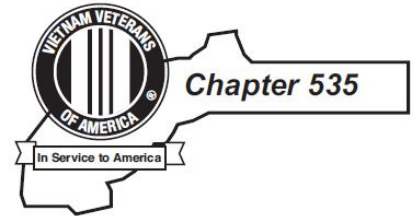




INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

CHAPTER 535



Website: www.vva535.org

Volume 30 Issue 10

October 2020

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 535 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE October 2020

**Watch for an Announcement for a possible
October 1, 2020 ZOOM meeting.**

Our present reality is in flux but we must embrace it. Yogi Berra, during the 1973 National League pennant race, famously said, "It ain't over 'til it's over". In a similar vein, 47 years on, we must understand that things will be better when they are better.

I submit it is always constructive to see the glass as half full, rather than half empty. And then, at the end of the day, perhaps we must ask ourselves a few simple questions: What did I learn today? What could I have done differently? What can I do for my fellow man? Now, there is a key point: "What can I do for my fellow man?"

In this edition of INCOMING you will read of two remarkable events, both fundraisers for VVA-535. Inspirational thoughts by Dale Epps and by Michael Thompson have been examples of simple gestures that can lead to VVA-535's ability to better support our local Veteran population with funds accrued through selflessness.

With a Covid-19 caused dearth of opportunity for populated fundraising activities, what can you – yes, YOU - do to bring largess to VVA-535?

Bart Ruud

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 October 1, 2020

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

Tom Woollard has worked hard for many months to coordinate and arrange for guest speakers. Tom has informed us he will be relocating in the near term and will not be in a position to assist with coordinating guest speakers.

The Officers and Directors of VVA-535 are grateful for Tom’s long diligence with this coordination effort, and we extend hearty thanks. We wish Tom well as he moves on to the next chapter of his life.

While we seek someone to assume Tom’s role, please do pass along any ideas you may have for future guest speakers.

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Upcoming Events

NCCVC Meeting – Oct. 1, 2020 ??
 General Meeting – Oct. 1, 2020 online via Zoom
 Director’s Meeting – Oct. 1, 2020
 Nevada County All Veterans Stand Down –
 October 16-17, 2020 **Cancelled**
 CSC Meeting – Visalia Oct. 23-25, 2020
 Victorian Christmas – **Cancelled** for 2020

Chapter 535 Officers

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 bruud@ssctv.net

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 Enrique Vasquez530-575-4416

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 Ralph Remick559-7716

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 Dave Middleton 530-205-9375

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Dave Chaix269-1431
 Dick Corn 277-8856
 Dan Davis 530-272-4110
 Keith Grueneberg916-425-1121
 Ray James 478-1126
 Dave Johnson 887-8297
 Dave Middleton 205-9375
 Ric Sheridan 274-1413
 Mike Underwood 925-759-2924
 Mel Williams1-707-391-7692
 Tom Woollard 432-1212

Committee Chairs

FinanceRalph Remick & Dave Johnson
 Parade and Honor Guard Dick Corn
 Membership AffairsRic Sheridan
 Newsletter Interim editor Bart Ruud
 Victorian Christmas Cancelled for 2020
 Nominations Ralph Remick
 Veterans Assistance Bart Ruud
 NCCVC Mike Underwood
 Speakers Bureau Open
 Web Master Ralph Remick
 Quartermaster Dick Corn
 Facebook Master Mike Laborico
 Nevada County Fair Cancelled for 2020
 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
 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
Mon. – Fri., 8:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

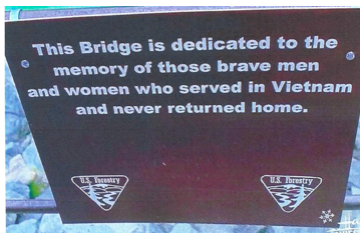
Matters of interest as outlined at Zoom Meeting of Sept. 3, 2020

The county will continue to utilize the Veterans Memorial Hall for an indefinite time as a Covid-19 testing site. The building is closed to public use.

Membership Chair Ric Sheridan reported the VVA-535 roster shows 87 Regular members and 5 Associate members, perhaps the greatest membership count ever.

Distribution of \$1,500 in funds generously donated by Chapter 535 members was distributed as “add-on” funds to 24 Junior Livestock Auction recipients. Twenty-four youth received \$75 each and six recipients received \$25 each. A big thanks to all who voluntarily contributed to this project. Locally, the Friends of Nevada County Military (\$1,500), VFW, Marine Corps League and American Legion also participated in the Nevada County Fair online auction.

