

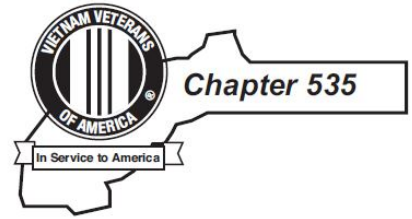


INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

CHAPTER 535

Website: www.vva535.org



Volume 28 Issue 1

January 2018

Dear Fellow Veterans,

Greetings! Another year is almost done. Wow has it gone by fast.

We had a very good Victorian Christmas booth this year with a gross of over \$11 k. We could easily have sold more brownies and drinks! After deductions for products were bought we will provide the final numbers.

Thank you to all that participated and supported this effort. It could not have been done without extra people jumping in to help when we were short on help. Bart wrote a special letter giving kudos to all that helped so I won't even attempt to steel his thunder! Thank you Bart for all to did as it took a big load off me.

Weather was great! I saw dark clouds the last night and snow fell at my house in Cascade Shores. I hit some black ice going up Red Dog Road and had the vehicle and trailer almost sideways. I went back down to Pasquale and got home about 11 pm that night. Enough excitement for one evening!

All of the dispensers have been cleaned and stored in the trailer. The trailer helped out greatly and was easy to load and unload. More work will be done to organize it for future use if needed.

We will have a guest speaker this next regular meeting. I believe it is the Nevada County Sheriff.

Our Christmas dinner on Dec. 7th was very good. Perhaps a few less people but it was great to see everyone!

Everyone have a great Christmas and Happy New Year! And again thank you to all that helped!

Sincerely,

Chuck Holmes

Pentagon Shipping More Food for Christmas Meals This Year

Military.com 20 Dec 2017 By Richard Sisk



Soldiers deployed to are served Christmas dinner from their command group at Bagram Airfield, Dec. 25, 2012.

The cooks for the traditional Christmas meals for troops overseas should have a lot more to work with this year, including the eggnog.

The Defense Logistics Agency said that **deployed** service members will be getting a total of 112,092 pounds of turkey for Christmas, compared to 90,727 pounds in 2016, and 59,430 pounds of beef, compared to 39,970 last year. The eggnog total was up from 1,079 gallons last year to 2,145 this year.

Robin Whaley, who works with DLA Troop Support Subsistence supply chain in Philadelphia, said it takes a lot of planning and coordination between her team and their industry partners to ensure service members can enjoy a traditional meal during the holiday season.

In a DLA release, Whaley said, "Our warfighters spend a lot of holidays away from their families and miss out on some of their favorite family traditions. We take great pride in ensuring a taste of home is delivered to every warfighter."

The agency's delivery priority for the holiday meals was going to troops deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Kuwait.

DLA Troop Support also ensured that service members at other locations around the world, including those at sea, will be able to enjoy a holiday meal, the release said.

This is what the agency expects to deliver for holiday meals worldwide: 112,092 pounds of turkey; 59,430 pounds of beef; 38,430 pounds of ham; 29,304 pounds of shrimp; 690 cases of cookies; 16,002 assorted cakes and pies; 6,564 pounds of marshmallows; 3,743 gallons of juice; and 2,145 gallons of eggnog.

ANNUAL VVA CHAPTER 535 CHRISTMAS POTLUCK DINNER A SUCCESS

Our VVA Chapter 535 Annual Christmas Potluck happened as scheduled on Thursday, December 7, 2017. President Chuck welcomed all in attendance, and he shared seasonal greetings as extended by Harold and Patricia Braves, who could not attend.

Jose Gonzales brought along a large platter of jalapeño poppers to serve as hors d'oeuvres, and those poppers lived up to their name in whetting appetites for the turkeys he prepared. To balance the turkey, Ric Sheridan brought along a delicious ham. Rounding out the feast were a myriad of salads, potluck dishes and desserts that VVA members and their wives and significant others had prepared. If you missed the party, make plans now to attend a similar calling in December 2018.

A huge thanks is extended to Ric Sheridan and Frances for organizing and coordinating the event.

