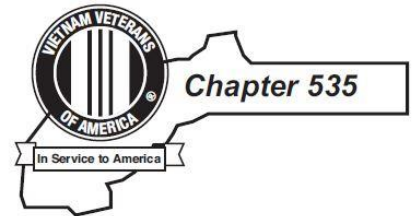




# INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
**CHAPTER 535**



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

Volume 34 Issue 1

January 2024

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
CHAPTER 535  
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE  
January 2024**

*understanding of the sacrifice, patriotism, and  
bravery of those who served, those who gave all,  
and those left behind.*

Hello VVA members,

As Year 2023 winds down and we crunch the numbers that speak to the arrival of 2024, now is the time to reflect on the good and even the bad of the past months. There can be much to gain from reflection. It's fact that reflection can empower us, individually and collectively, so that we can move to the future with vigor. Take the challenge now and actively contemplate the future!

Blessings to all and may you have a new year of good health and happiness.

Bart Ruud for,  
Ray James  
President

**VVA Chapter 535 Mission Statement**

*To foster camaraderie among members and assist those with disabling mental and physical injuries, to promote the welfare of our brethren affected by the war, and to engender public*

**Veterans Crisis Line**

**DIAL 988 then PRESS 1  
Or text 838255**

**(Put these numbers 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 4, 2024  
VVA Chapter 535 Meeting – January 4, 2024  
CSC: January 5 - 7, 2024 - Visalia

### **Chapter 535 Officers**

President Ray James  
rjames1087@sbcglobal.net  
1-530-273-1087

Vice-President Peter Hidalgo  
peterhidalgo45@yahoo.com  
1-530-912-1971

Treasurer  
Ralph Remick ..... 530-559-7716

Secretary  
Bart Ruud ..... 530-305-0493  
[bruud45@gmail.com](mailto:bruud45@gmail.com)

### **Directors**

Doug Becker ..... 530-272-3300  
Dick Corn ..... 530-277-8856  
Keith Grueneberg .... 916-425-1121  
Ric Sheridan..... 530-274-1413  
Corbin Smith ..... 916-833-7860  
Enrique Vasquez ..... 530-575-4416  
Mel Williams ..... 707-391-7692

### **Committee Chairs**

Finance ...Ralph Remick & Kent Holley  
Parade and Honor Guard ..... Dick Corn  
Membership Affairs .....Ric Sheridan  
Newsletter ..... Interim Editor... Bart Ruud  
Victorian Christmas ...Cancelled for 2022; 2023  
Nominations ..... Ralph Remick & Dick Corn  
Veterans Assistance ..... Ray James  
NCCVC ..... 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... Interim: Bart Ruud

### **Nevada County Veterans Services Officer**

David West II  
Nevada County Veterans Service Officer  
988 McCourtney Road  
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 Veterans Services Officer**

Richard “Steve” Johnson: 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.

**Guest Speakers: Wendy Malone**, State Service  
for Veterans Chair, DAR. **Tim Whalen**, CPO, USN  
(Ret.), from the Citrus Heights Vet Center.  
(Coordinated by Enrique Vasquez)

### **Matters of Interest as outlined at the Meeting of December 7, 2023**

Our General Meeting of December 7<sup>th</sup> was tabled  
in lieu of a Christmas potluck dinner attended

by more than 30 who enjoyed a wide array of cuisine prepared by many.

Frances and Ric Sheridan are thanked for coordinating this event and bringing it to fruition.

“Second Courage” presentations continue to be sought. Verbal or written presentations will be gladly accepted. Such presentations can include how the presenter reintegrated into society and created a productive life following completion of their military obligation.

### **What Was the Concept Behind Fire Bases in Vietnam?**

By David Zabecki. Vietnam Magazine. May 9, 2023



Similar to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century fort concept, fire support bases in Vietnam could reinforce each other across long distances with powerful effects.

Vietnam was a non-linear war. There were no front lines with enemies on one side and friendlies on the other. Tactical problems could become very complex, with the enemy potentially in any or all directions. It was vital to be able to observe and fire 360 degrees all-around.

Although atypical of most 20<sup>th</sup>-century warfare, those conditions were not necessarily unique to military history. Perhaps the closest American

experience was the Indian Wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—with isolated forts established to control certain areas and provide security to overland travel routes and civilian settlements in the sector.

