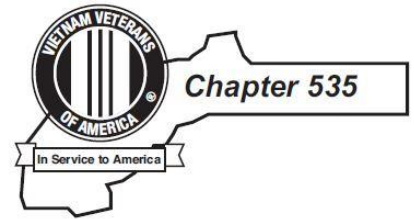




# INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
**CHAPTER 535**



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

Volume 32 Issue 6

June 2022

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
CHAPTER 535  
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE  
June 2022**

Spring is here, although it feels more like summer.

Time to start thinking about wildfire prevention. Take a good look around your property; hopefully you are ready.

If you, or veterans in need, could use a helping hand, please contact me or one of the Chapter 535 Officers or Board Members.

A helping hand is just that, not major lot clearing. More like weed eating, trash hauling and such.

We could use some help in scheduling speakers for our monthly meetings. If you know of someone that would like to share their story or if you would like to take the time to let us know more about your service, or anything of interest, please contact me.

We are easily entertained!

Good article and pictures in the Nevada County Union about the dedication of the Vietnam

Memorial Bridge on the South Fork of the Yuba River at Highway 49.

Thank you, Keith and Ralph!!

Dave Chaix, President

### **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.

Pg. 1 President’s Message  
Pg. 1 Mission Statement  
Pg. 2 Table of Contents  
Pg. 2 Upcoming events  
Officers, Directors & Committee  
Chairs  
Pg. 3 Matters of Interest  
Pg. 4 B 1-B Bomber Fire  
Pg. 5 Sniper Rifle  
Pg. 6 How to Avoid Probate  
Pg. 7 Javelin Missile  
Pg. 8 Hamburger Hill  
Pg. 10 Iconic Watch of WW II  
Pg. 9 Russian Tank Decapitation  
Pg. 12 Writing Your Story  
Pg. 13 VVA Application  
Pg. 14 Calendars

**Upcoming Events**

- Memorial Day – May 30, 2022  
NCCVC Meeting – June 2, 2022  
VVA General Meeting – June 2, 2022  
Flag Day – June 14, 2022  
CSC meeting: June 16 -18, 2022 - Visalia  
June 25, 2022 – Chili Cookoff  
July 2, 2022 – Penn Valley Gateway Park  
Community fun day. VVA 535  
Food Booth chaired by Jose  
Gonzales  
July 4, 2022 Parade – Bill Slade deuce & a half  
Nevada County Fair – August 10-14, 2022  
CSC: August 19 – 21, 2022 - Visalia  
CSC: Oct 14-16, 2022 - Visalia  
October 16 – 22, 2022 VSO Conference, Gold  
Country Inn, Grass Valley  
December 1, 2022 – Christmas potluck dinner

**Chapter 535 Officers**

President David Chaix  
dmcb402@gmail.com  
1-530-269-1431

Vice-President Keith Grueneberg  
kgberg0178@sbcglobal.net  
916-425-1121

**Table of Contents**

Treasurer  
Ralph Remick ..... 530-559-7716  
Secretary  
Bart Ruud ..... 530-305-0493

**Directors**

Dick Corn ..... 530-277-8856  
Enrique Vasquez .....530-575-4416  
Ray James .....530-478-1126  
Ric Sheridan .....530-274-1413  
Corbin Smith ..... 916-833-7860

**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 2021  
Nominations ..... Ralph Remick  
Veterans Assistance..... Dave Chaix  
NCCVC ..... Open  
Speakers Bureau ..... Ray James  
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**

David West II  
Nevada County Veterans Service Officer  
988 McCourtney Rd.  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
[David.West@co.nevada.ca.us](mailto:David.West@co.nevada.ca.us)  
(530) 265-1446 (Office)  
(530) 913-5046 (Cellphone)

“Walk-In” opportunities are available M – F.

**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. The  
Auburn office, at 11562 B Avenue, Auburn, CA 95603, is now open every  
Tuesday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.. The Carnelian Bay  
office, at 5252 N Lake Blvd, Carnelian Bay, CA 96140, is now open every

## **Matters of Interest as outlined at Meeting of May 5, 2022**

A chili cookoff, sponsored by Welcome Home Vets, is scheduled for June 25, 2022. Jose Gonzales and Keith Grueneberg will prepare an entry. Additional help is needed.