Table of Contents

Pg. 1 ..	President's Message
	Christmas Meals
Pg. 2...	Table of Contents
Pg. 3 ...	Board Meeting Aftermath
Pg. 3 ..	Upcoming events
	Officers & Directors
Pg. 4 ..	Vet Designation on Drivers License
Pg. 4 ...	US Army's New Pistol
Pg. 6....	Moral Injury
Pg. 8 ...	Writing your story
Pg. 9 ...	Poorly Performing Doctors
Pg. 10 ..	Code Red
Pg. 11 ..	Trailer storage solicitation letter
Pg. 12 ..	Victorian Christmas Conundrum
Pg. 14...	Application for membership
Pg. 15 ..	Calendars

Matters of interest as outlined at Board Meeting of December 21, 2017

Victorian Christmas, staffed by just 20 percent of VVA-535 membership, will likely be remembered as a banner year. Gross receipts were approximately \$11,060.00 but all expenses are yet to be reconciled.

The Board acknowledges that without Harold and Patricia Graves rescuing VVA-535 by baking more than 500 brownies, the project would have met its demise. Whole-hearted thanks are extended, and VVA-535 will acknowledge in kind with a work-day at the Graves estate at a later time.

President Chuck is actively seeking a volunteer to travel with him to Fresno January 26-29, 2018 to attend the California State Council meeting.

Ralph Remick has continued to explore options for a fundraiser concert that might be staged by the Center for the Arts in late April 2018.

The storage trailer, for the present, will be stored at Chuck Holmes property.

Upcoming Events

- General Meeting ..Jan 4, 2018
- Director's MeetingJan. 18, 2018
- CSC Full Council - January 26-28, 2018, Fresno
 - April 27– 29,2018,Fresno
 - August 24 – 26, 2018, Fresno
- VVA Leadership Conference, Palm Springs, CA
 - July 22 – 30, 2018
- NCCVC meeting. 10:00 a.m. Jan. 4, 2018

Chapter 535 Officers

President
 Chuck Holmes (H) 478-1126; (C) 263-6968

Vice-President
 Dave Chaix 269-1431

Treasurer
 Ralph Remick559-7716

Secretary
 Dave Johnson 887-8297

Past President
 Harold Graves 470-8507

Directors

- Craig Johnson 575-3576
- Dave Johnson 887-8297
- Ralph Remick 559-7716
- Ric Sheridan 274-1413
- Dave Chaix269-1431
- Bill Holman 265-8387
- Bart Ruud 823-1368
- Dale Epps 368-6156
- Harold Graves 470-8507
- Chuck Holmes 478-1126

Committee Chairs

- FinanceRalph Remick & Dave Johnson
- Parade and Honor Guard Dick Corn
- Membership AffairsRic Sheridan
- Newsletter Interim editor Bart Ruud
- Victorian Christmas Chuck Holmes
- NominationsDick Corn
- Christmas Year Round Harold Graves
- NCCVC Ken Farmer
- Web Master Ralph Remick
- Quartermaster Kent Hawley
- Facebook Master Mike Laborico
- Nevada County Fair Chuck Holmes
- VSO Liaisons Don Bull & Gary Oliver
- CA State Council Rep. Chuck Holmes

Nevada County Veterans Affairs Rep.

Kevin Edwards (530) 273-3396
ncvso@co.nevada.ca.us Tuesday & Thursday,
 8:00 to 12:00 and 1:00 – 4:00 are “Walk-In” days.

More than 64,000 Veterans Apply for Veteran Designation on California Driver Licenses. CalVet 11/27/2017

Sacramento – In the two years since Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. signed legislation authorizing a VETERAN designation on California driver licenses and identification cards, more than 64,000 veterans have visited their County Veterans Service Office to apply and the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has issued more than 55,000. In the process, veterans learned about their eligibility for other benefits, and 28% applied for additional benefits. Thus far, an additional \$17 million has been awarded retroactively and an additional \$31 million will be received annually by these veterans statewide.

"There are 1.7 million veterans in California. Our hope is that each one of them has ready access to all of the benefits they have earned through their service to this country," said CalVet Secretary Vito Imbasciani. "Getting them into a County Veteran Service Office is the first step to ensuring they do."

