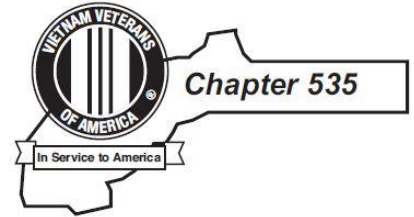




INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

CHAPTER 535



Website: www.vva535.org

Volume 33 Issue 1

January 2023

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER 535
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
January 2023

Just a note to let you that Bart and I will be at Ha Long Bay, Vietnam for our next meeting, January 5, 2023.

We leave December 31, 2022 @ 4:15 PM, from Auburn by charter bus, stopping at Vince's in West Sacramento to pick up some of our travelers and have dinner.

Then we are off to SFO to board an EVA Airlines flight New Year's Day @ 00:05.

Our tour begins in Hanoi with visits to Ha Long Bay, Yen Bai, Sapa, Lai Chau, Dien Bien Phu, Son La and Mai Chau.

Then a flight from Hanoi to Pleiku and Kontum to visit the Vinh Son and Sa Mai Orphanages. In the 1960's the Sao Mai Orphanage was known as the Tu Tam Orphanage. Joe Sanders and I had both worked and contributed there.

Visiting the orphanages is the main reason for the tours, but to travel that far we try to make the tour interesting. I think we have succeeded, as all but 2 of our travelers are returnees, which has been the same tour after tour.

We have been visiting the orphanages since 2001 and established a 501(c)3 in 2005. We will visit each of the 7 orphanages taking gifts and funds for the support of the children.

After leaving the Central Highlands we travel to Saigon for the TET Celebration.

This is my 20th and I believe my last tour.

VVA Chapter 535 has supported our efforts from the beginning and is very much appreciated.

These orphanages are Montagnard children. The Montagnards fought on our side, we left, and they have suffered.

VVA Chapter 535 members that have traveled with us are Mike Gregersen, Bart Ruud, Ralph Remick, Pete Hidalgo, Ken Tokutomi, Joe Sanders, Richard Squire and of course myself.

Dave Chaix

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

NCCVC Meeting – January 5, 2023
VVA 535 General Meeting – January 5, 2023
CSC: January 6-8, 2023 – Visalia
Chapter Elections - April 6, 2023

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 AffairsRic 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 Services Officer

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

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

Placer County Veterans Services Officer

Matthew Galvin ... 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 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.

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 (Potluck Dinner) of December 1, 2022

Members were reminded that **JoAnne Middleton** would be hosting an open house on Saturday, December 10, 2022. VVA 535 will be benefactors, in memory of Dave Middleton.

After two years of service, NCCVC Chairman Gary Miller has tried to step back from the chairmanship of the NCCVC. At the present, no one has stepped up to chair the group.

Neither President Dave Chaix nor Bart Ruud anticipate being available to attend the CSC meeting in Visalia, January 6-8, 2023. We are actively seeking someone to attend this meeting.

Margie Buhler

As we are aware, Margie passed on November 12, 2022 after a long struggle with cancer. Margie was a tireless advocate for VVA 535 and for veterans all through the years she and Fred were local residents. We extend sympathy and heartfelt condolences to Fred.

Burial will be at 10:45 a.m. on January 20, 2023 at the Sacramento Valley Veterans Cemetery. A **Celebration of Life** for Margie will

be held at 11:00 a.m. at the Lincoln Community Church in Lincoln, CA.

ELVIS PRESLEY'S MOTORCYCLES

7 December 2022

Elvis Presley's motorcycles - the king of rock 'n' roll loved motorcycles and purchased a Harley-Davidson after signing his first record deal

It was a Harley-Davidson Model 165 ST Elvis Presley decided to buy with the money from his first ever record deal, such was his love for all things two-wheeled.



Not a big thumping American cruiser we associate with the brand today, instead a small 165cc single-cylinder two-stroke, based on the pre-WWII German DKW RT 125.

Elvis bought his in 1955, the year he used his uncle's 1940 Buick to get his car driver's license. Because he lived in Tennessee, the license meant he could also legally ride a motorcycle as well. The Harley was a perfect beginner's bike but he soon wanted something bigger so in January the following year when he signed a new record deal, he was at Memphis Harley-Davidson trading the Model 165 for a KH 883cc side-valve Harley.



Big twins

Four days earlier, he was recording Heartbreak Hotel which eventually sold more than a million singles. The new KH cost \$US1134 at the time, which Elvis traded his Model 165 two-stroke in for the amount of \$US436.70.

