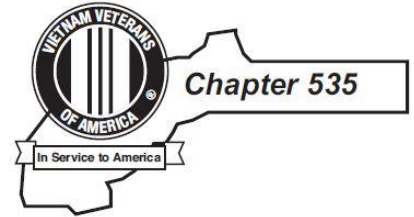




# INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

## CHAPTER 535



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

Volume 32 Issue 8

August 2022

### VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 535 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE August 2022

When Elaine and I were in Italy we visited a U.S. Military Cemetery. This was done to visit her uncle's grave. He was lost in a B-24 Aircraft in WW II. This was the first time Elaine had visited his grave and probably the grave had not been visited by family in a long time.

First, we noticed how reverent the workers were when we were close. They stopped their machinery and bowed their heads. Later, I went to thank them and they said "No, Thank You"!

The cemetery was immaculate!

We noticed coins on the graves and have done some research:

A **penny** means you visited.

A **nickel** means you and the deceased veteran trained at boot camp together.

A **dime** means you and the deceased veteran served together in some capacity.

A **quarter** is very significant because it means that you were there when that veteran died.

The tradition of leaving coins on the headstones of military men and women can be traced to as far back as the Roman Empire. Soldiers would insert a coin into the mouth of a fallen soldier to ensure they could cross the "River Styx" into the afterlife.

In the US, **this practice became common during the Vietnam war**, due to the political divide in the country over the war. Leaving a coin was seen as a more practical way to communicate that you had visited the grave than contacting the soldier's family, which could devolve into an uncomfortable argument over politics relating to the war.

What happens to the coins? They are collected from the gravesites monthly and the money is used for cemetery maintenance, the cost of burial for soldiers, or the care for indigent soldiers.

This is probably not true for non-military cemeteries, but I still make sure I have coins when visiting these special graves.

Dave Chaix

VVA 535 BBQ – June 30, 2022, Kentucky Flat  
 Community Center  
 NCCVC Meeting – August 4, 2022  
 VVA General Meeting - August 4, 2022  
 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  
 December 17, 2022 Wreaths Across America

**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.*

**Veterans  
 Crisis Line**

**DIAL 988 then PRESS 1**

**(Put this number into your phone)**

**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.

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**Upcoming Events**

**Chapter 535 Officers**

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

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

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 2022  
 Nominations ..... Ralph Remick  
 Veterans Assistance..... Dave Chaix  
 NCCVC ..... Dave Chaix; Dick Corn  
 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 (Cell phone)

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

## **Placer County Veteran Services 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  
3rd Monday (excluding Holidays) 9:30 a.m. -12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-  
3:00 p.m.

Derrick Oliveira has left the employ of Placer County as of July 8, 2022, and moved on to achieve a long-term academic goal. In the interim, prior to the hiring of a new VSO, the office staff continues assist Veterans daily.

### **Guest Speaker for August 4, 2022**

Cal Fire Division Chief Jim Mathias will present information pertinent to emergency services related to the Cal Fire mission.

### **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.

### **Matters of Interest as outlined at the Meeting of July 7, 2022**

VVA 535 served exemplary chili, prepared by project leader Jose Gonzales and a team of associate cooks. The team garnered 2<sup>nd</sup> place according to the taster judges.

Carl Cieslikowski reported on the outcome of the Penn Valley Community Fun Day and ended by turning over \$300 in profits to our Treasurer.

The California Vietnam Memorial in Capitol Park, Sacramento, is in need of more than \$100,000 in repair and maintenance costs that are the responsibility of VVA. Chapter 535 will consider a donation to the cause once more details are understood.

Planning is underway for a Chapter 535 booth at the Nevada County Fair. Volunteer booth sitters are being actively sought.

Jose Gonzales reiterated the critical need to find a new storage site for our enclosed utility trailer.

There is movement, spearheaded by Jose Gonzales, to organize for a Summer BBQ to be staged at the Kentucky Flat School, for a VVA 535 members and their families. (Scheduled for 7/30/2022).

### **Army Cuts Off More Than 60K Unvaccinated Guard and Reserve Soldiers from Pay and Benefits**

6 Jul 2022

Military.com | By [Steve Beynon](#)



Soldiers with the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oklahoma Army National Guard, fire weapons over a trench during a live-fire exercise at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California, July 24, 2021.

Some 40,000 National Guard and 22,000 Reserve soldiers who refused to be vaccinated against COVID-19 are no longer allowed to participate in their military duties, also effectively cutting them off from some of their military benefits, Army officials announced Friday.

"Soldiers who refuse the vaccination order without an approved or pending exemption request are subject to adverse administrative actions, including flags, bars to service, and official reprimands," an Army spokesperson said in a statement.

The move comes in the midst of the annual training season, during which part-time soldiers are often ordered to serve from two weeks to a month with their units for summer training exercises. Those training events are usually critical for soldiers to sharpen their military skills and for unit commanders to ensure their formations are ready to deploy if needed.

If the soldiers continue to refuse the vaccine, the consequences could be even more dire. "In the future, Soldiers who continue to refuse the vaccination order without an exemption may be subject to additional adverse administrative

action, including separation," the Army spokesperson said.

The long-term impact may mean many soldiers would be forced to leave, a devastating outcome especially in the middle of a recruiting crisis as Defense Department officials struggle to fill the ranks.

Soldiers will be allowed to come on duty and earn their pay in order to be vaccinated or to take part in separation procedures.

"We're going to give every soldier every opportunity to get vaccinated and continue their military career," Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen, director of the Army Guard, told Military.com in an emailed statement. "We're not giving up on anybody until the separation paperwork is signed and completed."

The Army National Guard and Reserve deadline to receive the vaccine was June 30, the latest of all the services, which required vaccination last year. As of July 1, 13% of the Army Guard and 12% of the Reserve is unvaccinated.