A veteran designation on a driver license or ID card recognizes military service and makes it easier for veterans who don't have a retired ID or a VA ID to access privileges and benefits without having to carry their military record with them. As an added bonus, a veteran designation means a business can easily confirm veteran status when offering discounts on holidays such as Veterans Day.

The DMV and CalVet have vigorously promoted this program in conjunction with the County Veterans Services Offices (CVSO), and veteran service organizations statewide. While the program has been a success, there are still hundreds of thousands of eligible veterans in California who don't know the program exists or are planning to participate when their current driver license is up for renewal.

Veterans can follow these three important steps to obtain their designation.

STEP 1 – Take your DD-214 to a CVSO to obtain a Veteran Status Verification Form (and check your eligibility for other benefits at the same time!) To find a local CVSO, call 844-737-8838 or visit www.calvet.ca.gov.

STEP 2 – [Go online](#) or call DMV at 800-777-0133 for an appointment to visit a DMV field office. Present the completed and stamped Veteran Status Verification Form and driver license application to a DMV representative at your local DMV field office.

STEP 3 - Pay your \$5 designation fee and related application or renewal fees.

Veterans are required to pay a one-time \$5 designation fee, in addition to any other [application fees](#) associated with a renewal, duplicate, or original driver license and/or ID card. The designation fee is included in the legislative language contained within [Assembly Bill 935](#).

The CalVet and the California DMV wants to remind veterans that they must first obtain a Veteran Status Verification Form from a CVSO, BEFORE visiting a DMV field office to apply for the designation.

For more information, please visit [CalVet's website](#).

Meet the US Army's new pistol

By **Allison Barrie** | Fox News



Sig Sauer XM17. In future battles, U.S. soldiers will have a new sidearm for personal protection. The Army's new pistol may see more action than the last thanks to a design that has great potential for offensive purposes like close quarter combat.

The Army has begun fielding the first Sig Sauer XM17 Modular Handgun System (MHS) sidearms.

The Sig Sauer 9mm XM17, and the more compact version XM18, are replacing the M9 as the Army's service pistol.

This is the first change in about three decades since Beretta's M9 was first introduced as the Army's sidearm in the Cold War era back in 1986.

Over the next 10 years, the Army will distribute the new handguns to all Army units.

Cutting to the chase...what is better about this new weapon? Fans of the new weapon are citing factors like better accuracy and tighter dispersion that will enhance soldiers' lethality. It is also hailed for being easy to use, as well as more comfortable and efficient. Read on for more details ...

So what is this new weapon?

The XM17 and XM18 are variants of Sig Sauer's publicly available P320 pistol. The compact XM18 can be carried in a concealed holster. First unveiled back in 2014, the P320 is a polymer striker-fired pistol that was developed as a service pistol. It is modular, with interchangeable grip modules. The user can adjust the caliber and frame size.

The P320 has a number of features handy for law enforcement and military purposes. The trigger has a short pull and reset. It can also be disassembled without having to manipulate the trigger – and also without tools. And it was designed to fit a wide range of hands.

The military variants have a different paintjob. The Army also has different magazine requirements. Soldiers will be able to utilize both standard, and extended capacity, magazines.

Both pistols can be outfitted with suppressors. To attach lasers and lights, there's an integrated MIL-STD-1913 Picatinny rail. There's also self-illuminating night sights for optimum combat effectiveness in challenging light conditions.

What's the XM17 advantage?

One of the primary goals in the shift has been to provide soldiers with enhanced performance, together with better durability and adaptability. Feedback throughout the process has been that it performed very well and reliably on the range. The XM17 is an easy to shoot, simple handgun with virtually no resistance on the trigger.

Sig Sauer is providing the U.S. Army's new pistol (101st Airborne/U.S. Army) In battle conditions, it is expected to give Soldiers more options. Once fired, the new sidearm makes it easy to quickly aim again accurately and shoot. And the XM17 and XM18 have excellent potential for close-quarter combat.

More soldiers to receive weapons

Another key development is that younger soldiers will be able to get their hands on this new pistol. The Army will be issuing this new sidearm down to squad leaders and team leaders as well. Previously, junior leaders were excluded from carrying the M9s. This new policy is expected to apply to all Army units receiving the XM17.

Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division are among the first to get their hands on the new pistol. As a result, new training will most likely be developed focusing on skills like shifting

from the M4 to the pistol and vice versa.

Are they already in soldiers' hands?

The Army has started rolling them out. The lucky first to receive them? The historic 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. About 2,000 XM17 and XM18 handguns reached them last month. The military plans to issue the XM17s to three units by the end of the year with the 3rd Cavalry Regiment at Fort Hood, Texas, next.

And the rest of the Army? Over the next decade, the Army plans to buy 195,000 pistols and will distribute them to all units.

Testing

Nothing should be more important than the opinion of the soldiers who will be relying on the new weapons. The Army's testing was extensive before the new sidearm was selected.

Committed to the goal of ensuring the best pistol was selected for soldiers in the future Army, a team traveled to different testing sites throughout the country.

Fort Bragg's excellent ranges were used to test the pistol in realistic conditions. Different scenarios were used such as testing the new Sig while in cold weather gear.

In addition to the Army, testing was conducted through the military as well with sailors, airmen and Marines participating. Different specializations were also involved pilots, crew chiefs and infantry putting the new weapons through their paces and providing feedback.

Intense competition for selection

The Army launched the competition to replace the M9 back in 2015.

It was a hotly contested battle between some of the world's finest gun makers with Beretta USA, Glock Inc. and FN America all competing alongside Sig Sauer. In the end it was Sig Sauer that won the deal for the New Modular Handgun

System (MHS), which is worth about \$580 million.

In January of this year, the Army announced that the XM17 was chosen as the new service pistol. Other services also have embraced the XM17 and XM18 as well. The Air Force is scheduled to buy 130,000, the Navy plans to buy 61,000 and the Marine Corps plans to buy 35,000.

On shelves now

Looking for a new primary carry pistol? Or to gift one this holiday season? In terms of civilians, the Army's variant is not publicly available but the base model, the P320, is available in 9mm, .357 SIG, .40 S&W and .45 ACP. It retails for approximately \$713.

For Veterans, a Path to Healing 'Moral Injury'

Aaron Pratt Shepherd. **THE STONE** Dec. 9, 2017

When you have a physical injury, go to the doctor. A psychological injury? Get thee to a psychiatrist. But what can be done if you suffer from a "moral injury?"

The term "moral injury" was popularized in the mid-1990s by Jonathan Shay, a staff psychiatrist at a Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Boston who was working with veterans suffering from psychological trauma. In his book "[Achilles in Vietnam](#)," Dr. Shay describes moral injury as a result of being ordered to do something in a "high-stakes situation" that violates an individual's deeply held beliefs about what is right.

In the heat of battle, soldiers are often ordered to do things that are unspeakable in civil society: kill enemy soldiers, regardless of their age; toss grenades into houses, regardless of whether there are noncombatants inside; burn down villages, regardless of loss of life. These

atrocities become memories that many veterans cannot shake.

In 2009, when America's long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had been dragging on for the better part of a decade, Dr. Brett Litz, the director of mental health services at the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in Boston, [revived Dr. Shay's idea](#). There was growing concern and frustration in the veteran community about the rapid rise of suicide rates. This was frequently attributed to post-traumatic stress disorder, but Dr. Litz and his research team were unconvinced that this diagnosis was precise enough.

While some symptoms of moral injury — reexperiencing the traumatic event, sleep disturbances, self-harming activities like substance abuse and recklessness, and suicidal thoughts — overlap with those of PTSD and traumatic brain injuries, there are differences. What distinguishes moral injury is a persistent sense of guilt and shame, and an ethical “drift,” whereby veterans no longer have a clear sense of right and wrong, or of what makes their lives meaningful.

Last year, I was part of the chaplains' service at the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center. We were trained to meet veterans in their moments of crisis to provide a comforting presence and a listening ear. But as my year there came to a close, I felt that I'd provided little comfort to many of the morally injured veterans I'd met.

In her book “Afterwar,” the philosopher and military ethicist [Nancy Sherman](#) highlighted the problematic disconnect between the American public and its military and veteran community. The disinterest among civilians in the wars being waged, she observed, had effectively cut off veterans with moral injuries from the wider community that could justify or sanction the acts they were asked to commit. (That disinterest was expressed cynically in Congress by the House leadership's [refusal](#) to entertain an

amendment to rescind and renegotiate the [authorization of military force in effect since 2001](#).)