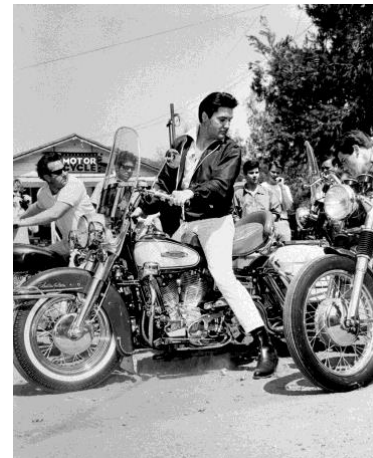
Between the Deluxe version he opted for, the touring screen and the optional seat he chose, it cost him an extra \$US903.19. In May 1956 Elvis and his KH made the cover of Harley's magazine The Enthusiast, and today, Elvis' KH can be admired in *Harley-Davidson's factory museum.*



In November 1956 Elvis spotted the all-new FLH Hydra Glide at his Memphis dealer, and was so taken by what he saw he purchased it on the spot. He rode it home and took American actress Natalie Wood for a three-hour ride through the countryside, chaperoned by police officer Nick Adams riding a FLH Police model.

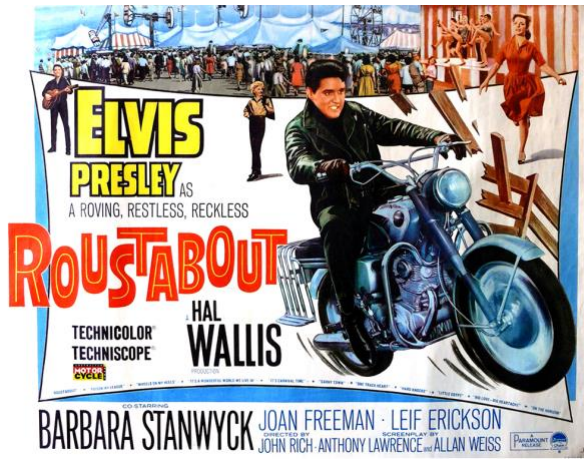


Elvis bought it with the King of the Highway accessory package, which included a windscreen, crash guards and fiberglass panniers. He also opted for a foot-operated gearchange with hand clutch. This had been an option since 1952, as an alternative to the hand-operated gearchange with the lever next to the fuel tank and a foot-operated clutch.



On the Electra Glide in 1965

The FLH of that era was the predecessor of the Electra Glide, which was introduced in 1965, the first electric-start model. Elvis loved the big twin Harleys because of their low seating position, and he preferred them "fully dressed", often fitted with all the accessories available in H-D's comprehensive catalogue.



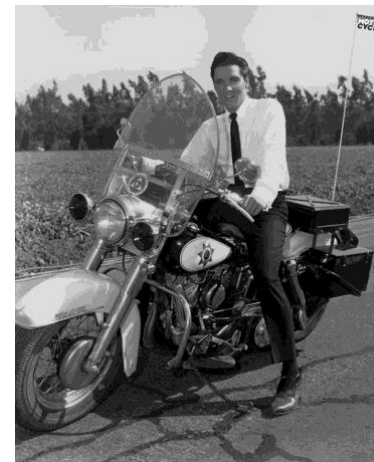
Bubble car: in the Messerschmitt KR200

The FLH was the King's favorite Harley model at the time, and when he bought the now-famous Graceland estate, the Hydra Glide was one of the first things to be moved.

During the recording of the movie *Kid Galahad*, a 1962 remake of the original Humphrey Bogart and Bette Davis movie from 1937, Elvis often rode the FLH police bikes that were present on the set. The movie was shot on location in the small town of Idyllwild, California, and he often rode in camouflage, dressed as a police officer, and he most times was accompanied by a more authentic sworn-in officer of the law riding the same model...



The Duo Glide with the Panhead engine



The H-D Duo Glide Police model

Duo Shovel

Two years later, Elvis upgraded to the newest version of the FLH, the Duo Glide, which was the first big twin H-D with a rear swingarm and dedicated rear suspension. The frame was now sprung both front and rear, hence the Duo name.

The Duo Glide surpassed the KH as Elvis' favorite Harley, but that changed when the electric-start Electra Glide was introduced in 1965. Now the heavy V-twin engine could easily be started with just a push of a button... and Elvis loved it.