One solution to the Vietnam War tactical problem was the fire support base (or firebase). Most 19<sup>th</sup>-century forts were isolated and had to be self-sufficient. Thanks to 20<sup>th</sup>-century technology, the firebases used by the allies in Vietnam could communicate with each other instantly and could be resupplied and reinforced by air.

### **WHAT WAS A FIREBASE?**

The fire support base was a combined infantry-artillery position that sometimes included armor. Depending on the planned duration of the position, firebases could be dug-in heavily and reinforced with engineer assets. Perhaps the greatest strength of the firebases was their ability to cover each other with mutually supporting fires over great distances. It is a long-standing principle of firepower that massing fires is the most effective way to use artillery.

Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the only way to mass fires was to physically group the guns together on the ground. Between World Wars I and II, improved communications combined with innovative advances in fire direction control techniques made it possible to mass fires instantly on enemy targets from many widely dispersed guns.

Firebases could reinforce the fires of their own internal guns with the guns of any or all other firebases within artillery range. It was a powerful multiplier effect.

### **HOW WERE FIREBASES SET UP?**

The size, composition, and positional duration of a firebase depended on the planning factors of mission, enemy, terrain, and troop availability. Some firebases were very large and held positions for months or longer. Other firebases were relatively small and remained in position for days or weeks. A smaller firebase might consist of a company of infantry with a two-gun artillery platoon in the center of the position. A larger firebase might consist of two or three infantry companies, or possibly an entire battalion.

The artillery would consist of an entire six-gun battery. Instead of being positioned in the normal staggered line, the guns were deployed in a star position, with the base piece at the center and the other five guns forming the points of the star to provide rapid and effective fire in any direction. Smaller firebases with two or four howitzers deployed their guns when possible in square or triangle formations.

Firebases on flatter terrain were usually round, and those on ridges generally were rectangular due to terrain. Most larger firebases contained a helicopter landing pad for resupply and medical evacuation. When a firebase deployed forward, the guns often were moved by air.

#### FIREBASES USED IN ATTACK AND DEFENSE

The firebases were not merely passive defensive positions. Infantry patrols aggressively pushed out from the perimeter, day and night, but usually stayed within the guns' maximum effective range fan—roughly 11,000 meters for 105mm howitzers and 14,000 meters for 155mm howitzers. When a patrol made contact, it could call for fire support not only from the guns of its own firebase but those of any other firebase in range.

The firebases, of course, invited attack. One gun inside the firebase usually fired illumination rounds to deprive attackers of the cover of

darkness. Other guns delivered fires where needed outward from the perimeter. Firing close to friendly troops could be complex because of the large bursting radius of HE ammunition. The solution to that problem was the M-546 Antipersonnel Round for the 105mm howitzer. Popularly called the "Beehive Round," it fired 8,000 steel flechettes, triggered by a time fuse set to detonate just outside the perimeter. A green star cluster hand flare fired just before the Beehive warned troops on the perimeter to take cover.

Between 1961 and 1973, U.S. and allied forces established more than 8,000 fire support bases in Vietnam; only a small fraction existed at any given time. Some of the war's fiercest battles were fought over firebases, including Firebase Ripcord in Thua Thien Province (July 1-23, 1970); Firebase Mary Ann in Quang Tin Province (March 28, 1970); and Firebase Gold in Tay Ninh Province (March 21, 1967). Neither the VC nor the NVA ever managed to overrun a U.S. forces firebase.

#### **US Indo-Pacific commander 'concerned' about China-Russia military ties**

By Mari Yamaguchi, The Associated Press. Dec 18, 2023



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, Chinese naval frigate Binzhou takes part in a joint naval drills with Russian warships in the East China Sea on Dec. 27, 2022.

TOKYO — The head of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said Monday he is "very concerned"

about increased joint military actions by China and Russia in the region.

Adm. John C. Aquilino spoke in Tokyo as another regional concern, North Korea, conducted its latest intercontinental ballistic missile test, underscoring the advancement of its capabilities.

Aquilino is meeting with Japanese defense officials ahead of a joint exercise, Keen Edge 24, early next year.

He urged China to stop escalating maritime confrontations with its neighbors, and said its increasing military activity with Russia is a serious concern during Moscow's war in Ukraine.

