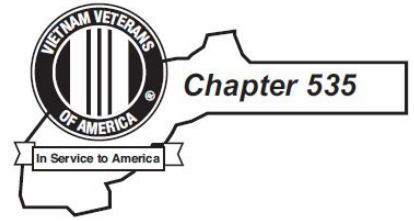




# INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
**CHAPTER 535**



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

Volume 31 Issue 3

March 2021

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
CHAPTER 535  
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE  
March 2021**

In her February 18, 2021 Wall Street Journal commentary, Dr. Marty Makary, Professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Bloomberg School of Public Health, “predicts that Covid-19 will mostly be gone” by April 2021. She has made this prediction “based on laboratory data, mathematical data, published literature and conversations with experts.”

Why? We will have achieved herd immunity. Herd immunity occurs when enough people become immune to a disease to make its spread unlikely. As a result, the entire community is protected, even those who are not themselves immune. Herd immunity is usually achieved through vaccination, but it can also occur through natural infection.

I have long thought about which liar am I to believe on what day. That is a cynical outlook, but I among many have lived in a state of fear regarding the Covid-19 virus for nearly a year. Fortunately, I am among the some 15% of Americans who have received a vaccine which is projected to provide a 95% chance of immunity to the virus.

By consensus, those present at our Board and General Member meeting of February 4, 2021 elected to hold an in-person meeting, with the practice of Covid safety protocols, in the Veterans Hall Remembrance Room on Thursday March 4, 2021. This will be a hybrid meeting – that is, online on Zoom, and concurrently in the flesh. The meeting will be called to order at 1800 hours. Please join us.

Bart Ruud

**Watch for an Announcement for a  
March 4, 2021 hybrid 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 March 4, 2021

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.

Director Dan Davis has volunteered to assume the late Tom Woollard's role as our Speaker's Bureau liaison. Thank you, Dan. Please do pass along any ideas you may have for future guest speakers.

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### Upcoming Events

NCCVC Meeting – March 4, 2021 ??  
General Meeting – March. 4, 2021 (Hybrid) – in person and online via Zoom  
Director's Meeting – March 4, 2021  
Vietnam Veterans Day Lunch – March 27, 2021  
CSC Meeting – Visalia May 6- 9, 2021

### Chapter 535 Officers

President Bart Ruud

brud45@gmail.com  
(H) 530-823-1368 (C) 530-305-0493

Vice-President  
Enrique Vasquez .....530-575-4416  
Treasurer  
Ralph Remick ..... 530-559-7716

Secretary  
Dave Middleton ..... 530-205-9375

### Directors

Dave Chaix ..... 530-269-1431  
Dick Corn ..... 530-277-8856  
Dan Davis ..... 530-272-4110  
Keith Grueneberg .....916-425-1121  
Ray James ..... 530-478-1126  
Dave Johnson .....530-887-8297  
Dave Middleton .....530-205-9375  
Ric Sheridan .....530-274-1413  
Mike Underwood ..... 925-759-2924  
Mel Williams .....1-707-391-7692

### Committee Chairs

Finance .....Ralph Remick & Dave Johnson  
Parade and Honor Guard ..... Dick Corn  
Membership Affairs .....Ric Sheridan  
Newsletter ..... Interim editor Bart Ruud  
Victorian Christmas ..... Cancelled for 2020  
Nominations ..... Ralph Remick  
Veterans Assistance ..... Bart Ruud  
NCCVC ..... Open  
Speakers Bureau ..... Dan Davis  
Web Master ..... Ralph Remick  
Quartermaster ..... Dick Corn  
Facebook Master ..... Mike Laborico  
Nevada County Fair ..... Cancelled for 2020  
CA State Council Rep. ..... Open

### 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.

## ***United States Coast Guard Organizational Overview***

### **Placer County Veterans Service Officer**

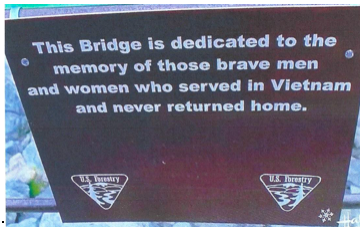
Derrick Oliveira ... 916-780-3290.  
1000 Sunset Blvd, Suite 115, Rocklin, CA  
Mon. – Fri., 8:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

### **Matters of interest as outlined at Zoom Meeting of February 4, 2021**

It is said that Veteran organizations are permitted to utilize the building as long as the follow Covid-19 prevention protocols.

Jose Gonzales initiated a movement to purchase memorial bricks for eight deceased members of VVA-535 not currently represented on the Memorial Wall at Memorial Park. This is a work in process, but several hundred dollars have been collected to further the cause.

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, 1<sup>st</sup> State Assembly District, is assisting. It appears constructive movement is in process.



Word from Director Dan Davis suggests that “Pop-Up” impromptu Craft Fairs could occur in Grass Valley as better weather returns. These could pose opportunities for VVA-535 to set up a concession booth for burgers and hot dogs or root beer floats.