Elvis purchased his first KH Harley-Davidson for just over 1000 bucks

Towards the end of 1964 Elvis bought his first Electra Glide. It was a 1965-model bike, which was the only year the Electra used the Panhead engine. He bought his second MY66 Electra with a shovelhead engine in October 1965. Elvis paid \$US1941.25 for his new 'Shovel', choosing the blue and white two-tone livery. Both Electra Glides came fully dressed with a swag of additional touring accessories.



Another one to add to the collection; Elvis was a prolific H-D customer

Elvis purchased several Electras in the years that followed, initially in Memphis, but later on also in Bel Air, California, where he also had an estate after his movie career took off in the early 1960s. The custom craze didn't pass him by, either, and in the 60s and 70s he also had some of his FLHs converted into moderate choppers.



Music royalty: Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash

Memphis Mafia

As well as for himself, Elvis often bought motorcycles for his friends. In April 1965 he bought no less than nine Triumphs for his 'Memphis Mafia' mates so he could go riding with them. In 1976 he did the same, but with Harley-Davidsons instead of Triumphs. In the 1960s Elvis rode a Triumph a few times in movies, but on the big screen it was mostly a Honda he was seen with. In that period, he bought two 305cc Honda CA77 Dream twins, a black one for himself and a white one for his wife Priscilla. The idea was to go riding together, but in reality this rarely took place.



In the summer of 1975 Elvis discovered the trike. A rather light and shaky constructed Rupp Centaur was his first, powered by a 340cc two-stroke engine. Elvis liked it, but it was way too light and underpowered for him. He visited

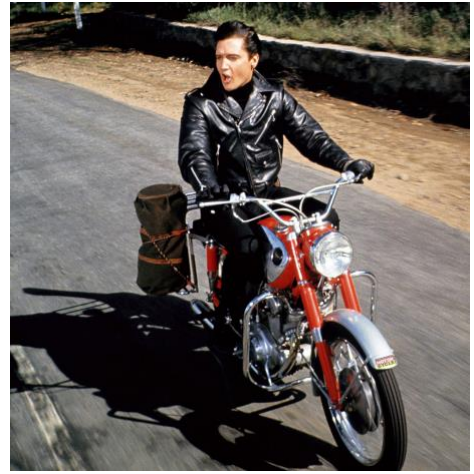
his Memphis dealer to see what could be done about it. The Centaur was conceived as a single seater, but Elvis mostly rode two-up and, since he had gained a considerable amount of weight by now, he was told the Centaur was not the right trike for him... The dealer principal showed Elvis a few Super Cycle trikes, which were powered by a Volkswagen boxer engine. Elvis returned a few days later and came back for a test ride. He must have liked it, as he bought a Super Cycle Stinger, and later on, a Super Cycle Stallion.



Elvis discovered the joys of trikes in 1975

Liberty Edition

Back to his Harleys, in 1976 Elvis bought three Electra Glides, all lightly modified with special paintwork. One of these machines is worth particular mention as on 25 March 1976, Elvis bought a FLH 1200 Liberty Edition, the bike introduced to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the United States of America. Interestingly, Elvis ordered his with the optional 'Liberator' fairing designed by Craig Vetter.



On location shooting the film Roustabout

Vetter started building fairings in 1966 and since 1973 he had been busy developing a fairing for the FLH Electra Glide. Willie G. Davidson was quite charmed with Vetter's fairing design and decided to add it to H-D's official accessory catalogue.



The 1956 KH, still in pristine condition today

Of course, just over one year later Elvis was dead, passing away on 16 August 1977, aged just 42. Two weeks before he died, he visited Super Cycles in Memphis, and in fact this store still exists. If you are in the neighborhood, call in and talk to owner Ron Elliott. He knew both Elvis and all his Harleys very well.



On his Electra Glide in the 70s – he bought three models alone in 1976

Every now and then one of Elvis' old Harleys is discovered. Somebody might find an old Harley in a barn or one might pop up at a garage sale. "To Elvis, love Priscilla" might be written under the seat or on a mudguard, after which the machine will sell for millions to the Harley museum in Milwaukee, or to comedian Jay Leno, or another fortunate collector. But some of these stories are classic urban legends, so if you want to be sure you're seeing a genuine H-D once owned by Elvis, go to the [Graceland museum](#) in Memphis, Tennessee. Four FLHs, as well as one Honda, that once belonged to the rock and roll icon are on display there.

Space Force's 3rd birthday wish: Keep growing

By [Rachel S. Cohen](#) Dec 20 2022



Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall, second from right, cuts a birthday cake Dec. 20 on the third anniversary of the Space Force's founding. Joining the celebration are Chief of Space Operations Gen. B. Chance Saltzman, left, and Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force Roger Towberman. (Space Force)

Break out 8,085 slices of cake.