Part-time soldiers with a pending medical or religious exemption for the vaccine may continue to train with their units and collect pay and benefits. But exemption approvals are rare.

The vaccines have some rare side effects, including heart inflammation that has affected at least 22 service members, according to a study from the JAMA Network.

Only six Guard soldiers across all states and territories have permanent medical exemptions for the vaccine, out of 53 who requested one, according to Army data. No Reserve soldiers have a medical exemption.

No Guard or Reserve soldiers have been approved for a religious exemption after nearly 3,000 requests. It is unclear what would qualify a soldier for a waiver on religious grounds. Soldiers are required to be inoculated against at least a dozen other ailments, including the flu

and hepatitis. And no major religious leaders have come out against vaccines.

Army officials have stopped short of outlining a clear plan on removing part-time soldiers, particularly Guardsmen, from service for continuing to refuse the vaccine. As of now, Guardsmen are barred only from attending federally funded drills and other training events, which make up the bulk of their service. While Guardsmen technically serve under their respective governors during their typical weekend duties, those weekends are federally funded.

Multiple Republican governors have vowed not to kick out Guardsmen who remain unvaccinated. It's unclear how easy it will be for the Defense Department to enforce its decision to bar unvaccinated Guardsmen from pay and benefits. On paper, the only thing an unvaccinated Guard soldier is qualified for now is state active-duty (SAD) orders, a comparatively rare tool for a governor to activate their Guard for short-term emergencies such as hurricane relief and responding to domestic disturbances.

SAD duties are usually short term. However, there are outliers such as Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who has used SAD orders lasting up to a year to mobilize thousands of troops for missions on the U.S.-Mexico border.

But SAD duties do not qualify Guardsmen for federal benefits or retirement -- effectively shutting them out of all of the military's service incentives other than a paycheck.

Reserve soldiers fall exclusively under the federal government, possibly making it easier to separate them from service.

As of Friday, 1,148 active-duty soldiers have been removed from the Army for failing to comply with the vaccine mandate.

## Why You Should Get a Veterans Designation on Your Driver's License

Military.com | By Jim Absher. July 5, 2022



Most states offer a free veteran's designation on their driver's licenses, and if you want to get your full benefits as a veteran, you will want to make sure you get yours.

Having your driver's license updated with your veteran status ensures you easily can get special veteran's-only discounts and other benefits that are offered by private businesses as well as state and local governments.

### For What Kind of Discounts Are Veterans Eligible?

You may have visited our discounts section and have seen the hundreds of discounts that businesses offer to veterans. These discounts cover almost every type of business you can imagine: from golf courses to drugstores to theme parks. However, it can be cumbersome to carry your DD-214 with you all the time in order to get these discounts, and that really isn't something you should be doing.

To make it easy to get these discounts, you can apply for a veteran's ID card from the Department of Veterans Affairs, but the VA only gives this card to honorably discharged veterans, and having to carry an extra ID card with you can be a hassle. That's why it's always

good to get that veteran's designation on your driver's license.

Either your VA ID card or your state-issued ID or license with a veteran designation is usually all you need to take advantage of the many discounts listed in our discounts section as well as other discounts. These "other" discounts can be extremely beneficial if you take advantage of them.

### **What Other Veterans Discounts and Freebies Are Available?**

Besides the usual discounts that national retailers and other businesses offer, many local companies offer veterans discounts. While most of these discounts are usually around 10% on goods and services, they can be worth a lot of money depending on the company. Sure, a 10% discount on breakfast isn't necessarily something that will make a big difference in your life, but if you are purchasing a big-ticket item, that discount can be a game changer.

Buying a new refrigerator? That 10% discount can be over \$200. Just found out you need a new \$10,000 furnace? That 10% discount is \$1,000. How about home improvement? Many contractors offer 5% or 10% discounts on construction services like siding or a new roof. Those savings can add up very quickly.

So, all things being equal, you always should seek out the business that offers a veterans discount if you want to save money. It never hurts to ask whether the business offers a veterans discount when you are shopping around for services.

Also, many states offer a ton of discounts and other benefits for veterans that you may not be aware of, and having an easily accessible veteran's ID card can make it much simpler for you and your family to receive them.

For example, most states offer veterans some type of discount for admission to state parks or state fairs; others offer free or discounted hunting and fishing licenses. One thing you may not know is that many states offer these discounts to non-resident veterans.

So if you're planning a vacation this summer, or staying in and doing some home-improvement, you may be able to save hundreds of dollars just by using your veterans discount.

### **Stay Up to Date with Military Discounts**

Want the scoop on military discounts? From travel to phones and everything in between, troops, military families and veterans can stay on top of military discounts. [Become a Military.com subscriber and get full access through our newsletter.](#)

### **Javelin missile: Made by the US, wielded by Ukraine, feared by Russia**

By [Jon Guttman](#),  
Thursday, May 12



Soldiers fire an FGM-148 Javelin during a combined arms live fire exercise in Jordan on August 27, 2019. (Sgt. Liane Hatch/Army)

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 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.”

### **WHAT IS THE JAVELIN?**

The FGM-148 entered service in 1996 as a replacement for the M47 Dragoon. The latest model is the FGM-148F, 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.

### **HOW ACCURATE IS THE JAVELIN?**

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.

### **WHO USES THE JAVELIN?**

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 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 anti-armor 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.”

### **PANZERFAUST 3: THE COLD WAR WEAPON WRECKING RUSSIAN TANKS IN UKRAINE**

**JON GUTTMON WEAPONS AND GEAR  
MANUAL 5/5/2022**

Though it has its roots in fighting Soviets in World War II, the Panzerfaust 3 antitank rocket is now being used against the Russians again — in Ukraine.