Nominations for the 2021-22 administrative year are due at the March meeting.



Since 1790, the Coast Guard has safeguarded the American people and promoted national security, border security, and economic prosperity in a complex and evolving maritime environment. The Coast Guard saves those in peril and protects the Nation from all maritime threats.

As a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, a law enforcement organization, a regulatory agency, a member of the U.S. Intelligence Community, and a first responder, the Coast Guard employs a unique mix of authorities, broad jurisdiction, flexible operational capabilities, and a network of partnerships. The Coast Guard is the principal Federal agency responsible for maritime safety, security, and environmental stewardship in U.S. ports and inland waterways, along more than 95,000 miles of U.S. coastline, throughout the 4.5 million square miles of U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and on the high seas.

The over 50,000 members of the Coast Guard operate a multi-mission, interoperable fleet of 259 Cutters, 200 fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, and over 1,600 boats. Operational control of surface and air assets is vested in two Coast Guard geographical Areas (Pacific and Atlantic), nine Coast Guard Districts, and 37 Sectors located at strategic ports throughout the country. Five Mission Support Logistics and Service Centers provide services for operational assets and shore facilities. Coast Guard program

oversight, policy development, and personnel administration are carried out at Coast Guard Headquarters located on the St. Elizabeths campus in Washington, DC.



### *Average Coast Guard Day*

- Conducts 42 search and rescue cases;
- Saves 12 lives;
- Saves over \$114,000 in property;
- Seizes 1,253 pounds of cocaine and 172 pounds of marijuana;
- Conducts 133 waterborne patrols of critical maritime infrastructure;
- Interdicts 18 illegal migrants;
- Escorts 9 high-capacity passenger vessels;
- Conducts 13 security boardings in and around U.S. ports;
- Screens 313 merchant vessels for potential security threats prior to arrival in U.S. ports;
- Conducts 19 fisheries conservation boardings;
- Services 45 buoys and fixed aids to navigation;
- Investigates 26 pollution incidents;
- Completes 24 safety examinations on foreign vessels;
- Conducts 162 marine inspections of U.S. vessels and facilities;
- Investigates 17 marine casualties involving commercial vessels;
- Facilitates movement of \$15.6B worth of goods and commodities through the Nation's Maritime Transportation System.

**SEMPER PARATUS**  
ALWAYS READY

### **Here's what happens when the Coast Guard makes a drug bust**

Source: *We Are the Mighty*. Eric Milzarski – April 29, 2020



Most troops and vets know very little about what the Coast Guard actually does. They're often seen as either the "Navy National Guard" or as a bunch of puddle pirates trying to pretend like they're one of the cool, DoD kids.

Yeah, sure; we'll hear their name get brought up whenever a hurricane hits or they'll be cursed at when they catch someone speeding on a private lake, but the truth is that they've more than earned their right to be a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

When they aren't out helping idiotic boaters, they're dropping narco-terrorists just like their grunt brothers.



When it kicks off, Coasties stay busy and can probably expect six or so busts in a week after that long-ass wait.  
(U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Melissa Leake)

It all begins with actionable intelligence. Despite what you might think about gangs *not* snitching on each other to save their own hides —

they *absolutely* do. Apparently, it doesn't even take that much to get them to talk. A threat of extradition and being sent back to their home country (where they face grave, domestic threats) is usually enough to get them singing like a canary.

So, the Coast Guard goes out to the expected route of traffickers in their Cutters and they wait... and wait... and wait...

This process could take days, weeks, or even months. If it turns out that the collected information is indeed legit and they find the smugglers, then the fun begins.

First is the show of force and an appeal to try and get them to surrender peacefully. There's literally no escape when the Coast Guard has you surrounded with much faster vessels and helicopters flying overhead. The ones who value their well-being will give themselves up. If they don't, warning shots will strafe the waters in front of the bow. If they *still* don't get the message, snipers from inside the helicopters will disable the engines — that's right: The Coast Guard has highly trained snipers who can hit speedboats from helicopters with surgical precision.

They should get the hint by now, but just in case they don't, the Coast Guardsmen then board their vessel and detain the smugglers while remaining very weary of any potential threats that may appear. For a look at what that's like, in a safe-for-television manner, check out the video below:



Ever wonder what half a billion dollars looks like? This was from just three busts.

(U.S. Coast Guard Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Mariana O'Leary)

The traffickers will go into custody and may be sent back to their host nation for trial (or execution, depending on the country). Then, the drugs are incinerated or destroyed by other means.

We're not talking small amounts either. We're talking about cartel-level quantities. Each bust account for tons of narcotics that will never make it to the streets. When they're set ablaze, that's millions that will never make it back to the cartels. Between 2010 and 2015, the U.S. Coast Guard took out 500 tons of cocaine — billion in street value.

The war on drugs is a constant battle, but busts like these make significant dents.

