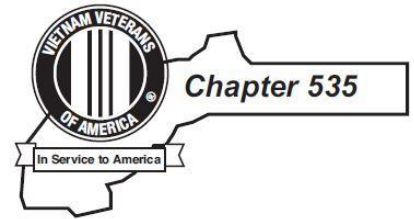




INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER 535



Website: www.vva535.org

Volume 31 Issue 9

September 2021

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 535 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE September 2021

Welcome to September!

Well we finished the Nevada County Fair with no casualties. A big thanks to everyone who participated. These events take a lot of personnel and scheduling to pull it off. Even though our location of the booth was not ideal we still had a number of people stop by and give us support. I am not sure today what the total was on the donations, but I am sure Ralph will have an accounting for us at our September meeting.

See you all September 2, 2021 at our general meeting.

Keith

Nevada County First Annual Military Appreciation Week

Nevada County is sponsoring a First Annual Military Appreciation Week to honor all Active Duty, Reservists, Retired, Veterans and Gold star Families in the County. The event is scheduled annually starting on the Saturday before Veterans day through the Sunday after

Veterans Day (November 6-14 this year) and we would like your support. The event is made possible with the support of the Beale AFB, local recruiting offices and the Nevada County Consolidated Veterans council. It will highlight Nevada County businesses who are offering discounts and other incentives to veterans during the week. Businesses can also offer discounts throughout the year. The County of Nevada Board of Supervisors will be proclaiming the event during the October 26th Board meeting presenting the resolution to our military partners and honoring veterans in Nevada County.

We will be creating an electronic list of all participating businesses and creating a distinctive logo for the event. This electronic list will be shared with our over 10,000 veterans who live in Nevada County, and over 15,000 Airmen and their families at Beale.

Additionally, we are working with local media outlets to highlight this unique County wide program so veterans outside of our local area can be made aware of your participation by the eye-catching logo prominently displayed at your business and the list which highlights your establishment. Participation in the program is free and not only benefits your business by attracting new customer and increasing sales but honor our veterans. To learn more about the program and have a representative reach out to you please visit: mynevadacounty.com/veterans or email militaryappreciation@co.nevada.ca.us

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 September 2, 2021

VVA Life Member Enrique Vazquez will share an overview of his military service.

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Upcoming Events

CSC Meeting – Visalia Aug. 27-28, 2021
NCCVC Meeting – September 2, 2021 (Hybrid??)
General Meeting – September 2, 2021
Director's Meeting – September 2, 2021
Nevada County Stand Down – Oct. 15, 16, 2021
VVA National Conference – Nov. 2- 6, 2021
VVA 535 Christmas Dinner – Dec. 2, 2021

WAA – St. Patrick's Cemetery – Dec. 18, 2021

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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 Keith Grueneberg
NCCVC Open
Speakers Bureau Dan Davis
Web Master Ralph Remick
Quartermaster Dick Corn
Facebook Master Mike Laborico
Nevada County Fair Open
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

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 Meeting of August 5, 2021

Final plans for the VVA 535 booth at the Nevada County Fair were discussed. All but two booth slots were filled.

Bart Ruud shared that he would attend the VVA Statewide Convention in Visalia. Chuck Holmes also indicated an interest in attending.

Discussion regarding Victorian Christmas was deferred to September or October.

VVA 535 stepped up with a \$500 contribution to the Hospitality House program for assisting homeless Veterans. Several VVA 535 members made individual contributions to offset the Chapter’s outlay. All contributions made between August 1- 11, 2021 will be matched, up to \$25,000 by Friends of Nevada County Military, and effort led by Life Member Fred Buhler.

President Keith shared that he will speak with County VSO David West regarding how VVA 535 might assist with the October Stand Down.

Bart Ruud shared a snippet of his Vietnam deployment as the NCOIC of a Counter Mortar Counter Battery Radar section in I Corps.

VA Long Term Care Update: Can Escalating Demand be Met?

MOAA Newsletter | René Campos | August 3, 2021

More of our loved ones who are getting older or have special medical needs requiring basic health care assistance are getting the help they require at home instead of in a facility or institutional setting. The VA has been expanding long-term care (LTC) services to veterans in the home or in a community setting, as have other public health care systems, as more veterans and their families’ desire to age in place. This comes at a time when the country has contended with widespread COVID-19 outbreaks in LTC facilities such as nursing homes while also dealing with the rapidly growing elderly population — one study estimated the growth in LTC employment between 2010 and 2030 at 79%.