The Space Force is celebrating its third birthday Tuesday — the anniversary of its founding on Dec. 20, 2019, when federal law created the service to better manage the military satellites, radars and other space-related assets that contribute to national defense.

The Space Force is a subsidiary of the Department of the Air Force, tasked with organizing, training and equipping troops around the world. Its missions include enabling military communications, providing the world with GPS coverage, tracking missile launches, monitoring space weather that could disrupt electric grids on Earth, and more.

In its first three years, the service has grown to encompass more than 8,000 uniformed members, or "guardians," plus several thousand civilian employees. That's about one-tenth the size of the Marine Corps, the next-largest branch of the armed forces.

It hopes to wield a \$24.5 billion budget in fiscal 2023, an increase of more than \$7 billion over last year. The plus-up would fund the transfer of people and other resources from other services into the Space Force, as well as programmatic growth.

In many aspects, the Space Force is starting to move past the initial startup phase. Recently installed Chief of Space Operations Gen. B. Chance Saltzman and other Space Force officials are now focused on building up the service as a bigger, better-trained version of the former Air Force Space Command, which managed the bulk of military space operations in decades past.

Military space operations have taken on new importance in the past year. Ten months into Russia's war on Ukraine, the U.S. and Ukrainian militaries as well as NATO forces have depended on the Space Force for key surveillance, targeting and communications capabilities in Europe.

Advances in hypersonic weapons development have also highlighted the need for new ways to track threats from — and in — orbit. And guardians are learning more about the vital intersection of space operations and cybersecurity every day.

Still ahead are the broad rollout of new uniforms; expanding Space Force command staff around the world; and decisions on the fate of a Space National Guard, to name a few items on the to-do list for standing up a military service.

Other perennial concerns, such as the prospect of conflict with Russia or China, or hurdles to closer allied cooperation, remain as well.

“We may be young, but our capabilities are mature beyond our years,” Saltzman said on Twitter. “[Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force Roger Towberman] and I want to thank our [guardians] and their families for all they do each and every day in service to our nation!”

Congress moves to ban TikTok from US government devices

By Nomaan Merchant
The Associated Press Dec 20, 2022



From the perspective of teens flooding onto TikTok, the Chinese-owned online video app is a major new outlet for self-expression, one proudly home to the silly, the loud and the weird. To others, though, the service is an unnerving black box that could be sharing information with the Chinese government, facilitating espionage, or just promoting videos and songs some parents consider lewd. (AP)

TikTok would be banned from most U.S. government devices under a spending bill Congress unveiled early Tuesday, the latest

push by American lawmakers against the Chinese-owned social media app.

The \$1.7 trillion package includes requirements for the Biden administration to prohibit most uses of TikTok or any other app created by its owner, ByteDance Ltd. The requirements would apply to the executive branch — with exemptions for national security, law enforcement and research purposes — and don’t appear to cover Congress, where a handful of lawmakers maintain TikTok accounts.

TikTok has grown in popularity in the military community. Military services have banned its use on government devices, but service members and their families can still use the app on personal devices. In July, Federal Communications Commissioner Brendan Carr testified before the House Oversight Committee’s panel that use of the app by service members and their families could be a national security threat, noting that troops often upload videos of barracks, military equipment and maneuvers.

TikTok is consumed by two-thirds of American teens and has become the second-most popular domain in the world. But there’s long been bipartisan concern in Washington that Beijing would use legal and regulatory power to seize American user data or try to push pro-China narratives or misinformation.

Brooke Oberwetter, a spokesperson for TikTok, called the ban “a political gesture that will do nothing to advance national security interests.” TikTok is developing security and data privacy plans as part of an ongoing national security review by President Joe Biden’s administration.

“These plans have been developed under the oversight of our country’s top national security agencies — plans that we are well underway in implementing — to further secure our platform in the United States, and we will continue to brief lawmakers on them,” Oberwetter said in a statement.

Speaking Friday, CIA Director William Burns said Beijing can “insist upon extracting the private data of a lot of TikTok users in this country and also to shape the content of what goes on to TikTok as well to suit the interests of the Chinese leadership.”

“I think those are real challenges and a source of real concern,” Burns told PBS. He declined to take a position on congressional efforts to limit TikTok.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., was pushing to include the TikTok provision in the big year-end bill, her office said. Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican who authored a version of the TikTok bill that passed the Senate last week, called the government device ban “the first major strike against Big Tech enacted into law.”