A "Resource Closet" with clothing, hygiene products, tents, sleeping bags, etc., has been set up by County VSO David West. Contributions are needed.

Carl Cieslikowski will present the VVA wreath at local Memorial Day activities scheduled at the Veterans Hall.

A community fun day is scheduled at Western Gateway Park, Penn Valley, for July 2, 2022. Carl Cieslikowski is among the planners for this event.

Armed Forces Day, May 21, will see a host of activities scheduled for downtown Grass Valley.

### **Guest Speaker for June 2, 2022**

Unknown at this time.

### **County VSO Resource Closet Needs**

Sleeping bags, duffel bags, small lightweight tents, socks, briefs/bras, tee shirts (white/olive drab), sweatshirts, sweatpants, jeans, shoes, boots hygiene supplies, grocery store gift cards, gas cards, blankets.

These kinds of items will become components of life packs to assist those in need that are seen by staff at VSO David West's office. Thank you for your assistance with this project.

## **History of Armed Forces Day**

On August 31, 1949, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson announced the creation of an Armed Forces Day to replace separate Army, Navy and Air Force Days. The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the Armed Forces under one Department, the Department of Defense. Each of the military leagues and orders was asked to drop sponsorship of its specific service day in order to celebrate the newly announced Armed Forces Day. The Army, Navy and Air Force leagues adopted the newly formed day. The Marine Corps League declined to drop support for Marine Corps Day but supports Armed Forces Day, too.

In a speech announcing the formation of the day, President Truman praised the work of the military services at home and across the seas and said, "it is vital to the security of the nation and to the establishment of a desirable peace."

In an excerpt from the Presidential Proclamation of Feb. 27, 1950, Mr. Truman stated: "Armed Forces Day, Saturday, May 20, 1950, marks the first combined demonstration by America's defense team of its progress, under the National Security Act, towards the goal of readiness for any eventuality. It is the first parade of preparedness by the unified forces of our land, sea, and air defense. "

The theme of the first Armed Forces Day was "Teamed for Defense." It was chosen as a means of expressing the unification of all the military forces under a single department of the government. Although this was the theme for the day, there were several other purposes for holding Armed Forces Day. It was a type of "educational program for civilians," one in which there would be an increased awareness of the Armed Forces.

It was designed to expand public understanding of what type of job is performed and the role of the military in civilian life. It was a day for the military to show "state-of-the-art" equipment to

the civilian population they were protecting. And it was a day to honor and acknowledge the people of the Armed Forces of the United States.

According to a New York Times article published on May 17, 1952: "This is the day on which we have the welcome opportunity to pay special tribute to the men and women of the Armed Forces ... to all the individuals who are in the service of their country all over the world. Armed Forces Day won't be a matter of parades and receptions for a good many of them. They will all be in line of duty and some of them may give their lives in that duty."

The first Armed Forces Day was celebrated by parades, open houses, receptions and air shows. In Washington D.C., 10,000 troops of all branches of the military, cadets and veterans marched past the President and his party. In Berlin, 1,000 U.S. troops paraded for the German citizens at Tempelhof Airfield. In New York City, an estimated 33,000 participants initiated Armed Forces Day "under an air cover of 250 military planes of all types." In the harbors across the country were the famed mothballed "battlewagons" of World War II, the Missouri, the New Jersey, the North Carolina and the Iowa, all open for public inspection. Precision flying teams dominated the skies as tracking radar were exhibited on the ground. All across the country, the American people joined together to honor the Armed Forces.

### **New Details on Last Month's Massive B-1B Bomber Fire**

Air Force Times | Rachel S. Cohen | April 21, 2022



The fire chief at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, on 10 MAY provided the first public recounting of the effort to extinguish a burning B-1B Lancer bomber after its engine caught fire last month. In a 10 MAY release, Chief Master Sgt. Charles Clawson of the 7th Civil Engineer Squadron described the seven-minute emergency response, which began at 10:03 p.m. when the base's fire and emergency services unit responded to a report of a B-1B ablaze on the flightline. Flames engulfed the bomber's entire left side and stretched as high as 75 feet into the air, Clawson said. Firefighters believed the blaze was coming from one of the stealth jet's four engines, which had exploded during routine maintenance.