In treating veterans with moral injuries, the ethical dilemmas that cause their traumas are often ignored. Clinicians tend to focus on addressing the symptoms; therapists and chaplains — myself included — tend to focus on veterans' regret and desire for forgiveness. But forgiveness may not be the balm that so many believe will make these veterans whole again. So what could recovery from moral injury look like?

Just over a century ago, a philosopher named [Josiah Royce](#) was engaged in important work that may provide us with an answer. Royce was a member of the storied Harvard philosophy department of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. One principle that Royce explored was loyalty — the commitment to a community and a cause that will (ideally) give rise to a rich and moral life. He claimed that moral actions should be understood in terms of their relation to an ideal, like friendship or patriotism, that is also always shared with others in a community.

Soldiers provide a good example. They are loyal patriots, serving their country in wartime, but also committed to protecting their fellow soldiers. But this is only one loyalty among many that a soldier may have — to family, God, the Yankees, or to ideals like freedom and justice. How can a soldier be loyal to the cause of family — and by extension, to the nearly universal community of those who share this loyalty — as he fires his weapon at an Afghan family's hut? How can he be loyal to the ideals of integrity and honor in war while acting in ways that defy those ideals?

Soldiers often describe the traumatic events connected with moral injury in terms of split loyalties — of having to make the impossible decision of betraying one ideal for another. The

reality of these choices, according to Royce, is that in these decisions, we still answer for this betrayal with the penalty of moral injury. Royce appreciated this tragic aspect of the moral life: Betrayals aren't easily fixed or forgiven. "The fact that I am the one who then did thus and so, not ignorantly, but knowingly," he wrote, "that fact will outlast the ages. That fact is as endless as time." Royce called this the "hell of the irrevocable" — the tragic inability of humans to have a "do-over" in life.

Royce's philosophy of loyalty offers a different way for clinicians and concerned citizens to think about what is really at stake for veterans. Moral injury, seen through Royce's lens, is less a matter of violating some deeply held moral norm and more a matter of choosing one profoundly important loyalty over another. This is the root cause of the tragic quality of a rich and fully loyal life: "We never completely win the union; we never realize to the full the one loyal life; but insofar as we are loyal, we win enough of this unity of life to be able to understand the ideal, and to make it our own guide."

Why can't these disloyalties be forgiven? At best, forgiveness serves only as a kind of amnesia. Even if the action could be forgiven by the offended party, what would this forgiveness mean? That the act had not been committed? Seeking forgiveness is like tossing a snowball into the hell of the irrevocable. Royce thinks that there is, however, another way. Instead of forgiveness, Royce proposes that atonement — proving one's loyalty to the cause and community that have been betrayed — is the only way to regain one's moral self and restore the moral integrity of the community.

What is atonement? A creative act of compensation or recompense that attempts to unify something that has been torn apart. Deeds of atonement, according to Royce, are meant not to win forgiveness but to enrich the life of the betrayed community — and by extension, to

bring something good out of disloyalty. "The deed of atonement," Royce admonishes, "shall be so wise and rich in its efficacy that the spiritual world, after the atoning deed, shall be better, richer, more triumphant amidst all its irrevocable tragedies than it was before."

So let's get concrete: The focus for those who suffer from moral injury (and those who care for them) should shift from forgiveness to creative deeds of atonement. Some veterans' organizations provide such opportunities, even if they don't adopt this language explicitly. [Team Rubicon](#), for example, gives veterans and civilians a new mission by helping communities in distress overcome disasters and disadvantages. But volunteer opportunities are not the only or even the best sites for deeds of atonement. After all, moral injury often extends to children and families.

Recovery from moral injury begins with identifying the causes and communities that were sacrificed in the heat of battle and finding creative new ways to re-establish loyalty to those causes. This can mean renewing one's commitment to being a good parent, serving the needy in one's community or taking political action to stem the flow of American lives into war zones that lead to moral injury. Focusing on atonement rather than forgiveness may help clinicians, community members, families and friends of veterans who suffer from moral injury begin to chart a path forward from the irrevocable deeds that haunt them.