"I view it as far beyond the marriage of convenience at this point in time" he said. "If you tied DPRK (North Korea) into that, the Russia-DPRK cooperation, and the fact that the only partner of the DPRK prior to that was (China), that's just a bad neighborhood and bad group to be in," Aquilino said.

North Korea has been pushing to expand cooperation with Russia and China. There have been concerns that the North has supplied missiles and other ammunition to Russia to support its war in Ukraine, in exchange for obtaining Russian missile technology.

Chinese and Russian bombers had a joint flight last week over the East China Sea to the waters between Japan and the Korean Peninsula, causing Japanese fighter jets to scramble against them, according to Japan's Defense Ministry.

Japan has territorial disputes with China over the Japanese-controlled East China Sea islands which Beijing also claims. It considers China a threat to national security and is in the process of a rapid military buildup.

Japan is particularly concerned about China's increased joint activity with Russia's military around the Japanese coast.

China has growing tensions with other neighbors.

Standoffs between China and the Philippines over a number of disputed offshore areas in the South China Sea have escalated this year. The United States has warned China that it is obligated to defend the Philippines, its treaty ally, if Filipino forces come under attack. China has warned the U.S. to stay away from what it calls a purely Asian dispute.

China also activated sonar in waters where an Australian ship had divers working.

But China's flight and maritime close encounters with U.S. warplanes and ships have stopped since U.S. President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping agreed in November to stabilize their relationship and re-establish military communication.

But Aquilino's requested talks with his Chinese counterpart have been pending for three years, and he is waiting for China to respond to his renewed request.

"No reply yet," he said, other than the Chinese embassy saying they have to work out the technology to set up the call.

### **Disability payouts help some vets earn more than healthy peers**

By Leo Shane III. Army Times. Dec 18, 2023





A Vietnam war veteran salutes during a Veterans Day ceremony at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)

Veterans with low disability ratings often earn more annually than their non-disabled peers, but those with more significant service injuries lag significantly behind other veterans in personal income, according to a [new analysis from the Congressional Budget Office](#).

The findings come as the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) continues to see its annual disability compensation costs rise each year. In fiscal 2022, those payouts totaled \$125 billion, almost 45% of all department spending.

Veterans with disability ratings can span a range of ailments, including physical wounds, illnesses linked to [military toxic exposure](#), traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. In 2022, about 30% of all veterans in America had some [compensable service-connected disability](#).

[CBO researchers](#) found that contrary to stereotypes, a veteran collecting disability payouts is more likely to be younger than the average veteran, be married, and to have a college degree. About one in five veterans with any disability rating are not in the American workforce.

Based on census reports and available VA data, CBO said the average earnings for male veterans with a disability rating in 2019 was \$52,200 — roughly \$10,200 (16%) below that of non-disabled veterans.

However, the range of earnings for those injured and infirm veterans varied widely. Veterans with low disability ratings (10% or 20%) averaged about \$3,100 more than their non-disabled peers, a 5% increase. Those with ratings 70% or higher earned nearly 40% less than non-disabled peers.

The report found similar trends with women veterans. Non-disabled veterans averaged \$42,900 in annual earnings. Women veterans with a 10% or 20% rating were about \$2,300 higher (5%), while those with a rating of 70% or more were \$16,000 lower (38%).

The difference typically comes down to an individual's ability to work, according to the report. Veterans with low disability ratings average about \$2,300 in payouts from VA over the course of a year, but have been able to maintain full-time jobs and keep pace with their peers.

“Veterans with a rating of 10 percent or 20 percent probably had relatively minor service-connected medical conditions (such as scars or tinnitus) that did not affect their ability to work,” researchers wrote.

Conversely, veterans with high disability ratings averaged \$29,200 in payouts but “had the lowest labor force participation rate,” restricting them to part-time employment or no steady work.

Researchers found similar earnings trends among veterans attending college full-time or part-time, although income from other sources — such as the VA's GI Bill benefits — played a large role in those financial totals.

Report authors did not draw any conclusions about whether any changes are needed in the veterans compensation system but said that the findings will “allow policymakers and others to compare the financial security of veterans receiving disability payments with that of

veterans not receiving payments as a way to gauge the importance of that compensation.”

The full report is available online at the [Congressional Budget Office website](#).