The first firefighters pulled up at 10:05 p.m. One unit armed with 3,000 gallons of water took aim at the No. 1 engine from the front of the bomber. Two other crews on either side of the jet also worked to push flames away from the fuselage and extinguish fires on the ground. The fire died out at 10:10 p.m. A video posted to the "Air Force Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AFamnnco> on 21 APR shows fire billowing from a B-1B while a few people scramble near the flames. The Air Force has not confirmed the video's authenticity. Two maintainers were hurt in the incident but did not need to be rescued, Clawson wrote. Their injuries were not life-threatening, and they were treated at a nearby hospital and released, the wing said at the time.

Clawson noted the Lancer fire provided the chance for first responders to put new training into action, after being slow to adjust to more advanced fire trucks purchased in 2020. Multiple brake and hydraulic fires on base since early 2021 helped them hone new tactics before they faced a major emergency last month. "The firefighters at Dyess AFB have a new outlook on the effectiveness of ultra-high pressure firefighting vehicles," he wrote. "Their new tactics have shown their capability to extinguish a major fire in minimal time."

The Air Force currently owns around 40 B-1Bs, which do not carry nuclear weapons, and is in the process of retiring the fleet. It received its first B-1B in 1985 and first deployed it in combat against Iraq in 1998. The planes are based at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, and at Dyess. B-1Bs have been plagued by safety issues, from ejection seat woes to fuel tank problems. In 2018, a four-member Lancer crew received the Distinguished Flying Cross for safely landing their bomber while its wing was on fire. The Air Force has not released further details on the condition of the bomber that caught fire in April or what may have caused the explosion. An investigation is underway.

### **Marine Sniper Program Multibarrel Sniper Rifle Will Replace Two Existing Weapons Mk22 Mod 0 Advanced Sniper Rifle**

Marine Corps Times | Todd South | May 11, 2022

Marine snipers are about to trim their sniper rifle inventory by combining two in one with a new multibarrel weapon that will give shooters three caliber options and replace two existing rifles —one of which jarheads have been carrying since Vietnam.

Marine Corps Systems Command —all things gear for Marines — announced 12 MAY that the Mk22 Mod 0 advanced sniper rifle has nearly completed testing as it approaches fielding in 2023. It is a bolt action, precision rifle system. The system part is important. That designation includes a bipod, sound and muzzle flash suppressor and a caliber agnostic 7-by-35 power Precision day optic.



The rifle will replace both the Mk13 Mod 7 and the M40A6 sniper rifles currently in use. The Army previously announced that it also would replace its M107 sniper rifle and M2010 enhanced sniper rifle with the Mk22 Mod 0. The M40A6 is a heavily modified version of the original M40, which first fielded during the Vietnam War and fires a 7.62 mm round. The A6 model began fielding in 2016. The Corps selected the Mk13 Mod 7 in 2018. It fires the .300 Winchester Magnum round. Accuracy International/Remington Arms makes the Mk13 Mod 7. U.S. Special Operations Command fielded an earlier variant.

Barret Firearms Manufacturing produces the Mk22. The weapon alone weighs 15.2 pounds, according to the company website. The Mk13 Mod 7 weighs 11.4 pounds. The M40A6 weighs approximately 16.5 pounds. Both use a five-round magazine. The Mk22's effective firing range is 1,500 meters. The M40A6 effective firing range is 800 meters. The Mk13 Mod 7 effective firing range is 1,300 meters. All three rifles are bolt action. The Mk22 Mod 0 is also called the MRAD, which stands for, "multirole adaptive design." That's in part because Barrett makes civilian and versions of the weapon in 10 different calibers, ranging from 6.5 Creedmoor to .338 Lapua Magnum. Barrett has provided .50-caliber sniper rifles to various military units for decades.

Initial fielding is slated for fiscal year 2023, which could mean as early as October. The rifle uses a 10-round magazine. The caliber agnostic scope is another key distinction. This rifle will have four different barrel options, so a versatile scope is necessary. Snipers can swap out either the .338 Norma Magnum, .300 Norma Magnum, 7.62mm and, for a limited time, the .300 Winchester Magnum. That gives shooters ways to adapt shooting to specific mission sets that might require more distance or more punch to get through barriers or body armor.