Our VVA-535 project, initiated by Keith Grueneberg, for installation of a plaque recognizing Vietnam War veterans at the Hwy. 49 bridge over the S. Yuba River remains as a work in progress. Assemblywoman Megan Dahle, 1st State Assembly District, is assisting. It appears this project will move beyond our hands.



VVA-535 Fundraiser 0.177 Caliber Air Rifle

Months ago, VVA-535 member and long-time Director, **Dale Epps**, organized a fundraiser raffle for a M-1 replica air rifle. Net profit from the sale of raffle tickets was **\$255**, and we thank Dale for his coordination of this event.

The long-delayed drawing for a winning ticket took place on September 3 with everyone online for our VVA-535 meeting being witness to the bucketful of tickets being rigorously stirred by Mandy Grueneberg. Then, while looking away, Mandy drew one ticket from the many. Yours truly, Bart Ruud, was the winner.

Obituary – Glenn Frazier Charter Member, VVA-535

Published in the Grass Valley Union, Sept. 8, 2020

Glenn Frazier
September 10, 1939 – August 9, 2020

Glenn Frazier was born on September 10th, 1939 in Albany, Indiana, to Walter and Marguerite Frazier. Glenn joined the Army shortly after graduating high school in 1957.

Married his high school sweetheart Marilyn Martin at the proving grounds chapel in Maryland. From there he was stationed in France where Marilyn followed a short time after. They began their family with the birth of their daughter Sandy. Next it was off to Ft. Ord, CA where their family was increased by the birth of daughter Glenda followed shortly after by their first son Mark. Germany was next in their travels, where they welcomed their son John.

He was an avid pistol marksman, being on the National Pistol Team, shooting competition matches for many years, achieving a high score of 2600. He graduated Officers candidate school (OCS) at Ft. Knox, KY in 1967, and was awarded his Captain's bars. He maintained friendships with his graduating class up until his passing. At this time he was stationed in Ft Sam Houston, TX. From 70-71 he served honorably in Viet Nam and received many awards including the Bronze Star. Retiring in Ft Lewis WA with 20 years in the Army. He was an active member in CA Rifle and Pistol Association, The American Legion post 130 and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 535 both of Grass Valley, CA.

Never the one to sit idle, they moved back to Indiana and bought out his father's ditching business working with his sons for several years. Marilyn passed away from a car accident shortly after celebrating their 25th anniversary. From there he sold his home and business and went on hunting and

fishing trips to Alaska, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho to name a few. Getting his grizzly bear, moose, elk, buffalo and others.

On a trip back to Indiana he met Joan (Holmes) Rivar and married in 1986 and welcomed Joan's 3 adult daughters into the family. Settling in Grass Valley, CA after many trips and adventures built their dream home. Upon completion of their home another "project" was brewing, and Shred-Vac was invented and patented. The house in Grass Valley was sold and they bought land in Smartsville to build another house and give ranching a go. They loved Oakhaven as they called their ranch and the peace and tranquility it brought them. After 32 years of marriage Joan passed away Dec. 8th, 2017 after a courageous battle with Parkinson's. Six months later he was diagnosed with renal failure caused by Multiple Myeloma cancer from exposure to Agent Orange in Viet Nam. His daughter Sandy moved out from TX to be with him. He lived life to the fullest the last 2 and a half years not letting it stop him from traveling to a grand daughters wedding, another's college graduation and many fishing trips. He passed peacefully in his home Aug.9th, 2020 just shy of his 81st birthday.

Glenn is survived by his children, Sandy Kardatzke, Glenda Ramos, Mark Frazier, John Frazier and their spouses, all of TX. Step children, Susan Kephart, Jane Rivar-Jacobs and Beth Slusher and their spouses. His brothers Jay Frazier and Gould Frazier. 19 grandchildren, and 28 great grandchildren with 2 more due this year. Numerous cousins, nieces and nephews. All were loved.

He will be laid to rest at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon, CA with full

Military Honors on September 14th, 2020. Because of Covid-19 the funeral is limited to 10. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Vietnam Veterans of America or The Wounded Warrior Project.

