



Chattanooga Area Veterans Council

Serving veterans and their organizations of East Tennessee, North Georgia and North Alabama



Military Women Hold Holiday Party

ATTENTION: ALL MILITARY WOMEN – Past & Present TriState Women Veterans Unit #157 will hold its Holiday Party this Saturday, 19 December 2015, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm, at SHONEY'S Meeting Room (in back of dining room), 2318 Shallowford Village Dr (I75/Exit 5), Chattanooga (Shoney's also offers a military discount!). If you would like to join in the Gift Game, please bring a wrapped gift - (homemade or store-bought) worth about \$5. Stay for 5 minutes or 2 hours! For more info or directions contact Patty Parks at (423)326-0839 or pattyjoparks@yahoo.com Hope to see you there!

Navy League Holiday Social

The Chattanooga Navy League John J. Spittler Council will hold its holiday social this Thursday, December 17 at the Roosevelt Room, Chattanooga Choo Choo Hotel 1400 Market Street, Chattanooga

6:00 pm - 6:40 pm: Social Time
6:45 pm - 7:30 pm: Buffet Dinner
7:30 pm: Games & Gifts
8:15 pm: 50/50 Drawing & Announcements

Buffet featuring two entrees, sides, dessert, coffee & tea
NLUS Members - \$30, Non-Member Guests - \$40

Mailed reservations should be received
NO LATER THAN Wednesday, December 16, 2015.

Send reservation & payment (Payable to "Chattanooga Navy League") to: Mark Parks, 6920 Sawtooth Drive, Ooltewah TN 37363-6894

Pay-at-the-door without Advance Reservations is \$45 per person.

Advance reservations accepted by phone till noon on 17 December 2015.
Contact Mark Parks at 423-326-0839 or via email at mparks@epbf.com

Chattanooga Area Veterans Council
PO Box 24984
Chattanooga, TN 37422

Check out our new website at www.chattareaveterans.com

Billy Hewitt, Chairman	423-894-3568
Mickey McCamish, Chairman-Elect	423-394-0024
Alan Syler, Vice-Chairman	423-855-6876
Patty Parks, Immed. Past Chair.	423-326-0839
Mark Parks, Treasurer	423-326-0839
Carol Laing, Secretary	423-309-1457

CAVC is a 501c19 non-profit veteran organization.

Sea Cadet Leaders Needed

Four years ago the Signal Mountain Sea Cadet Division was started. Most of the cadets' parents signed up to become officers in the program. A little more than 2 years ago another unit out of East Hamilton Middle/High School started up: the Hurricane Division.

In May of 2016 four of the seniors in the Sea Cadet program will graduate. This means that not only will the program lose four outstanding cadets, it will also be losing their parents as officers from both divisions. In order to maintain the quality and leadership that the Sea Cadet program offers new officers need to come aboard. At this time all of the officers at Signal Mountain Division are females - the male officer was transferred to another school at the beginning of this year. Therefore they are looking for strong, male leadership to come aboard the Signal Mountain Division.

If you would be interested in applying your leadership skills to help mold young minds who are excited about their future, please contact Stacy Kehoe, Commanding Officer of Signal Mountain and Hurricane Divisions, at slk40ax@gmail.com.

Please consider joining by January 31, 2016 to allow sufficient time to get trained up for the position. The website for both divisions is: www.signalmountainseacadets.com.

Military Retirement System Changing

Big changes are coming to the military retirement system. Congress has gone back and forth several times, and it looks like the final version of the law will be sent up to the President's desk soon. This is a major overhaul, but it's important to understand that everyone currently serving will be grandfathered into the current retirement system. So no need to worry about losing your current pension. It also won't start until 2018, so there is some time before these proposed changes take place. What is changing? The big change is a reduced pension multiplier in exchange for matching TSP contributions from the military and cash bonuses for re-upping at certain points in one's career. The pension multiplier would change from 2.5% per year, to 2.0% per year, a 20% reduction (40% of base pay at 20 years, as opposed to the current 50%). Again, this is still a proposal, and nothing has changed. But it's getting close. For a review of the proposal go to <http://themilitarywallet.com/new-military-retirement-plan>.