“Instead of having to learn multiple weapon systems, we just have one,” said Staff Sgt. Cruz Nuanez, a scout sniper instructor with the Advanced Infantry Training Battalion, School of Infantry-East, at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The 7-by-35 Precision day optic gives “greater magnification and observation capabilities” when compared with the current 5-by-25 optic, said Sgt. Christopher Frazier, marksmanship instructor with the Scout Sniper Instructor School and systems command liaison. That improved optic gives snipers greater standoff and survivability. They can “reach out and touch someone” from a good bit farther.

With those new accessories and capabilities comes more weight in the single package. But it technically reduces overall weight because shooters won’t have to carry an extra rifle, and all of the associated logistics and maintenance pieces. Early issues will include four barrels, one for each caliber. But the .300 Winchester Magnum barrel is a “one time” issue, officials said. That’s to ease the shooting transition, since currently Marine snipers can choose from the 7.62 mm and the .300 Winchester Magnum in existing rifles. “It’s definitely more efficient,” said Frazier. “Rather than putting one gun away and getting the next gun out, we can quickly change the barrels, and then we only have to carry ammunition and that extra barrel, not an entire extra gun and extra magazines.”

All three Marine scout sniper schools and Marine Corps Special Operations Command snipers assessed the entire package during evaluation periods, according to a press release. “This event is a bit unusual for a program to do at this point,” said Nick Berger, project officer for the Mk22 program. “However, it is important for us to make sure the sniper community has what it needs to be successful, and the timing of this event allows us to identify issues before fielding and to correct as necessary.

So far, according to the release, early feedback has been good “They are very user friendly,”

Nuanez explained. “It comes with all the tools you need and the tools are also user friendly. Taking the barrels off and putting them back on, as well as the bolt faces — there should be no issue.” Though new snipers will get a better rifle out of the box, the course qualifications for the scout sniper community will remain the same, according to the press release.

## **Probate How to Avoid It**

Navy Federal Investment Services | David Hammond | May 2022

Probate is the process of proving the validity of a will and supervising the administration of an estate usually in the probate court. State law governs the proceedings in the probate court, so the process can vary from state to state. Supervising the administration of an estate can result in additional expense, unwanted publicity, and delays in the distribution of estate assets for a year or longer, which is why planning to avoid the probate process may be beneficial. There are several ways in which assets may transfer on death directly from the decedent/owner to others without probate. The following are some of the more common ways.

**Create a living trust.** A revocable living trust is a separate legal entity that can be set up to hold assets. You can transfer most assets to a living trust while you're alive and have complete access to and control of those assets during your lifetime. You can also direct who is to receive assets held in trust upon your death. The use of trusts involves a complex web of tax rules and regulations, and usually involves upfront costs and ongoing administrative fees. You should consider the counsel of an experienced estate planning professional before implementing a trust strategy.

**Name a beneficiary.** Many types of contracts allow you, as the account owner, to designate a beneficiary or beneficiaries to receive the assets directly upon your death, avoiding probate.

Examples include life insurance, annuities, and retirement accounts such as IRAs and 401(k)s.

**Make accounts payable on death.** Certain other types of accounts, such as bank accounts and brokerage accounts, also allow you to designate a beneficiary to inherit the account at your death without going through probate.

**Own real estate jointly or create a life estate.** Owning property jointly, as joint tenants with rights of survivorship, is another way to transfer property at death while avoiding probate. When one joint owner dies, property ownership automatically transfers to the surviving joint owner. You can also create a life estate in the property. In this case, you transfer ownership of the property to others, often called remainder beneficiaries, while you retain a life estate in the property. This means you have the right to use and control the property during your lifetime. Upon your death, complete ownership of the property passes to the remainder beneficiaries.

### **FGM-148F Javelin Missile Made By the U.S., Wielded By Ukraine, Feared By Russia**

MilitaryTimes | Jon Guttman | May 12, 2022



Soldiers fire an FGM-148 Javelin during a combined arms live fire exercise.