Pratt Shepherd is a visiting assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Writing Your Story for INCOMING

(Ongoing repeat solicitation)

Ideas for your story:

- Think about what you appreciated about the Vietnam experience. There is surely a means to segue into that with very little

reflection on the negative aspects of war.

- What did you appreciate about the Vietnamese people during your deployment?
- Can you steer away from the bad stuff and reflect on the best experience you had in the Nam?
- Surely you had a close buddy and you supported each other. Maybe there is a story in that.
- What really got you through the day-to-day anxieties and fears? There might be a positive recollection in that regard.
- How did your experience instill in you a sense of patriotism that you possibly express every day of your life.

So far we have heard from Ruud, Epps, Chaix, Hamer, current Marine LCpl. Jesse Hernandez, Kent Hawley, and Mike Laborico. (Thank you!)

No writer needs to dwell on the negatives of war. Each of us who was there lived the negatives, and all of us are better people for having served, especially when we look at how we matured as a result of our experiences. Each of us has derived a sense of being and an energy that is different from what it might have been had we not been sent across the pond.

Do share with us, in your own words, something of that chapter of your life. And, thank you for your service.

Forward your story to Bart Ruud at bruud45@gmail.com or hand deliver to Bart.

Watchdog: VA failed to report 90 percent of poor-performing doctors

By NIKKI WENTLING | STARS AND STRIPES. Published: November 27, 2017

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs fails to report 90 percent of poor-performing doctors to national and state databases intended to alert other hospitals of misconduct, according to findings released Monday by the Government Accountability Office.

The government watchdog found VA officials were slow to investigate when concerns were raised about the performance of certain doctors. Further, in eight out of nine cases, the VA failed to report doctors who didn't meet health care standards.

“Until [the Veterans Health Administration] strengthens its oversight of these processes, veterans may be at increased risk of receiving unsafe care through the VA health care system,” the GAO concluded.

The findings were based on reviews of 148 instances of complaints against VA medical providers at five hospitals from 2013 to 2017. The concerns ranged from unsafe or inconsistent practices to doctors incorrectly recording patient visits.

- The VA failed to document about half of those cases, the GAO found. For 16 doctors,
- the VA waited multiple months or years to initiate reviews of complaints.

During that time, nine doctors were disciplined by the VA for possible professional incompetence or misconduct, or they resigned to avoid disciplinary action. But the VA didn't report any of them to state licensing boards, and only one was reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank. Those databases are designed to inform other health care facilities about doctors' past performance.

In one instance, a doctor who resigned from the VA while under investigation was not reported, and later hired to another, non-VA hospital in

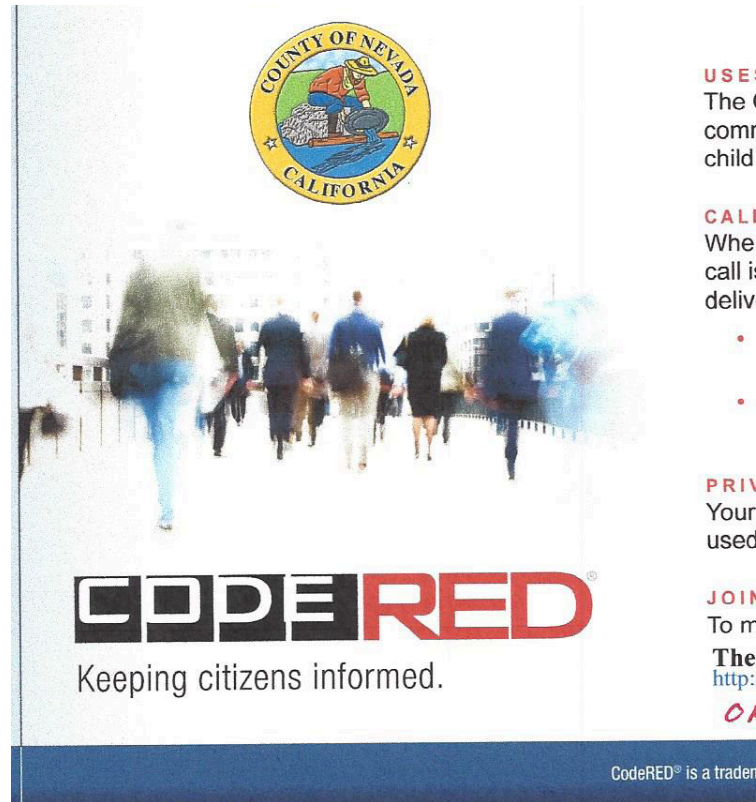
the same city. Two years later, that hospital disciplined the doctor for the same conduct that prompted the VA investigation, the GAO reported.