Veterans rely on VA LTC for everything from occasional help around the house to around-the-clock care. Eligibility is primarily based on the extent of a service-connected disability. To gain a better perspective of veterans’ access to home and community-based services, the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Health conducted a hearing on 27 JUL to address what the chair, Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA) refers to as a “silver tsunami” – a massive wave of Americans and veterans requiring LTC, the scale of which is too big to ignore.”

While VA delivers 14 different types of LTC programs in both institutional settings (like community living centers or nursing homes), and non-institutional settings (like a veteran’s home or through community adult day care services), purchasing or providing the care is placing increased demand on the department’s health care system. “VA’s various LTC programs provide a continuum of services to help meet veterans’ needs over time,” Dr. Scotte Hartronft, VA’s executive director for geriatrics and extended care (GEC) told lawmakers. “VA recognizes more needs to be done to accelerate home care. It is also critical to continue providing the funds needed for moving forward on these programs.” From FY 2014 to FY 2018, demand for LTC increased 14% and VA’s expected spending went up 33%. The VA

projects demand will continue to grow, with spending set to double by 2037.

Know Your Care Options Today, VA's LTC programs serve 439,970 veterans — 73% are 65 years and older and 20% are 85 years or older. About 85% of veterans in the program are receiving care at home. Two newer extended care programs are the Veteran-Directed Care Program (VDCP) and Medical Foster Homes

- VDCP

(https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Veteran-Directed_Care.asp) is one of the more popular programs and garnered a lot of attention during the hearing as a potential model for delivery of other VA health care services. The program is for veterans of all ages enrolled in VA health care who meet the clinical need criteria for services. Veterans in VDCP are given a flexible budget from the VA to purchase services that they or a family caregiver can manage as they see fit – a unique approach among VA programs.

- Medical Foster Homes

(https://www.va.gov/Geriatics/pages/Medical_Foster_Homes.asp), on the other hand, are an alternative to a nursing home. Care is delivered to a small number of veterans and non-veterans in a private-home setting where trained caregivers provide care and supervision 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Most expenses for care fall on the veteran, their family, or a legal representative.

Barriers for Veterans Accessing LTC

Lawmakers focused extensively on a February 2020 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-20-284.pdf>) identifying three key challenges the VA faces in meeting the growing demand for LTC services. These issues aren't unique to the VA and are common in other health care systems nationwide:

- Workforce shortages. The VA continues to grapple with hiring and retaining geriatricians and palliative care providers, and with caregiving staff in other areas such as nursing assistant and health technician positions. Shortages contribute to growing wait lists for certain programs.

- Geographic alignment of care. The VA struggles to align its services to where veterans live because of demographic shifts in the veteran population. Providing care to veterans in rural areas is especially challenging because of the lack of adequate workforce and infrastructure to support the delivery of care.

- Difficulty meeting veterans' needs for specialty care. Finding appropriate LTC for veterans with dementia, behavioral health conditions, ventilator care, or other specialized needs is challenging and costly.

GAO noted the VA had yet to develop measurable goals to address these challenges. Brownley voiced concern during the hearing that the VA had not yet acted on GAO's recommendations, holding up a two page document representing GEC's Elder Care Strategic Plan from last year. "A plan without a plan is a plan to fail," she said; "The committee needs sufficient detail to be able to oversee and ensure goals are being accomplished."

Like MOAA, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation (EDF) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) support expanding LTC programs, including VDCP. Witnesses from these groups called attention to other barriers facing veterans and their caregivers and families at the hearing:

- Difficulty in finding and managing caregivers or home care workers. PVA gave one example of a quadriplegic veteran who had to interview more than 400 potential caregivers over a 10-year period. These workers are paid low wages. Agencies typically charge 20-25% above what a worker is paid, so if the VA authorizes \$20, the worker makes only \$12 or \$13 per hour.

- Caregivers are not integrated into VA's LTC programs. EDF talked about burnout of caregivers during the pandemic. VA's respite care is disjointed and needs to be easier to access. Caregivers help veterans stay in their homes, saving the VA from covering more expensive care in an institutional setting.