From the time Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his “special military operation” on Feb. 24, 2022, his target, Ukraine, proved to be anything but low-hanging fruit. Ferocious though their 120 resistance was, however, it would not have lasted as long as it did — three months and still counting, as of May 2022 —

had it not been the vital weaponry and ammunition provided to the Ukrainians from numerous foreign supporters through what has amounted to a 21st century form of World War II’s Lend-Lease program.

Among the most noticeable weapons credited with standing up to overwhelming waves of Russian tanks has been a state-of-the-art, infantry-operated guided missile. The Americans who produced it call it the FGM-148 AAWS-M (for “Advanced Antitank Weapon System-Medium”), but many of its current users have come to call it “Saint Javelin, Protector of Ukraine.” The FGM148 entered service in 1996 as a replacement for the M47 Dragoon. The latest model is the FGM148F, and an upgraded FGM-148G is in the works. Weighing 49 pounds, the Javelin has advanced electronics that have progressively improved to afford the operator fire-and-forget capability. Using the attached Command Launch Unit, the operator aims and fires, the missile being spring ejected before igniting and traveling on toward the target at a rate of 1,000 feet every seven seconds, guided by an infrared seeker in the nose.

Upon contact, the foremost of two tandem high-explosive antitank, or HEAT, warheads explodes against the reactive armor, clearing the way for the second warhead to reach the tank’s main armor. The Javelin’s warheads can penetrate steel up to 23.5 inches to 31.5 inches thick. With an effective range over 1.5 miles, the Javelin’s warhead travels 213 feet before it arms — but it does produce a backblast that the user must take into account. Though its range falls below the 2.3-mile effective range of the BGM-71 tube-launched, optically guided, wire-guided, or TOW missile, the Javelin is much lighter and handier for operation by a single trained infantryman. Like the TOW, however, it can be mounted on a vehicle if one is available.

The United States has claimed that of the first 112 Javelins it used, 100 hit the targets, both directly and on trajectories from above, where tank armor is thinner and more vulnerable to

penetration. The Command Launch Unit, which can magnify targets up to four times, can be removed from the weapon system and used as a lightweight optical device and night sight. Javelins have been sold to military services all over the world, and U.S. Army, U.S. Marine and Australian forces have used them to good effect in Iraq and Afghanistan, where its accuracy at greater ranges than other weapons made it useful against enemy strongpoints as well as moving vehicles.

Although it has seen its share of combat since its introduction to service, it has been in Ukraine that the Javelin has attained legendary status. The country had already purchased 210 missiles and 37 launchers in March 2018, for \$47 million, followed by another order in June 2020 for \$150 million more. These came swiftly into play when Putin sent in the tanks, making the Russian advance a costly one on all fronts. The Ukrainians have claimed more than 230 tanks and armored vehicles destroyed thus far, although it should be noted that they have other antitank weapons that may have contributed to that statistic, as well.

Nor is the Javelin without its weaknesses, particularly its vulnerability to losing the contrast necessary for a missile lock at dawn or dusk, or if the target shoots off clouds of infrared-blocking 121 smoke. The principal complaint from Ukrainians about the Javelins, however, is that there never seem to be enough of them. They have already received more than 5,500 missiles, and the United States and other allies have pledged to send more, but they are expensive and time consuming to produce — 6,840 per year at \$176,000 per system. In aiding the Ukrainians, the U.S. has sent off as much as two-thirds of its existing arsenal, which cannot be immediately replaced.

Fortunately for the Ukrainians, they do have a supplement of other effective light infantry antiarmor weapons and have become experienced in making every shot count. For the time being, though, the Javelin has acquired so

literarily iconic a place in the Ukrainian arsenal that reports have come in of a local artist creating a piece of mock traditional religious art depicting Mary Magdalene holding a Javelin. Newborn Ukrainian babies have reportedly been christened “Javelin” or “Javelina.”

## BATTLEFIELD CHRONICLES: THE BATTLE OF HAMBURGER HILL



"Have you ever been inside a hamburger machine?" Sgt. James Spears asked reporters in 1969 after capturing Hill 937 in Vietnam's A Shau Valley. "We just got cut to pieces by extremely accurate machine gun fire."