A German soldier holds a Panzerfaust 3 in 2016 in Lower Saxony.

Though the Russian Army was once vaunted as the second-best military in the modern world, the greatly underestimated Ukrainian military has showed it up again and again, seemingly with only national pluck and a hodgepodge of donated weapons from sympathetic Western countries.

Among the borrowed Ukrainian arsenal, the Panzerfaust 3 has made an impressive showing against Russian armored columns. What is this shoulder-fired antitank rocket, where did it come from, and why is it striking fear into [Vladimir Putin](#)’s soldiers?

### **THE PANZERFAUST ORIGINATED IN WORLD WAR II**

In 1943, with a resurgent Soviet army advancing on the [Third Reich](#) behind a phalanx of first-class tanks being produced in numbers that Germany has no hope of matching, Germany developed a small, simple, easy to use antitank weapon that could turn any wielder into a tank killer. Called the [Panzerfaust](#) (“armor fist”), it was essentially a tube that launched a rocket-propelled grenade with a shaped charge capable of penetrating armor at ranges up to 200 feet. The launching tube could be reloaded if extra



warheads were available, but inexpensive enough to be discarded if they were not.

Distributed among soldiers and, as of Oct. 18, 1944, to hastily trained elders and children of the Volkssturm (“people’s storm,” Nazi Germany’s last-ditch national militia), the Panzerfaust required extraordinary courage to operate at its effective range and was not reliable enough to save the Reich from its ultimate doom on May 8 (or May 9, depending on who you ask) the next year.

### **IT BECAME A COLD WAR STAPLE**

It was, however, effective enough for postwar armies on either side of the Iron Curtain to make improvements on its basic design. That includes the current German Bundeswehr (Federal Armed Forces) in the form of the Panzerfaust 3. After entering combat in Afghanistan with the Bundeswehr, the new generation of Panzerfausts is again battling Russian tanks ... except that the people wielding the antitank weapons are Ukrainian.

In response to a 1973 order for a more powerful, accurate semi-disposable weapon to replace the World War II-vintage PzF-44, capable of engaging the latest generation of Russian T-72 and T-80 tanks, the Dynamit Nobel *Allgemeine Gesellschaft* worked on this latest version of the antitank rocket from 1978 to 1995, though the Panzerfaust 3 was accepted by the Bundeswehr in 1992.

### **THE MODERN PANZERFAUST 3 IS A TANK-KILLING MACHINE**

It has since undergone technical upgrades to keep up with improvements in tanks, especially the Panzerfaust 3-T, which uses a dual hollow-charge tandem warhead, with a spike on the front of the warhead that can set off reactive armor and in so doing free a path for the main charge to reach and penetrate up to 31.5 inches of steel armor. As a further improvement, the

Panzerfaust 3-IT600 gets its designation from the user’s ability to engage enemy armored vehicles at up to 600 meters by using a Simrad Optonics sighting-and-targeting mechanism.

Once fired, the warhead is sent on its way by a spring, but after about 16.5 feet, the rocket motor ignites and the safety disengages, allowing the warhead to explode on contact with its target. The warhead also contains plastic granulate that work on the recoilless countermass principle to virtually eliminate backblast.

The Panzerfaust 3-IT600 is 3 feet, 11 inches long and weighs 34 pounds, 6 ounces, of which 8 pounds, 10 ounces is the 110mm-diameter (4.3-inch diameter) warhead with Amatol/Sindal high explosive. Up to 29 pounds, 5 ounces of spare rounds can be carried by the operator.

With a muzzle velocity of 499 feet per second, the warhead has a maximum effective range of 1,312 feet on a stationary target and 1,968.5 feet against a moving target. Minimum effective range (without the debris of an exploding target endangering the user) is 65.6 feet.

### **CAN A PANZERFAUST 3 TAKE ON A RUSSIAN T-90?**

These capabilities pale beside the 125mm (4.9-inch) main gun with a 1.86-mile range on Russia’s latest main battle tank, the T-90, in an open battlefield. As with the original PzF-44, however, Panzerfaust 3 operated on uneven ground, forested areas or urban environments by trained, motivated troops can be every bit as deadly as designed.

Once under full production, the original Panzerfaust 3 cost \$9,994, but the IT-600 version costs \$11,108 apiece because of its computerized sight. A standard antitank round costs \$297, but there is also a Bunkerfaust (“bunker fist”) round for use against static enemy positions. That costs \$202.

As of 2003, 261,718 Panzerfaust 3s have been produced. In 1989, Japan became the first foreign power to purchase the weapon, followed by Switzerland in 1991. Since then, it has also entered the arsenals of Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Peru, South Korea Iraq and Mauritius. Ukraine added its name to that list when Russian forces invaded it in February 2022 and a variety of sympathetic Western powers began supplying weapons — including the Panzerfaust 3 — to bolster Ukraine’s defenses. Thus far, the Ukrainians have been putting them to very good use, much to the expense of a growing number of Russian armor crews.

### **‘NO. 1 GUN’: AN M60 MACHINE GUNNER IN VIETNAM TELLS HIS STORY**

A former expert with the M60 machine gun shares his experiences wielding the fearsome weapon in Vietnam.

By **VICTOR RENZA** 10/6/2021 Vietnam magazine



A Marine on patrol crosses a rice paddy in Vietnam holding an M60 machine gun in 1966. Nicknamed “the pig” due to its size, weight and sound, the gun struck fear into enemy troops.

**Most war stories are about soldiers and battles.** Rarely do we examine war through the

unique bond between a man and his weapon—in this case the M60 machine gun. I was drafted on Nov. 10, 1965, and assigned to the 4th Infantry Division. I traveled to Fort Lewis, Washington, and trained there for 10 months before deploying to Vietnam as specialist 4. At Fort Lewis, every recruit learned to operate various weapons.