- VA LTC programs are not aligned to veterans' needs. Programs should put veterans and their caregivers at the center of health care like VDCP. That means building caregiving support around them, not a one-size-fits-all approach typical of the VA.

Subcommittee members were particularly baffled at why more VA medical centers have not adopted VDCP, especially as PVA testified that each medical center needs only a master level social worker to coordinate the program. VDCP is very popular and allows veterans and their families control over how benefit dollars will be spent. Hartront told members LTC is available in all medical centers except for the two newer programs, VDCP and Medical Foster Care. "We really are trying to expand VDCP as quickly as possible and communicating awareness of the program," he said, adding that the VA "can never over communicate with veterans on how they can access these programs." Currently only 69 of the 171 medical centers administer the program.

What Can Veterans and Their Caregivers Expect?

The challenges and desire to improve VA LTC programs did not fall on deaf ears with subcommittee members. Brownley warned the subcommittee would be watching and making sure the department accelerates its efforts to expand VDCP and other LTC programs. She also suggested reforms for all VA LTC programs were needed to integrate caregiver support, respite care, mental health, and telehealth services more fully within the continuum of care. "I want to put together a package of LTC

programs that works for veterans," she said. "It's about veterans having a one-stop-shop place to go to get the care they deserve."

VA Prostate Cancer Program Congress Should Increase Access to Care for Veterans

Military Times | Paul Taylor (Opinion) | August 6, 2021

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis among U.S. veterans, who are twice as likely to be diagnosed as men in the general public. In fact, one in five U.S. veterans are at risk for developing prostate cancer in their lifetime. Historical access to care issues within the VA, exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, have increased the impact of this disease among veterans, who are often not screened for prostate cancer until it's too late. Even when cancer is identified, the Department of Veterans Affairs lacks an adequate plan to protect veterans from this deadly disease. It is critical that Congress acts now by increasing access to preventative prostate cancer care and mandating the creation of a standardized clinical treatment pathway within the VA to help ensure that more veterans do not unnecessarily die from prostate cancer.

Veterans and active military servicemembers know the importance of having a clear plan of attack for defeating your enemies. For Col. Paul Taylor (Ret.) that became even more apparent when he was diagnosed with stage IV prostate cancer in 2012. At the time, he was only 41 years old, and was serving as a commander in the Army's 101st Airborne Division. After the initial shock of a cancer diagnosis, his military training kicked in, helping him figure out his next steps and his plan for fighting cancer. His treatment at that point had included hormone therapy, chemotherapy, surgery, and immunotherapy, which had helped him hold the disease in check.

By establishing a clinical pathway for prostate cancer through the VA, lawmakers could

provide a clear plan of attack and support for veterans fighting prostate cancer. Legislation should address all stages of prostate cancer, from early detection to end-of-life care. Congressional action would also help draw attention to veterans who are at an elevated risk for the disease due to evidence-based risk factors, like race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family history. A clinical pathway would also lead to the development of a suggested protocol for prostate screening, diagnosis, treatment, or care based on severity and stage of cancer to provide veterans with all-inclusive support for the disease.

Veterans are an extremely high-risk patient population for developing prostate cancer. The United States has an aging veteran population and many veterans have been exposed to herbicides, such as Agent Orange — two factors that further increase the risk for prostate cancer. Black men are 1.8 times more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer and 2.2 times more likely to die from prostate cancer, highlighting the disparate impact of prostate cancer on Black veterans, who are most at risk for the disease. There are already nearly 489,000 prostate cancer patients in the VA health care system, and 16,000 of these patients have metastatic prostate cancer, meaning the cancer has spread to other parts of their bodies. With many men catching up on regular prostate check-ups now, the number of prostate cancer patients within the VA is expected to rise. Early detection of prostate cancer is critical for improving treatment and survival rates. Congress has the power to expand access to prostate cancer care and help protect veterans. As we appreciate the sacrifices our veterans make, let's honor them by improving health care services for veterans and passing crucial legislation to increase prostate cancer care in the VA.

