

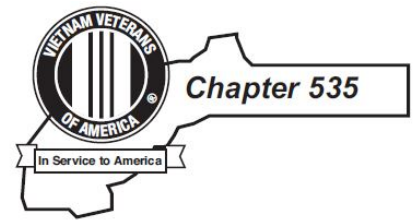


INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

CHAPTER 535

Website: www.vva535.org



Volume 29 Issue 1

January 2019

Gentleman and Ladies,

Life has been very generous to me, and I suspect most of us of ALR-84 could say the same if only we paused long enough to consider the key point of this sentence. Each of us is unique because our life experiences are, by nature, varied and personal.

So why has life been generous? I have friends who've forever had my back. I have lived a long while, learned much, shared a little, helped change a few lives for the better, and been a recipient of the love and care of many. All of these concepts, and more, create solidarity in humankind that is extraordinary.

The Brotherhood we share in VVA-535 is real. A pride of lions, a troop of baboons, or a herd of elephants each has similar comradeship, but perhaps only man has the ability to cognate the value of friends and at the same time understand how fragile we are.

As we begin a new year, keep in mind the frailty of the human condition. Lift a hand for your fellow man when there is need. Make sacrifices; your thoughtfulness will be repaid in kind many times over. A basic tenet is this: We will always need one another, and in the waning years of our lives, we may need that heartfelt prayer or act of human kindness more than we ever

dreamed. It might just be that charitable effort that makes all the difference. Think about it, and all good wishes for the new year. /BR

VVA Chapter 535 Mission Statement

To foster camaraderie among members and assist those with disabling mental and physical injuries, to promote the welfare of our brethren affected by the war, and to engender public understanding of the sacrifice, patriotism and bravery of those who served, those who gave all, and those left behind.

The **50:50 Raffle** initiated on May 3, 2018 currently has \$257 in the can. If you choose to participate, the Raffle will continue at the meeting of January 3, 2019. At the current \$257 enticement, if you drew the Black Marble you would pocket \$128. Surely that sum will grow on January 3rd. The odds are getting better as only five marbles, including the Black Marble, remain in the sock. I plan to buy in and take my chances!

Christmas Potluck Wrap

Ric Sheridan and Francis again deserve our sincere thanks for coordinating our annual Christmas potluck dinner, an event attended by something in the order of 60, including guests. Thank you, Ric, and **Frances**, for again stepping up to make this happen. And thank you, **Ric**, for prepping

ham, and thank you **Jose Gonzales** for prepping the turkey. And, a final thanks to all who brought an unwrapped toy for *Toys for Tots*.

Guest Speaker for January 3, 2019

No guest speaker this month.

Attention

If you do not drive and need a ride to a meeting or any VVA-535 function, please contact Bart Ruud or any local VVA -535 member and we will do our best to arrange transportation for you.

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Upcoming Events

- General Meeting January 3, 2019
- Director’s Meeting January 3, 2019
- NCCVC meeting: January 3, 2019
- CSC meeting – Jan. 25-27, 2019, Fresno
- Mardi Gras Parade, Nevada City, Feb. 17, 2019

Chapter 535 Officers

President Bart Ruud bruud45@gmail.com
 (H) 530-823-1368; (C) 530-305-0493

Vice-President
 Dale Epps 368-6156

Treasurer
 Ralph Remick559-7716

Secretary
 Dave Johnson 887-8297

Directors

Dave Chaix	269-1431
Dale Epps	368-6156
Kent Hawley	432-3551
Bill Holman	265-8387
Chuck Holmes	478-1126
Dave Johnson	887-8297
Dave Middleton	205-9375
Ralph Remick	559-7716
Bart Ruud	823-1368
Ric Sheridan	274-1413
Tom Woollard	432-1212

