PTSD and specially trained dogs in Atlanta, Iowa City and Portland, OR, as part of a \$12 million study. Researchers will gauge how the dogs affect PTSD symptoms, suicidal thoughts, mood disorders, substance abuse, the ability to work and other issues during the 21 months each veteran-dog pair is monitored.

Participating veterans must be engaged in some type of mental health treatment for PTSD. They have the option to keep their dogs at the end of the study no matter the outcome, according to the VA.

Veterans are randomly chosen to receive either emotional support dogs or service dogs. Emotional support dogs provide comfort and companionship, says Lauren Lee, program manager at Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), one of three groups providing dogs for the study. Service dogs, on the other hand, are trained to do specific tasks, can accompany their handlers to any place open to the public, and can work independently of their handlers.

In this case, dogs are being trained to search a building or room and let the veteran know if

someone is there. “If a veteran feels anxiety, they can cue on the canine,” Lee says. “Then, based on the dog’s body language – their ears are up and their tail is wagging – the veteran knows there’s not something in their environment they should worry about.”

In addition to the “sweep” or “search” command, the dogs are being trained to bring owners things like medications, turn on lights in a dark room, and sit in front of or behind their owners if someone is approaching. This gives the veteran personal space, Lee says. However, the dogs won’t be aggressive or make moves to protect their owners.

The VA currently provides service dogs for veterans with physical disabilities but does not pay for PTSD or mental health dogs. In August, however, the VA announced it will start a pilot program to provide service dogs to some veterans with mental health disorders.

Congress mandated the study of service dogs specifically for veterans with PTSD in 2010. The VA launched a pilot study in 2011 but stopped it after two dogs bit veteran’s children in their homes. Issues around dog health and training prompted the VA to suspend the study for a second time in 2012. The study was redesigned and launched again in 2015, and all 220 veterans are expected to have their dogs in the coming months, Michael Fallon, VA’s chief veterinary medical officer, told Congress last spring.

Meanwhile, a bill was introduced in the House of representatives in January 2016 that would require the VA to provide service dogs to veterans with PTSD. That bill is in the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

October 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6 VVA-535 general meeting. 6:00 p.m.	7 Operation Enduring Freedom (Military Phase) began (2001)	8
9 Invasion of North Korea (1950)	10 Columbus Day (Observed)	11	12 Bombing of USS Cole (2000)	13 U.S. Navy established (1775).	14	15
16	17	18	19	20 VVA-535 Board 6:00 p.m.	21	22
23	24 United Nations Day	25 Operation Urgent Fury (1983)	26	27 Navy Day	28	29
30	31 Halloween					

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 _____