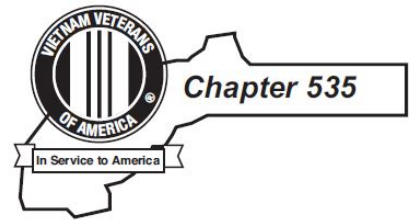




# INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

## CHAPTER 535



Website: [www.vva535.org](http://www.vva535.org)

Volume 30 Issue 3

March 2020

### VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 535 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE March 2020

Greetings! If you all remember at our last meeting, Dale Epps shared with us an email he received from an out of state Vietnam vet. This veteran remembers watching a film that was made in Nevada City entitled "The Christmas Card." In this movie an army sergeant traveled to Nevada City to deliver the dog tags of a veteran killed in action. As part of that movie, it shows the veteran visiting the south fork of the Yuba River where a plaque was attached to a handrail leading down to the river. The plaque stated, "This Bridge is dedicated to the memory of those brave men and women who served in Vietnam and never returned home." The veteran who sent the email visited Nevada City and was looking for the plaque and never found it. Being concerned, he emailed Dale. The plaque was only installed for the movie then removed. The veteran who emailed Dale told him he has a friend who owns a monument business and he could design and produce a replica of that plaque. I was able to obtain a picture of this plaque and it is attached to this message. The plaque does not meet current specifications. I contacted Cal-Trans since the plaque referred to a bridge. Cal-Trans advised me to contact State Parks because it was attached to part of the

park. I am in the process of contacting them at this time. I spoke with Patricia Nelson regarding bridge naming and she remembers our local bridges needing legislative approval. She is researching this for me. We may have to proceed to the legislature if State Parks advises us to do so. So this is a work in progress to get a new plaque installed at Hwy 49, at the south fork of the Yuba River bridge. I think this is something we should jump on.

Due to time constraints at our last meeting, we did not have the opportunity to discuss a picnic for this summer. This will be a topic to be discussed at our March meeting.

Working on a suggestion offered by one of our members regarding bringing the mobile Vietnam veterans wall to our county. We moved to have our representative to NCCVC address this issue with them due to the cost involved. We will await their decision.

The drawing for the M-1 replica will be held on April 6<sup>th</sup>. We need a couple of members to supervise the drawing with Dale Epps. We only need a couple of witnesses.

Once again Ralph Remick has offered to serve as the nominating committee for officers next year. He will be contacting members of our group to solicit interest.

Fund raising is still a topic for continued discussion. Please be thinking of ways to make money for the organization.

President Keith



### 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.*

#### 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.

### Guest Speaker for March 5, 2020

Dave Chaix will present a summary of his recent travel to Vietnam. Time permitting, Bart Ruud will share an overview of his 1971-72 deployment as a 17B40 NCOIC in I-Corps, Vietnam.

Tom Woollard works hard to coordinate and arrange for guest speakers. Lend a hand and pass along any ideas you may have for future guest speakers.

### Table of Contents

Pg. 1	President's Message
Pg. 2	Mission Statement
Pg. 2	Guest Speaker
Pg. 2	Table of Contents
Pg. 2	Upcoming events
	Officers, Directors & Committee Chairs
Pg. 3	Jan. Board Meeting Aftermath
Pg. 3	Election Nominations
Pg. 4	Corona Virus
Pg. 6	tMedical Marijuana
Pg. 7	Trump Border Wall
Pg. 9	France/Africa
Pg. 9	Soldierstone
Pg. 11	Writing Your Story
Pg. 12	Air Rifle Fundraiser
Pg. 13	VVA Application
Pg. 14	Calendars

### Upcoming Events

NCCVC Meeting – March 5, 2020  
General Meeting – March 5, 2020  
Director's Meeting – March 5, 2020  
CSC Meeting – Visalia – Feb. 28, 29, Mar. 1  
VVA-535 Elections – April 2, 2020  
April 6, 2020 – Drawing for air rifle  
CSC Meeting – Visalia – April 24-26, 2020  
May 7 - Installation of Officers & Directors  
CSC Convention – Visalia, CA - June 12, 13, 2020  
CSC Meeting – Visalia - July 31 – Aug. 2, 2020