### **US Coast Guard Cutter Spencer WHEC-36 My Life in the Coast Guard**

Submitted by David Johnson  
Director, VVA 535

The USCG Cutter JOHN C. SPENCER (WHEC-36) was commissioned in New York in 1937. The W-designates Coast Guard and HEC stands for high endurance cutter. The SPENCER was primarily employed in the International Ice Patrol. This type of service was started after the Titanic went down in 1912.

In World War II the SPENCER changed its colors to gray and became part of Navy operations in the North Atlantic as a convoy escort. She was credited with the sinking of at least two German submarines. After the war with the improvement of aviation capabilities and intercontinental flights there was a need for rescue facilities along the way. Ocean Stations were set up in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the Coast Guard was selected to carry out these duties. There were four stations in the Atlantic and Pacific. The purpose was to provide weather observations, navigational

assistance to aircraft and search and rescue capabilities.

I enlisted in the in the Coast Guard in November 1966 and went through Basic Training in Cape May, New Jersey. Following boot camp, I remained in Cape May where I worked in Base Security. I transferred to the SPENCER in 1968 and participated in the weather patrols. Not the most exciting duty as we would steam to our patrol sector, cut our engines and drift around the ocean for a few weeks.

In January 1969 the SPENCER departed New York to take up Market Time Patrol off the coast of Vietnam. Our route went down the east coast through the Panama Canal and north to Long Beach. Our next stop was Pearl Harbor. From where we docked, we had a perfect view of the Arizona Memorial. The visit to the memorial was very moving as oil was still leaking from the sunken ship nearly 30 years later. Ironically enough, the movie *Tora Tora Tora* was being filmed at the time. It was a very eerie experience to be there on a US ship in the military and to see Japanese Zeros flying low over the harbor.

After leaving Hawaii we crossed the 180th meridian - the International Date Line that marks the entrance into *The Realm of the Golden Dragon*. This leads to the initiation of all those that are passing the Date Line for the first time which happened to include the majority of the crew.

Next stop was Guam for a quick refueling stop. Several days later we arrived in Subic Bay, Philippines. This was our official "in chop" into Coast Guard Squadron Three. We soon sailed for our first patrol on Market Time Barrier. This took us to Area 9 which was the southern tip of South Vietnam to the Cambodian border. At this point we were introduced to the Navy PCF's known as Swift Boats. We acted as their "Mother Ship" providing support to the crews and their boats on their returns from riverine patrols.

We only had one doctor and one corpsman on our ship to provide medical care. Needless to say, they were very busy attending to the wounded. As part of the Medical Civic Action Program our doctor and corpsman visited the village of Song Ong Doc to treat the local villagers and their Home Forces troops. Mai, a ten-year-old boy was brought back to the ship to be treated for burns suffered from a mortar attack. During Mai's four day stay on board he set the record for candy consumption. This particular patrol had 17 Purple Hearts awarded to the Brown Water Sailors. Throughout our deployment our one ship's doctor and corpsman made several trips to other villages to treat the local villagers.

We played host to an Allied Strike Force, primarily consisting of Cambodian mercenary soldiers led by US Special Forces advisors. We provided meals and a better place to rest prior to their next operation ashore. During this patrol we also provided gun fire support from our 5-inch gun on several occasions.

Over 40 years later, an interesting fact was brought to my attention about this particular patrol. One of the Swift Boats was PCF 94. The Officer in Charge was none other than Lt JG John Kerry. This has been confirmed by a photo in our "Log Book" of PCF 94 tied up to our ship and a second photo of Kerry in our Sick Bay. The timing was also confirmed by Kerry's short time in Vietnam as he was in our area in February 1969.

Our next stop was Hong Kong where we served as "Station Ship" which was the official administration ship for the US Seventh Fleet. We provided harbor services to all incoming ships arranging for supplies and other needs upon arrival. We also provided Shore Patrol services at the pier where all allied ship crews landed on shore.

We were fortunate to have Captain Marc Welliver II as our Commanding Officer as he truly cared about the well-being and morale of

the crew. He believed in working hard and playing hard. He said, "If we can find a place to store it then go out and buy it. We'll store it on the ship and get it home." Obviously, a lot of electronics as well as, furniture and other interesting items were purchased by the crew. Between Hong Kong and later with our deployment in Japan the ship was loaded down with our purchases by the time we returned to New York.

Our next patrol was in Area 6 off the coast of Vung Tau in the Mekong Delta region. The next few weeks included gun fire support missions, boarding and inspection of suspicious vessels referred to as "junks" and "sampans." We took on supplies via underway replenishment (un reps), ship to ship transfer of supplies and vertical replenishment (vert reps) by helicopter. We in turn provided support to Coast Guard 82 footers and Swift Boats.

Next was a quick R&R stop in Bangkok including tours and relaxation. Our longest patrol was 43 days in Area 3. Again, this comprised of routine gun fire support, inspection and boarding suspicious vessels. We did get a partial day break with a trip to the coastal town of Qui Nhon for a beer and a grilled steak close to the beach.