Committee Chairs

Finance	Ralph Remick & Dave Johnson
Parade and Honor Guard	Dick Corn
Membership Affairs	Ric Sheridan
Newsletter	Interim editor Bart Ruud
Victorian Christmas	Jose Gonzales
Nominations	Dick Corn
Veterans Assistance	Bart Ruud
NCCVC	Dick Corn
Speakers Bureau	Tom Woollard
Web Master	Ralph Remick
Quartermaster	Kent Hawley
Facebook Master	Mike Laborico
Nevada County Fair	Bart Ruud
VSO Liaisons	(Open opportunity)
CA State Council Rep.	Vacant

Nevada County Veterans Service Officer

VSO Officer -David West (530) 273-3396 office
(530) 913-5046 cell
988 McCourtney Road, Grass Valley 95949
ncvso@co.nevada.ca.us
Thursday, 9:00 to 12:00 and 1:00 – 4:00 is a
“Walk-In” day.

Placer County Veterans Service Officer

Suzi Vinci 916-780-3290.
1000 Sunset Blvd, Suite 115, Rocklin, CA
Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 5:00
p.m.

Matters of interest as outlined at Board Meeting of November 1, 2018

(Repeat message, as there was no December Board Meeting)

The Board heard input from Dave Chaix regarding a desire on the part of **Patricia Graves** that the \$3,050 realized as donations in memory of Past-President Harold Graves be utilized annually for a period of years to fund the proposed Harold K. Graves Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship would be awarded to a student whose long-term goal will be career military service to our country. Patricia is working with local high school staff to develop parameters.

The Board continues to seek a VVA-535 member who will willingly represent us at **California State Council** meetings in Fresno, CA.

Victorian Christmas a Success

VVA-535 earnestly thanks **Jose Gonzales** for his leadership with this project. Additionally, all volunteers who helped in the kitchen and at the street fair booth are commended for teaming up with Jose. A quiet hero among the volunteers is **Patricia Graves**, who baked hundreds of brownies and delivered them to the booth team for each of the five sessions. Many thanks, Patricia. When net financial figures are known,

they will be reported to the membership. A net of approximately \$3,872 is ballpark.

‘This is not going to be won militarily’: Top US commander in Afghanistan reveals pessimism

By: Kyle Rempfer November 1, 2018



U.S. Army Gen. Austin Miller speaks during the change of command ceremony at Resolute Support headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan, Sunday, Sept. 2, 2018. Miller assumed command of the 41-nation NATO mission in Afghanistan following a handover ceremony.

The new U.S. general leading the mission in Afghanistan gave a surprisingly candid interview this week on the situation in-country.

In his first interview since taking command of NATO’s Resolute Support mission in September, Army Gen. Austin Miller’s thoughts seem to mirror the pessimism felt by the American people as the war in Afghanistan treads past the 17-year mark.

“This is not going to be won militarily,” Miller told NBC News in an exclusive interview. “This is going to a political solution.”

“My assessment is the Taliban also realizes they cannot win militarily,” he said. “So if you realize you can’t win militarily at some point, fighting is just futile, people start asking why. So you do not necessarily wait us out, but I think now is the time to start working through the political piece of this conflict.”

Miller’s comments reflect several realities

portrayed in the latest report from the leading U.S. government oversight agency on Afghanistan.

As of July, the Afghan government controls or influences only 55.5 percent of the country's 407 districts. That is the lowest level since the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, began tracking district control in November 2015, according to the group's quarterly report released Thursday. Although the exact numbers are classified, Resolute Support also said that the average number of Afghan government force casualties from May to October 2018 is the highest it has ever been during similar periods.

May was the most active month, accounting for 26 percent of all casualties during this five-month period. About 52 percent of the casualties during this time came during checkpoint operations, while 35 percent occurred during patrols. SIGAR reported that the number of checkpoint casualties is increasing while the number of patrol casualties is decreasing.

Trump strategy is working, departing general in Afghanistan says

By: Tara Copp

Thousands of additional U.S. forces, new authorities and recent ceasefires give hope, general says.