To my surprise, I qualified as an expert with the M60 machine gun, nicknamed “the pig” because of the size, weight and sound of the weapon.

At that time, an infantry company consisted of about 150 men. Each company had eight M60s. The machine gun was also mounted in the **UH-1 Huey helicopter and other Army aircraft.** It weighed 24 pounds, was 43.5 inches long and had bipod legs that folded down to stabilize the weapon when firing from a prone position. The gas-operated, belt-fed gun had a maximum rate of fire of 550-650 rounds per minute.



Victor Renza poses with “No. 1 Gun” in Vietnam, one of eight machine gunners in his company. / Courtesy Victor Renza

**In the hands of a well-trained machine gunner,** the M60 was a devastating weapon—so feared by our opponents that they usually aimed their first shots at the machine gunners, who were often in positions exposed to enemy fire.

We were told in training that the life expectancy of a machine gunner was about seven seconds from the moment the first round was fired.

When I was assigned to the M60 in advanced individual training, I decided that if I had to be a gunner, I would learn everything there was to know about the weapon. Soon I could take the gun apart and put it back together in the dark. To keep busy on the boat ride to Vietnam, my unit—Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment—held competitions where we took the gun apart and put it back together while blindfolded to see who could do it fastest. I won a few times, and even when I did not, I benefited from handling the gun under stress. By the time we reached Vietnam in October 1966 I felt the gun had become a part of me.

Company B arrived in-country with four rifle platoons, and each platoon was armed with two M60s. The machine guns were numbered within each platoon. I was in 2nd Platoon and carried the platoon's "No. 1 Gun." I had an assistant gunner, Spc. 4 Paul Domke, who carried extra belts of ammo and fed them into the gun. Two of my closest friends in the company, Spc. 4 Bill May and Spc. 4 Charlie Ranallo, were on "No. 2 Gun."

I personally carried 300 rounds of ammo at all times, one belt in the gun and two across my chest. My assistant gunner and my ammo bearer also carried 300 rounds each. I didn't make a move without that gun beside me.

Our battalion operated at a base camp near Tuy Hoa in Phu Yen province along the South China Sea from October 1966 to January 1967. We had run patrols for about a month when I first saw action. I had yet to fire a shot with No. 1 gun and was hoping it would stay that way.

Then one hot, sunny day, while walking across rice paddies, we suddenly received small-arms fire from **Viet Cong** in some distant hills. Everyone in the company hit the dirt. We could

not see any enemy soldiers, but we could see smoke coming from their weapons through the trees. Knowing I had a 100-round belt in my M60, I opened up on that hillside, my gun getting so hot that the barrel smoked. Suddenly I realized that my platoon sergeant was screaming at me to stop firing. I was wasting ammo and didn't even have a target! I may not have hit anyone that day, but I am certain that No. 1 Gun kept a lot of enemy heads down.

After a couple of hours, the Viet Cong stopped shooting and melted back into the jungle. No. 1 Gun and I survived our first firefight. Together we had passed the test. I also earned a Combat Infantryman Badge, signifying that I had been actively engaged in combat. If it had been up to me, I would have awarded my gun the CIB too.

**In the few firefights and skirmishes** we had with local VC, the gun always performed well. No. 1 Gun became my very best friend. One afternoon, while Company B was still in the Tuy Hoa area, we received orders to gather up our gear and get ready to board choppers for an assault into a hot landing zone. The battalion was sending us to a village with a small river running through it.

Enemy fire greeted us as soon as we landed near the village. Half of the company hopped off the Huey on one side of the river, and the rest exited on the other side. Both halves quickly swept toward the river to clear the village. Supported by a shoulder strap, No. 1 Gun was on my hip with the safety off, ready to rock and roll. As I made my way to the river, I saw a VC guerrilla jump into the water on the other side. A dense mass of elephant grass hung over the riverbank, and he ducked under it.



U.S. soldiers nestled in dense jungle foliage provide covering fire with an M60 machine gun in 1966. Machine gunners were often in positions exposed to enemy fire and had short life expectancies after the first shot in a firefight was fired.

Anxiously extending the bipod legs on the M60, I added a 100-round belt to the one I already had in the gun. I wasn't sure if the VC had moved to right or left, so I sprayed the elephant grass in both directions. I pumped 200 rounds into that riverbank. When the Company B units that landed on the opposite side of the river got to the bank, some troops reached in and pulled the enemy from the water. His body was torn to pieces.

"What the hell did you hit him with?" one of our men shouted. Proudly holding my M60 over my head, I screamed at the top of my lungs, "No. 1 gun!" Everyone laughed.

No. 1 Gun had registered its first kill. It was very nearly my last. As I was running to the river's edge, ready to unload on the VC hiding in the elephant grass, I ran past a grass hut and never bothered to clear it. Lowering my gun, I turned around and noticed two VC sitting in the doorway of the hut, staring at me. One was holding a carbine. Startled, I quickly pointed my M60 at them. The man with the carbine immediately dropped it, and the two VC

surrendered. It was the silent power of the pig, I suppose.

In January 1967, the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, was airlifted to Pleiku province in the Central Highlands. No. 1 Gun and I now faced a new and more formidable foe—the North Vietnamese Army. We soon learned that the NVA troops were very different from the local guerrillas we had fought around Tuy Hoa. They were well-armed, well-trained and knew how to fight. I had to rely on my gun more than before.

Over the next two months, we exchanged fire with groups of the NVA. On the morning of March 22, 1967, companies A and B of my battalion began a search-and-destroy operation along the Cambodian border. We were about 700 yards east of Company A when it was ambushed by an NVA battalion. Ordered to reinforce the unit, the Company B commander put our four platoons abreast of each other, and we marched west.