### **Judge issues order keeping Confederate memorial at Arlington Cemetery**

By Matthew Barakat. The Associated Press. Dec 18, 2023



Workers prepare a Confederate memorial for removal in Arlington National Cemetery on Monday, Dec. 18, 2023 in Arlington, Va. (Kevin Wolf/AP)

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — A federal judge on Monday issued a temporary restraining order barring removal of a memorial to Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

A group called Defend Arlington, affiliated with a group called Save Southern Heritage Florida, filed a lawsuit Sunday in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, seeking the restraining order. A hearing has been scheduled for Wednesday.

Work to remove the memorial had begun Monday before the restraining order was issued, but the memorial remains in place on cemetery grounds.

A cemetery spokesperson said Monday that Arlington is complying with the restraining

order, but referred all other questions to the Justice Department.

The cemetery had said on Friday that it expected to complete the removal this week. It said the removal was required by Congress, and that it was complying with environmental and historic-preservation regulations.

But the lawsuit accused the Army, which runs the cemetery, of violating regulations in seeking a hasty removal of the memorial.

“The removal will desecrate, damage, and likely destroy the Memorial longstanding at ANC as a grave marker and impede the Memorial’s eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places,” the lawsuit accuses.

The temporary restraining order issued Monday by U.S. District Judge Rossie Alston said that a lawyer for the plaintiffs represented to the court that the work at the memorial involves the disturbance of gravesites.

In a footnote, Alston wrote that he “takes very seriously the representations of officers of the Court and should the representations in this case be untrue or exaggerated the Court may take appropriate sanctions.”

On Friday, the cemetery had said in its statement that “the area around the Memorial will be protected to ensure no impact to the surrounding landscape and grave markers.”

Last week, a federal judge in the District of Columbia dismissed a lawsuit seeking to block removal of the memorial filed by the same plaintiffs. Alston, in his order issued Monday, told the parties to be prepared to discuss how that case affects his decision whether to extend his temporary restraining order beyond Wednesday.

David McCallister, a spokesman for the Florida heritage group, welcomed the judge’s order

while acknowledging it is only temporary. He said the current case differs from the one that was dismissed because they now have evidence that the work is being done in a way that disturbs grave sites.

Generally, he said the memorial promotes reconciliation between North and South, and removing it erodes that reconciliation.

The statue, unveiled in 1914, features a bronze woman, crowned with olive leaves, standing on a 32-foot pedestal, and was designed to represent the American South. According to Arlington, the woman holds a laurel wreath, a plow stock and a pruning hook, with a biblical inscription at her feet that says: “They have beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning hooks.”

Some of the figures also on the statue include a Black woman depicted as “Mammy” holding what is said to be the child of a white officer, and an enslaved man following his owner to war.

Last year an independent commission recommended the memorial be taken down as part of a report to Congress on renaming of military bases and assets that commemorate the Confederacy.

More than 40 House Republicans wrote to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin recently, arguing that the commission overstepped its authority when it recommended that the monument be removed.

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin disagrees with the decision and plans to move the monument to the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park in the Shenandoah Valley, Youngkin spokeswoman Macaulay Porter said.

**Update**  
**CNN — December 20, 2023**

The removal of the Confederate Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia may proceed, a federal judge ruled Tuesday, after finding groups who tried to halt it failed to prove that keeping the monument was in the public’s best interest.

US District Judge Ronnie D. Alston granted a temporary restraining order Monday, barring the memorial’s removal after a request for a preliminary injunction by the groups Defend Arlington and Save Southern Heritage Florida.

The groups claimed the Defense Department’s plan to remove the memorial violated the National Environmental Policy Act, and that the department had failed to take care of the grave sites surrounding the memorial site during the removal process.

But in an order filed Tuesday, Alston said the plaintiffs did “not establish that a preliminary injunction is in the public interest.”

“Plaintiffs’ complaints regarding the removal efforts being likely to damage the gravesites are misinformed or misleading,” the order said.

The statue’s removal is part of a wider action to remove Confederate symbols from US military facilities set forth in a Department of Defense directive issued last October. Arlington National Cemetery had anticipated the monument would be completely removed by Friday, spokesperson Kerry Meeker previously told CNN.

The bronze statue – designed by American sculptor Moses Jacob Ezekiel and unveiled in 1914 – depicts a woman atop a 32-foot-tall pedestal. The figure is wearing a crown adorned with olive leaves, holding a laurel wreath, a plow stock and a pruning hook, according to the cemetery. A Biblical inscription at her feet reads, “They have beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning hooks.”