Speaking to reporters Tuesday, Hawley said users should have the right to use TikTok without having their data subject to Beijing’s control. He called for the Biden administration to force ByteDance to divest its U.S. operations. Courts blocked former President Donald Trump’s efforts to ban TikTok from U.S. smartphone app stores.

“We shouldn’t have to ban it,” Hawley said. “Put up a firewall between Beijing and TikTok.”

Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill., has co-sponsored legislation to prohibit TikTok from operating in the U.S. altogether. He called the government device ban an appropriate initial step and said there was a “groundswell of support” for wider action.

“We’re not just talking about Republicans and Democrats and independents,” said Krishnamoorthi, a member of the House Intelligence Committee. “We’re talking about parents who are concerned broadly about social media and TikTok in particular.”

Belarus says its Russian S-400, Iskander missiles enter ‘combat duty’

By [Jaroslaw Adamowski](#) Dec 20, 2022



Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) and his Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko (L) watch training launches of ballistic missiles as part of the Grom-2022 Strategic Deterrence Force exercise, from the situational center of the Russian Defense Ministry in Moscow on Feb. 19, 2022. (Photo by Alexey Nikolsky/Sputnik/AFP via Getty Images)

WARSAW, Poland — Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has announced the S-400 air defense systems and Iskander missiles the country has received from Russia have been put “on combat duty.”

The move comes as analysts are seeing Moscow’s rising pressure on Minsk to increase the satellite nation’s involvement in the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Lukashenko made the announcement during the authoritarian leader’s meeting with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, during the latter’s Dec. 19 visit to Minsk.

“Today, we put on combat duty the S-400 complex, which you handed over to Belarus, and, most importantly, the Iskander complex, which you also, having promised it six months ago, handed over to us,” Lukashenko said, as quoted in a statement released by the Russian president’s office.

Lukashenko has long called on the Kremlin to provide his regime with Iskander missile systems. This would allow the Belarusian armed forces to expand their attack range from about

300 km (186 miles) to 500 km (311 miles), he has argued.

The distance between Minsk and Warsaw, the capital of NATO member state Poland, which has maintained strained ties with Belarus, is about 546 km (339 miles).

Last February, the Belarusian government organized a referendum which enabled the authorities to modify the constitution's article describing the nation as a "nuclear-free zone" and a "neutral" state. The vote, which international organizations have broadly dismissed as rigged, allows Russia to deploy additional nuclear weapons along NATO's eastern flank.

Meanwhile, the Institute for the Study of War, a U.S. think tank, said in a recent analysis that "Lukashenko uses the rhetoric of defending Belarusian borders against the West and NATO in an effort to avoid participating in the Russian invasion of Ukraine."

Lukashenko had used similar hints about the possible deployment of nuclear weapons in Belarus on Feb. 17 in the context of claimed Western aggression, analysts wrote.

USS George Washington suicides investigation reveals systemic issues

By Geoff Ziezulewicz Dec 20, 2022



A sailor aboard the aircraft carrier George Washington instructs sailors on how to properly extinguish a fire during a simulated at-sea training exercise in March 2022.

The suicides of three junior sailors assigned to the aircraft carrier George Washington over six days in April were not connected, according to a Navy investigation into the deaths released this week.

But the probe nonetheless reveals systemic Navy shortcomings and raises more questions about the state of the Navy's mental health services, a shortage of providers that is echoed across America.

It also shows the ignorance that higher-ranking sailors had of the plight of some of their junior brethren, and an institutional indifference to how bad life can be in the shipyards.

Retail Services Specialist 3rd Class Mika'il Sharp killed himself April 9, Interior Communications Electrician 3rd Class Natasha Huffman died by suicide the next day and Master at Arms Seaman Recruit Xavier Mitchell-Sandor ended his life April 15.

While their deaths are not directly attributed to conditions aboard the aircraft carrier George Washington, the probe shows that all three young adults were going through hard times in their own way.

National Defense Service Medal won't be awarded after December

By Meghann Myers and Davis Winkie Tuesday, Sep 6, 2022



The National Defense Service Medal, awarded to all troops who have served since 9/11, won't be awarded after Dec. 31. (Defense Department)

Following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the formal end of combat operations in Iraq, the Defense Department is preparing to truly transition the military out of a wartime posture. Which is to say, the National Defense Service Medal is going back into retirement on Dec. 31.

The award — affectionately known as the “pizza stain,” which all troops serving since 9/11 have been able to pin on their uniforms after initial training — won't be awarded for the foreseeable future.