Our next stop was Naval Ship Yard in Sasebo, Japan. We were there for routine yard repairs and R & R. There we took a bus trip to Nagasaki to view ground zero, 24 years after WW II. Surprisingly there was very little trace of the damage from the war. The museum was educational, and we found the parks to be healthy and green.

We did have a scare when we were in port. There was a fire in our sea bag locker, which would have been bad enough, but it happened to located right over our magazines, all of which were fully loaded. Fortunately, the fire was extinguished just before they were going to tow us out to the middle of the harbor away from the docks where there were several other ships.

On a personal note, my daughter was born while we were in Japan. She was nearly 4 months old when I got home. Ten children were born to crew members while we were deployed for those 10 months.

Our next patrol was Area 7. Mostly routine gun fire support, boarding and inspections, un reps and vert reps. We did assist one of our own - CGC Point Marone, an 82-footer that was hit by a rocket. Our doctor tended to the wounded and our Damage Control Department patched up the listing Point Marone.

Our final R & R stop was in Singapore. It was one of the prime tourist attractions in the Far East with fine hotels and restaurants.

Our last patrol was off the coast around Qui Nhon. For the most part it was a routine. We observed a three-day cease fire in respect to Ho Chi Minh's death - in contrast to commemorating his birthday in July with a gun fire support mission.

The Coast Guard had five ships as part of Coast Guard Squadron Three. These were all Secretary Class Cutters named after Secretaries of the Treasury. John C. Spencer was Secretary of the Treasury in 1844. Coast Guard ships were referred to by their length. The Spencer was 327-footer built for the Coast Guard prior to WW II. There were 311 footers which were built during WW II as Navy Sea Plane Tenders and then in the 1960's the modern 378 footers came into service. Deployment was usually about 10 months as different ships rotate in and replaced the one headed home. We were happy to see the CGC Hamilton when we made our last trip Subic Bay to be relieved of our duties on our way back to New York.

I will always remember my experiences aboard the SPENCER and the people I served with. My time in Vietnam included some good times with entertainment by the crew, education from the places we served and no doubt some very scary moments.

## **Military Sniper Rifle MRAD Mk22 for the Army, Marines and SOCOM**

Source: Army Times | Todd South | January 29, 2021

After my tour in Vietnam I was stationed at the Coast Guard Supply Center in Brooklyn, NY for my last year of service. I was and am very proud to have served in the Coast Guard – the military branch that most people don't know much about. In 1790 the US Revenue Cutter Service was founded as part of the Department of Treasury. It merged with the US Life Saving Service to form the Coast Guard in 1915. In 1967 it moved into the Department of Transportation and in 2003 the Coast Guard became part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Today the Coast Guard is a very diverse organization. As a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, a law enforcement organization, a regulatory agency, a member of the U.S. Intelligence Community, and a first responder, the Coast Guard employs a unique mix of authorities, broad jurisdiction, flexible operational capabilities, and a network of partnerships. The Coast Guard is the principal Federal agency responsible for maritime safety, security, and environmental stewardship in U.S. ports and inland waterways, along more than 95,000 miles of U.S. coastline, throughout the 4.5 million square miles of U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and on the high seas.

As for the SPENCER, she went back to Ocean Station weather patrols until she was decommissioned in 1974. She was the most decorated Cutter in the Coast Guard fleet and served as an engineering training ship using the steam propulsion plant. Unfortunately, the SPENCER was sold for scrap in 1980 after serving her country for over 43 years.

The ship's mast currently stands on the Parade Grounds at the Coast Guard Training Center, Cape May, New Jersey. It stands along with a statue of Signalmen First Class Doug Munro, the only Coast Guardsman to receive the Medal of Honor. He served on the SPENCER in 1939.

The great sniper rifle replacement across the Army, Marine Corps and SOCOM (Special Operations Command) has begun with the newest sniper rifle and it's the Barrett Multi-Role Adaptive Design rifle chambered in three calibers. Over the next five years, the MRAD will replace the Army's existing M107 sniper rifle and M2010 Enhanced Sniper 51 Rifle under the Precision Sniper Rifle program, and all bolt action rifles in the Marines, delivering conversion options so that snipers can choose from 7.62mm, .300 Norma Magnum and .338 Norma Magnum, depending on their shooting needs. The military designation for the rifle will be the Mk22, which is the nomenclature for the PSR.

"The Army plans to purchase Multi-Role Adaptive Rifle (MRAD) systems for Foreign Military Sales and Precision Sniper Rifles (PSR) systems for Army Snipers and EOD personnel," PEO Soldier spokesman told the website Task & Purpose. "The MRAD is one component of the PSR." Marine Corps budget documents from early 2020 noted that the "ASR will replace all current bolt-action sniper rifles in the Marine Corps." Those documents cited a purchase of 250 MRAD rifles for the Corps. That means the decades-old M40, which has been in service midway through the Vietnam War. The M40, was scheduled to be replaced by the Mk13 Mod 7.