The Battle for Hill 937 was a costly one for both sides of the fighting. It required at least a dozen assaults from American troops who believed they were taking one of the largest North Vietnamese headquarters complexes in the country.

After nearly 11 days, 72 Americans were dead on Hill 937, with nearly 400 more wounded. The North Vietnamese Army (PAVN) lost 630 men as



the U.S. finally took control of the hill. Then just a few days after wrestling it away from the enemy, the Americans abandoned it.

For the days and decades afterward, everyone from military officers, journalists, and politicians to the troops who fought in the battle would not only question the tactics used but the military significance of what would come to be known as "Hamburger Hill."

The Battle of Hamburger Hill came in May 1969, as the U.S. and South Vietnamese forces fought to destroy North Vietnamese bases of operation in the A Shau Valley. The communists were using the valley to infiltrate South Vietnam through neighboring Laos.

The plan was for three battalions from 101st Airborne Division to conduct a reconnaissance in force into the valley, looking for North Vietnamese troops, weapons, and supplies. They would then destroy any they might find. Meanwhile, Marines and U.S. Army cavalry would cut off any possible retreat into Laos.



American troops on the ground knew that North Vietnamese regular units would aggressively resist any U.S. advance, but only for a short time. The communists would be forced to clear out before the U.S. could bring its superior firepower into the fighting. Prolonged, intense combat between the two sides, like the fighting seen at Ia Drang, occurred infrequently but was bloody when it did happen.

A Shau was a crucial stop along the Ho Chi Minh Trail for the communists, which meant that both sides wanted to clear the enemy out of the area. For the communists, the valley was a lifeline.

For the Americans, it was a centerpiece of putting maximum pressure on the enemy as it moved.

But dense jungle and its remote location made it difficult to move men and materiel or gather intelligence in the valley. The Americans would have to get their information the old-fashioned way: combat patrols and captured prisoners.

The little information they could gather would not tell them one of the PAVN units in the area was a battle-hardened group of communist veterans known as "The Pride of Ho Chi Minh" or that the coming battle was going to be bloody and violent.



At Hill 937, two battalions of PAVN forces decided they would make one of those intense stands against the 101st. The 3rd Battalion, 187th Regiment arrived to take the hill on May 10, 1969, expecting to reach the top within hours. It would take nearly ten days.

The first attacks came on May 10, but the 3/178th was not at full strength, as much of the unit was still trying to march through the dense jungle foliage. The full unit would not arrive until May 19th. On the other side of the hill, 1/506th was making attacks to determine the level of resistance on that slope.

The Airborne troops made multiple frontal attacks on the communist defenders on May 14th as more reinforcements arrived. They made little progress but took heavy casualties. The defenses of the hill were well-organized and planned.

The approaches to the hill were narrow trails that created a bottleneck for the attacker, forcing the Americans to attack in smaller formations. Unable to capitalize on their numbers, the U.S. troops were funneled into prepared fields of enemy machine-gun fire, which was devastating during the frontal assaults. Once forced to fall back, American forces called in artillery fire, but that too was ineffective. The prepared defenses on the hill were both well-hidden and reinforced.

Over the course of 12 assaults, the Army dropped more than 1,000 tons of bombs, 142 tons of napalm, 31,000 20-mm shells, and 513 tons of tear gas on Hill 937. By May 18th, soldiers and reporters alike were referring to the fight as "The Battle of Hamburger Hill."



The closest the Army came to taking the hill before they were fully reinforced came on May 18th. The 3/187th engaged entrenched PAVN defenders in close quarters combat with small arms and grenades. Just 75 meters from the summit, the Americans struggled to coordinate one final assault. A chance thunderstorm ended that day's fighting early, and the 3/187th was forced to withdraw.

Finally, the Army moved in two fresh battalions of infantry to join the others, even though the first battalions had paid a high cost for their previous assaults. With reinforcements in place, the Americans launched a four-battalion attack of Hill 937 on May 20, 1969. Within two hours, they reached the top and cleared the hill of enemy forces within the next three hours.

On June 5th, the 101st Airborne's new commander abandoned Hill 937, as he deemed

it had no military value. The next fight over Hamburger Hill would take place in Washington, as it led Congressmen and Senators to fight over American strategy in Vietnam.