An Innovative Fundraiser for VVA-535

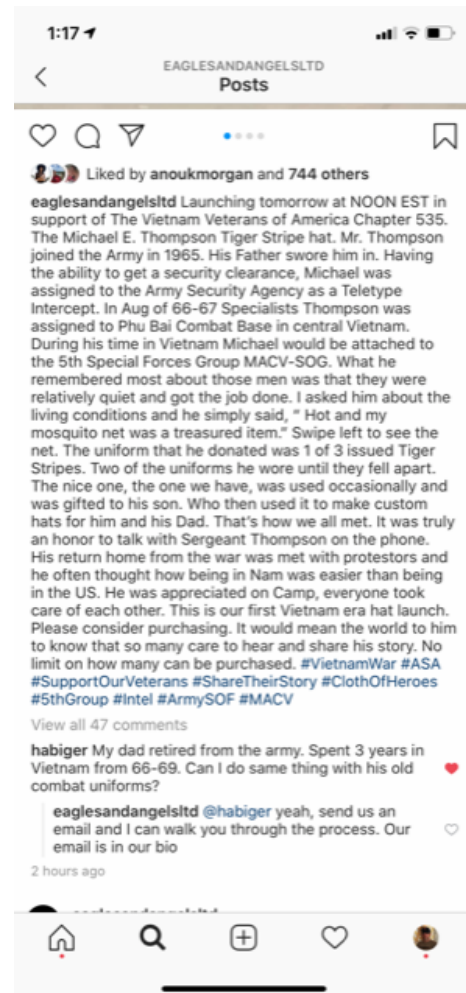
Recent correspondence from VVA-535 Life Member **Michael Thompson** has shared something unique.

The Michael E. Thompson Tiger Stripe hat was developed, fabricated and marketed on Sept. 16, 2020 by **Eagles and Angels LTD** as a limited edition hat. The 120 hats sold out online in just minutes, with 20% of each hat's profits going, by Michael's direction, to VVA-535. **Thank you, Michael!**

The limited edition hat was the brainchild of Michael's son, Sean, who is well acquainted with the principals of E and A Limited.



Here is the backstory:



Late breaking news from Michael Thompson is that the sales of the Michael E. Thompson limited edition Tiger Hat will see VVA- 535 in receipt of almost \$800. This was an almost effortless fundraiser, and again, thank you, Michael.

Here is a challenge, suggested by Michael: If you have a era uniform that could be donated to **Eagles and Angels** for the construction of a limited edition hat that would showcase your own deployment and service, there could be realization of further returns that will effectively be used to support our Veteran community in need. Won't you please consider this?

Michael Thompson has the details for facilitating this action. Do contact me, Bart Ruud, for information on how to contact Michael. Phone me, or text me at 530-305-0493 or email me at bruud45@gmail.com Many thanks.

LEGACY PLANNING – Another View

VVA is not the only organization facing the "legacy question." The following is from the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA), presented in Letters to the Editor:

My fellow rotor-heads,

I've been following the recent conversation regarding our association's legacy. After all, second to marrying my bride of fifty years, the decision to join the ranks of Army aviators was the most important one of my life. I consider what the decision gave and cost me. A public station, prestige, solid friendships and also night sweats and a gunshot wound that will always remind me of then. But this is now, and our glory years are well behind us.

It is my understanding that the Association is currently set up as a "last man standing organization". The ranks are now growing thinner and many are concerned that no one will be there to carry the torch. This is true. As we did then when no one was there to take over when things got rough. We did it ourselves.

Our legacy now and forever is displayed at Arlington Cemetery, Texas Tech. University, and the annals of the U.S. Army. We don't need anything more. We did not volunteer to go into

the breach for legacy. Glory found us, each of us together. Now is the time to enjoy the sunset.

What I am trying to express is that I am proud of the last man concept. It is honorable and final. Perhaps an Association close-out committee with legal assistance can tie up loose ends when the time comes. The last VHPA aviator standing can hold the trophy and drink to us for a very good bottle of scotch. Then it will end. We were soldiers at a time and place that never can be duplicated. With our passing will be time to close the book. Our actions are legacy enough. History will tell our story.

Respectfully,
Timothy B. Braun WO1
Co. B 227 Avn. Bn. (Combat Assault)
1st Cavalry Division
RVN 1988-69

To the Editor:

This is my humble opinion to the March/April 2020 article, "Planning for trhe End".

As long as the VHPA is alive, the one thing I care about is that the VHPA maintain its focus on the Vietnam Veterans that were Arm aviators, crew chiefs, gunners, and support. In military history, there was nothing prior to Vietnam that used helicopter air cavalry/airmobile tactics, and there will be nothing like it in the future.

