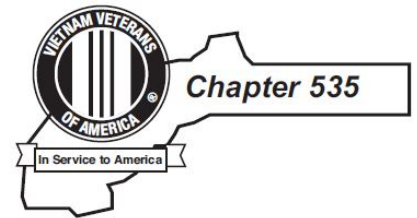




# INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
**CHAPTER 535**



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

Volume 30 Issue 5

May 2020

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**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
CHAPTER 535  
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE  
May 2020**

These are interesting times we are experiencing. America has never had to deal with this type of incident since 1917-18. It caught everyone off guard. Of course, if the Chinese government would have been forthcoming with the information the virus would most likely not have had these serious effects on our citizens. I hope everyone and their families are safe and have observed the government recommendations. They seem to be working, looking at the trends. I am sure we will get back to normal in the next six months or so. Again it appears we will not have a meeting in May. I know the locks have been changed on the veterans building so I am not sure who has the new keys. I met with Dale Epps last week and he turned over the M-1 rifle, the sold tickets, and the funds derived from the raffle. Dale removed the \$275.00 as we agreed as payment for the rifle. We netted \$255.00 for the organization. As soon as we can meet again, we will hold the raffle. I do not want to conduct the drawing in private so that we can be completely transparent. Our ZOOM meeting last month went well thanks to Ralph Remick. He arranged our contact with the program. Now is a good time to keep walking for exercise as recommended by my wing man, Bart Ruud. We

still have pending elections to be held as soon as we can re-group. I will hold the post until we can have our elections. I am open to any ideas/suggestions you may have on the subject. So everything is on hold for the time being. I received information the state conference has been canceled and rescheduled to a later date. It is my hope America can open up soon and get our economy back on track. And as an old sergeant I used to work for said many times, "Be careful out there and don't let the turkeys get you down!" Thanks for reading my ramblings. Take care!

President Keith

**Watch for an Announcement for a possible  
May 7, 2020 ZOOM meeting.**

### **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 May 7, 2020**

Bart Ruud will share an overview of his 1971-72 deployment as a 17B40 NCOIC in I-Corps, Vietnam. Note: *ON HOLD*.

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.

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**Upcoming Events** - *Mostly cancelled*

- NCCVC Meeting – May 7, 2020 ??
- General Meeting – May 7, 2020 online via Zoom
- Director’s Meeting – May 7, 2020
- VVA-535 Elections – May 7, 2020
- April 6, 2020 – Drawing for air rifle (deferred)
- CSC Meeting – Visalia – ~~April 24-26, 2020~~
- May 7 - Installation of Officers & Directors (deferred)
- CSC Convention – Visalia, CA – ~~June 12, 13, 2020~~

- CSC Meeting – Visalia - ~~July 31 – Aug. 2, 2020~~
- CSC Convention – July 30 – August 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 April 2, 2020**

Cancelled due to COVID-19

In March the Board discussed the Traveling Wall project and came to no conclusions, other than to table some questions and defer those questions to the General Membership: Could the project be combined with the Nevada County Stand Down, October 16, 17, 2020? Would the VVA-535 insurance cover the project? Would NCCVC be permitted to provide 24-hour security as means to offset costs?

Installation of a plaque recognizing Vietnam War veterans at the Hwy. 49 bridge over the Yuba River remains as a work in progress. State Parks administrators need to weigh in.



A slate of Directors and Officers for 2020-21 was shared by Nominations Chair Ralph Remick. Nominations remain open through April 2, 2020 up to the point they will be closed for elections on April 2, 2020. *Elections may be delayed.*

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

Our *Nominations Committee Chair*, Ralph Remick, notes that our annual election of Officers and Directors is scheduled for April 2, 2020. Nominations will remain open until closed just prior to the election. **Elections have been deferred due to COVID 19.**

Currently nominated are:

Officers:

President – open

Vice-President – Enrique Vasquez

Secretary – Dave Middleton

Treasurer – Ralph Remick

Board of Directors:

David Chaix

Dick Corn – Sergeant at Arms

Mike Underwood

Ray James

Ric Sheridan - Membership

Tom Woollard – Speakers Bureau

Mel Williams

Dan Davis

Bart Ruud

### **USS Theodore Roosevelt Navy Leaders Praise Ship's Captain for Urgent Evacuation Request**

Stars & Stripes | Caitlin M. Kenney | April 2, 2020

As of 31 MAR about one-fifth of the USS Theodore Roosevelt's 4,865 sailors were off the COVID-stricken aircraft carrier and into isolation on Guam, with about 2,700 more expected to evacuate in the next few days, Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly said 1 APR. Modly's update comes two days after the ship's captain sent a stark letter up the chain of command made public on 31 MAR by the San

Francisco Chronicle warning that fully 90 percent of the crew needed to evacuate and isolate for two weeks for their own safety. The secretary's comments clarify that the Navy was indeed evacuating most sailors from the ship, after Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in a CBS News interview aired late Tuesday that said an evacuation was not yet necessary. Modly praised the captain for the prodding, and said that evacuation efforts already were in the works but not with the right urgency.

"The misunderstanding was the requirement to get off the ship faster," Adm. Michael Gilday, chief of naval operations, said at a Pentagon press conference. As of 3 APR Ninety sailors have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, while 593 have tested negative and several hundred tests are still pending, Modly told reporters.

About one-quarter of the crew has been tested so far. None of the sailors has yet required hospitalization for the disease, he said. About 1,000 sailors will remain aboard the Roosevelt to run its nuclear reactors, oversee its weapons, and keep the ship running, Gilday said. The others are coming off the ship as suitable accommodations can be found or created for them ashore, Modly said.

In the meantime, Navy leadership is having twice-daily conversations with its 3- and 4-star officers on what the fleet should know and be doing about the coronavirus outbreak, Gilday said. The Navy has cancelled some exercises and training operations. Ships are required to have their crews aboard for 14 days of isolation before leaving on a deployment. And although consistent social distancing is impossible aboard a warship, the CNO has told ship and submarine captains to "be creative" in designing ways to reduce contact between sailors, by altering procedures for standing watch or other methods.

Modly said the Navy was already working to evacuate the ship on 30 MAR, when the

ship's commanding officer sent a four-page letter up his chain of command asking for more help. "The spread of the disease is ongoing and accelerating," Capt. Brett Crozier wrote in the March 30 letter. "Decisive action is required."

In the letter, Crozier proposed to evacuate all but about 10 percent of his crew, and requested urgent aid from the Navy in finding accommodations ashore where the other 4,300 sailors could live in isolation for two weeks with separate berthing and bathrooms. Modly said the captain's letter and its call for urgent help indicated that there had been some "communication breakdown" between the Roosevelt and its Navy higher-ups. He said Crozier had acted appropriately in sounding the alarm up to his chain of command. "We want people to tell us about problems," he said. Gilday added "the eye-opener was that he wanted to move faster to get the crew off the ship."

No one knows how the coronavirus got onto the ship. Modly said all sailors returning from an early-March port visit in Danang, Vietnam, were tested and found negative for the virus. The first two sailors to develop COVID symptoms did so 14 days after the ship left Danang, he said.

Modly also addressed another apparent communications breakdown: with his boss. On the afternoon of 31 MAR, when crew members were already streaming off the Roosevelt, Defense Secretary Mark Esper told CBS News, "I don't think we're at that point" where the carrier should be evacuated, adding, "Well, I have not had a chance to read that letter, read it in detail. Again I'm going to rely on the Navy chain of command to go out there to assess the situation." On Wednesday, Modly said that he had since spoken to Esper, who agrees with the evacuation plan. The acting secretary couldn't yet say how long the Roosevelt might stay in Guam, or the evacuation's effect on the fleet's readiness. But he stressed that the aircraft carrier was being maintained in fighting condition. "If the ship needs to go, the ship can go," Modly said.