“Termination is based on the United States no longer conducting large-scale combat operations in designated geographic locations as a result of the terrorist attacks on the United States that occurred September 11, 2001,” Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin wrote in a memo signed Aug. 30.

Thus brings to a close the fourth conflict for which troops could earn the National Defense Service Medal. It previously was activated for five years during the first Gulf War, 13 years for Vietnam and four years for the Korean War.

Senate backs big land transfer for NAS Fallon bombing range

By Gabe Stern, The Associated Press/Report for America Dec 16, 2022



Navy F-35C Lightning IIs attached to Strike Fighter Squadron 101 and F/A-18E/F Super Hornets attached to the Naval Aviation Warfighter Development Center fly over Naval Air Station Fallon's Range Training Complex east of Reno, Nev., in 2015. The defense authorization bill designates 558,000 additional acres for military training at Fallon. (Lt. Cmdr. Darin Russell/Navy via AP)

RENO, Nev. — The U.S. Senate has voted for a massive expansion of a northern Nevada naval air training complex that will transfer of a huge swath of public land to the military.

The Senate on Thursday approved as part of the annual defense spending bill what is likely to be one of the final steps in yearslong negotiations to designate 872 additional square miles of land for bombing and military use to the Naval Air Station Fallon, which is 65 miles east of Reno.

The measure also designates more than 906 square miles of land for conservation, wilderness areas and other protected areas, as well as roughly 28 square miles of land and \$20 million each to two Native American tribes. Churchill County, where the training facility is located, will also receive \$20 million.

The Fallon complex is the Navy's main aviation training range, supporting aviation and ground training, including live-fire exercises. All naval strike aviation units and some Navy SEALs train at Fallon before deployment.

The House approved the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act last week. It now awaits President Joe Biden's signature.

The management of Nevada's vast swaths of federal land, and the differing needs it serves, has long been a push-and-pull for different groups in Nevada that has resulted in legal battles over lithium mining, development, national monuments and endangered species designations. The training facility expansion has been under consideration for years as Nevada's congressional delegation has introduced it time and again while trying to balance the interests of different groups, including the Navy, conservationists, counties and Native American tribes who have long considered the land to be sacred.

The expansion will "improve our national security, fuel economic growth in Churchill County, and preserve important cultural heritage sites for Tribal nations," Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto said in a statement. Praise also came from Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak and Sen. Jacky Rosen, both Democrats, and Republican Rep. Mark Amodei and Churchill County Chairman Pete Olsen.

The Navy has said the expansion is critical to meeting combat training needs for modern aircraft and weapons systems that have outgrown training capabilities over the past two decades.

"This critical legislation enhances our Nation's security by allowing our Carrier Air Wings and Naval Special Warfare Teams to train in a more realistic environment and better prepare for strategic competition," Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro said in a statement.

Several groups have historically been split or mixed on the expansion, including conservationists and some nearby tribes. Brian Sybert, the executive director for the Conservation Lands Foundation, thanked Cortez Masto, Rosen and Amodei for "crafting a delicate

community compromise that has resulted in the only conservation win within this year's NDAA."

But Patrick Donnelly of the Center for Biological Diversity called it "a devastating loss for Nevada wildlife."

He said the public land set to be transferred is one of the few swaths of U.S. land that is largely absent of humans. He added that even parts of the land that will still be maintained by the U.S. Interior Department will still hold combat training exercises that can harm wildlife.

Tribes that have been living in the area where the training complex is located and who consider the valley to be sacred were more optimistic.

"While our tribe will never support the expansion of NAS taking more of our ancestral lands, we're still very thankful and grateful of the many benefits that the NDAA for our tribe has," said Cathy Williams-Tuni, the chairwoman of the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone tribe.

She has said the tribe would work closely with the military and Nevada's delegation to "come up with — we don't always want to say this word, but — a compromise."

The Paiute-Shoshone Tribe is not against national defense, she added, but there is also an importance to the ancestral lands, with burial sites and artifacts spread out across it.

Over the past year, the Nevada congressional delegation, Interior Department and Navy officials have engaged with northern Nevada tribes that would be affected by the expansion. The assistant secretary of the interior also flew to Nevada to visit the land and the tribe. About two weeks ago, Williams-Tuni met with Department of Interior and Indian Health Service officials in Washington D.C.