SOCOM awarded a contract for the MRAD back in March 2019 and deliveries were scheduled to start this January, according to a Barrett company release. The search for the convertible rifle began back in 2016 with a SOCOM request. The original plan was for the Army to buy 536 MRAD rifles under the previous program, a PEO Soldier spokesman told Task & Purpose that the new plans will include purchasing an estimated



2,800 rifles over the next five years. To learn more about the MRAD refer to <https://youtu.be/IvwW4Rtva7c>.

## **Selective Service System Supreme Court Asked to Declare Military Draft Unconstitutional**

MilitaryTimes | Todd South | February 12, 2021

The former National Security Agency director and nine prominent retired general and flag officers have signed on to legal brief asking that the U.S. Supreme Court rule that the military draft is unconstitutional.

Their filing is in support of a petition that argues the Selective Service System is unconstitutional because it applies only to men ages 18 to 26 and not women. Former Director of the National Security Agency Michael Hayden, a retired Air Force four-star and retired Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal top the list of supporters on the legal brief. The group's attorneys filed their brief 10 FEB to support the petition filed by the National Coalition for Men, represented by the American Civil Liberties Union against the Selective Service System on 8 JAN.

The original claim argues that the high court should overturn a ruling it made in 1981 when the same challenge was made. At the time the justices ruled that the draft was constitutional because its primary function was to ensure combat ready forces for defense of the nation. At the time, women were excluded from combat roles. But that's changed. The Pentagon announced it would lift the ban on women in combat jobs in 2013. Over the following six years the services opened up all jobs previously closed to women. By continuing to make Selective Service registration and draft eligibility apply only to men, the Coalition for Men argues that the system is violating constitutional rights of men by sex discrimination.

The original lawsuit was filed in 2013 after the defense department announced an end to the ban on women in combat jobs. The federal Southern District of Texas court agreed that men-only registration was unconstitutional, but the Fifth Circuit reversed that ruling, which sent it for review by the Supreme Court. Should the high court overturn the previous ruling, that wouldn't automatically open the draft to women. It would likely go back to Congress, which wrote the law. That is hinted at in the filings, in which authors list options for Congress, from extending selective service registration to women, eliminating the registration requirement, basically abolishing the draft or coming up with a new system for ensuring military readiness.

Legislative proposals in recent years, including part of the 2016 defense spending bill, regarding registration of women have stalled out in Congress, over worries over traditional family roles for women and the viability of the Selective Service System itself. The system costs about \$23 million a year and studies been critical as to whether it would be effective if officials needed it to conduct a draft. There hasn't been a draft more than 45 years, and Pentagon officials roundly say they prefer the all-volunteer force over conscription.

Men between the ages of 18 and 25 who don't register for the draft face fines and even jail time. They could also be made ineligible for benefits such as student loans. But a group that strongly supports a return to the draft, the All-Volunteer Force Forum, and its head, retired Army Maj. Gen. Dennis Laich, told Military Times that while they support adding women to the Selective Service registration, having the courts decide the matter is a "slippery slope." "If the Supreme Court were to rule it is unconstitutional for men only to register, then the remedy falls to Congress to either do away with Selective Service altogether or require women to register," Laich said.

At a number of AVF Forum events since its 2013 founding, Laich said that attendees have voiced that specific concern — “no way are you going to draft my daughter.” That sentiment could sway elected leaders, Laich said. “Can you predict what’s going to happen with this Congress on anything, especially National Security issues?” Laich said. “I think it’s a risk that needs to be identified.” Laich said he’d rather see Congress take up the issue itself but past experience doesn’t support that move. In March 2020, the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service recommended in its report to Congress making women eligible for the draft.

“This is a necessary and fair step, making it possible to draw on the talent of a unified nation in a time of national emergency,” according to the report. Hayden, McChrystal and others on the supporting brief cite similar reasoning for their argument that not including women unfairly discriminates against both men and women and hurts military readiness in case of a draft. The report authors noted a 2016 Pentagon assessment that showed only about 30 percent of those aged 17 to 24 would be eligible to serve. Half of those eligible were women. “If the United States enters a war that requires mobilization of the draft, women will be necessary to meet the military’s needs,” according to the brief. The brief reviews the history, especially recent gains, of women in the military. Those include a 1990s end to the ban on women serving aboard Navy ships, the service of women in combat zones during recent wars, graduation and completion of rigorous, elite training such as the Army Ranger School, Special Forces selection, Navy SEAL officer assessment and selection and Marine Infantry Officers Course.

The Selective Service System was granted an extension to file its response until March 15. Should the Supreme Court take up the case it would likely be in the fall term, which begins in October. The other named retired general and flag officers who signed on supporting the

petition include: Army Lt. Gen. Claudia Kennedy, Army Maj. Gen. Randy Manner, Army Maj. Gen. Gale Pollock, Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Stephen Cheney, Air Force Brig. Gen. Carlos E. Martinez, Army Brig. Gen. Marianne Watson, Navy Rear Adm. John Hutson and Navy Rear Adm. Harold L. Robinson.