## **Update 01: Captain Relieved of Command after COVID-19 Letter Leaked**

Stars & Stripes | Caitlin M. Kenney | April 2, 2020

The captain of the USS Theodore Roosevelt was relieved of command 2 APR, two days after his letter that warned sailors could die from the coronavirus outbreak aboard the aircraft carrier was leaked to the media. Capt. Brett Crozier was dismissed due to loss of confidence and for not using his chain of command to make Navy leaders aware of his concerns about the coronavirus outbreak on the ship, acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly announced at the Pentagon.

“He did not take care and what that did is it created a...little bit of a panic on the ship,” he said. The executive officer of the Roosevelt, Capt. Daniel Keeler, will serve as acting commander. Crozier assumed command of the Roosevelt in November from Capt. Carlos Sardiello, who was enroute to Guam to assume command of the ship, Modly said. Crozier warned in his letter that the outbreak could kill some sailors, and “if we do not act now, we are failing to properly take care of our most trusted asset our sailors.” The contents of Crozier’s letter were first published 30 MAR by the San Francisco Chronicle, which reported 150 to 200 Roosevelt sailors had been sickened by the virus, citing an unnamed senior officer aboard the ship. On 2 APR, Modly said there are 114 sailors on the Roosevelt who tested positive for the coronavirus. By 14 APR over 500 sailors inclusive of the former Captain were reported positive with one death.

Adm. Robert Burke, vice chief of naval operations, will be conduct an investigation into circumstances and the climate across Pacific Fleet to determine why there was a breakdown in the chain of command, Modly said. Now docked in Guam, the Roosevelt was on a scheduled deployment in the Indo-Pacific region before diverting to the island after the first several virus cases aboard the ship were

reported last week. Crozier requested in his letter to have almost all of the crew removed from the ship to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The Navy had already moved about 1,000 sailors off the ship and was working to remove an additional 2,700 by 3 APR.

Modly and Adm. Michael Gilday, the chief of naval operations, told reporters 1 APR that they agreed with Crozier’s assessment of the situation and his decision to send the letter up the Navy’s chain of command. They also indicated the captain would not face punishment unless it was determined that he had leaked the letter to the media. Modly said 2 APR that he is not suggesting Crozier leaked the letter to the newspaper. “I don’t think I’ll ever know who leaked the information,” he said. But because Crozier emailed the letter to as many as 30 people, including some outside of his chain of command, he did not protect the information detailed inside or make certain it was not leaked. “He did not take care and what that did is it created a ... little bit of a panic on the ship,” Modly said. “I could reach no other conclusion that Capt. Crozier had allowed the complexity of his challenge with the [coronavirus] breakout on the ship to overwhelm his ability to act professionally, when acting professionally was what was needed most at the time.”

During the news conference, Modly also spoke directly to commanding officers throughout the service, saying his decision to fire Crozier is not retribution but about the captain’s judgment and the way in which he sent the letter. The Navy secretary said he was frustrated the letter portrayed the impression that Navy was not assisting the Roosevelt. He said the Navy located more than 3,000 beds on Guam within a week of the ship arriving at the island due to actions taken before the letter was sent.

“It undermines our efforts and the chain of command’s efforts to address this problem. It creates a panic and creates the perception that the Navy is not on the job, the government’s not

on the job, and it's just not true," said Modly, whose chief of staff contacted Crozier on Monday, the same day that letter was sent, to ask whether the captain had all the resources he needed for the crew.

"The [commanding officer] told my chief of staff that he was receiving those resources and he was fully aware of the Navy's response, only asking that he wished the crew could be evacuated faster... and at no time did the [commanding officer] relay the various levels of alarm that I, along with the rest of the world, learned from his letter when it was published by the [commanding officer's] hometown newspaper two days later," Modly said.

Modly called Crozier "an honorable man" and spoke directly to the Roosevelt's crew and their families. He said he is convinced Crozier loves them and "that he had you at the center of his heart and mind in every decision that he has made." "But it is my responsibility to ensure that his love and concern for you is matched, if not exceeded by, his sober and professional judgment under pressure," Modly said.