Other figures on the monument include a Black woman depicted as a “Mammy,” carrying an infant of a White officer, and a Black man following his owner to war, according to the cemetery.





Washington National Cathedral reveals new racial justice stained glass windows to replace those that honored Confederate generals

Though the monument's bronze elements were to be removed, its granite base and foundation were to stay at the site to avoid disturbing surrounding graves, cemetery officials had said.

According to the cemetery's [website](#), Confederate remains weren't allowed to be buried at Arlington until 1900, 35 years after the Civil War ended.

"By 1902, 262 Confederate bodies were interred in a specially designated section, Section 16," the cemetery said. The total is now more than 400, according to the cemetery website.

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin has voiced his disappointment in the removal plans, according to his spokesperson Macaulay Porter. The governor planned to relocate it to the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park in the Shenandoah Valley, Porter said.

### **First-ever provision for psychedelic studies included in defense bill**

By [Zamone Perez](#). Defense News. Dec .15, 2023



The legislation comes as a mental health crisis sweeps through veteran and military communities.

A first-ever provision included in this year's defense policy bill enables studies to analyze [the effects of psychedelics](#) on troops suffering from various medical issues.

As part of the [National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2024](#), any member of the military diagnosed with either post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury can take part in a clinical study that uses authorized funds from the Pentagon.

Studies can be conducted regardless of a substance's classification under the Controlled Substances Act or Uniformed Code of Military Justice, according to the bill. The bill passed through the Senate on Wednesday and the House on Thursday. President [Joe Biden](#) issued a statement on his intent to sign the bill into law following its passage in the House.

"The inclusion of provisions supporting studies on psychedelic therapy in the 2024 NDAA marks a historic moment for the veteran community," said Amber Capone, CEO of Veterans Exploring Treatment Solutions, a group helping veterans access psychedelic therapies. "This legislative breakthrough reflects a bipartisan dedication to prioritizing the mental health of those who have served."

The legislation comes as a mental health crisis continues to ravage veteran and military communities. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom suffer from near-epidemic levels of PTSD, with nearly 30% of those veterans reporting PTSD symptoms at some point in their lives.

The new provision directs Defense Sec. Lloyd Austin to establish a process for the Pentagon to fund studies by federal or state agencies that study the medicinal properties of psychedelics. Academic institutions are also eligible to receive Pentagon funding.

The legislation includes a range of psychedelic substances with potential medical properties:

- MDMA, more commonly known as ecstasy or molly
- Psilocybin, more commonly known as magic mushrooms
- Ibogaine, extracted from the root of the Iboga plant in central Africa
- 5-MeO-DMT, commonly found in many plant species and secreted from the glands of the Colorado River Toad
- Other qualified “plant-based alternative therapies”

Researchers have already received promising initial results on a number of the substances included in the bill. In 2017, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration designated MDMA as a “breakthrough therapy” for treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder. Psilocybin to treat anxiety and depression received that designation in 2019.

Advocates are hopeful ibogaine will be the next to receive that status.

The Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelic Studies, or MAPS, has researched the effects of MDMA for more than 30 years. Its most recent study — a second phase III, multi-site clinical trial — confirmed the results of the first phase III trial.

In that study, more than 86% of participants who received the MDMA-assisted therapy experienced “clinically meaningful” improvement 18 weeks after starting the trial, according to MAPS. Additionally, more than 71% of participants who underwent MDMA-assisted therapy no longer met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD at the end study, compared to little more than 46% of participants who had the placebo plus therapy.

For the next five years, Austin must submit a report to the House and Senate Armed Services committees about the institutions provided

funding for the studies, the number of troops participating and results of the clinical trials, according to the bill.

But advocates for psychedelic therapies say there is more work to be done, and another bill making its way through Congress contains language to use such therapies to help veterans who have been diagnosed with PTSD or TBI.

Reps. Lou Correa, D-Calif., and Jack Bergman, R-Mich., recently submitted an amendment to the Veterans Affairs appropriations bill that would direct the department to set up pilot programs for breakthrough therapies, including MDMA, across the country. The pair co-chair the Psychedelics Advancing Therapies Caucus.