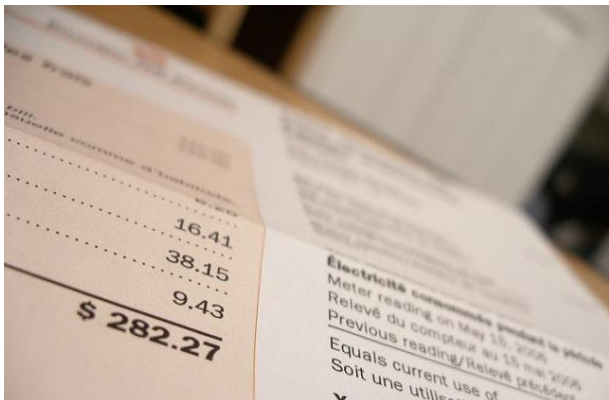
Williams said Thursday that the next step is for the tribe to co-steward the lands with the

Department of the Interior and the Navy, which she said could potentially include a cleanup program of military residue and the transfer of some vital materials to the tribe for heating subsystems.

The Fallon Paiute-Shoshone tribe funding will go toward building and maintaining a cultural center, and the Walker River Paiute tribe's \$20 million is due to past ordnance contamination on tribal land, with about 13 square miles held in trust.

Williams-Tuni said Thursday that although she still opposes the plan as a whole, she is looking forward to "explaining to our membership how we didn't just give away, and we didn't give in."

When the NDAA passed the House last week, Amber Torres, chairman of the Walker River Paiute tribe, called it "a momentous day where an historic injustice against the Walker River Paiute Tribe has been resolved" in a statement.



Nevada changed electric billing to allow utilities to triple the monthly charges for people who own solar panels—one of a few state-level battles between utilities and solar providers. (Brendan Wood / CC BY-SA 2.0)

US Households Expected to Pay Higher Utility Bills for Decades

By [Andrew Moran](#) December 20, 2022

Utility costs have surged across the nation this year, leaving millions of Americans falling behind on their monthly bills. It might get more challenging as households nationwide can expect to pay higher utility costs for decades to come due to storm recovery bond charges.

Natural disasters have ravaged the United States in recent years, from hurricanes to winter freezes. These weather events have destroyed infrastructure and cost electric and gas utility firms billions of dollars in repairs and maintenance.

The numbers confirm that more companies have taken on recovery bonds this year. In the first nine months of 2022, Bloomberg data show that businesses have issued a record \$17 billion in recovery bonds, with estimates suggesting it could top \$20 billion by the end of the year.

According to advisory firm Saber Partners, around \$12.4 billion in weather-related utilities debt was issued in the past year, although this figure only includes debt that customers will have to pay. This is a huge jump compared to nearly \$7 billion in long-term recovery bonds issued by states and utilities between 2007 and 2021.

Most utility debt has been weather-related as these companies try to strengthen their power grids against fierce storms and harsh conditions.

Bond issuers receive the money upfront from investors and repay the loan over time with funds from customers' monthly bills. Financial experts note that this type of debt securitization can mean a cheaper month-over-month option than conventional financing alternatives, ranging from 1–13 percent of average client bills.

While this has been standard practice since the deregulation efforts in the 1990s, the measure has accelerated over the last several years.



General view of Lower Broadway as vehicles and people traverse through snow and ice in Nashville, Tenn., on Feb. 15, 2021. (Brett Carlsen/Getty Images)

Industry experts note that the enormous debt increase in 2022 was caused by Winter Storm Uri, the significant snow and ice storm and tornado outbreak that left millions of homes without power in Texas in February 2021. The week-long weather event, which was the deadliest winter storm in North America since 1993, had been estimated to cost nearly \$200 billion in damages.

Uri also caused the price of electricity and natural gas to spike across multiple states.

More States Embracing Recovery Bonds

Experts purport that ratepayer-supported bonds have their advantages and disadvantages. These funding mechanisms can avoid costly bill shocks or lower energy costs amid expensive disasters.

In February, the Railroad Commission of Texas approved a financing order that allowed several utilities, including Atoms Energy, CenterPoint, and Texas Gas Service, to issue customer rate-relief bonds. This would authorize these companies to spread out additional charges for their customers.

“The financing order allows natural gas utilities to spread the high cost of gas incurred during last year’s winter storm across multiple monthly bills rather than having customers face a large spike in one bill. This order is not a windfall for natural gas utilities and is for the benefit of Texas consumers,” the commission stated.

This past summer, the Kansas Corporation Commission let the Kansas Gas Service (KGS) issue securitized bonds to recover more than \$300 million in deferred and carrying costs due to Uri. For the next seven to 10 years, customers would pay a winter event securitized cost of as much as \$6.42. Without securitized bonds, households would face monthly charges between \$9.04 and \$13.90, according to a report from the commission.