Nothing lasts forever; when the VHPA bleeds out I want it and what it represented to be remembered and then buried. My point is that leaving the VHPA in a state that would allow it to be modified, morphed, re-imagined, consolidated, merged (watered down) would be a travesty (in my eyes).

What I care about is that long after we are all gone, this unique group of individuals and approach to war fighting is remembered. This can be accomplished in a number of ways:

1. The VHPA needs to create a Will and appoint an Executor.
2. Its total archive needs to be preserved and maintained like any other historical information.

3. The archive must be available to the public; physical and online.
4. A contractual guardianship/caretaker needs to be created, along with a process for assigning generational guardians to ensure its preservation and public access into the future.
5. So, create a plan with a timeline, and execute it.

In reading the letters to the Editor in the July/August 2020 issue, I most liked Mike Law's input. Especially his emphasis on SOPs. If it's not written down, it doesn't exist! So, as Major Bowling once said to me on the radio, "Press on."

Stay Safe,
Ricky Gerontis (Pallbearer 37)

USS Fitzgerald (DDG-62) NTSB Report Faults US Navy for Collision

Defense News | David B. Larter | September 4, 2020

Disorganization and a lack of situational awareness by the on-watch crew of the U.S. Navy destroyer Fitzgerald was the primary cause of the collision off Japan in June 2017 that claimed the lives of seven sailors, according to a new report by the National Transportation Safety Board. The report, which largely mirrors the Navy's own report on the incident, found that the Fitzgerald was the vessel that was required to maneuver to avoid the collision, but failed to do so, the American investigative agency found.

"The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the collision between the US Navy Destroyer Fitzgerald and container ship ACX Crystal was the Fitzgerald's bridge team's failure to take early and substantial action to avoid collision as the giveaway vessel," the report read. The report also found that the bridge team lacked sufficient training and neither asked for nor received adequate support from the radar operators in

the ship's combat information center. Crew fatigue also played a role in the accident, NTSB found, as did the commanding officer's failure to put more experienced watchstanders on the bridge while navigating busy shipping lanes.

The release of the NTSB report reopens wounds for the Navy from three years ago. The service — in the wake of the Fitzgerald collision and another fatal collision of the destroyer John S. McCain in remarkably similar circumstances just weeks later — has conducted a sweeping overhaul of how it trains its junior officers to drive ships, and how it screens its perspective commanding officers for taking command. Those changes have made the Navy safer than it was three years ago, the service's top surface warfare officer told Defense News in an exclusive interview. "When we look back on those costly lessons learned and think about where do we need to go and what do we have to do," said Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, head of Naval Surface Forces, "we need to continue to build the professional training base of the surface force. And we've come an awful long way, but I'm dedicated to that. There's some work we need to complete, and I see it as a journey."

In the wake of the accidents, the Navy performed spot checks on surface warfare officers in the fleet to determine how well they handled ships, but the results were distressing. Almost 85 percent of the junior officers evaluated struggled to extricate the ship from danger in an extreme situation, and struggled to practically apply the rules of navigation on the open ocean, even though they knew the rules. The accidents spurred the Navy to invest in more training for its junior officers before they check in on their first ship, and to invest in shore-based watch team trainers so ships can put their watch teams through challenging navigation situations. The Navy has also required officers at multiple levels of their career to take go/no-go assessments in a bridge navigation simulator to determine if they have the skills to proceed back to sea.

Prospective commanding officers now, for example, must pass a simulator evaluation on ship handling before being allowed to take command of a ship. “We came up with an aggressive agenda post-collisions,” Kitchener said. “There’s a deep education piece, and then there’s the piece that’s up to me and that’s: Are we executing? What’s the knowledge base on the ships? What’s the status of those programs?” Kitchener said he’s getting positive feedback from the fleet on the increased rigor put into training surface warfare officers to handle ships. Beyond that, he said the two enlisted ratings most concerned with safe navigation — operations specialists, who monitor radars from the ship’s combat information center, and quartermasters, who generally ensure safe navigation from the bridge — have both increased the rigor of their navigation training, and that it is paying dividends in the fleet.

In the wake of the Fitzgerald and McCain accidents, it emerged that Naval Surface Forces had been signing off on waivers for ship certifications in the Japan-based 7th Fleet as a means of allowing the ships to perform operational tasking, even if they required further training or regular evaluations to ensure they were sharp on critical skills such as damage control or navigation. But it also emerged that Naval Surface Forces and 7th Fleet felt somewhat powerless to say no to operational tasking from US Pacific Command, even if that tasking meant taking irresponsible risks with training and readiness. That has changed since the accidents, Kitchener said. Today, he is empowered to raise the red flag if a ship has a training or maintenance need that would limit a ship’s availability for operational tasking.