Nevada County All Veterans Stand Down –  
October 16-17, 2020  
CSC Meeting – Visalia Oct. 23-25, 2020

### **Chapter 535 Officers**

President Keith Grueneberg  
kgberg0178@sbcglobal.net  
(H) 530-265-1946(C) 916-425-1121

Vice-President  
Enrique Vasquez .....530-575-4416

Treasurer  
Ralph Remick .....559-7716

Secretary  
Dave Johnson ..... 530-887-8297

### **Directors**

Dave Chaix .....269-1431  
Dick Corn ..... 277-8856  
Dale Epps ..... 368-6156  
Ray James ..... 478-1126  
Dave Johnson ..... 887-8297  
Dave Middleton ..... 205-9375  
Bart Ruud ..... 823-1368  
Ric Sheridan ..... 274-1413  
Mike Underwood ..... 925-759-2924  
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 ..... Underwood & Ruud  
Nominations ..... Ralph Remick  
Veterans Assistance ..... Keith Grueneberg  
NCCVC ..... Dick Corn  
Speakers Bureau ..... Tom Woollard  
Web Master ..... Ralph Remick  
Quartermaster ..... Dick Corn  
Facebook Master ..... Mike Laborico  
Nevada County Fair ..... Dave Middleton  
CA State Council Rep. .... Mike Underwood

### **Nevada County Veterans Service Officer**

VSO Officer -David West II (530) 265-1446 office

(530) 913-5046 cell  
988 McCourtney Road, Grass Valley 95949  
[ncvso@co.nevada.ca.us](mailto: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**

Derrick Oliveira ... 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 February 6, 2020**

Sponsored by *Welcome Home Vets*, an “Injured  
Veteran Gold Tournament” fundraiser will be  
held in Penn Valley/Lake Wildwood in July.  
Details will evolve.

To date, 51 tickets for the M-1 replica pellet gun  
have been sold. It is hoped a total of 100 tickets  
can be sold at \$10 each. Drawing is 4/6/2020.

VVA-535 is holding \$146 from the late Fall e-  
waste project for NCCVC. The funds may be used  
to help support the 2020 Stand Down,  
scheduled for Oct. 16-17, 2020.

Given net returns from Victorian Christmas  
appeared to be just \$2,113.53 the Chapter will  
seek ideas from the membership for a less labor  
intensive and less weather conflicted fundraiser.  
Ideas are actively sought.

### **VVA-535 Leadership Election Planning**

Our *Nominations Committee Chair*, Ralph  
Remick, with an eye on the calendar, notes that  
our annual election of Officers and Directors is  
scheduled for April 2, 2020.

Current President Keith has served admirably  
but the time for change is coming around like  
clockwork. There should never be an  
assumption that a sitting president will

automatically assume a second consecutive term. We have a capable membership and within that body is someone ready for new responsibility. That someone could be you. Why? Because you are ready to lead. Your life experience has made you ready. You have assimilated ideas and notions that will carry us forward for our next leadership year of May 2020 through April 2021. When the floor is opened for nominations, be ready to accept a role that will move us collectively forward. Long-serving Officers and Directors are not a fixed entity. All positions are open for nominations.

## Coronavirus

### What We Need to Know About COVID-19

CNN | Dr. Tom Frieden | February 8, 2020

A study published 7 Feb 2020 in the medical journal JAMA found that 41% of the first 138 patients diagnosed at one hospital in Wuhan, China, were presumed to be infected in that hospital. This is big news. In plain English, it means that nearly half of the initial infections in this hospital appear to have been spread within the hospital itself. This is called nosocomial transmission. (Doctors use big words to hide bad things: Nosocomial means caught it in the hospital.) What's more, most spread doesn't appear to have been the result of a so-called "super-spreader event," in which a single patient transmits infection to many other people. In these events, a procedure such as bronchoscopy -- where a doctor inserts a tube into the patient's lungs -- can result in many infections.