Earlier this month, the Louisiana Utilities Restoration Corp./ENO announced it intends to issue nearly \$210 million in storm recovery bonds that maintain a final maturity date of September 2037.

At the same time, there have been concerns that the costs are unequal, as households in different parts of the country may pay more over time. Today, five states pay the highest percentage of securitization charges on their monthly bills: New York, Texas, Louisiana, New Hampshire, and Oklahoma.

Americans Struggling With Utility Bills

Despite efforts to mitigate the financial pain of utility bills, millions of Americans are struggling to keep the lights on and water running.

The National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA) reported last month that more than 20 million families were behind on their utility bills. The policy organization also found that the collective amount owed totaled about \$16 billion, up from \$8.1 billion at the end of 2019. The average delinquent bill jumped from \$403 to \$792.

“The increase in the energy burden for families in the bottom 40 percent of the U.S. income distribution, is of even greater concern,” the NEADA noted in a report ([pdf](#)). “From 2020 to 2022, families’ average energy costs increased from \$3,098 to \$3,770, and the amount spent on gasoline increased from \$1,035 to \$1,662. This increase in utility costs reflects the continued high prices for natural gas, heating oil and propane, as well as this past summer’s heat waves that increased the cost of air conditioning from an average of \$450 the previous summer to about \$600.”

A recent LendingTree [survey](#) discovered that more than one-third (34 percent) of households struggled to pay for food and medicine because of high utility bills. Twenty-three percent of households could not pay a portion of their energy bill in the past year.

“Life is getting more expensive by the day, and it’s shrinking Americans’ already tiny financial margin for error down to zero,” said LendingTree chief credit analyst Matt Schulz in a statement. “Unless they’ve been able to increase their income, millions of Americans have had to make sacrifices because of inflation to pay the bills. Perhaps the worst part is that inflation likely isn’t going anywhere anytime soon. That means that short-term quick fixes won’t cut it.”

In November, electricity prices surged 13.7 percent year over year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics ([BLS](#)). Utility piped gas service rose at an annualized rate of 15.5 percent.

The average cost of home heating is forecast to rise 17.2 percent since last winter’s heating season, totaling \$1,208, the NEADA stated ([pdf](#)).

Writing Your Story for INCOMING

(Ongoing repeat solicitation)

Ideas for your story:

- Think about what you appreciated about the Vietnam experience. There is surely a means to segue into that with very little reflection on the negative aspects of war.
- What did you appreciate about the Vietnamese people during your deployment?
- Can you steer away from the bad stuff and reflect on the best experience you had in the Nam?
- Surely you had a close buddy and you supported each other. Maybe there is a story in that.
- What really got you through the day-to-day anxieties and fears? There might be a positive recollection in that regard.
- How did your experience instill in you a sense of patriotism that you possibly express every day of your life.

So far we have heard from Ruud, Epps, Chaix, Hamer, Chuck Holmes, current Marine LCpl. Jesse Hernandez, Kent Hawley, Mike Laborico and Dave Johnson. (Thank you!)

No writer needs to dwell on the negatives of war. Each of us who was there lived the negatives, and all of us are better people for having served, especially when we look at how we matured as a result of our experiences. Each of us has derived a sense of being and an energy that is different from what it might have been had we not been sent across the pond.

Do share with us, in your own words, something of that chapter of your life. And, thank you for your service.

Forward your story to Bart Ruud at bruud45@gmail.com or hand deliver to Bart.

VVA 535 Member Biographies

Do you know _____

*Now, our readership and Brotherhood knows
_____ better than we might ever
have known this man, this leader.*

Who will be next to share?

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

December

2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 VVA 535 Pot Luck Holiday Dinner	2	3
4	5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8	9	10 Middleton Christmas Open House 12:00 – 6:00
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 Hanukkah (begins at sundown)	19	20	21 Winter begins	22	23	24
25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve

January

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5 VVA 535	6 CSC Visalia	7 CSC Visalia
8 CSC Visalia	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 Battle of Khe Sanh begins (1968)
22	23 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	24	25	26	27 Paris Peace Accords signed (1973)	28
29	30 Tet Offensive begins (1968)	31				

February

2023

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

March

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting Operation Rolling Thunder Begins (1965)	3	4
5	6	7	8 First Marine Battalion arrives in DaNang (1965)	9	10	11
12 Daylight Saving Time Begins	13	14	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18
19	20 First Day of Spring	21	22 Ramadan Begins	23	24	25 Medal of Honor Day
26	27	28	29 National Vietnam War Veterans Day	30	31	