As we approached the battle, we heard intense firing. The NVA had wedged a blocking force between our company and Company A, preventing us from advancing any farther.

Hurrying forward with No. 1 Gun, I jumped into a small dry streambed with Domke, my assistant gunner. Sgt. Arthur Parker and Spc. 4 Joey Piambino were to my right in the streambed. The three of us had trained together at Fort Lewis and were good friends. I put the M60's bipod legs down, lifted the weapon and positioned it on the ground outside the streambed facing the NVA.

Then I dropped back down in the streambed to organize our ammo. When I popped back up to put out some automatic fire, a bullet whizzed by my ear—no more than an inch from my head—and slammed into the tree next to me, shattering the bark. An NVA soldier had evidently spotted the gun and waited patiently

for me to stick my head up. I never even got a shot off.



A machine gunner in the 8th Infantry Regiment treks up a steep slope during a search-and-destroy mission in May 1969

Terrified, I dropped down as fast as I could, pulling the gun and two ammo belts of 100 rounds apiece on top of me as I fell back into the dry streambed. My heart was pounding out of my chest. Still shaken, I grabbed the gun and crawled to the left inside the streambed. Eventually I found a spot where the bed leveled off and began firing on the NVA. No. 1 Gun, as always, thumped out a throaty roar as I fought desperately to push the enemy back.

To my right, Piambino had poked his head out of the trench to fire his M16 rifle. As soon as he did, a round hit him in the forehead, blowing out the back of his skull. I am convinced the same NVA soldier who shot at me moments before had killed my good friend, a budding doo-wop singer from Long Island, New York.

Unable to reach Company A, my company pulled back, formed a perimeter and called in air and artillery support. Suddenly, I heard my name shouted from the Company B command group. I picked up my M60 and walked to the center of the perimeter, where I found the company commander, Capt. Robert Sholly, standing with

Platoon Sgt. Bruce Grandstaff and my best friend, Sgt. Bob Sanzone. The 4th Platoon's single machine gun crew—the platoon had entered the fight short a gun—had been killed in the fighting, and I was to be moved there.

Naturally I was excited at the opportunity to join Sanzone, but at the same time I hated leaving 2nd Platoon's No. 2 Gun team, Ranallo and May, without any support. More importantly, Grandstaff was very gung-ho. I worried about that kind of leadership style in the highlands.

I was still pondering the move to 4th Platoon when U.S. Air Force jets screamed over the treetops with canisters of napalm. Tumbling end over end, the canisters exploded in a white-hot fireball. The rolling fire burned everything to the ground and undoubtedly killed scores of NVA. The enemy fire ceased, and we made arrangements to collect our dead before continuing on to Company A.

Company B had seven dead, Grandstaff announced, and I was to take No. 1 Gun onto a small hill and provide security while others retrieved them. If the NVA shot at the group retrieving the bodies, I was to fire over the heads of the grunts and engage the enemy. That was a hell of a responsibility to take on. If anything went wrong, I could easily kill some of our soldiers.

Nervous, I set up my gun on the hill and loaded a new hundred-round belt. Flipping the safety off, I scanned the jungle in front of me. I prayed I would not have to fire over the heads of the 4th Platoon troops entering the draw to retrieve our dead. The group found the first man killed and carried him up the hill, placing his body right next to me. They kept coming up the hill bringing more bodies to me until all seven had been found. The smell of those charred bodies, blackened and smoking from the napalm strike, is something I can never forget.

We gathered the casualties and set out for Company A. The dead were placed on ponchos. I was told to help carry one of the bodies. I was already lugging around a 24-pound weapon, 300 rounds of ammo and a pack that weighed a good 45 pounds. Nevertheless, I swung No. 1 Gun over my shoulder, grabbed a corner of a poncho and stumbled off with three other soldiers.

Carrying a dead man some 300 yards through thick jungle in 100-degree heat was extraordinarily difficult. The body felt as though it weighed considerably more than it looked. I was constantly untangling the barrel and bipod of the gun from grasping vines and branches. The jungle seemed to want No. 1 Gun more than I did.

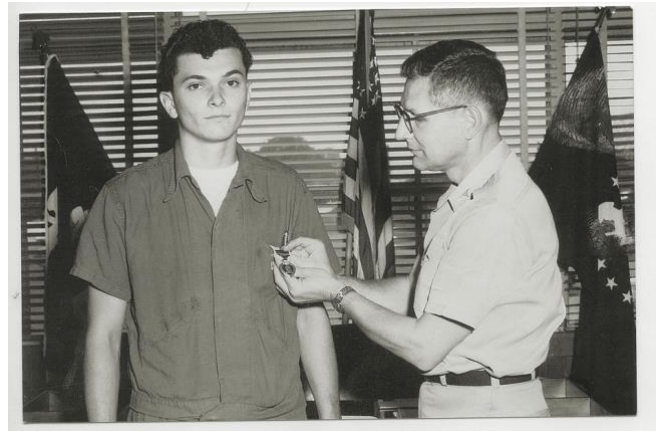
When we reached Company A, we placed our dead in the center of the two-company perimeter. In Company A, 22 men had been killed—added to the seven killed in Company B. First Sgt. David H. Mc Nerney, who assumed command of the company when all of its officers were killed or wounded, was presented with the Medal of Honor in a White House ceremony in September 1968.

I didn't want any medals. I just wanted to get off No. 1 Gun before my luck ran out.