USS Bonhomme Richard Sailor Accused Of Starting Fire Identified In Warrant

Military Times | Geoff Ziezulewicz | August 4, 2021



Seaman Apprentice Ryan Sawyer Mays identified as the sailor accused of setting fire to the amphibious assault ship on July 12, 2020

A federal search warrant affidavit unsealed this week has identified the sailor suspected of starting the 2020 fire aboard the amphibious assault ship Bonhomme Richard as Seaman Apprentice Ryan Sawyer Mays, a SEAL training washout who some shipmates said “hates” the Navy. The affidavit by Naval Criminal Investigative Service Agent Maya Kamat was filed 3 AUG to compel Google to grant access to Mays’ Gmail account.

The Navy on 29 JUL announced arson and hazarding a vessel charges against a sailor for starting the multiday fire that began on July 12, 2020, as the ship was undergoing maintenance in San Diego. While the Navy declined to identify the sailor ahead of an Article 32 hearing that will help determine whether the case goes to trial, a motion filed Tuesday by government prosecutors asking to unseal the affidavit involving Mays states that “a sailor was arrested and charged” in connection to the investigation and that the affidavit should be made public so that it can be disclosed to that sailor’s defense team. A defense official has confirmed to Navy Times that Mays is the sailor against whom the Navy has preferred charges.

The affidavit for the first time reveals information about the sailor accused of starting the fire and suggests that key firefighting stations may have been tampered with, hindering efforts to extinguish the inferno, which burned for four days and left dozens of military and civilians firefighters injured, according to the affidavit. That document also reveals that investigators found plastic bottles containing fuel near the fire's origin site. Mays, 20, told investigators he did not start the fire and was being "setup," according to the affidavit. A Kentucky native, Mays could not be reached for comment and began a new assignment with Amphibious Squadron 5 in April, according to his service record. 51

His civilian attorney, Gary Barthel, said his client remains on a regular duty status and is innocent of the charges. Barthel said Mays retained him in September 2020 and that his client was held in the brig for 56 days last year. "My client has always maintained his innocence and denies any wrongdoing with regard to the fire aboard the Bonhomme Richard," Barthel told Navy Times. According to the affidavit unsealed this week, Seaman Kenji Velasco reported that he was standing watch near the ramp down to the Lower V storage area of the ship at about 8 a.m. July 12, 2020, when he saw a sailor wearing coveralls and a mask carry a bucket down into the Lower V about five minutes before the first reports of smoke emerged, according to the affidavit.

Velasco later said, "he was 'fairly sure' and '90% sure'" that it was Mays, the affidavit states. "I love deck," the sailor "sarcastically stated" while passing Velasco, a phrase the sailor knew Mays to say, according to the affidavit. Velasco told investigators that Mays "'hates' the U.S. Navy and the Fleet," according to the affidavit. "Velasco further explained that after the fire on the BHR, he was attending a muster at the base theater, when he asked MAYS if he had gone to the Lower V before the fire started," the affidavit states. "According to Velasco, MAYS replied, 'yes.'"

In an interview with NCIS agents, Mays "repeatedly denied having started the fire on the BHR or having been in the Lower V on the day of the fire," the affidavit states. "He maintained his innocence as to being the cause of the fire throughout the entire interview," it continues. "At one point, after being told that he had been identified as having descended the ramp to the Lower V, before the fire started, Mays stated that he was being setup." About six days after the fire began, investigators determined that it originated in the Lower V. No one reported seeing any sailors come back up the ramp out of the Lower V after the sailor Velasco believed to be Mays went down there the morning of the fire, according to the affidavit. Other sailors surmised that Mays "could have went up the escape truck, went into the deck berthing area, and took his coveralls off while wearing his cammies underneath," the affidavit states.

While Mays initially told investigators that anyone in the Lower V during a fire would be "f*****" because the only way back to the Upper V was the ramp, he eventually admitted knowing about other exit points from the Lower V. "MAYS admitted he had traversed at least one of the two conflagration station ladders where he learned to 'skate off and hide' from work," the affidavit states. Mays joined the Navy in 2019 and started BUD/S training to become a SEAL in October 2019 but dropped out after five days, according to the affidavit. He was reassigned to Bonhomme Richard as an undesignated seaman. "According to Navy leadership, the morale and behavior of sailors who had aspired to become a SEAL, and then find themselves serving in a more traditional role on a Navy ship, are frequently very challenging," the affidavit states.