This would be a concern, but not nearly as much as what appears to have happened: Many health care workers and many patients got infected in many parts

of the hospital. What's more, since there's a broad spectrum of infection and only patients who were sick were tested, it's quite likely that there was even more transmission in the hospital. So, like SARS and MERS -- other coronaviruses -- before it, the Wuhan coronavirus, now renamed COVID-19 is spreading in hospitals.

### What does this mean?

The virus appears to be quite infectious, health care workers are at especially high risk, and we urgently need more information about just how infectious the virus is. The virus might well be impossible to contain -- just as the common cold and influenza can't be stopped, but the health and societal impacts can be blunted. China's extraordinary efforts to stop the spread of the virus, even if unsuccessful, may slow its spread and improve China and the world's ability to limit the harm the virus causes.

### What do we need to do now?

We must protect health care workers and others who care for sick people. This is done through a hierarchy of controls: source, engineering, administrative and personal.

- ● *Source controls* include encouraging patients who are only mildly ill to not expose others; requiring all people who are ill to wear face masks; limiting hospital attendance by visitors who may be infectious; ensuring that ill health care workers don't work; and minimizing the number -- and ensuring the safety of -- risky procedures such as bronchoscopy and sputum

induction, by performing them only in isolation rooms.

- • *Engineering controls* include putting partitions in triage areas, making sure potentially contaminated air is not recirculated and surfaces are cleaned meticulously, and implementing additional precautions for suspected cases.
- • *Administrative controls* include asking all patients if they have symptoms and taking their temperatures; requiring those with cough or fever to wear a face mask, and isolating them from others at least by several feet until they are more thoroughly assessed. It's especially important to recognize all potentially infectious patients quickly and to implement strict infection control procedures and early in all areas of all health care facilities.
- • *Personal controls* include hand washing and respiratory hygiene. But mask use by the general public -- people without symptoms who are not caring for others -- has little or no benefit and potentially great harm if people who need masks can't get them. Masks will be in short supply. The most important use is for health care workers and those caring for ill patients. In health care settings, safely reusable respiratory protection that can be disinfected can be crucially important. Useful products include personal air-purifying devices and elastomeric respirators. Patients also must be able to cover their mouths to reduce spread of infection.

**What more do we need to know?**

We are learning more, but unfortunately, the answer is, a lot. China has been working hard to keep up with the testing, care and social impacts of the virus. It's good to see crucial epidemiological information starting to emerge. We still don't know:

- The basics about who has been tested, what proportion are positive, how this is changing over time, and what the positivity rates are by location, week of testing and patient age. This is basic information. As just one example: How many children have been tested? Does the fact that there have been few infections in children reflect a lack of testing or a lack of infection?
  - • Among those who test positive, what proportion do and don't develop severe disease, analyzed by age, sex and underlying medical conditions? What proportion die, analyzed by the same factors?
  - • Among all patients using selected health facilities in Wuhan and elsewhere, what proportion of those with a cough have infection, as confirmed by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing of nasopharyngeal swab samples?
  - • What proportion of those without a cough have novel coronavirus infection confirmed by PCR testing?

The answers to these questions will help determine whether the virus is already circulating widely (i.e., has become endemic and can't be stopped), what proportion of all with infection have serious illness, and whether

the epidemic is peaking or not. Where is the novel coronavirus going next? Only time will tell. The next few days and weeks will determine:

- ● If sustained transmission begins in other countries, which unfortunately seems likely.
- ● If it does, whether it can be contained, which unfortunately seems unlikely.
- ● How severe the illness is among those who are infected, which we still don't know.

Until we know this critical information, we won't be able to assess how bad this novel coronavirus is going to get and which control measures have the best chance of slowing spread.

## **Medical Marijuana**

### **Survey Indicates Vets Using but Cost is a Barrier**

Telegram.com | Susan Spencer | February 4, 2020

Military veterans are using marijuana to treat chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression, among other ailments, according to recently released survey data. But the cost of medical marijuana, which isn't covered by insurance, is a barrier, even if cannabis is used as an alternative to pharmaceuticals. Final results from the 2019 Veterans Health and Medical Cannabis Study, which looked at 201 veterans in Massachusetts and 565 respondents nationwide, were presented at the Cannabis Advancement Series held Wednesday at Babson College in Wellesley.