## **Atrial Fibrillation - What it is and how to deal with it**

<https://www.informedhealth.org> | January 28, 2021

### **Introduction**

Atrial fibrillation is an abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia). It is usually chronic. The heartbeat is continuously irregular and often so fast that the [heart](#) pumps less blood into the body. Atrial fibrillation is one of the most common types of irregular heart rate.

Atrial fibrillation isn’t immediately life-threatening. In the long term, though, it increases your risk of a [stroke](#). Thanks to various treatments, most people can live a normal life despite having atrial fibrillation.

### **Symptoms**

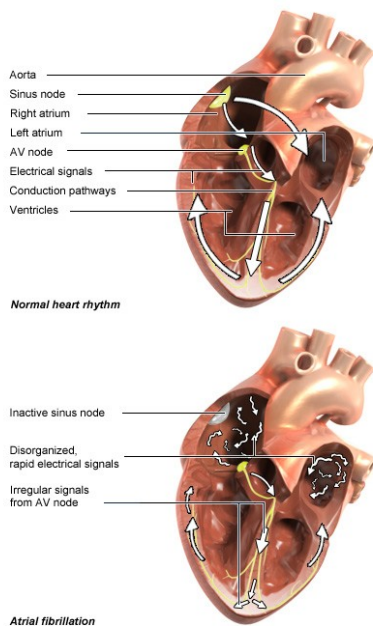
The most common symptom is a pounding or racing heart (palpitations) that can be felt in the chest or neck. The person's pulse is then usually higher and less regular than normal. A healthy resting heart rate usually ranges between 60 and 90 beats per minute. In people who have atrial fibrillation, this can increase to between 120 and 160 beats per minute.

Other possible symptoms include feeling weak, exhausted, light-headed and dizzy. But up to 30 out of 100 people don’t notice that they have atrial fibrillation.

People who also have other heart problems may have other symptoms as well. For instance, [heart failure](#) (cardiac insufficiency) can lead to shortness of breath and exhaustion, particularly during physical activity.

## Causes

Every time the [heart](#) beats, it contracts (squeezes) and pumps blood into the body. The heartbeat is regulated by electrical signals. The signal that starts a heartbeat is generated in the sinus node, which is found in the wall of the right atrium (the upper right chamber of the heart). This signal spreads like a wave across both atria (upper heart chambers), causing them to squeeze. The sinus node is sometimes described as the heart's "natural pacemaker." A normal heartbeat is known as the sinus rhythm.



In atrial fibrillation, the electrical signals spread across the upper chambers in a chaotic way. This makes them quiver ("fibrillate") uncontrollably.

The upper chambers of the heart usually help the lower chambers (ventricles) to fill up with blood. They provide about 20% of the heart's pumping power. In atrial fibrillation, the heart doesn't have this extra pumping power. The lower chambers still pump blood into the body, but not as much and in a less regular rhythm.

Atrial fibrillation can be caused by various things. The most common causes include:

- [High blood pressure](#)
- [Coronary artery disease](#)
- [Heart attack](#)
- [Heart failure](#) (this is sometimes caused by atrial fibrillation instead)

Sometimes atrial fibrillation is caused by a treatable condition such as a [leaky heart valve](#) or an [overactive thyroid gland](#). If that is the case, the atrial fibrillation might go away following heart valve surgery or thyroid treatment.

In about one third of all people who have atrial fibrillation, the cause remains unknown.

## Risk factors

The biggest risk factor is older age. It is estimated that about 2% of the total population and about 7% of people over the age of 65 are affected.

If you have close relatives (parents, brothers or sisters) who have atrial fibrillation, you are more likely to develop it yourself. Some types of heart surgery can cause atrial fibrillation too.

The risk factors that you can influence include the following:

- Alcohol (drinking too much or too regularly)
- [Smoking](#)
- [Diabetes](#)
- High blood pressure
- Being very overweight
- [Sleep apnea](#) (pauses in breathing during sleep)

## Outlook

Atrial fibrillation typically occurs in rare, short episodes at first. Over time, it can then gradually progress to longer episodes or permanent atrial fibrillation. There are four different types, depending on how long the episodes last:

- In **paroxysmal (“intermittent”) atrial fibrillation** the heart rhythm usually returns to normal on its own within about 48 hours. It can sometimes last up to seven days, though. Paroxysmal atrial fibrillation may occur only once or keep coming back in episodes.
- **Persistent atrial fibrillation** lasts longer than seven days.
- **Long-standing persistent atrial fibrillation** lasts longer than a year.
- **Permanent atrial fibrillation** is always present.

But this classification can only serve as a rough guideline: It often isn’t clear whether someone has already had episodes of atrial fibrillation in the past, or how long they have already had it for.