[Source: The Military Wallet | November 17, 2015 ++]

Coolidge Award Nominations Due

The annual Charles H. Coolidge Veteran of the Year and Associate of the year awards will be presented at the CAVC Banquet in March. Every CAVC member organization is eligible to nominate a deserving candidate for each award. The selection is based on the nominee's contribution to the veteran community. The nomination form can be found at CAVC's website: www.chattareaveterans.com

VA Family Caregiver Assistance

DAV has worked diligently for several years as a part of a larger coalition of veterans organizations that promoted the advent of family caregiver support services for severely injured and ill veterans. Congress finally responded five years ago by enacting Public Law 111-163, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010. However, that act limited services and supports to family caregivers of veterans injured or who became severely ill in military service only on or after September 11, 2001. That omission left thousands of veterans' families without the level of caregiver support and services they have needed because those veterans' health challenges, many from war injuries, occurred before that effective date.

On 25 JUN, Representatives Elizabeth Esty and Ryan Costello introduced H.R. 2894, the "Caregivers Access and Responsible Expansion for All Veterans Act," or the "CARE for All Veterans Act." If enacted, this bill would responsibly and finally address these families' needs on the same basis as those of veterans injured after September 11, 2001. Ultimately, when fully implemented, the bill would improve the lives of tens of thousands of veteran families, and will save the federal government massive sums that otherwise would need to be spent to provide institutional solutions to these veterans' health challenges and health maintenance. Therefore, this bill is both beneficial to these families and a taxpayer-friendly measure.

Veterans can assist in getting this legislation passed by urging their Representative to co-sponsorship and support of passage of H.R. 2894. A letter has been prepared for this purpose or you may write your own to express your views. Go to <http://www.dav.org/can/?vvsrsrc=%2fCampaigns%2f43357%2fRespond> to review DAV's editable letter which can automatically be sent to legislators by their constituency. [Source: DAV Commander's Action Network | November 14, 2015 ++]

FIFTY YEARS AGO IN VIETNAM – NOVEMBER 1965

While the monsoon rains continued in November both sides launched a series of offensive operations. The US Marines and the Vietnamese Marine Brigade moved in an amphibious operation named Blue Marlin on November 7th. They landed from two ships, the Paul Revere (APA 248) and the Windham County (LST-1170) about one third of the way between Chu Lai and Da Nang. The force turned southward astride Route 1 to sweep and clear an area that was mostly fishing villages that were heavily infested with Viet Cong.

Meanwhile General William Westmoreland elected to debut the new air mobile 1st Cavalry against the regular North Vietnamese Army (NVA) in the Central Highlands. He believed the mobility of its helicopters would overcome the regions rough terrain.

On November 14th the 1st Battalion 7th Cavalry began being airlifted into a small landing zone named LZ X-Ray. The NVA began attacking immediately and that started what came to be known as the Battle of Ia Drang Valley. The battalion was pinned down around the LZ. They dug in for the night but the NVA continually probed their lines and conducted three assaults against the Americans. At dawn about 6:20 am they launched a major assault against Charlie Company followed by a three pronged attack at 7:45 am. Both sides took heavy casualties. At about 9:10 am the 2nd Battalion 7th Cavalry arrived and began reinforcing the Charlie Company lines. Around 10:00 am the NVA began withdrawing as the 2nd Battalion 5th Cavalry moved overland from LZ Victor to reinforce the US position. But at approximately 4:00 pm the NVA launched another major assault. With the assistance of well-directed artillery fire four assaults were repulsed and after heavy losses, the NVA withdrew.