The study, which was done March 3 through Dec. 31, 2019 was conducted by Marion McNabb, a public health researcher and CEO of Worcester-based Cannabis Community Care and Research Network; Steven White, professor of management and marketing at University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth; Stephen Mandile of Uxbridge, an Iraq War veteran and cannabis advocate; and Ann Brum, CEO of Joint Venture & Co. More than half of the 201 Massachusetts veterans who completed the survey through outreach by veterans groups, social media sites and marijuana dispensaries were age 50 or older. Most, 54%, had served in the Army. The sample was overwhelmingly male, 90%, and 84% were white, non-Hispanic.

Chronic pain, PTSD and anxiety were the top medical conditions facing veterans. Nearly one in three, 30%, of veteran respondents were currently or had been homeless in the past. Ninety-one percent of respondents reported using medical marijuana. Recreational marijuana was used by 59%. A large majority of veterans who responded to the survey reported that cannabis provided relief for their major medical troubles. In fact, 77% reported actively trying to reduce the use of over-the-counter or prescription medications with medical cannabis. Top symptoms treated with medical cannabis included: pain, 51%; sleep problems, 50%; depression or mood, 45%; anxiety or panic attacks, 41%; and aggression, 24%.

"It surprised me, but it's not that surprising," McNabb said about the findings. "They are users and consumers of medical cannabis. They're really finding relief in medical cannabis use." The survey's findings shed additional light on previously published research on medical marijuana, also reported at the Cannabis Advancement Series last week, by Staci Gruber, director of the Cognitive and Clinical Neuroimaging Core at McLean Hospital's Brain Imaging Center and associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Gruber told the audience that almost everything researchers know about the impact of cannabis



on the brain and cognitive functioning comes from recreational users, most who began using the drug as teenagers, while their brain was still developing.

Studies conducted by Gruber and colleagues have found that after three months of treatment, medical marijuana patients demonstrated improved task performance accompanied by changes in brain activation patterns measured in imaging. Further, brain activation patterns after treatment appeared more similar to those in healthy controls, who weren't using marijuana, than at pretreatment with medical marijuana. Gruber said her research suggested medical marijuana use may affect the brain differently, compared with brain impacts among recreational marijuana users.

Consistent with the veterans survey, Gruber's study also found medical marijuana patients reported improvements in how they were feeling and notably decreased use of prescription drugs, particularly opioids and benzodiazepines, after three months of treatment.

Mandile, an Uxbridge selectman, became an advocate for medical marijuana after he was seriously wounded in Iraq while deployed with the Army National Guard in 2005. His Department of Veterans Affairs doctors put him on 57 medications, including nine opioids, over the ensuing decade. In 2013 he attempted suicide. In 2014, an ultimatum from his wife prompted Mandile to wean himself from prescription drugs by using marijuana, something he accomplished in five months. He founded a nonprofit organization, Alternative Treatment for Veterans, to raise awareness and work with dispensaries to offer discounts on medical marijuana to veterans who are rated 100% disabled by the VA. The product discounts have been picked up by 11 marijuana dispensaries across the state.

Mandile also testified last week on proposed legislation, H. 4274, filed by state Rep. Michael

Soter, R-Bellingham, that would allow veterans to use their VA paperwork to qualify for a medical marijuana card, instead of requiring them to pay hundreds of dollars to get a card from a separate registered health care professional. The Joint Committee on Cannabis Policy was to report on the bill by 5 FEB Mandile began working with McNabb a little more than a year ago to push for data on veterans' access to medical marijuana.

The 2017 state law legalizing adult-use marijuana called for the Cannabis Advisory Board to make recommendations to the Cannabis Control Commission related to costs associated with the purchase of medical marijuana by U.S. military veterans and individuals insured through the VA, and to make recommendations on improving cost-effective access. But a study and recommendations were never done by the Sept. 1, 2018, deadline in the law, Mandile said. "As much as they (legislators) can feel the connection with anecdotal stories," Mandile said, "they needed something more concrete, more data driven."