“It is clear to me as the surface type commander that I own the training and maintenance entitlement for surface ships,” Kitchener said. “That’s on me. And I need to be the one who holds the line on that. “And when I get a question of, ‘Hey can we accelerate this or can

we do that,’ my answer is, ‘Here’s the entitlement, here’s what I have to do,’ ” he added. “Sometimes there is some negotiation, but what’s not negotiable is that entitlement has to be fulfilled. And my experience, so far, is that has pretty much worked. Does that create a little bit of tension between me and the numbered fleet commanders, the operational commanders? Yes. But I think it’s supposed to. I think that’s healthy. I think it forces us to come up with an informed decision. And I think that’s one of the best things we did.”

As for crew fatigue, Kitchener said he’s seeing progress in the fleet in getting sailors on more natural sleep and watch cycles, and that most ships are adopting a form of what’s known as circadian rhythm-based watches. Another key component to addressing the issues that led to the collisions is teaching commanders how to gauge risks the ship is taking as it moves, Kitchener said. “I want our COs to be bold, but I want them to understand the risk, be able to evaluate it and drive that discussion so that they can be advocates for their sailors, but at the same time communicate to me what the risk is to our mission and what the risk is to our force,” he said.

Stars & Stripes DOD Rescinding Newspaper’s Shut Down Order

The Associated Press | Lolita C. Baldor | Sept. 10, 2020

The Defense Department is rescinding its order to shut down the military’s independent newspaper, Stars and Stripes, in the wake of a tweet late last week by President Donald Trump vowing to continue funding the paper. In an email to Stripes’ publisher Max Lederer, Army Col. Paul Haverstick said the paper does not have to submit a plan to close. Haverstick, acting director of the Pentagon’s Defense Media Activity, said a formal memo is being drafted that will rescind the order to halt publication by Sept. 30, and dissolve the organization by the end of January. The email was obtained by The

Associated Press. “The memo will be provided once it is completed and properly vetted and approved within the Department,” said Haverstick’s email. “We are trying to get this completed by the weekend, but this timeline may shift based on vetting.”

The Defense Department had ordered the paper to shut down following the Pentagon’s move earlier this year to cut the \$15.5 million in funding for Stars and Stripes from the budget. On 4 SEP, as news of the shutdown order trickled out, Trump abruptly tweeted his opposition to the plan. “The United States of America will NOT be cutting funding to @starsandstripes magazine under my watch,” Trump tweeted. “It will continue to be a wonderful source of information to our Great Military!” Trump’s tweet came after the Pentagon notified Stars and Stripes that its final newspaper publication will be released this month.

Trump’s tweet came as he fought off accusations that he called service members killed in World War I “losers” and “suckers” during an event in France in 2018. The comments, first reported by The Atlantic and confirmed by The Associated Press, shined a fresh light on Trump’s previous public disparaging of American troops and military families and they delivered a new campaign issue to his Democratic rival Joe Biden, less than two months from Election Day. Trump was alleged to have made the comments about the war dead as he was set to visit the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery during a trip to France in November 2018.

The Trump White House hadn’t spoken out against the Pentagon plan to close the paper before last Friday, even though it’s been in the works and publicly written about for months and was in the president’s budget request. Friday afternoon, however, Trump worked to shore up his reputation as a staunch supporter of the nation’s armed services. Members of Congress have objected to the defunding move for months. And senators sent a letter to

Defense Secretary 11 | Page Mark Esper last week urging him to reinstate the money. The letter, signed by 15 senators — including Republicans and Democrats — also warned Esper that the department is legally prohibited from canceling a budget program while a temporary continuing resolution to fund the federal government is in effect.

The House-passed version of the Pentagon’s 2021 budget contains funding for the paper’s publication, but the Senate has not yet finalized a defense funding bill. “Stars and Stripes is an essential part of our nation’s freedom of the press that serves the very population charged with defending that freedom,” the senators said in the letter. Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), in a separate letter to Esper in late August, also voiced opposition to the move, calling Stripes “a valued ‘hometown newspaper’ for the members of the Armed Forces, their families, and civilian employees across the globe.” He added that “as a veteran who has served overseas, I know the value that the Stars and Stripes brings to its readers.” Haverstick, in his new email, also said the department is looking into how it will fund Stripes for the next year, since it was not budgeted. And he said the paper will be required to submit a budget plan for the next year.