“[The provision] to the NDAA is an important and significant first step in DOD research into novel treatments for PTSD,” said Julianna Mercer, the veterans advocacy director for the group Healing Breakthrough. “There is significant momentum for new and innovative ways to treat PTSD, and Congress is already well into its next goal.”

### **The Korean War is Far From Over Though the shooting ceased in 1953 with an armistice, tensions remain between North and South.**

By Mark Simner. History Net. 11/17/2023



U.S. Marines engage in a street fight amid the September 1950 battle to retake Seoul, the capitol of South Korea

No, technically, it's not over, though overt hostilities stopped 70 years ago.

On June 25, 1950, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK, or South Korea), sparking the first hot conflict of the Cold War—a proxy war between China and the Soviet Union in support of the north, and the United States and its United Nations allies in the south. Crossing the 38th parallel, the DPRK's Korean People's Army (KPA) pushed ROK and U.S. forces south, trapping them behind the 140-mile Pusan Perimeter. In response, the U.N. sent troops, 21 nations ultimately contributing to the effort.

Assuming command of U.N. forces, General Douglas MacArthur turned the tide with Operation Chromite, the amphibious landing of troops at Inchon, southwest of Seoul. Reinforced U.N. forces also broke out of the Pusan Perimeter, pushing the KPA back across the 38th parallel. Coalition forces then invaded North Korea, aiming to reunify the Korean Peninsula, with leading elements reaching the Yalu River border with China.

At that imminent threat, Chinese troops poured into North Korea and launched a series of offensives against ROK and U.N. forces. The fighting was fierce as combatant forces seesawed back and forth. Notable battles included those on the Chosin Reservoir and the Chongchon River. Eventually, the front lines stabilized along the 38th parallel and a long stalemate ensued, though where fighting broke out, such as the three Battles of the Hook, it proved especially bitter.

Peace talks began in July 1951, but disagreement over the repatriation of POWs led to protracted negotiations. The conflict dragged on, claiming the lives of as many as 5 million civilians and military personnel, until the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement at

Panmunjom on July 27, 1953. Tensions remain.

In the mid to late 1960s a series of incidents threatened the armistice, including armed clashes along the DMZ separating north and south, the attempted assassination of South Korean President Park Chung Hee (amid the January 1968 Blue House Raid), the capture of the U.S. spy ship Pueblo that same month and North Korea's 1969 shutdown of a U.S. Lockheed EC-121M Warning Star spy plane over the Sea of Japan, killing 31 crewmen.

North Korea has become increasingly isolated on the world stage, particularly in the wake of the Cold War. In 1994 President Bill Clinton, on receiving intel that North Korea was developing nuclear weapons, weighed bombing its nuclear reactor at Nyongbyon. In 2002, in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush included North Korea in his "axis of evil" list of states sponsoring terrorism. In June 2019 Donald Trump tried a different tack, becoming the first sitting U.S. president to set foot in North Korea when he stepped into the DMZ to shake hands with North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un. Despite such overtures, Kim has recently stepped up the rhetoric and since resumed the missile tests.

## LESSONS

**Beware short-term commitments:** The United States occupied South Korea at war's end in 1945 and withdrew three years later, leaving South Korea weak and ill prepared to resist a North Korean invasion, once again necessitating military intervention.

**Ignore intelligence at your own peril:** In October 1950 MacArthur dismissed information regarding Chinese troop movements and assured Washington that Beijing would not

intervene. Chinese troops crossed the Yalu on the 19th and attacked on the 25th.

**Sometimes divorce is inevitable:** Today South Korea is a thriving, modern republic, while North Korea remains a communist backwater.

Reconciliation seems unlikely.

### **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**

**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 2022



# December

# 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting & <b>holiday potluck.</b>  Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.  Hanukkah Begins	8	9
10	11	12	13 National Guard Birthday	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 First Day of Winter	22	23
24	25 Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa Begins	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve						

# JANUARY

# 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4 NCCVC VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	5 CSC Visalia	6 CSC Visalia
7 CSC Visalia	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

# February

# 2024

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

# March

# 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 VVA-535 Board & General Meeting	8	9
10 Daylight Savings Time begins	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 First Day of Spring	20	21	22	23
24 Palm Sunday	25 Medal of Honor Day	26	27	28	29 Good Friday National Vietnam War Veterans Day	30
31 Easter Sunday						