On November 17th the battalions were ordered to move overland to other nearby larger landing zones to be airlifted out. The 2nd Battalion 5th Cavalry was sent north to LZ Columbus and had an uneventful several mile march. The 2nd Battalion 7th Cavalry was told to go northwest to LZ Albany with was several miles further. The battalion was soon encountering NVA elements. When the Line of March went through thick jungle in a long column the NVA sprang a massive ambush along the length of the entire column from both sides. Companies C and D took the brunt of the attack and in no time almost every man was killed or wounded. D Company took 93% casualties. Many of the battalion leaders fell in the initial attacks. Small pockets of men banded together to take cover and try to survive the night.



Throughout the night the US forces expected another major assault but illumination flairs provided by the Air Force aircraft flying overhead made the NVA cautious. By morning they had withdrawn and supporting forces came in to rescue the beleaguered 2nd Battalion. The casualties sustained that day by the 2nd Battalion came to be the highest of any American unit in any battle in the war. At LZ X-Ray they suffered 96 killed and 121 wounded but in the ambush there were 155 killed and 124 wounded. It was estimated that about 800 NVA were killed.

As the month came to a close, under cover of more rain, the Viet Cong throughout I Corps made a series of attacks on isolated outposts. They avoided the American main bases except for routine, almost nightly mortar or rocket attacks to disrupt the bases.

Three Medals of Honor were awarded for actions during November. Helicopter pilots Major Bruce P. Crandel from Olympia, WA and Capt Ed W. Freeman from Hattiesburg, MS, respectively, the Commander and a Flight Leader of the 229th Assault Helicopter Company were each awarded the Medal of Honor for repeatedly flying their helicopters into landing zone X-Ray under intense enemy fire to bring in ammunition and evacuate the wounded during the battle of Ia Drang Valley. Second Lt Walter J. Mann, Jr. from Pittsburg, PA, serving as a Platoon Leader in Company A, 1st Battalion 7th Cavalry, was awarded the MOH for single handedly assaulting and destroying enemy machine gun positions with hand grenades thereby saving the lives of the men in his platoon.

Compiled by RADM Noah Long, CEC, USN (ret) from information in Web Site of the Vietnam War Commemoration.

VVA Membership Special Offer

For a limited time Vietnam Veterans of America is offering special membership pricing through 31 December 2015. A lifetime membership in a VVA Chapter or an Associate Chapter is only \$100.

If you are a Vietnam Veteran or a Vietnam Era Veteran you are eligible. If you did not serve during the Vietnam era or are not a veteran but still want to support the Vietnam Veteran community you may choose to join the Associate VVA.

Membership applications are included in this newsletter.

Agent Orange Exposed Ships

VA maintains a list of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships associated with military service in Vietnam and possible exposure to Agent Orange based on military records. This evolving list helps Veterans who served aboard ships, including "Blue Water Veterans," find out if they may qualify for presumption of herbicide exposure. Veterans must meet VA's criteria for service in Vietnam, which includes aboard boats on the inland waterways or brief visits ashore, to be presumed to have been exposed to herbicides. Veterans who qualify for presumption of herbicide exposure are not required to show they were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides when seeking VA compensation for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure.

The new additions include the Navy survey ships Sheldrake and Towhee, attack transport ship Okanogan, submarine rescue ship Chanticleer, destroyers Frank Knox and James E. Kyes, and transport ship General W. A. Mann. VA also expanded the dates of eligibility for sailors who served on the destroyer Fechteler and said veterans may be eligible for presumptive status if they went ashore from the guided missile cruiser Dewey or attack transport ships Pickaway or Paul Revere during certain periods during the war.

Find your ship

Ships or boats that were part of the Mobile Riverine Force, Inshore Fire Support (ISF) Division 93 or had one of the below designations operated on the inland waterways of Vietnam. Veterans whose military records confirm they were aboard these ships qualify for presumption of herbicide exposure. During your Vietnam tour, did your ship or boat have one of the following designations?