The main thing to know is that all types of atrial fibrillation increase the risk of a stroke. So the specific type of atrial fibrillation isn’t all that relevant when deciding whether or not to have treatment with [anticoagulants](#) (anti-clotting medication).

## Effects

Although atrial fibrillation can cause various noticeable symptoms, it is usually not an acutely life-threatening condition. But it can lead to various health problems in the long term. The main ones are:

- **Heart failure** (a weak heart, also known as cardiac insufficiency): If the atria (upper heart chambers) no longer squeeze properly, the rest of the heart has to work harder to provide the body with blood. This can become too much for the heart to handle, making it weaker over time. If someone already has heart failure, atrial fibrillation can make it worse.
- **Stroke**: In atrial fibrillation, the upper heart chambers no longer pump enough blood. As a result, it takes longer for

blood to pass through these chambers and it builds up there. This increases the likelihood of blood clots forming. If a [blood clot](#) is carried to the [brain](#) in the [bloodstream](#), it may block a blood vessel there and cause a stroke.

A person’s individual risk of stroke will depend on whether they have risk factors other than atrial fibrillation. People who have atrial fibrillation often have other medical conditions too, such as high blood pressure or coronary artery disease.

## Diagnosis

Various things can help to get an accurate diagnosis, find out the cause, and plan the treatment:

- **A talk about your medical history (anamnesis)**: The doctor asks questions about your symptoms, other medical conditions, age and family history, as well as risk factors for heart disease.
- **Physical examination**: This includes [measuring your pulse rate and blood pressure](#).
- **Electrocardiogram (ECG)**: An ECG measures the electrical activity that regulates the heartbeat. This is a reliable way to diagnose atrial fibrillation. [ECGs](#) can be done when you are at rest, exercising or over a period of 24 hours (Holter monitor).
- **Blood test**: Blood tests can be used to check various things, including [thyroid function](#). Atrial fibrillation is sometimes caused by an [overactive thyroid gland](#), or taking too high a dose of thyroid medication. The electrolytes (salts and minerals) in your blood can be measured too. Atrial fibrillation is sometimes associated with an electrolyte imbalance.
- **Ultrasound scan of the heart (echocardiography)**: This is commonly known as an “[echo](#).” It can be used to, for

example, see how big the heart chambers are and check for heart valve problems.

Some tests are particularly helpful when planning treatment: For example, [kidney](#) and [liver](#) function tests are important because some medications aren't suitable for people with kidney or liver problems.

Because atrial fibrillation doesn't always cause symptoms, it is sometimes discovered by chance, for instance if an ECG is done for a different reason.

## Prevention

There's a lot you can do yourself to keep your heart healthy – which helps to prevent atrial fibrillation too:

- Quit smoking
- Get more exercise
- Lose weight (if you're overweight)
- Eat less salt (if you have high blood pressure)
- Drink less alcohol

Research has shown, for instance, that people who have atrial fibrillation have fewer episodes if they generally avoid alcohol. One study also found that losing weight reduced the symptoms and frequency of atrial fibrillation episodes.

## Treatment

The treatments for atrial fibrillation have two main aims: One aim is to get rid of – or at least reduce – the symptoms caused by the irregular heartbeat. The other is to prevent strokes.

There are various medications for each of these aims, with their own advantages and disadvantages.

## Treating the symptoms

It is sometimes enough to reduce the too-high heart rate with medication – usually a beta blocker. This treatment takes the strain off the heart and helps to reduce the symptoms. It is referred to as heart rate control.

If that doesn't make a big enough difference, doctors can try to reset the rhythm of the heart. This approach is known as cardioversion. It attempts to stop the irregular quivering ("fibrillation") and restore a normal rhythm. Cardioversion is usually done in a hospital by delivering controlled electric shocks to the heart. But the rhythm of the heart may become irregular again afterwards. The risk of this happening can be reduced by treatment with medication or a procedure known as catheter ablation. This is a good idea if your risk is high, or if the atrial fibrillation has already returned several times.

In rare cases, atrial fibrillation can become dangerous and, for example, lead to a big drop in blood pressure. If that happens, the heart rhythm is usually quickly restored using controlled electric shocks.

## Stroke prevention

Most people who have atrial fibrillation are advised to take medication to prevent [strokes](#). Medications called [oral anticoagulants](#) reduce blood clotting and can greatly lower the risk of a stroke.

It is best to talk with your doctor about whether or not to use anticoagulants, and decide together. Here it is a good idea to carefully weigh the pros (stroke prevention) and cons (risk of bleeding). Your personal risk of a stroke and bleeding will depend on your personal risk factors. Special calculators can help to determine your risk.

## Everyday life

Most people aren't aware of their heart if it beats normally. That's different in people who

have atrial fibrillation: They often notice that their heart is not beating as it should. Many find this so worrying that they see a doctor about it. Being diagnosed with atrial fibrillation might come as a shock at first, but the symptoms can usually be effectively managed using various treatments. Patient education courses can be helpful too: Here people can learn how to cope with the condition in everyday life, and how to use their anticoagulant medication properly. The doctor will help you to apply for patient education.