The somewhat good news is that the Afghan government's control over the total population in-country remains unchanged since this time last year at 65 percent.

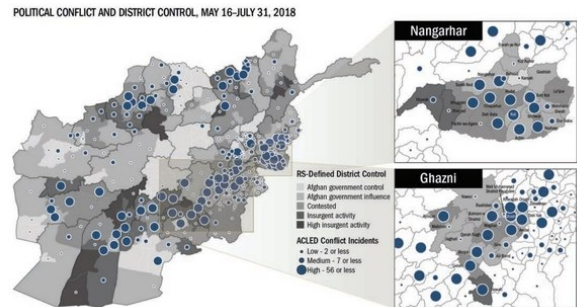
Roughly 12 percent of Afghanistan's districts are now reportedly under insurgent control or influence, according to SIGAR.

About 32.4 percent of Afghan districts are contested — which means they are neither

controlled by the Afghan government or the insurgency.

Since SIGAR began receiving district control data in November 2015, Afghan government control and influence over its districts has declined by about 16 percent; contested districts have increased by about 11 percent; and insurgent control or influence has risen by 5.5 percent.

"The control of Afghanistan's districts, population, and territory overall became more contested this quarter, with both the Afghan government and the insurgency losing districts and land area under their control or influence," SIGAR officials wrote in their report.



When Miller took over the war in early September, Afghan soldiers were already being killed and wounded at record numbers.

Miller told NBC News that he kicked off his tenure by pushing out a more aggressive policy of helping the Afghan military locate and defeat Taliban fighters. But in that new interview, Miller also acknowledged that Afghanistan requires a political, not military, solution to its woes.

Miller also narrowly escaped a Taliban attack unharmed on Oct. 18 in Kandahar city during a meeting with Kandahar's governor. The Taliban had managed to turn one of the governor's bodyguards to their side, who then initiated an insider attack at the conclusion of the meeting.

5 freed from Gitmo in exchange for Bergdahl join Taliban's political office in Qatar

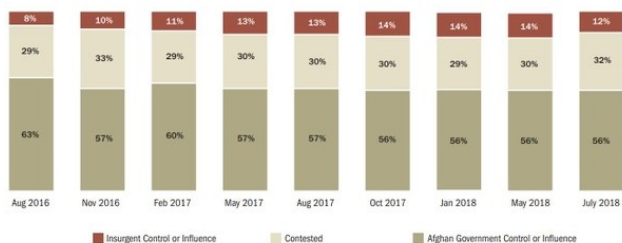
By: Kathy Gannon, The Associated Press

They may complicate efforts toward peace talks with Taliban, some analysts say.

A key U.S.-backed Afghan warlord in the country's volatile southern region, Kandahar police chief Gen. Abdul Raziq, was killed in the attack. Raziq was arguably the most important power broker in the region.

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Smiley, the U.S. general in charge of Resolute Support's advising mission in southern Afghanistan, and another unidentified civilian were also wounded in the attack.

HISTORICAL DISTRICT CONTROL IN AFGHANISTAN



Afghanistan's summer fighting season was also marked by a notable loss for Afghanistan's elite Commando units, who were routed in their defense of Ghazni city, less than 100 miles from Afghanistan's capital of Kabul, from a Taliban offensive in August. Although the Commandos eventually rallied to retake the city with the help of U.S. special operations forces, the fact that such an elite unit was overrun and reportedly took a high rate of casualties may indicate fatigue and overuse among its troops.

The cumulative funds allocated for reconstruction and related activities in Afghanistan since fiscal 2002 totals roughly \$132 billion, according to SIGAR.

A Link to the Friends of Vinh Son Orphanage website:

<https://www.friendsofvso.org>

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, Chuck Holmes, 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.

Review Finds 'Sufficient' Evidence Linking Hypertension to Agent Orange Exposure

Stars and Stripes | By Nikki Wentling 19 Nov 2018

WASHINGTON -- Researchers with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine found for the first time that enough evidence exists to link hypertension to [Agent Orange](#) exposure during the Vietnam War.