### **MILITARY MYTHS & LEGENDS: A VETERAN-INSPIRED WATCHMAKER BROUGHT BACK THE ICONIC WATCH THAT WON WORLD WAR II**



Timing can be critical when conducting a military operation. During World War II, it wasn't just the men in combat who depended on accurate timing. The rest of the millions of Allied service members and potentially the entire free world relied on precision watches.



Like most critical supplies, the Allies knew that their troops required timekeeping devices that could withstand any of the dangers of modern combat, even if they weren't sure what the fighting would look like. The A-11 spec wristwatch was designed to be the timepiece that survived the war; even its wearer did not.

Veteran-inspired watchmaker Praesidus is bringing back the quality of that original design

with a new line of recreated vintage tool watches inspired by the original World War II A-11 spec. The design of its latest watch, the A-11 Vince Speranza Edition, is inspired by the story of Speranza, the parachute infantry regiment, and the .30-caliber machine gun Speranza used at the Battle of the Bulge.

Tens of thousands of A-11 watches were made during World War II. It featured a single-piece strap, high contrast white lettering on a black background, and a solid case made of nickel or silver. The specifications for this military watch also included hand-winding, an outer minute track with 10-minute demarcations, and minute and hour hands.

Other modifications to the original spec were allowed, though the U.S. Navy required lumed numbers for its aviators. The watch proved so solid and reliable that the rest of the Allied forces requested it - even the Soviet Union.



The latest version pays tribute to Vince Speranza, a soldier who fought at the Battle of the Bulge using an M1919 Browning .30-caliber machine gun. He landed in Europe with the 101st Airborne Division's 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment. He was one of the "Battered Bastards of Bastogne," who held the city, even in the face of a massive Nazi counterattack that left the city and its defenders surrounded.

The design of Praesidus' A-11 "Vince Speranza" watch is based on the famous soldier and his weapon. The stainless steel case back features a replica of an M1919 bullet. The strap comes in two options: the M1919 Barrel and the machine gunner. Assembled in the United States, it's powered by an automatic movement and

features double-domed, scratch-resistant sapphire glass.

It even comes in a humidor box in honor of the cigar-chomping Vince "Machine Gunner of Bastogne" Speranza.

Praesidus is a veteran-driven watch brand that aims to recreate the timepieces worn by WWII heroes. Along with Speranza, the company has also honored Thomas Marcus Rice, another paratrooper with the 501st who jumped into Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Rice famously lost his watch in that jump. When Rice turned 97, Praesidus recreated the A-11 watch he'd lost.

The watchmaker's goal is to bring the spirit of American soldiers to a new generation so they can continue telling the stories of courage, heroism, and patriotism in the future - stories that might otherwise be forgotten to history. It has an entire line of watches available on the Praesidus website.

Like the original A-11, Praesidus' recreation is a simple, accurate, high-grade wristwatch that can stand up to the rigors of time and combat. The only difference is that the recreation might be a little sturdier, as the 21st-Century watchmaker can use durable materials that weren't available due to World War II rationing.

### **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 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

# May

# 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Army 173 <sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade begins landing in South Vietnam (1965)	4	5 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	6 National Nurses Day	7
8 Mother's Day	9 Operation Linebacker begins (1972)	10 Battle of Hamburger Hill begins (1969)	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 Armed Forces Day
22	23	24	25	26 Operation Menu ends (1970)	27	28
29	30 Memorial Day	31				

# June

# 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	3	4
5 Pentecost	6	7	8	9	10 Creighton Abrams takes over command from William Westmoreland (1968)	11
12	13	14 Flag Day  Army Birthday	15	16 CSC- Visalia	17 CSC- Visalia	18 CSC- Visalia
19 Father's Day	20	21 Summer Begins	22	23	24	25 Chili Cookoff
26	27	28	29	30		

# July

# 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Penn Valley Gateway Park Community Event
3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	8	9
10	11 U.S. Resumes Diplomatic Relations with Vietnam (1995)	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



# August

# 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Gulf of Tonkin incident 1964	3	4 VVA 535  Coast Guard Birthday	5	6
7	8 Nixon resigned 1974	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			