But many people still feel worried. Some wonder whether they should try to avoid strenuous activities, and whether they can continue living as usual and do things like sports. There's no medical reason not to. Research has even shown that moderate exercise can improve your physical fitness. It's best to talk to your doctor about which type of exercise would be suitable.

### **Heart Defibrillators & Pacemakers Apple's iPhone 12 Impact**

ABC 10 News | WXYZ Staff | February 5, 2021



In electrophysiology we treat heart rhythm problems, such as when the heart becomes irregular, when it gets fast or when it gets slow. There are various ways to treat heart rhythm problems. If the heart rhythm gets very slow and it is not treatable with changes in medications then a pacemaker is needed. What a pacemaker does is keep the heart beating at the proper rate and from beating too slow. It also will only activate if it is needed, it is not shocking people all the time.

An implanted defibrillator is a bigger device. It is there to prevent death from a cardiac arrest. The device shocks the heart if it needs to be shocked, because of a life-threatening rhythm disturbance from the lower chambers of the heart. It can correct this rhythm. Because it has a pacemaker built into it, a defibrillator also has the capability of stimulating the heart like a pacemaker, to help stop fast rhythms, at times, and to prevent the heart from getting too slow. At any time, electrical fields or strong magnetic fields can influence the devices. People who work in power plants, or near alternators of cars, can be affected because they are exposed to heavy magnetic fields. People with pacemakers and defibrillators who use arc welding devices and other kinds of heavy energy that involve magnetism or electricity tend to have problems.

Cardiologists at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit say they discovered that the iPhone 12 has the ability to deactivate implantable cardiac devices when held too close to a person's chest. Apple's iPhone 12 series features a strong magnet to help maximize charging, which can cause issues with cardiac devices, according to a press release from Henry Ford. The health system says the phone's magnet can turn off heart defibrillators and can cause a pacemaker to deliver electrical impulses that could drive heartbeats out of sync. More than 300,000 people in the U.S. get one of these devices implanted every year, according to Henry Ford.

Cardiologists with the health system tested out their theory by holding an iPhone 12 close to a patient's chest. "When we brought the iPhone close to the patient's chest the defibrillator was deactivated," said Dr. Gurjit Singh, Henry Ford Heart & Vascular Institute cardiologist, in a press release. "We saw on the external defibrillator programmer that the functions of the device were suspended and remained suspended. When we took the phone away from the patient's chest, the defibrillator immediately returned to its normal function." Their findings were published in the medical

journal HeartRhythm in January and drew the attention of the FDA, the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation and Apple. Apple followed up by publishing the following warning on its website:

iPhone contains magnets as well as components and radios that emit electromagnetic fields. All MagSafe accessories (each sold separately) also contain magnets—and MagSafe Charger and MagSafe Duo Charger contain radios. These magnets and electromagnetic fields might interfere with medical devices.

Though all iPhone 12 models contain more magnets than prior iPhone models, they're not expected to pose a greater risk of magnetic interference to medical devices than prior iPhone models.

Medical devices such as implanted pacemakers and defibrillators might contain sensors that respond to magnets and radios when in close contact. To avoid any potential interactions with these devices, keep your iPhone and MagSafe accessories a safe distance away from your device (more than 6 inches / 15 cm apart or more than 12 inches / 30 cm apart if wirelessly charging). But consult with your physician and your device manufacturer for specific guidelines.

Consult your physician and medical device manufacturer for information specific to your medical device and whether you need to maintain a safe distance of separation between your medical device and iPhone or any MagSafe accessories. Manufacturers often provide recommendations on the safe use of their devices around wireless or magnetic products to prevent possible interference. If you suspect iPhone or any MagSafe accessories are interfering with

your medical device, stop using your iPhone or MagSafe accessories.

We provide more information on safety at [Important safety information for iPhone](#) in the iPhone User Guide.

Henry Ford says Singh and his coworkers plan to do a more comprehensive study of various brands of defibrillators and pacemakers and testing them against the magnet in the iPhone 12 and other devices. Singh and Henry Ford Health System advises that anyone who has an iPhone 12 or phones with magnetic cases or devices containing magnets should keep it at least 6 inches away from their chest at all times.

### **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, Mike Laborico and Dave Johnson. (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.



**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

# 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Valentine's Day	15 Presidents' Day	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Ash Wednesday	25	26	27
28	29					

# March

# 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Operation Rolling Thunder began (1965)	3	4 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Daylight Saving Time starts	15 Presidents' Day	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20 Spring begins
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Passover Begins
28	29 Vietnam Veterans Day	30	31 LBJ announced he would not run for re-election (1968)			

# April

# 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting  April Fools' Day  VVA-535 Elections (Pizza)	2 Good Friday	3
4 Easter	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Earth Day	23	24 Passover Begins
25	26	27	28	29	30 Saigon falls (1975)	