By mid-April 1967 I was pleading with the captain to get a replacement gunner for my M60 in 4th Platoon. My friend May, I later learned, was doing the same thing in 2nd Platoon. We had been carrying machine guns for over seven months. We wanted a break. Sholly finally agreed and stated that the next time we received replacements I could give one of them my M60. I, in turn, would take an M16 rifle, which felt like a feather in comparison. Soon after, Pfc. Joe DeLong joined the company, and Sholly informed me that he would be the M60 gunner.

I was told to show the new guy how to use it properly. DeLong had only fired the weapon once in training, so I let him fire off a few rounds to practice. Like most inexperienced gunners, he underestimated the power of the pig and failed to keep the barrel down when firing. After a quick lesson, DeLong became the new owner of 4th Platoon's No.1 Gun. May was eventually able to hand off 2nd Platoon's No. 2 Gun to Ranallo.

The next three weeks passed uneventfully. Then the tempo changed suddenly and violently. Shortly before 11 a.m. on May 18, the point squad in Company B's 2nd Platoon spotted three NVA soldiers walking on a trail near the Cambodian border and attempted to capture them, but the NVA dashed off into the jungle.



Renza receives a Purple Heart in July 1967 at Camp Zama, Japan. He was wounded in an ambush that left 21 of his comrades dead.

Courtesy Victor Renza

Sholly injured an ankle, and 1st Lt. Cary Allen took command of Company B. He pulled the company into a perimeter and dispatched 4th Platoon to recon the trail to the west, while 1st Platoon performed a similar mission to the east-southeast. The two platoons were to advance no more than 200 yards from the main body of the company.

Moving west down the trail, 4th Platoon exchanged fire with a single NVA soldier, then a handful and finally a group of about 10-15 around noon. Our chase after the enemy

unwittingly led us into a large ambush. In an instant the jungle erupted in gunfire. As the entire platoon hit the ground, I saw guys crawling back toward me. We looked for cover and returned fire the best we could. I couldn't see DeLong and didn't know if No. 1 Gun was firing.

Surrounded by an enemy battalion, our hopelessly outnumbered platoon waged a desperate battle for survival. Around 3 p.m., when Grandstaff realized we were about to be overrun, he called in artillery right on top of our location. A battery of big 155 mm howitzers blasted the tiny platoon perimeter, tearing trees out of the ground and hurling chunks of red-hot shell splinters through the air. It was a chaotic nightmare.

Not long after the artillery barrage ended, the North Vietnamese swept through 4th Platoon and executed some of the survivors.

I had been shot in the back early in the battle and was lying behind a log with two other soldiers. I watched in horror as four NVA soldiers ambled through the branches of a downed tree that partially concealed us. One of them gazed in our direction, lowered his AK 47 assault rifle and fired six shots. Two rounds smashed into a log inches above my head. Amazingly, the NVA men then walked a short distance away, sat down and ate lunch. After about 30 minutes, the four enemy soldiers got up and left the area.

The 4th Platoon survivors stayed put for the night. Company A searched in vain for the platoon in the dark and finally found the shattered unit on the morning of May 19.

Overrun and utterly destroyed, the 30-man 4th Platoon had suffered 21 killed and one missing. Of the eight who remained, seven were wounded. The man listed as missing was machine gunner Joe DeLong, captured along with No. 1 Gun. DeLong was later killed

attempting to escape from a North Vietnamese prisoner of war camp in Cambodia. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star in 1974.

Ever since that fateful day in 1967, I have often wondered what became of my beloved M60. Was No. 1 Gun used to kill Americans? Was it left behind on some forgotten battlefield? Or is it on display in a [Hanoi museum](#) so curious citizens of that city can inspect a weapon captured from American "imperialists"?

*Victor Renza was sent home after he was wounded on May 18, 1967. Before he was drafted Renza had worked as a hairdresser for women in his hometown of Peekskill, New York. In Vietnam he cut the hair of everyone in his company for free. Back home he returned to hairdressing and got a job at Kenneth Salon in New York City working with top models and fashion magazine editors. He also worked on Jacqueline Kennedy's hair pieces and wigs. In 1973, Renza opened his own salon in Peekskill. He retired in 2012 and lives in Delray Beach, Florida.*

### **House Wants Troops to Chow Down Bison Meat**

Military Times. Jonathan Lehrfeld. July 7, 2022



Want a hot bison sandwich on rye? The uncommon food product may soon be on the table for troops as Congress has proposed in its annual defense bill the Department of Defense purchase bison meat from native tribes and organizations. House lawmakers passed their \$840 billion version of the National Defense Authorization Act out of committee on June 23, incorporating a series of amendments that included, among others, a procurement measure for bison meat. The final annual defense bill must still be passed by the full House, and later agreed to by the Senate, which earlier in June passed its own version out of committee.

If passed, the Pentagon will begin “increasing procurement of bison meat...with the goal of procuring two million pounds of bison meat annually to promote bison as a healthy and sustainable food source and further treaty and trust responsibilities and Native American agriculture,” according to the amendment text. The amendment would also direct the secretary of defense to provide a briefing to the House Committee on Armed Services by Feb. 1, 2023, outlining opportunities to increase the procurement of bison meat and other agricultural products from native tribes and organizations.

The amendment was introduced by Rep. Ruben Gallego, an Arizona Democrat and Marine veteran. “The success of our nation’s armed forces is dependent upon its ability to innovate and use resources efficiently. One possible practice is the procurement and use bison meat in Indian Country,” Gallego said in a statement to Military Times. “As a leader in Congress on Tribal issues, I have seen the success Tribes have had in rehabilitating our country’s bison population, and the military would benefit from this meat to keep troops fed. That’s why my NDAA amendment is a cost-effective win for both our military and Indian Country.”