## **Military Draft**

### **Commission Recommends Women Be Eligible**

Stars & Stripes | Nikki Wentling | March 25, 202

A congressionally mandated commission recommended 25 MAR that women should be eligible for the draft and required to sign up at 18. Congress created the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service in 2017 to develop recommendations about the need for a military draft and how to foster an interest in all types of national service among young Americans. In their final report, which was shared with the Pentagon, White House and Congress this week, commissioners recommend extending selective service registration to women.

"Women areas likely as men to be qualified for military service," said Debra Wada, vice chair of the commission and the former assistant secretary of the Army. "Ensuring they are part of the registration pool will only make sure we're more prepared. It signals that all Americans may be expected to serve in a national emergency."

Conscription into the military hasn't been used in more than 45 years, but adult men are still required by law to sign up for selective service at 18. The commission proposed that Congress introduce legislation to amend the Military Selective Service Act to eliminate male-only registration. The policy change would expand draft eligibility to all Americans ages 18 to 26.

Over a period of nearly three years, commissioners held public meetings and hearings, spoke to people in 42 cities, consulted more than 530 organizations and collected 4,300 public comments. The topic of extending the draft to women "evoked a range of passionate and heartfelt views," the commissioners wrote. In the end, they decided the male-only military draft excludes women from a fundamental civic obligation, reinforces gender stereotypes about women's roles and omits a skilled population from being called into military service during emergencies.

The commission found that 29% of men and slightly more women, at 29.3%, are qualified to meet the initial physical and educational standards to serve in the U.S. military, Wada said. "Ultimately it comes down to making sure that at a time of critical need, we have access to highly qualified individuals," she said. More than 224,000 women serve in the U.S. military. Former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter ordered the opening of all combat roles to women five years ago, and at least 30 women have successfully completed Army Ranger School, according to the report. The

policy change is long overdue, commissioners said.

The report, titled "Inspired to Serve," listed dozens of recommendations to increase Americans' participation in military, national and public service. It aims to make a "service year" a rite of passage for young Americans and boost standards for civic education from kindergarten through high school. U.S. Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) said 25 MAR the report came at a "pivotal moment," as the country grapples with the coronavirus pandemic. "Our national service infrastructure, from the military, to public and community service, has been called into action to fight the COVID-19virus," Reed said. "This is not a report that should sit on the shelf, this is a call to action. These recommendations can serve as a guidepost for what the future of national service looks like."

Rep. Michael Waltz (R-FL), a combat veteran, said he would work with other lawmakers to turn language in the report into legislation. "Whether it be in the National Defense Authorization Act or stand alone, we are going to make this happen," he said.

## Days in History

### April 03, 1968 - Vietnam War:

North Vietnam agreed to meet with U.S. representatives to set up preliminary peace talks.

### April 03, 1969 - Vietnam War:

*Nixon administration will "Vietnamize" the war* Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announces that the United States is moving to "Vietnamize" the war as rapidly as possible. By this, he meant that the responsibility for the fighting would be gradually transferred to the South Vietnamese as they became more combat capable. However, Laird emphasized that it would not serve the

United States' purpose to discuss troop withdrawals while the North Vietnamese continued to conduct offensive operations I South Vietnam. Vietnam. Despite Laird's protestations to the contrary, Nixon's "Vietnamization" program, as he would announce it in June, did include a series of troop withdrawals, the first of the war.

### Vietnam War: April 3, 1972

Nixon orders response to North Vietnamese invasion » The United States prepares hundreds of B-52s and fighter-bombers for possible air strikes to blunt the recently launched North Vietnamese invasion. The aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk was sent from the Philippines to join the carriers already off the coast of Vietnam and provide additional air support. This attack was the opening move of the North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive (later called the "Easter Offensive"), a massive invasion by North Vietnamese forces designed to strike the blow that would win them the war. The attacking force included 14 infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments, with more than 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 tanks and other armored vehicles. The main North Vietnamese objectives, in addition to Quang Tri in the north, were Kontum in the Central Highlands, and An Loc farther to the south.