On 21 JUL, Command Master Chief Jose Hernandez "identified MAYS as a person who showed disdain towards authority and the U.S. Navy," according to the affidavit. The affidavit also cites a 14 JUN Instagram post of a shirtless Mays which stated, "I love the smell of napalm in

the morning.” Mays would later tell investigators it was a reference to the iconic line from the Vietnam War movie “Apocalypse Now,” according to the affidavit. Navy Chief Lino Aguilarbarron told investigators on Aug. 12, 2020, that he had spoken with Mays on an unknown date after the fire, and that Mays said he had been in the Lower V that day to store some hoses. “Mays stated he did not see anything in the Lower V that would have ignited the fire by itself, more likely the fire was started by someone,” Aguilarbarron told investigators, according to the affidavit.

During a 10-hour interview with NCIS agents on Aug. 20, 2020, Mays said “he was training for special operations and planned to reapply to become a member of the SEAL teams,” the affidavit states. He also said he mustered the day of the fire with the rest of his duty section on the flight deck at about 8 a.m. and was in the hangar bay when he became aware of the fire, according to the affidavit. During that interview, Mays recalled a conversation after the fire among deck department sailors in which they talked about seeing an individual in coveralls and a mask carrying a bucket into the Lower V before the blaze started. “Investigators had not previously mentioned during the course of the interview that the individual had been seen wearing a mask,” the affidavit states. “At one point MAYS told investigators the witness could not have identified him because, ‘I had a face mask on.’”

He was arrested after his interview and booked into the Navy brig aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California. During the booking process, two masters-at-arms “heard MAYS say (unmasked) that he was guilty, seemingly talking to himself,” the affidavit states. After learning this, NCIS agents brought Mays back in for requisitioning that same day, but “MAYS denied he was guilty and denied having said so,” the affidavit states. Mays asked to take a polygraph test and one was administered on Aug. 21, 2020. “When he was informed of the possible deception indications, MAYS became extremely

upset and denied any involvement in starting the fire,” the affidavit states.

Investigators discovered plastic bottles near the fire’s origin that contained “heavy petroleum distillates,” which can include diesel, kerosene and jet fuel, according to the affidavit. That affidavit also contains insight from Bonhomme Richard officers suggesting that the Lower and Upper V firefighting stations had been tampered with before the fire. A few weeks after the fire, the ship’s damage control assistant, Lt. Cmdr. Felix Perez, walked through the Upper and Lower V compartments with investigators and stated that three of the four firefighting stations in those areas “were not in their normal configuration,” the affidavit states. “One station located on the port side of the Upper V did not have any hoses connected to the firefighting station,” the record states.

“Perez stated that, regardless of maintenance status, there should have been hoses on the racks with at least one hose connected to the fire station,” the affidavit states. Other Upper V hoses were found cut during initial firefighting efforts, and Perez reported that four months earlier at another ship location, “a fire hose was found cut,” according to the affidavit. Perez said his team walked the spaces for inspection on July 10, 2020, two days before the fire, and that while one station might have been overlooked, it was “nearly impossible for three of the four closest to and inside the Lower V to have been missed.” “Perez opined that three of the four fire stations aboard BHR appeared to have been purposely tampered with and/or disconnected,” the affidavit states.

Mays told investigators he broke off a relationship with a pregnant female sailor after he found out he was not the father, according to the affidavit. That woman told investigators she never became pregnant and “described MAYS as being volatile and ‘bipolar,’” it states. A few weeks before the fire, CMC Hernandez told investigators that Mays was caught sleeping in berthing during his duty day on July 5, 2020. He

was awoken by a contractor and reacted by “verbally confronting the contractor in an aggressive way, causing the contractor to report the incident to Navy personnel,” according to the affidavit. Mays told a NCIS special agent that he had taken a picture of the fire with his phone, and that he felt “a small amount of adrenaline and anxiety,” when he learned about the fire, according to the affidavit.

The agent requested the affidavit be sealed when it was filed last fall because “MAYS is not aware of the full extent of the investigation,” and if he was, the agent feared he would seek to evade prosecution and destroy evidence.

Drone Defense

Air Force Counters to Wipe Out Swarms

Task & Purpose | David Roza | August 5, 2021



One of the biggest threats to U.S. troops abroad isn't a stealth fighter, a nuclear missile, or a massive cyberattack. It's a swarm of cheap drones that can overwhelm the expensive defense systems troops have on hand now. “I'm talking about the [drone] you can go out and buy at Costco right now in the United States for a thousand dollars, four quad, rotorcraft or something like that that can be launched and flown,” Marine Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, the head of U.S. Central Command said last summer. “And with very simple modifications, it can be made into something that can drop a weapon like a hand grenade or something else.”