The new survey found Massachusetts veterans spend an average of \$79 a week, or \$317 a month on cannabis. Nearly three-quarters, 72%, purchase cannabis from regulated dispensaries. About one out of five, 19%, grow their own. Money to purchase marijuana products and get a medical marijuana card were the top two barriers reported in the veterans survey. "In the veterans community, we often hear, 'Thank you for your service,'" Mandile said. "This was an opportunity for the Legislature and people of Massachusetts to actually do something to help veterans, more than just a thank-you."

### **Trump Border Wall**

Military.com | Richard Sisk | January 15, 2020

\$7.2B more from Military Funds to Build Wall

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said 14 Jan 2020 that the Pentagon will back the Trump administration's plan to take another \$7.2

billion from the military's budget to pay for the border wall. "The first priority of the Defense Department is the protection of the homeland," Esper said. "The southwestern border is a security issue." He said the DoD is committed to backing up the Department of Homeland Security in protecting the border, adding that the diversion of funds for that mission is in the nation's interests. "If that's what it takes" to fulfill the mission, the Pentagon is prepared to support the diversion of military funding for the wall, Esper said at a joint Pentagon press briefing with Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono.

On Capitol Hill, House Democrats began lining up to oppose the plan. In a joint statement, Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY), chair of the House Appropriations Committee, and committee members Pete Visclosky (D-IN) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), denounced the plan, first reported by The Washington Post, which would redirect \$3.7 billion from military construction and \$3.5 billion in counter-narcotics programs overseen by the military. The money would pay for 885 miles of new border wall, according to the Post. The three Democrats charged that President Donald Trump is "once again forcing service members and their families to pay for his wall by canceling even more vital military construction projects."

The latest debate on funding the wall comes amid continuing court battles over land rights and authorizations for construction stemming from the administration's declaration of a national emergency at the border last year to take \$3.6 billion in money appropriated by Congress for military construction. The \$3.6 billion in 2019 came from 127 military construction projects in 23 states, 19 countries and three U.S. territories and included funding for schools, firing ranges and hurricane recovery in Puerto Rico, according to the DoD. It is still unclear whether Congress will move to restore funding for the projects that were suspended last year in the next National

Defense Authorization Act, scheduled for 1 Oct 2020.

In a joint statement, the three Democrats renewed arguments they used against the diversion of military funds last year, calling the border wall "a wasteful political stunt, not a meaningful way to secure our nation." "Moreover, at a time when the opioid epidemic continues to rage across the country, President Trump is stealing funding that was intended for meaningful counterdrug priorities to pay for his wall," they said. Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee overseeing all government spending, also expressed doubts about diverting more military funding for the wall. Shelby told the Washington Post that he supported building the border wall but "I wish they'd get the money somewhere else, instead of defense."

Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who opposed the diversion last year as an abuse of Congress' traditional "power of the purse," called move to channel more funds from military construction "outrageous." Reed, a West Point graduate and former Army Ranger, said in a statement that "what President Trump is doing here is shortchanging our troops and taking resources from real, effective operational priorities and diverting them to build a wasteful political prop." The position of Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas,





changed, according to a Republican aide. Thornberry backs increased border security but believes the resources should come from the Department of Homeland Security and not the Defense Department, the aide said.

### France Wants U.S. to Continue Presence

Air Force Magazine | Brian W. Everstine | January 27, 2020

The head of France's military used her visit to Washington to press the Pentagon to maintain its operations in the Sahel region of Africa. "The US support is critical to our operation," French Minister of Armed Forces Florence Parly said during a 27 Jan 2020 press briefing alongside Defense Secretary Mark Esper. "Any reduction would limit our effectiveness against terrorists."

The visit comes as the Pentagon reviews the US military's global force structure, with the overall goal of reducing personnel deployments in certain areas and realigning focus to the Indo-Pacific or bringing units home for training. The Africa review is ongoing, and a review of US Southern Command began last week.