North Vietnam had a number of reasons for launching the offensive: impressing the communist world and its own people with its determination; capitalizing on U.S. antiwar sentiment and possibly hurting President Richard Nixon's chances for re-election; proving that "Vietnamization" was a failure; damaging the South Vietnamese forces and government stability; gaining as much territory as possible before a possible truce; and accelerating negotiations on their own terms. Initially, the South Vietnamese defenders were almost overwhelmed, particularly in the northernmost provinces, where they abandoned their positions in Quang Tri and fled south in the face of the enemy onslaught. At Kontum and An

Loc, the South Vietnamese were more successful in defending against the attacks, but only after weeks of bitter fighting. Although the defenders suffered heavy casualties, they managed to hold their own with the aid of U.S. advisors and American airpower. Fighting continued all over South Vietnam into the summer months, but eventually the South Vietnamese forces prevailed against the invaders and retook Quang Tri in September. With the communist invasion blunted, President Nixon declared that the South Vietnamese victory proved the viability of his Vietnamization program, instituted in 1969 to increase the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces.

#### **April 04, 1975 – Vietnam War: Operation Baby Lift aircraft crashes**

A major U.S. airlift of South Vietnamese orphans begins with disaster when an Air Force cargo jet crashes shortly after departing from Tan Son Nhut airbase in Saigon. More than 138 passengers, mostly children, were killed. Operation Baby Lift was designed to bring 2,000 South Vietnamese orphans to the United States for adoption by American parents. Baby Lift lasted for 10 days and was carried out during the final, desperate phase of the war, as North Vietnamese forces closed in on Saigon. Although this first flight ended in tragedy, all subsequent flights were completed safely, and Baby Lift aircraft brought orphans across the Pacific until the mission's conclusion on 14 APR, only 16 days before the fall of Saigon and the end of the war.

#### **US adds military surveillance cameras at Mexico border despite drop in crossings**

James LaPorta, The Associated Press and Julie Watson, The Associated Press 4/22/2020



In this April 4, 2019, photo, a mobile surveillance camera system manned by soldiers monitors a sector near the Presidio Border Patrol Station at Presidio, Texas

The Trump administration has been quietly adding military surveillance cameras at the U.S.-Mexico border in response to the coronavirus pandemic, though fewer people appear to be crossing illegally. It's the latest move as operations at the U.S.-Mexico border have become increasingly militarized and secretive.

Documents obtained by The Associated Press show the Department of Defense, at the request of the Department of Homeland Security, sent 60 mobile surveillance cameras and 540 additional troops to the southwest border this month. The documents are unclassified but for official use only and were part of PowerPoint slides created last week to brief Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, commander of U.S. Army North, the primary unit overseeing military operations at the border.

The cameras are owned by Customs and Border Protection but manned by the military and will be removed after the pandemic has ended, said Matthew Dyman, a spokesman for Customs and Border Protection, which is under the Department of Homeland Security. He said he couldn't immediately explain why the cameras are needed, adding that the request was "law enforcement sensitive."





Troops forming crisis response forces at US-Mexico border checkpoints

About 160 soldiers will be backing up border patrol agents in California and Texas.

Apprehensions of people crossing illegally have declined by 77% since a peak in May, according to Customs and Border Protection. April figures have not been released yet but are expected to be even lower.

The cameras were set up as President Donald Trump announced he would sign an executive order Wednesday placing a 60-day pause on issuing green cards in an effort to limit competition for jobs in a U.S. economy wrecked by the coronavirus.

Trump has used emergency powers during the pandemic to implement an aggressive border crackdown that has included turning away or immediately deporting asylum-seekers, including minors. It's unclear if the surveillance cameras and additional troops were part of that strategy.

The addition of the mobile cameras, which are mounted in the back of trucks, bring the total to 192, according to the documents.



In this April 4, 2019 photo, a mobile surveillance camera system is stationed near the Fort Hancock Border Patrol Station at Fort Hancock, Texas.

Southern border expert David Shirk sees no justification for adding cameras and troops. He pointed out that Mexico so far has a fraction of the number of COVID-19 cases that have been confirmed in the United States, while deportees flown back from the U.S. have introduced cases in their home countries.

“There is no evidence that suggests there are hordes of COVID-19 patients lined up along the border,” said Shirk, an associate political science professor at University of San Diego. “And there is no evidence that COVID-19 is even contributing to a surge in people trying to cross the border.”