The first newspaper called Stars and Stripes was very briefly produced in 1861 during the Civil War, but the paper began consistent publication during World War I. When the war was over, publication ended, only to restart in 1942 during World War II, providing wartime news written by troops specifically for troops in battle. Although the paper gets funding from the Defense Department, it is editorially independent and is delivered in print and digitally to troops all over the world.

**VA Medical Marijuana Update
House Poised to Vote on Bill to Let VA
Recommend It to Vets**

ConnectingVets.com | Abbie Bennett | Aug 31, 2020

The Department of Veterans Affairs has long used marijuana's position on the federal controlled substances list as a reason not to incorporate it into veterans' care. Now, the House is poised to vote on legislation that would remove marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act, effectively ending marijuana prohibition at the federal level -- though states would still get to rule on it for themselves. House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC) announced over the weekend of 28 AUG that the House plans to bring the bill to the floor after nine months of silence, and "will be voting soon" on H.R. 3884, the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement (MORE) Act. The exact date for the vote is still to be determined.

The legislation, though unlikely to pass the current Senate, is one of the most significant steps from Congress so far in changing federal marijuana policy. The vote in the House will be historic, even if the bill is all but dead on arrival in the Senate. VA senior leaders have told Capitol Hill lawmakers again and again that the reason they will not allow VA physicians to recommend marijuana use for veteran patients - even in states where it is legal -- is because of the federal prohibition. It would put doctors and VA at legal risk, they argued, as lawmaker after lawmaker and advocate after advocate questioned, pushed and promoted the drug's potential use for a variety of veterans' health concerns. VA leaders said it would take an act of Congress for things to change at the department.

"The MORE Act decriminalized marijuana at the federal level by removing it from the Controlled Substances Act," Clyburn said in an emailed announcement. "This would allow state law to determine the status of marijuana legality for each state." VA senior leaders, including Secretary Robert Wilkie, told Veterans Affairs lawmakers that it would take an act of Congress for them to be willing to sign off on doctors recommending the drug to vets in states where it was already legal. The bill itself contains a

provision specifically for veterans -- allowing VA doctors, or contracted doctors, to make recommendations to qualifying veterans who live in states where use of the drug is legal for medical purposes.

Multiple polls show a vast majority of veterans agree that medical marijuana should be legal. Most Americans overall believe marijuana in all its uses should be legal. So far, 33 states and the District of Columbia have legalized medical marijuana. Past attempts by Congress -- even those with some bipartisan support -- have been met with opposition from VA leaders. In the Senate, some of those measures have been met with opposition from Republican leadership. In November last year, the House Judiciary Committee took the first vote in Congress to remove marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act. The committee voted 24-10 to advance the bill, and it has not made it to the House floor until now.

Some veterans fear their use or potential use of marijuana could jeopardize their VA benefits and lawmakers have even introduced bills to prevent exactly that. But VA says on its website that "veterans will not be denied VA benefits because of marijuana use." A few bills have been filed to codify that and ensure that VA could not take benefits from veterans for their marijuana use. None have passed so far. Dr. Ben Kligler of the Veterans Health Administration recently told Connecting Vets that veterans can talk to their VA doctors about cannabis use and ensure use will not interact negatively with existing medications, but VA doctors cannot prescribe or recommend its use to veterans, or replace existing medication with medical marijuana.

Marijuana use for veterans has gained some traction among lawmakers in Congress, but none of the legislation has made significant progress, and some of it has been shut out entirely, especially in the Senate. While some veterans have, anecdotally, shared that marijuana has benefitted them, including in some cases helping to prevent suicide, many

lawmakers remain unconvinced, calling for more evidence-based conclusions before a decision can be made. But lawmakers also have supported other alternative treatments and therapies for vets that, in some cases, have questionable efficacy for veterans' health concerns. One thing both Republicans and Democrats seem able to agree on is the need for VA to study marijuana's potential uses for veterans, though some have expressed frustration with the timeline for that research

Artificial Intelligence Secretary of Defense Says AI Will Change the Battlefield

DOD News | Jim Garamone | Sept. 9, 2020

One aspect of the return of great power competition is the race to develop artificial intelligence, Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper said at the virtual Joint Artificial Intelligence Center symposium. Artificial intelligence has the potential to change the battlefield, and the country that's first to field it will have enormous advantages over competitors, he told participants today. "History informs us that those who are first to harness once-in-a-generation technologies often have a decisive advantage on the battlefield for years to come," the secretary said. "I experienced this firsthand during Operation Desert Storm, when the United States' military's smart bombs, stealth aircraft and satellite-enabled GPS helped decimate Iraqi forces and their Soviet equipment."