In sufficient numbers, those drones can spy on friendly bases, destroy infrastructure and attack personnel, explained the Air Force Research Laboratory in a recent video. How? Because machine guns don't have the range or accuracy to destroy the nimble fliers; anti-aircraft missiles are too expensive to use on the cheap devices; and most military bases don't have enough missiles to destroy an entire swarm. Enter Thor, the Norse god of Thunder, who serves as the namesake to one of the Air Force's newest weapons. While the Air Force's Tactical High Power Operational Responder (THOR) may not look like a hero, it could save the day for American troops if their far-flung combat outposts are ever attacked by hundreds of cheap kamikaze-style enemy drones.

THOR, video at <https://youtu.be/QjHGxKb6W1c>, isn't much to look at. The weapon consists of a big satellite dish mounted on top of a 20-foot long shipping crate. But simplicity is a virtue, as the weapon can be transported easily aboard a C-130 transport plane and set up within three hours by a crew of two, according to the Air Force Research laboratory, which is leading the development of THOR. Once THOR is set up, it can detect an incoming threat and silently shoot a beam of energy to knock out drones in a wide target area, exactly like what you might find in a drone swarm. The beam is a high-powered microwave that instantly triggers a counter-electronic effect in the targeted drone. AFRL boasted that the system took out hundreds of drones in real-world tests. That real world setting may have been somewhere in Africa, where the Air Force tested out THOR starting in December. “I've watched it in action and it's really quite impressive,” said Air Force chief scientist Richard Joseph at the time. The Air Force has been testing THOR since at least 2019, and now the branch wants to make it even better.

Last week, the Air Force Research Laboratory announced that it wants to develop Mjolnir (pronounced mee-yol-neer), a weapon that will

do the same thing as THOR but at a higher level. In Norse mythology, Mjolnir is Thor's hammer, with which he slays many a great foe. "Because THOR was so successful, we wanted to keep the new system's name in the THOR family," said Amber Anderson, THOR program manager, in a press release about Mjolnir. Mjolnir will use the same technology, but will be more advanced in terms of "capability, reliability, and manufacturing readiness," the Air Force Research Laboratory explained in a recent press release. That last part, "manufacturing readiness," means the branch hopes private businesses will help the Air Force produce "large quantities" of the system. The Air Force lab hopes to deliver a prototype of Mjolnir by 2023, but the sooner the better, since top military thinkers are already ringing alarm bells over America's adversaries developing drone swarm technology.

"Small, fully autonomous GPS-programmable drones can be purchased online by anyone for a few hundred dollars," wrote the Center for New American Security in a recent press release. "Outfitted with small explosives, chemical or biological weapons, they could be converted into short-range precision weapons."

- Just two years ago, Houthi fighters in Yemen used drones to fly past Saudi Arabian missile defense systems and hit the oil processing facilities at Khurais and Abqaiq, the largest such facility in the world. The attack sent oil prices soaring and was a wake-up call for national security experts. "It was the first instance of a mass-drone attack and the highest number of drones that I believe we've seen non-state actors use simultaneously in a combat operation," Paul Scharre, vice president of the Center for New American Security and an expert on autonomous weapons, told the Guardian. In 2017, ISIS fighters also used small, commercially available drones to drop mortar rounds onto Iraqi security forces during the battle for Mosul.

- Last fall, drones also drew headlines for their role in the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. "[Unmanned aerial vehicles] were operationally integrated with fires from manned aircraft and land-based artillery but also frequently used their own ordnance to destroy various high-value military assets," including Armenian T-72 tanks and S300 air defenses, according to an analysis of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by the Center for Strategic & International Studies. The U.S., with its multi-billion dollar jets and ships, worries that its expensive platforms may suffer a similar fate.

"Although an individual low-cost drone may be powerless against a high-tech system like the F-35 stealth fighter, a swarm of such drones could potentially overwhelm high-tech systems, generating significant cost-savings and potentially rendering some current platforms obsolete," wrote the Congressional Research Service in a 2020 report. To counter such a threat, the military needs a weapon that can hit the target and won't run out of ammo as the swarm approaches.