The GAO is recommending the VA improve oversight of how concerns raised about doctors are reviewed and documented. In response to the watchdog report, VA Deputy Chief of Staff Gina Farrisee wrote the agency agreed with the recommendations and would comply with them by October 2018.

“Without documentation and timely reviews of providers’ clinical care, [VA] officials may lack information needed to reasonably ensure that providers are competent to provide safe, high quality care to veterans,” the GAO report reads. The U.S. Office of Special Counsel has recently received complaints from whistleblowers that seem to back up the GAO findings of VA leadership failing to address concerns about doctors, inspectors wrote.

A subcommittee of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is planning to meet Wednesday morning to discuss the report publicly.

Code Red – At our November 2017 meeting, Keith Grueneberg spoke of Nevada County’s Code Red system, a service that send robotic messages of importance to the citizenry.



Residents of **Placer County** can register with its similar mass notification system at the following website: Placer-Alert.org

Stowage of our utility trailer: Although our immediate need to stow the storage trailer is resolved for the near term, we continue to seek a permanent storage opportunity. The membership is asked to assist in this endeavor by taking responsibility to seek possible storage solutions.



Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the only national Vietnam veterans organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families.

We are a non-profit 501 veterans organization, with our local Nevada County Chapter 535 formed in 1992.

Over the past 25 years, VVA Nevada County Chapter has supported many community efforts including Meals-On-Wheels, local high school scholarships, emergency one-time financial help for veterans, and Information and Referral services for veterans. More recently, our local chapter provides direct financial support to Friends of Vinh Son, a group of Montagnard (mountain people) orphanages neglected by the Vietnamese government.

To fund our community efforts, our VVA Chapter depends on our members fundraising activities. Our primary fundraising activity is during the weeks of Victorian Christmas, when our members sell hot cider, hot chocolate, and homemade brownies from our booth in Nevada City.

Our current need is to have a location available to store our approximately 8'x16' trailer containing our booth equipment and supplies for about 11 months out of the year, when the trailer is unused. As a business entity, the value of your space donation should be tax deductible and would be very much appreciated by our VVA Chapter and those we serve. An IRS tax ID Number can be provided.

Victorian Christmas Conundrum

As I reflect on 2017's Victorian Christmas, three points come to mind. First, many thanks to the 17 individuals, two of whom are not even members of VVA, for stepping up and making this event the success it was. Second, this project could not have happened without Patricia and Harold Graves baking more than 500 brownies, one dozen at a time. And third, without the diligence of VVA-535 President Chuck Holmes and his participation in ten work sessions, the event would have failed.

Beyond Harold, Patricia and Chuck, another key player was Ralph Remick, who undertook the legwork to coordinate with the Nevada City Chamber of Commerce to obtain permits.

The combined Kitchen and Booth teams included Dave Chaix, Dick Corn, Dale Epps (Kitchen Manager at all five events), Tom Eberlein, Dale Ferguson, Keith Gruenberg, Kent Hawley and his son Ben, Chuck Holmes, Ray James, Mike Laborico, Ralph Remick and his son Kurt, Bart Ruud, and Ric Sheridan. Two individuals who had committed to assist did not report for duty. A third volunteer was respectfully excused due to illness.

Fifteen VVA-535 members from a roster of 75 equates to 20 percent participation on the single VVA-535 fundraiser of the year. How can an organization survive when 80 percent of the membership was non-participatory? Granted, some live out of the area, and some have physical limitations and their inability to participate is understood.