The government’s own numbers show the opposite. Apprehensions at the U.S.-Mexico border have been declining for nine straight months.

As of Sunday, the 60 added mobile surveillance cameras planned to be manned and operational, according to the documents. That day, the six Mexican states bordering the U.S. reported a total of about 125 confirmed COVID-19 cases, according to Mexico’s health secretary. By comparison, the four U.S. states that border Mexico — California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas — recorded about 55,000 infections Sunday.

Pentagon officials as recently as August were considering a request from the Department of Homeland Security to send reconnaissance

planes and military drones designed for battlegrounds in Afghanistan and Iraq to the border.

Administration officials have declined to say whether that plan, first reported by Newsweek on Aug. 9, is still in the works. In December, Richardson, the U.S. Army North commander, ordered historically unclassified documents and daily briefings on the U.S.-Mexico border to be moved to a classified system to prevent further leaks.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contractors place rebar at footings of retaining walls on June 20, 2019. This project is for new border wall in the U.S. Border Patrol's San Diego Sector, which is funded by CBP and executed by USACE.

### **Why this could be the last year the Pentagon pays for the border wall**

The Pentagon has so far chipped in almost \$10 billion for the wall's construction.

With the additional troops, about 3,000 active-duty service members are on the border along with 2,500 National Guard troops. Barred from law enforcement duties, they have kept a low profile and are largely doing on-the-ground surveillance.

The border mission — marking one of the longest deployments of active-duty troops to the border in U.S. history — has cost more than \$500 million since October 2017. The Defense Department also has reallocated nearly \$10 billion to building Trump's border wall.

“The U.S. border is the most militarized peacetime border in the world, and the border is more militarized today than it ever was in the entire history of our two countries,” said Shirk, the professor. “I think the administration is clearly exploiting a crisis to try to advance its ulterior domestic policy objective of restricting immigration.”



In this April 4, 2019 photo, a mobile surveillance camera system manned by soldiers monitors a sector near the Presidio Border Patrol Station at Presidio, Texas.

Trump uses the monthly border tallies on apprehensions as a benchmark to determine how his policies are working, and that's become particularly important in an election year. The number of people crossing the border traditionally declines when it's hot outside, and the winter months often see increases. However, as COVID-19 cases in the United States jumped dramatically in March, apprehensions at the border dipped further, to 29,953 from 30,074 in February and a peak of 132,856 in May.

That coincided with the U.S. expelling more than 10,000 Mexican and Central American asylum-seekers after the administration quietly tapped a rarely used public health law on March 20 — the same day Trump announced the southern border was closed to nonessential travel.

The head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Robert Redfield, has extended the rules largely shutting down the asylum system until May 20. His order described a “serious danger” of COVID-19 being introduced

at Border Patrol stations and ports of entry as well as further into the country.

At least 272 Customs and Border Protection employees have tested positive for the virus, including 62 in states bordering Mexico. Redfield also noted that many places on the U.S. side of the border have not yet experienced widespread community transmission of the virus and therefore the pandemic in Canada and Mexico remain “a serious danger to such locations.” That’s despite the U.S. having the most cases in the world by far.

The Department of Homeland Security requested the cameras under the Economy Act, which allows federal agencies to order goods and services from other federal agencies.

Congress passed the law in 1932 to eliminate overlapping activities of the federal government. It has been abused, so conditions have been added, including a requirement that the requesting agency demonstrate that its request meets a bona fide need that either exists or is arising within the fiscal year.

#

### **Why Congress should support a national Veterans Treatment Court program**

DJ Reyes 4/22/2020 Army Times



The first Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) was

started in 2008 in Buffalo, N.Y. There are 460 operational VTCs in the United States with approximately 11,000 veterans currently participating. (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)

Last year I wrote a commentary on pending federal legislation supporting the funding for a national level [Veterans Treatment Court \(VTC\) program](#). Unfortunately, the VTC legislation got caught up in the “freeze in place” status that I’m sure other pending bills experienced through the turbulent periods of the impeachment hearings and of course the COVID-19 crisis. But if we want to positively impact on the national problem of veteran health and wellness, Congress must take action now to pass and fund the legislation, and the president must sign it into law.