Nets or shotguns might be promising options, but those methods are effective only within a range of a few dozen meters, researchers said in a recent report titled Directed Energy Futures 2060. THOR's range remains unclear, but researchers said in the report that counter-drone directed energy weapons have a range of about one kilometer. While THOR is a directed-energy weapon, it's not the same as a laser, Breaking Defense said. A laser can knock out one drone at a time, but THOR can swat down entire swarms in a single shot. "If anti-drone lasers are like sniper rifles, microwave weapons are like shotguns full of birdshot," the site wrote last year.

But there may be even crazier anti-drone energy weapons coming down the pike. The goal of a directed energy weapon system is to produce a counter-missile and counter-drone system that's so effective, fast and affordable that it

basically acts like a force field against incoming threats, according to the Directed 56 Energy Futures 2060 report. It's not quite like the deflector shields in Star Wars, but if it stops threats from coming through, then what's the difference?

"We're painting with broad strokes, but we're diving into what missions of the future will look like," Jeremy Murray-Krezan, the directed energy deputy chief scientist for the Air Force Research Laboratory, according to Breaking Defense. "The technology is not quite Star Wars, but we're getting close."

Constipation Update Eleven Foods That Cause It

Cheapism | Scott Nyerges | July 19, 2021

Constipation isn't any fun. Our bowel movements are supposed to be easy, regular, and without much effort on our parts. In fact, when you're eating right, it shouldn't be a problem having regular bowel movements that pass effortlessly. You should be enjoying the time we get alone on the toilet, maybe reading a book or doing a crossword puzzle. You shouldn't be straining and striving to get out a few little pieces. Your stool should be healthy-looking, come out quickly, and not cause any pain or harm when it's exciting.

So, how do you achieve this? You simply change your diet. You get out all the bad stuff that is making it hard to poop, and you replace those foods with real foods that make pooping regular, easy, and effortless. We're supposed to be eating plenty of fiber, drinking water, and exercising regularly. All these things help with bowel movements. But, if you're eating the wrong foods, you still might have trouble. Following are eleven of the 21 top foods that cause constipation. You should remove these from your diet as soon as you can so you can get back to enjoying your daily bathroom routine.

1. Bananas

Bananas are a food that many people know can cause bowel irregularities. You may be alright if you eat one banana, but for banana fanatics, it may be best to curb the habit. Many new mothers make the mistake of giving their babies bananas as a first food, but this may not be a good idea if the infant does not have diarrhea. Try mashed carrots instead of an avocado. Bananas may cause constipation when they are unripe, but when they are ripe, they can actually help get things moving.

2. White Rice

If you eat sushi because it is healthy, you may be getting plenty of protein, vitamins, and minerals from the fish, vegetables, and seaweed, but the white rice may be causing a problem for your bowels. However, not all rice causes constipation, but only white rice. This means that if you eat whole grain brown rice, you may not be causing irregularities, but can be encouraging healthy elimination. The husks of the rice are where many of the nutrients are, so eat rice in its natural form. There are many varieties of whole grain rice, and you can even use it to make sushi.

3. Gluten

Gluten isn't bad for everyone. However, for those with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, the substance that exists in many grains can keep the bowels from moving properly. Constipation is one of the telltale signs of gluten sensitivity, and many people don't realize they have an allergy to gluten, but may feel that the issue is with their bowels. Consuming grains may be the cause of constipation, and this can be confirmed by going to a specialist who can pinpoint allergies. Fortunately, there are plenty of gluten-free products on the market.

4. Persimmons

If you enjoy persimmon pudding with a dollop of whipped cream or like to eat large persimmons raw and sliced, beware of eating too many because they can cause constipation. However, not all persimmons are created equal when it comes to bowel health. The soft, sweet persimmons, particularly the small variety, used for persimmon pulp for baking may be fine for the bowels. However, the less sweet, larger persimmons that are eating raw have tannins that may keep you from eliminating. Having a persimmon once in a while may not be problematic, but avoid eating too many of the less sweet ones.