There is word that a couple of other local organizations might like to step in and take over the VVA-535 site and the project. Before this single fundraising project is cast aside by VVA-535, it seems rational thinking must prevail.

Every choice, every decision has a consequence. In effect, if the decision to abandon the project was made, that would be a pivotal decision, and perhaps it would be the harbinger of the demise of VVA-535. An organization with no organized activity or project is a weak organization.

Electing to continue the project comes with an established territory: Many of those who visit Victorian Christmas appear to look for the VVA-535 booth and are happy to indulge in its products.

The Board, our elected Officers and the Membership at Large must absolutely be rational in its thinking as it studies the options of continuation of the project, or abandonment of a project that has gone on for decades. Any decision made must be realistic. That decision should not be based on emotion or on fantasies of what might occur in a perfect world. The decision must be calculated and based on facts, facts that include costs of Chamber fees and raw products, a committed labor force, leadership, bakers to prepare brownies, logistics, and more.

VVA-535 does not suffer from fundraiser fatigue. Its sole fundraiser is Victorian Christmas. The project is well understood because the project has carried forth for many years, and a logistical outline exists to provide for a sense of direction.

One might ask, "What is the core purpose of this project? Is it to build a treasury or is it an outreach opportunity to enlighten the community about Vietnam Veterans of America?" Clearly, it is both.

If consumption of the product is telling, the market is there. Thousands of people attend Victorian Christmas and indeed the crowds have increased over the years. So too have the revenues generated year by year.

Questions need to be asked:

- Does revenue earned sufficiently offset costs?
- Does the project relate to the core values of VVA?
- Will those who support us on the street miss us?
- Does the project have the support of the membership sufficient to populate the workforce?
- What can be done to increase VVA-535 member participation?
- Does the public appreciate those who have served our country?
- Is there means to simplify the project so that it might be less labor intensive?
- Who will prepare brownies in the future? Must brownies even be provided?
- Does the VVA-535 membership truly understand the value of the project and the logistics of the project?
- Is it prudent for Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 535, to sunset its presence in the community?
- Has this project run its course to the point that it is time to retire it?
- What kind of annual fundraiser could replace Victorian Christmas?
- Is a VVA-535 fundraiser even necessary?
- Additional concerns -

No decision to continue the project or abandon the Victorian Christmas project needs to be made in the near term. A decision, however, will need to be made in the months ahead so that the project is either retained or passed along. Willing hands are ready to take away a key VVA-535 fundraiser, a project that solidifies what VVA is. A decision to retain the project or give it up will be very consequential.

Bart Ruud
December 20, 2017

Application For Membership
VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC., CHAPTER 535
P.O. Box 37, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, or in **any duty location** between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: (_____) _____ Cell Phone: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____ Gender: _____

(Optional) Chapter Number: _____ Sponsor: _____

_____ I am already a VVA member and I want to become a Life Member. My VVA Number is _____.

Type of Membership: Individual _____ 1 year @ \$20. Individual _____ 3 years @ \$50.
Life Membership: _____ \$100. (Check type of membership)

ATTENTION New members and new life members: You must submit a copy of your DD-214 form along with this application and dues payment.

Payment Method: ___ Check ___ Money Order ___ Credit Card (Visa, MasterCard, AMEX, Discover)

Credit Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Return your completed application, payment and a copy of your DD-214 to:

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Chapter 535
P.O. Box 37
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Revised: January 201

December 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Victorian Christmas	4	5	6	7 VVA-535 Christmas Dinner	8	9
10 Victorian Christmas	11	12	13 Victorian Christmas	14	15	16 Wreaths Across America
17 Victorian Christmas	18	19	20 Victorian Christmas	21 Board Meeting 6:00 p.m.	22	23
24	25 <u>Christmas</u>	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4 VVA General Meeting	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	16	17 Operation Desert Storm began 1991	18 VVA Board Meeting	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord 1973
28	29	30	31			

February

2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 VVA General Meeting	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 Boy Scouts of America founded 1910	9	10
11	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 Valentine's Day	15 VVA Board Meeting	16	17
18	19 President's Day US Marines Landed on Iwo Jima 1945	20	21	22 Washington's Birthday	23	24 Operation Desert Storm ground campaign began 1991
25	26	27	28			