For the record, the VTC bill is non-partisan and has received substantial bipartisan support. It supports a 12-year, metrics-proven program of successful treatment and rehabilitation against veteran suicide (over 20 a day), substance and opioid abuse. It saves millions of dollars in taxes by keeping veteran defendants out of jail and into treatment. And the key ingredient that has played a critical role in the VTC’s sustained success is the volunteer Veteran Mentor Program that supports a majority of the VTCs currently operating throughout our Nation.

If the VTC legislation is funded and signed into law, it will authorize the Department of Justice to nationalize a program that is currently and unevenly established and administered throughout the 50 state judicial systems. One example: there are approximately 460 VTCs operating in counties throughout the U.S. However, there are over 3,000 counties in the United States. State legislatures authorize their respective counties to establish their VTCs. No two VTCs are the same. Another example: Florida, as one of the more “robust” states currently has around 34 operating VTCs. Although this number may sound sufficient, it constitutes only 50 percent coverage for its 67-

county state, which is also the second largest veteran populated state in the nation.



Associate Judge Pamela Woodcock Pfeiffer applauds towards a U.S. Army veteran after he completed a treatment program at the Kent County Courthouse in Warwick, R.I., on May 13, 2016.

### **Veterans courts could get big boost if Congress passes this law**

Advocates say veterans treatment courts have helped many veterans get back on their feet without the stigma of incarceration.

Here in Florida's 13th Judicial Circuit's VTC, the docket reached a high of around 225 veteran defendants in 2019. The volunteer Veteran Mentor Corps supported the VTC with a total of over 120 volunteers in its program (55 to 62 mentors provide active, continuous support). These mentors are individually assigned to veterans, and help veterans navigate the VTC program requirements while being out of jail and participating in VA treatments and counselling, medical substance screenings, school, gainful employment, and community service. Last summer, these data points were discussed as part of the National Veterans Court Alliance presentation, led by its chair, Hon. Luis Quinonez, before key White House officials and on Capitol Hill.

As the national debate continues in Congress regarding "who's in and who's out" for the second round of the economic stimulus bill, both sides of the aisle will advocate for inclusion of

their own respective programs. This is a good time to remind our elected representatives of the promise to our military and veterans, and to underscore the spirit of the Department of Veterans Affairs to "care for those who shall have borne the battle and their families and survivors."

Helping our veterans, many of whom have returned from multiple combat deployments, deal with a brush with the law due to service-related conditions, is an issue that demands the involvement and support of our fellow Americans. We depend on our brave men and women to answer the call to defend our freedoms. We must also be there to support them by providing the needed resources to get them well again. Let your elected congressman and senator know that you support HR886 passage and funding now.

*DJ Reyes is a retired Army colonel with over 33 years of service with tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is the senior mentor and program coordinator, Veterans Treatment Court in Tampa, Florida.*

**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.

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## 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~~.

**DRAWING HAS BEEN DEFERRED DUE TO COVID-19**



**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

# April

# 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 April Fools'Day	2 VVA-535 Election of Officers & Directors <i>On Hold</i>	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  Pizza@ Trail Blazer - Alta Sierra. 11:30 a.m.	27	28	29	30		



# May

# 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	8	9
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13 NVAR Departs	14	15 Peace Officers Memorial Day	16 Armed Forces Day
17	18	19	20	21	22 Maritime Day	23
24	25 Memorial Day (observed)	26	27	28	29	30
31						

# JUNE

# 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 U.S. Coast Guard Established 1790 <b>VVA-535</b>	5	6 D-Day Allied Invasion of Europe 1944
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Flag Day Army Birthday 1775	15	16	17	18	19	20 First Day of Summer
21 Father's Day	22 Pledge of Allegiance Recognized by Congress 1942	23	24	25 Beginning of the Korean War 1950	26	27
28	29 First U.S. Ground Forces Arrived in Korea 1950	30				