5. Caffeinated Beverages

Most people know coffee and other caffeinated beverages are diuretics that can stimulate the urinary tract and bowels, so it might be surprising to learn they can also leave to constipation. In people who are already dehydrated, substances in coffee, black tea, and some sodas can worsen symptoms. If you are already dehydrated, coffee or tea can keep you from having a bowel movement, so drink plenty of water. Try having iced tea in the summertime, which combines caffeine and water, but make sure you drink fresh water without tea as well.

6. Red Meat

Beef may be rich in protein, minerals, and iron, but beware of eating too much of it. There are several reasons why that juicy steak you had last night may be keeping you from having a bowel movement the morning after. The high iron content in meat can keep the bowels

from moving and the high fat can slow down the digestion. In addition, the type of protein in meat is tough which can also make it hard to digest.

7. Alcohol

Many people like to have some beer, wine, or whiskey to relax, celebrate or simply to enhance a meal. However, alcohol can cause constipation or make it worse in some circumstances. Alcohol is a depressant, which means it slows down your system. This includes the digestive system, and alcohol may keep the food from moving through your digestive system efficiently. In addition, alcohol dehydrates the body, and dehydration is the main cause of constipation. If you are going to drink alcohol, make sure you stay hydrated with water or juice. This will not only prevent constipation but can keep you from having a hangover.

8. Gum

You may have heard the old wives tale that if you swallow a piece of gum it takes many years to digest. However, what is true is that if you consume gum, you are not doing your digestive tract any favors. Accidentally swallowing a piece of gum now and again may not hurt you, but if a child intentionally swallows multiple pieces of gum, they could experience severe constipation. That is one good reason for not allowing the gum to very young children until you can be certain they will not swallow pieces.

9. Chocolate

The fact that chocolate can cause or aggravate constipation can be disappointing for many people since chocolate is a favorite food. Chocolate slows down the digestive system and can interfere with peristalsis, or the muscle

movements that coax food through your system. Doctors often warn their patients with Irritable Bowel syndrome to avoid chocolate. If you don't have this condition but are concerned about avoiding constipation, you may not have to give up chocolate entirely but should cut down at least a bit.

10. Supplements

Taking supplements can make it easy to get the vitamins and minerals you need. However, there are a number of problems that can arise from relying on supplements. Large doses of calcium and iron can exacerbate or cause constipation. People at risk for osteoporosis, such as women over the age of 40 may need to take calcium supplements and those with anemia and pregnant women require extra iron. If this is the case, consume extra fiber or prunes to counteract the effects of the supplements on your bowels. You can take half a pill and get the rest of the nutrients from food.

11. White Flour

Grains don't have to be an issue for your bowels as long as you consume whole grains. The problem with white flour is that it strips wheat of most of its fiber, vitamins, and minerals that keep your digestive tract regular and can improve general health. There are many reasons it is a good idea to choose to eat whole grains whenever you can. Even if you do eat white flour from time to time, counteract the effect by consuming some whole bran or eating bran flakes for breakfast. Make sure the flour you use is genuine whole wheat.

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 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 November 1, 1955 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 2021

August

2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Gulf of Tonkin Incident (1964)	3	4 Coast Guard Birthday (1790)	5 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	6	7 Purple Heart Medal Established (1782) Vietnam War Began (1964)
8 Nixon resigns (1974)	9	10	11	12	13	14 Japan Surrendered Ending WW II (1945) National Navajo Code Talkers Day
15	16 National Airborne Day	17	18	19 National Aviation Day	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

September

2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting VJ Day: Japan signed formal surrender (1945)	3	4
5	6 Labor Day Rosh Hashanah Begins	7	8	9	10	11 Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance
12 Grandparents Day	13	14 Star- Spangled Banner written by Francis Scott Key (1814)	15 Yom Kippur begins	16	17 Constitution Day - US Constitution Approved (1787) Citizenship Day POW/MIA Recognition Day	18 Air Force Birthday
19	20 National POW Recognition Day	21	22 Autumn Begins	23	24	25
26 Gold Star Mothers Day	27	28	29 VFW Day VFW Established 1899	30		

October

2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting Afghanistan War Began (2001)	8	9
10	11 Columbus Day (observed)	12	13 Navy Birthday (1775)	14	15 Stand Down National Boss Day	16 Stand Down
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 United Nations Day	25	26	27 Navy Day	28	29 CSC - Visalia	30 CSC Visalia
31 Halloween						