In addition to hypertension, researchers determined there's sufficient evidence linking Agent Orange to monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance, or MGUS, a condition in which an abnormal protein is in the blood that progress to other disorders, including some forms of blood cancer. A link between the condition and Vietnam War service hadn't been considered previously.

Based on the new report, Vietnam Veterans of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars called on VA Secretary Robert Wilkie to add hypertension and MGUS to the list of diseases presumed to be caused by Agent Orange. There are 14 diseases on the list, and veterans suffering from them are allowed quicker access to VA benefits.

"There is no doubt in anyone's mind that Agent Orange made veterans sick, it made their children sick, and it brought pain and suffering and premature death to many," VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence said in a statement. "We now call on VA Secretary Robert Wilkie to use his authority and recognize the science in the report to swiftly add these two illnesses to the presumptive list so that these veterans can finally receive the assistance they earned and deserve."

Congress requires the National Academies of Sciences to review scientific literature about Agent Orange exposure every two years. The first report was published in 1994.

There have been previous attempts to get

hypertension onto the list of presumptive diseases.

Following the 2016 report, when researchers recognized there was "suggestive" evidence linking hypertension to Agent Orange, the VA sent a recommendation to the White House that it be added. At the same time, the agency recommended adding three other diseases: bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson's-like tremors.

The recommendation is still sitting in the Office of Management and Budget. Members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs were told in June that OMB was waiting on the results of two studies before making a decision. One of the studies isn't expected to be complete until 2020.

With the new report bolstering their case, Rick Weidman, policy director for Vietnam Veterans of America, is pushing for Wilkie and President Donald Trump to add hypertension and MGUS. But he has his doubts.

Earlier this fall, Wilkie came out [opposed to legislation that would extent Agent Orange benefits to tens of thousands of "Blue Water" Navy veterans](#) who served on ships off the coast during the Vietnam War. At the time, Wilkie cited high costs and a lack of scientific evidence as his reasoning.

"With the actions of the new secretary in regard to Blue Water Navy, I'm not hopeful," Weidman said. "It all has to do with the president. It depends on whether he loves us enough to spend money on us."

If the executive branch won't move on the issue, Congress needs to step in, he said.

"It really depends on Congress and how much pressure they're willing to put on the VA to act," Weidman said.

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 _____.

Membership: Individual Life Membership: \$50. (Effective Oct. 20, 2018)

ATTENTION New 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 2019

December

2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Advent	3 Hanukkah	4	5	6 VVA General Meeting /Potluck & Board Meeting	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8
9 Victorian Christmas	10 Human Rights Day	11	12 Victorian Christmas	13	14	15 Bill of Rights Day <i>Wreaths Across America</i>
16 Victorian Christmas Battle of the Bulge began (1944)	17	18	19 Victorian Christmas	20	21 First Day of Winter Pilgrims Landed (1620)	22
23 Victorian Christmas	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29
30	31 Official end of WW II (1946)					

January

2019

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

FEBRUARY

2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Groundhog Day
3	4	5	6	7 VVA General Meeting & Board Meeting	8 Boy Scouts of America founded (1910)	9
10	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday (1809)	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16
17 Mardi Gras Parade Nevada City	18 President's Day	19 U.S. Marines landed on Iwo Jima (1945)	20	21	22 Washington's Birthday (1732)	23
24 Desert Storm Ground Campaign Began (1991)	25	26	27	28		

MARCH

2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Operation Rolling Thunder began (1965)
3 Star Spangled Banner made U.S. Anthem (1931)	4	5	6 Ash Wednesday	7 VVA General Meeting & Board Meeting	8	9
10 Daylight Savings begins	11	12 Girl Scouts of America founded (1912)	13	14	15 American Legion's 100 th Birthday	16
17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 Start of Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003)	20 First Day of Spring	22	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day	30
31						