There's "no decision made, and in due course we will make them," Esper said on 27 Jan 2020. France has an ongoing fight against terror groups in the Sahel region of Western Africa, largely focused on Mali. US forces have provided support of this fight for years, including an ongoing tanker deployment called Operation Juniper Micron, along with intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and logistics support. Esper would not comment on possible plans to close the newly built Niger Air Base 201 near Agadez, the largest USAF-led construction effort in the service's history.

US lawmakers have recently written to Esper with concerns about the possible reduction in Africa, saying the American presence is critical

to the fight against extremist groups. There are about 7,000 US personnel on the continent. Esper said that if any reduction is made, European allies should deploy more personnel to "offset" the cuts.

### Visiting Soldierstone, a hidden memorial in Colorado honoring forgotten war veterans



### Mysterious memorial honors forgotten vets

Hidden high in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, in a remote and unmarked field, is a secret monument honoring war veterans. The lonely pillar of polished granite sits at more than 11,000 feet, in a clearing among majestic peaks. Just what it is, and how it got all the way up here, has for decades puzzled the hardy few who have found it.

In a remote and unmarked field high in the Rocky Mountains, a former Green Beret erected a pillar of granite in tribute to fallen compatriots.

"They just stumble on it and go, 'What the heck is this?'" said Rob Roy, who isn't comfortable talking about this mountaintop mystery, in part because he made a vow of silence to the man who built it – his late uncle, Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Allen Beckley, the soldier behind "Soldierstone." Roy told correspondent Lee Cowan that the memorial "makes people think."

"This is kind of contrary to what Uncle Allen may have wanted," Roy said. "He doesn't want to beat the drum, but I'm beating the drum for him, and a lot of other people are."



Lt. Col. Stuart Allen Beckley, the soldier behind Soldierstone.

By all accounts Beckley was a soldier's soldier. He served for nearly a decade in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. "If you know anything about Special Forces, Green Berets, they're the people that parachute behind the lines and they work with indigenous people and help them defend themselves," Roy said.

"But most of what he was doing then, he couldn't really talk about?" asked Cowan. "Correct."

The troops he trained and served with had been secretly recruited by the CIA. Made up mostly of Hmong and Lao decent, this secret army took tens of thousands of casualties fighting communism in Southeast Asia – lives that otherwise might have been American.

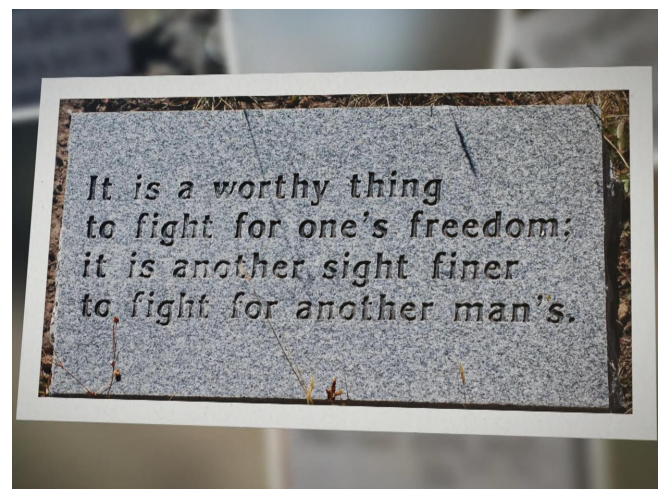
But for decades, the U.S. government denied their sacrifice. In a recording Beckley made after he retired, it was clear that ignoring those foreign fighters haunted him long after the war had ended: "I made a silent promise to myself that they would have their memorial, and it would not just be in Asia; their memorial would be in the Unites States as compatriots of ours," he said.

In 1990, Beckley set out to build his tribute with the help of stone cutter Mike Donelson. "I mean, this was a mission," Donelson said. "So, when he first described what he wanted to do, what did you think?" Cowan asked. "I thought he was a quack at first, and within 30 minutes I knew he wasn't," he replied. "Did he explain why he was building it?" "It kind of got revealed to me over time," Donelson said. "He did want it remote, and the people who needed to find it, would find it."



The Soldierstone memorial being erected in 1995.