Artificial intelligence has the potential to be even more far-reaching than those technologies. "Unlike advanced munitions or next-generation platforms, artificial intelligence is in a league of its own, with the potential to transform nearly every aspect of the battlefield, from the back office to the front lines," he said. "That is why we cannot afford to cede the high ground to revisionist powers intent on bending, breaking or reshaping international rules and norms in their favor — to the collective detriment of

others." Esper noted that Russian President Vladimir Putin said the nation that leads in AI will be the "ruler of the world," and Russia has increased investments in the technology. "His intent is to employ any possible advantage to expand Russia's influence and chip away at the sovereignty of others," Esper said.

The Russians used a sophisticated and well-coordinated combination of unmanned aerial vehicles, cyberattacks, and artillery barrages to inflict severe damage on Ukrainian forces when they invaded that country. "Since then, Moscow has announced the development of AI-enabled autonomous systems across ground vehicles, aircraft, nuclear submarines and command and control," he said. "We expect them to deploy these capabilities in future combat zones."

The Chinese Communist Party has a goal of being the AI world leader in 10 years. The People's Liberation Army sees AI as a leap-frog technology that will allow the largest military on Earth to field low-cost, long-range autonomous vehicles and systems to counter America's conventional power projection. "At this moment, Chinese weapons manufacturers are selling autonomous drones they claim can conduct lethal, targeted strikes," the secretary said. "Meanwhile, the Chinese government is advancing the development of next-generation stealth UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicle], which they are preparing to export internationally."

"Beijing is constructing a 21st-century surveillance state designed to wield unprecedented control over its own people," Esper said. "With hundreds of millions of cameras strategically located across the country and billions of data points generated by the Chinese Internet of Things, the CCP will soon be able to identify almost anyone entering a public space, and censor dissent in real time." The Chinese system can be used to invade private lives, leaving no text message, internet search, purchase or personal activity free from Beijing's ever tightening grip, the secretary said. "As we speak, the PRC is deploying — and honing — its

AI surveillance apparatus to support the targeted repression of its Muslim Uighur population," he said. "Likewise, pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong are being identified, seized, and imprisoned or worse by the CCP's digital police state — unencumbered by privacy laws or ethical governing principles. As China scales this technology, we fully expect it to sell these capabilities abroad, enabling other autocratic governments to move toward a new era of digital authoritarianism."

The U.S. is pioneering a vision for the emerging technology that protects the U.S. Constitution and the rights of all Americans. U.S. officials would like to see allies and partners adopt the standards of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and respect for the rule of law. "We approach AI as we have other high-tech breakthroughs throughout our department's history — with rigorous standards for testing and fielding capabilities and the highest ethical expectations," Esper said. "Technology may constantly change, but our commitment to our core values does not."

Earlier this year, DOD adopted ethical principles for the use of AI-based on core values, such as transparency, reliability and governability. "These principles make clear to the American people — and the world — that the United States will once again lead the way in the responsible development and application of emerging technologies, reinforcing our role as the global security partner of choice," he said. Esper touted the work of the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center saying its more than 200 civil service and military professionals work diligently to accelerate AI solutions and deliver these capabilities to the warfighter.

The JAIC helps the joint force organize, fight and win at machine speed. For example, AI helps in enhancing wildfire and flood responses through computer vision technology. "The JAIC is utilizing every aspect of artificial intelligence as a transformative instrument at home and abroad," he said. "The JAIC is also lowering

technical barriers to AI adoption by building a cloud-based platform to allow DOD components to test, validate and field capabilities with greater speed, at greater scale. The goal is to make AI tools and data accessible across the force, which will help synchronize projects and reduce redundancy, among many other benefits."

Marine Corps Boot Camp Plan to End Gender Segregation

Military.com | Gina Harkins | September 1, 2020

Marine leaders want every male recruit arriving at boot camp to train alongside women in the same company, putting an end to the longstanding tradition of separating trainees by gender, according to newly released plans to make both of the service's recruit depots coed. All-male recruit companies trained solely by men will be made "obsolete," according to a memo the Marine Corps submitted to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services. That includes boot camp at the Marine Corps' West Coast training depot in San Diego, which currently doesn't accept female trainees. "Gender integration at Marine Corps Recruit Training remains a top priority," the memo states. "The outcome the Marine Corps desires for gender integration is for every male recruit to train alongside a female recruit within the same company."