This unique component to the annual defense legislation serves as an example of how the Pentagon aims to expand its relationship with

native communities, as well as how the nutritional value of an otherwise untraditional military food may become a new staple that packs a protein filled punch for troops. The Pentagon and other government agencies already work with tribes to acquire goods and services thanks in part to the Buy Indian Act, which gives the Department of the Interior the authority to create contracts with native businesses. The yearly number of new contracts can range from \$20 million to more than \$60 million according to DOI.

There are approximately 3,500 bison at Yellowstone, the largest free-roaming bison population in the world, and roughly 400,000 in North America, according to the National Bison Association, a non-profit group for bison producers and consumers. The National Bison Association has long been advocating for the nutritional value of bison. The U.S. Department of Agriculture finds that per 100 grams of bison meat there are a total of 25.4 grams of protein, compared to 17.2 grams in traditional 80% lean ground beef. Nearly 30,000 bison have been slaughtered in U.S. federal plants this year and nearly 245,000 pounds of boneless and bone-in chilled bison meat has likewise been imported from Canada, according to the USDA’s most recent monthly bison report.

In 2021, Vox reported that the Army once tried to exterminate bison and also as recently as last year bison have been found to roam around at military installations, as reported by CBS. The USDA is now launching a new study this month that will focus on health and nutrition of bison as well as industry management. After the NDAA’s passage, Pentagon leaders will be given until next February to come up with a plan to work on this new procurement assignment with federally recognized tribes and tribal organizations.

**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.

## VVA 535 Member Biographies

Discussion at our July 2022 meeting disclosed a

reality that while our members may know something of their cohort's military service, little is known of their roots and personal lives. With that came the suggestion that members share biographical sketches orally at a meeting or in written form for INCVOMING so that they might be better known.

As a leadoff sketch, Bart Ruud shares something of his background in the following submission:

I was raised on an Auburn, CA area 160-acre farm but determined early in life that I did not want to try to make a living raising cattle or sheep or any other livestock. At age 33, my dad had acquired the farm for a \$15 cash down payment and a promissory note and moved to the property on July 1, 1940. He was a 1932 Business Economics graduate of the University of Washington and had been raised on a homesteaded ranch that was later greatly expanded in eastern Washington. Dad came to California to seek his future, probably because a sister and her husband had a 135-acre farm in the north Auburn area, and that gave him a base. By happenstance he didn't put his university education to use, but he was an avid reader, something that enhanced his knowledge and wisdom, and he was a man of solid character. He was the youngest of a family of eight children, the offspring of a Swedish immigrant mother and Norwegian immigrant father who arrived in America with the clothes on their backs.

Dad, a bachelor, took over the dryland north Auburn farming operation that came with the former owner's dog and a few head of cattle. It was clear that if he could irrigate some of the parcel, he could increase the livestock carrying capacity of the land, and thus enhance his economic probabilities. In due course, with a workhorse and plow, a pick, a shovel and a rock bar he dug a canal about a half mile in length to carry water from an established Nevada Irrigation District canal to the Ruud property.

With WW II going full steam, my dad endeavored to enlist in the U.S. Army. He had

been in the Navy ROTC program at the University of Washington but for reasons unknown to me volunteered to serve in the Army rather than to seek induction into the Navy. He was rejected for military training solely because he was considered more valued as a farmer producing agricultural products for a nation needing to supply its people and its military with food than as an Army inductee. He was sent home from the induction center to farm. It's my strong suspicion that he regretted never serving our country in the military. (My military service somewhat vindicated those feelings.)

I think in summer 1942 dad enrolled in a Red Cross First Aid class because he thought it prudent to know something about emergency care should he ever injure himself as a bachelor farmer. It just happened that the woman he would later marry in May 1943 was the class instructor. Mom, a southern California school teacher at an Episcopal girl's school, was visiting her parents in Auburn and decided to help the country as a volunteer Red Cross instructor. Mom's dad, an attorney, and her stepmother had a dairy stocked with Jersey milk cows. They also held the contract to supply the Auburn area DeWitt Military Hospital with dairy products ranging across the spectrum of milk, butter, cottage cheese, and ice cream. The dairy was located directly adjacent to Camp Flint, a prisoner-of-war camp where Italian and German prisoners were held. By arrangement, German farm-boy prisoners helped with milking chores at the dairy. It was common that many prisoners worked across the community in various voluntary capacities. By any account, they were trusted, decent people held in a safe environment, far from the brutality and risks of war.

Mom came from a motivated Tennessee family whose members became either practicing medical doctors or attorneys, all of whom had attended Vanderbilt University. But mom's mother died of an infection in the pre-antibiotic era when she was 8 years old, and she was sent

to become a boarding student at an Episcopal Church girl's school, *The Bishop's School*, in La Jolla, CA. Later, following her 1928 graduation from Stanford University and from a master's program at UC Berkeley, she would return to *The Bishop's School* to teach English. Mom had a major in English and minors in French and economics as an undergraduate. She was fully fluent in French, having studied the language since seventh grade.

My parents were married in Auburn's St. Luke's Episcopal Church even though my dad was a charter member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Auburn. Those were their lifelong churches; I was raised in the Episcopal Church. My older sister came along in 1944 and my twin sister and I came along weeks prematurely in May 1945. After two months of hospital preemie care, my twin and I came home to a farmhouse with no electricity until we were two years old, a 7-party crank telephone, two hand pumps – one on the kitchen drainboard and one on a utility porch – an outhouse, and gravel-surfaced county roads.