A long-forgotten videotape documented the construction "on top of the world." Civilians, active duty, and retired veterans made up the small army who unloaded eight tons of hand-carved granite, not just for the pillar but 36 so-called "quote stones," weighing 300 pounds a piece, etched with a poem or proverb written in Laotian, Thai, and Vietnamese, among other languages.



A "quote stone."

They were scattered like fallen troops around the monument itself.

In the summer of 1995, Beckley's memorial to foreign fighters was finally finished. It was the same year he died of cancer. He never saw his offering in person. "When we walked away, it was done; that was the end of it," Donelson said. "Besides a few people that stumbled across it on the Continental Divide trail, nobody knew it was there." Until this happened: In 2013, a YouTube post appeared and the secret of Soldierstone was out.

Ranger Tristram Post will help you find Beckley's Soldierstone, but only if you ask: "We have tried very hard, as much as we can, to respect his vision that it would be a spot where people would just sort of find it," she said. She doesn't publicize the exact location, and neither will we.

Rob Roy had only seen pictures of his uncle's dream; Mike Donelson hadn't seen it since he built it. So, they made the long drive in fresh-fallen snow, and then began the long hike. You have to really want to pay your respects way up here. Once there, the solitude is part of the experience – as is leaving a token of military service.

After a quiet pause, it was time to go. And they, like everyone, left Soldierstone to its isolation.



Stone cutter Mike Donelson revisits Soldierstone, while Rob Roy visits his uncle's monument for the first time.

Cowan asked, "Think the colonel would be proud?" "Oh, I'm sure he's proud right now," said Roy. "I think a lot of people would be proud." Especially the memories of those who are now no longer forgotten.

Although the National Forest Service watches over the memorial, it's been volunteers who really keep it up, managing the collection of mementos left behind by visitors, such as military service pins, and making sure there's no trash or graffiti.

Soldierstone has done what Beckley hoped it would in so many ways. But something that selfless can't be a secret for too long.

**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](mailto:bruud45@gmail.com) or hand deliver to Bart.

### **VVA-535 Fundraiser 0.177 Caliber Air Rifle**

This is a photo showing a display of the air rifle to be offered by VVA-535 for members only. Tickets, at **\$10 each**, will be available at the December VVA-535 meeting/potluck. A total of one hundred tickets will be available.

The drawing for this air rifle will be conducted on **April 6, 2020**.



**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



# February

# 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5	6 VVA-535	7 Wear Red Day	8 Boy Scouts of America founded 1910
9	10 Columbus Day	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday 1809  Operation Homecoming began 1973	13	14 Valentine's Day	15 Sinking of USS Maine 1898
16	17 President's Day	18	19 U.S. Marines landed on Iwo Jima 1945	20	21	22 Washington's birthday 1732
23 Flag raised on Iwo Jima 1945	24 Operation Desert Storm ground war started 1991	25	26 Ash Wednesday	27 CSC Meeting	28 Persian Gulf War ceasefire 1991  CSC Meeting	29 CSC Meeting

# March

# 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 CSC Meeting	2 Operation "Rolling Thunder": began 1965	3 "Star Spangled Banner" made U.S. National Anthem, 1931  CA Primary Elections 2020	4	5 VVA -535  Nominations of Officers & Directors	6	7
8 Daylight Saving Time begins	9	10	11	12 Girl Scouts of America founded 1912	13	14
15 American Legion's birthday 1919	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 1 <sup>st</sup> Day of Spring  Start of Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003	20	21
22	23	24	25 Medal of Honor Day	26 Anniversary of The Wall Groundbreaking	27	28
29 National Vietnam War Veterans Day	30	31				

# April

# 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 April Fools'Day	2 VVA-535 Election of Officers & Directors	3	4
5 Palm Sunday  Gold Star Spouses Day	6 Drawing for Air Rifle	7	8 Passover	9	10 Good Friday	11 Persian Gulf War Official Cease Fire 1991
12 Easter	13	14	15 Tax Day	16	17	18
19	20 Patriot's Day	21	22 Earth Day	23	24 CSC Meeting - Visalia	25 CSC Meeting- Visalia
26 CSC Meeting Visalia	27	28	29	30		