The Marine Corps was tasked with explaining its short- and long-term plans for integrating recruit training, which was mandated by the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. Signed into law in December, the NDAA requires the Marine Corps to stop separating trainees by gender at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island in South Carolina within five years and in San Diego within eight. The memo says officials from Training and Education Command are now working with Marine Corps Installations Command "to identify the requirements, shortfalls, and cost estimates to meet the NDAA requirements." The biggest limitation, officials added, is the need for new facilities to house

coed training companies. Several coed companies have completed training at Parris Island since early 2019, but the East Coast recruit depot doesn't have the space to accommodate that setup during certain months. The number of recruits shipping to boot camp spikes between June and September, when many new high-school graduates head off to training.

Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, which currently only trains men, needs new facilities not only for female recruits, but also for women drill instructors. "Once the infrastructure conditions have been set at MCRD San Diego (MCRD SD) for integrated training," the memo states, "then MCRD SD Drill Instructor School will begin training female Drill Instructors." Parris Island has a staffing goal of 116 female drill instructors. Officials said in the memo that the number of female drill instructors at both recruit depots would depend on the number of women that train at each in the years to come. "The ratio of female to male DIs is proportionate to the number of female and male recruits," the memo states. "The Marine Corps focuses on the importance of having four DIs assigned to each platoon. ... Platoons and the assigned DIs are gender specific."

The Marine Corps has been slow to adopt gender-integrated entry-level training for new enlistees. The service has faced increasing pressure from lawmakers in recent years to make boot camp training coed after combat arms jobs opened to women and a high-profile scandal highlighted the troubling way some male Marines treated their female colleagues. Last year, the first-ever coed company graduated from Parris Island. The 50-person company included one female platoon and five male platoons. The male and female platoons lived in separate squad bays, but otherwise completed much of their training together after the first phase of boot camp, which runs about four weeks.

Marine Commandant Gen. David Berger has said that model would continue at Parris Island after the first company performed "very well." Eight more coed companies have followed, but the effort has been slowed during the coronavirus pandemic due to more restrictive social distancing requirements, officials wrote in the memo to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services. "These iterations demonstrated the strength of the Marine Corps' platoon training model, as it transformed young women and men into U.S. Marines," it states. "The Marine Corps is continuously assessing and refining recruit training and is identifying opportunities in FY21 to utilize the fully integrated company structure with future recruit training companies to best combine the strength of our platoon model with the logistical benefits of integrated companies."

The Marine Corps plans to continue studying how best to train men and women together at boot camp. By 1 OCT, the service plans to award an academic institution access to its recruit depots to conduct a third-party review on the way Marine recruits are trained. The findings of that study will be published in a peer-reviewed journal after it's completed in fiscal 2022, which runs from Oct. 1, 2021, through September of the following year. The Marine Corps originally wanted the study back by Feb. 1, 2021, but no one applied to the original solicitation to complete the review. Maj. Gen. Bill Mullen, the former head of Training and Education Command who recently retired, said he directed the study to see if the service had their entry-level training model right.

"We think we have it right ... but how much of that is our own biases?" Mullen told Military.com in a 2019 interview. "How much of that is a 'we invented it here' kind of thing? ... If an independent study, not affiliated with the Marine Corps, comes in and takes a hard, honest look at things in an unbiased way, how do you argue with that?" The academic study will examine four areas: alternative boot camp training models; costs for those alternatives;

costs for the traditional model of separating male and female recruits; and how perceptions about coed training influences a person's decision to join the service.

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.

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: _____

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

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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

SEPTEMBER

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 VVA-535	4	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10	11 Patriot Day	12
13 Grandparent's Day	14	15	16 American Legion Day 1919	17 Constitution Day	18 Air Force Birthday 1947 National POW Recognition Day	19 Rosh Hashanah
20	21	22 First Day of Fall	23	24	25	26
27	28 Yom Kippur	29	30			

OCTOBER

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 VVA-535	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Columbus Day	13 Navy Birthday 1775	14	15	16 Stand Down?	17 Stand Down?
18	19	20	21	22 VVA CSC Convention	23 VVA CSC Convention	24 VVA CSC Convention
25 VVA CSC Convention	26	27 Navy Day	28	29	30	31 Halloween

November

2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Daylight Saving Time Ends	2	3 Election Day	4	5 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	6	7
8	9	10 Marine Corps Birthday 1775	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving	27	28
29	30					