Wartime gas rationing meant infrequent trips to town for supplies. I'll never know how my mother tolerated coming from a comfortable environment to being a farmer's wife who by circumstance had to live in rustic conditions and near economic poverty. She and my dad were together until he died unexpectedly of a heart attack at age 70 in 1978 while attending to one of his horses. Mom lived out her life on the family farm, dying unexpectedly at age 87 in 1994. With dad's death, though I did not live on the property, I took over running the farm. In the late-1990s I leased the property to renters who take less care of the land than I would desire. At my age, I am not about to step back into farming, and I wonder what will become of the farm that was my home during my youth. The farmhouse we grew up in remains my sister's home as a set-aside from the lease.

As a child, I attended all the local schools. For logistical and economic reasons, I never played

sports like Little League or participated in Boy Scouts. We were poor but we children never understood that reality. We enjoyed a carefree life on the farm, helping our dad as we could, hunting and fishing for food for the table, and walking a half mile to the school bus stop all through our formative years. From the time I was 12 years old, I worked for neighbors at odd jobs for small change remuneration. By age 13 I was riding my bicycle over 7 miles to town to mow lawns for \$0.50 while using the homeowner's mower or other equipment. I saved every dime I could and eventually bought a 1947 Chevrolet coupe that lasted only a short time before the motor went south. In those days we drove the neighborhood, sans a license, and we got away with it. When I was 16, I bought a 1950 Ford sedan, the purchase of which angered my dad, and that was the kicker for me to begin to pay for my room and board. That reality forced me to look for a real job, and I went to work seven days a week for a local veterinarian as a "kennel boy" who fed cats and dogs in the kennels, sanitized the kennels, bathed the dogs as requested, and assisted in all manner of surgeries – literally everything that came across the exam table. Today, in that capacity, I might be considered a Veterinary Technician. I made decent money for the era, and I saved much of it because I knew one day I would go to college as means to escape farming.

My interests were not with farming, and in 1969 I earned a bachelor's degree in Forest Management at Oregon State University after long hiding behind a college draft deferment. It took a while to get through the program because I had to work my way through college. I worked as a logger, cannery worker and hod carrier in construction. My dad could offer little help because he and my mother were trying to assist my sisters with their own schooling. My older sister graduated UC Berkeley and served in the Peace Corps in Columbia before working several decades for an international law firm in San Francisco. My twin sister graduated University of Washington, later earning a master's degree in public health at the

University of Minnesota, and then employed by El Dorado County. Even later, she earned a library science master's degree, changed careers, and worked as a Reference Librarian in the Placer County Library system for 25 years.

No one among the three of us kids ever married. I could easily have married but preferred my freedom from relationship compromises and the trials of raising a family. Thus, I've owned a few toys, traveled in western Europe 17 times, traveled the former Soviet Union 7 times, traveled in Canada, Mexico, Argentina, and New Zealand, and I've journeyed back to Vietnam 5 times. I've also seen Alaska and Hawaii on several occasions.

Following Oregon State University graduation, I departed Oregon two days later for southeastern Alaska where I took a job 90 air miles from Ketchikan with a logging company situated on the Behm Canal, a natural channel that separates Revillagigedo Island from mainland Alaska. I worked there about 15 months before I was drafted and reported for induction in Anchorage, AK. It had taken months for the Draft Board to find me, and had I not been in the work force, paying payroll taxes, officials might never have found me. When I was eventually located, I was sent for a physical in Anchorage, which I passed. Later, a draft notice arrived but I wanted nothing to do with the military or the Vietnam War, so my answer was simple: I tore up my induction notice and went on with life. Later, the State police showed up and served papers which directed that I report for induction within seven days. While Canada was close, my girlfriend said I had to report for induction and serve our country. My dad said the same thing, but my mother suggested I seek asylum in Canada. In the end, my girlfriend saw me off on the plane to Seattle and ultimately to Fort Lewis where, beginning in mid-September 1970 I went through basic training. My AIT training was at Fort Sill, OK. Service, at age 26, followed in Vietnam where I was a section chief of a counter mortar counter battery radar section.

Sgt. Ruud came home from Vietnam in 1972 with a Bronze Star, good and bad memories, and a solid case of PTSD. It has taken a lifetime to find peace, but with professional therapy, I am in better balance today than ever. Along the way, I served several years in a mechanized infantry unit of the California Army National Guard. I quit that adventure just as I was to promote to Sergeant First Class. Additionally, I earned a master's degree, became a Registered Professional Forester in California, gained employment as a forestry professor and later as an academic advisor at Sierra College, and had a wonderful 33 years in its employ. During the earlier years with the college, with summers off, I became a USFS crew boss of a wildland fire hand crew and fought fire for ten seasons all over the western United States with my team of 20 young firefighters. I retired from the college in 2007 too young, at age 62. Community volunteerism and serving on several organizational Board of Directors has filled the void, almost to the point of exasperation.

I attribute my success in life to the care afforded me by family, a plethora of friends, and a brotherhood of military veterans. #

**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

# 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 Dave Middleton Memorial 1:30 p.m. Veterans Hall
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 VVA 535 BBQ Kentucky Flat Community Center
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 Fair Set-Up	10 Nevada County Fair	11 Nevada County Fair	12 Nevada County Fair	13 Nevada County Fair
14 Nevada County Fair	15 Fair Take- Down	16	17	18	19 CSC- Visalia	20 CSC- Visalia
21 CSC- Visalia	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

# September

# 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 VVA 535	2	3
4	5 Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10
11 Patriot Day	12	13	14	15	16 National POW/KIA Recognition Day	17 Constitution Day
18 Air Force Birthday	19	20	21	22 Autumn Begins	23	24
25 Rosh Hashanah (Begins at sundown)	26	27	28	29	30	



# October

# 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 Yom Kippur (Begins at sundown)	5	6 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	7	8
9	10 Columbus Day	11	12	13 Navy Birthday	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Operation Linebacker ends 1997	24	25	26 Republic of Vietnam Created 1955	27	28	29
30	31 Halloween					