- AGP (Assault Group Patrol/Patrol Craft Tender)
- LCM (Landing Craft, Mechanized)
- LCU (Landing Craft, Utility)
- LCVP (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel)
- LST (Landing Ship, Tank)
- PBR (Patrol Boat, River)
- PCF (Patrol Craft, Fast or Swift Boat)
- PG (Patrol Gunboat)
- STABS (Strike Assault Boats)
- WAK (Cargo Vessel)
- WHEC (High Endurance Cutter)
- WLB (Buoy Tender)
- WPB (Patrol Boat)
- YFU (Harbor Utility Craft)

If your vessel is not included in the Mobile Riverine Force, ISF Division 93 or above designations, check VA's alphabetized ship list at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/shiplist/list.asp. Need help determining qualifying service? VA will help determine qualifying service in Vietnam after you file a claim for compensation benefits. To contact VA:

Call 1-800-827-1000 or 1-800-829-4833 (TDD for hearing impaired)

Go to your nearest VA benefits office - www.va.gov/directory/guide/division.asp?dnum=3

Ships will be regularly added to the list based on information confirmed in official records of ship operations. Currently there are 344 ships on this list. A Veteran must file an Agent-Orange related disability claim before VA will conduct research on a specific ship not on VA's ships list. This requirement also applies to survivors and children with birth defects. VA does not have the capacity to research ships when no compensation claim is filed. If you think your ship should be on the list and you are not filing a claim, you may conduct your own research and submit documentary evidence to VA. Documentary evidence includes deck logs, ship histories, and cruise book entries. You may obtain ship deck logs from the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. This evidence must show the ship entering the inland waterways of Vietnam, docking in Vietnam, or otherwise sending crew members ashore. A ship that anchored in an open water harbor, such as Da Nang Harbor, is not sufficient evidence for the presumption of Agent Orange exposure. You must scan your documentary evidence and email it to the Veterans Benefits Administration's Compensation Service at 211_AOSHIPS.VBACO@va.gov. Emails sent to this email address are not secure. Please do not include personal data. [Source: VA Secy Vet Group Liason Officer | Kevin Sector | November 23, 2015 ++]

National Defense Authorization Act 2016

After an extra month wait, the annual defense authorization bill is finally law. President Obama signed the budget and policy bill on 25 NOV, marking the 54th consecutive year the measure has survived Washington political fights to become law. The most significant result for troops is the renewal of dozens of specialty pay and bonus authorities, and a massive overhaul of the military retirement system. Starting in 2018, newly enlisted troops will no longer have the traditional 20-year, all-or-nothing retirement plan. Under the changes, it will be replaced with a blended pension and investment system, featuring automatic contributions to troops' Thrift Savings Plans and an opportunity for government matches to personal contributions. The new system is expected to give roughly four in five service members some sort of retirement benefit when they leave the military, as opposed to the current system which benefits only one in five.

The \$607 billion authorization bill also includes comprehensive defense acquisition reform and language designed to stop Obama from closing the detention facilities at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. White House officials had objected to that language and hinted at a possible veto. But similar language in the measure each of the last six years didn't stop the president from signing past authorization measures into law. Obama did veto an earlier draft of this fiscal 2016 authorization bill, but over broader fiscal fights that were resolved last month when lawmakers approved a new two-year spending plan that goes around mandatory budget caps for both defense and nondefense programs.

The legislation is only half the annual budget process for Congress. Lawmakers still need to pass a defense appropriations bill for fiscal 2016 to start new programs and acquisition plans. Congressional leaders are hopeful that can be done before Dec. 11, when a short-term budget extension expires. But finalizing the annual defense authorization bill is a significant step forward in that larger process, and gives Pentagon planners a host of other policy updates as well:

- **Allowing personal firearms on stateside bases** — Lawmakers are requiring Defense Secretary Ash Carter to develop a plan by the end of this year that would allow stateside base commanders to decide whether to allow their service members to carry personal firearms on duty, or in areas where that is currently restricted by the military. Any such plan would not supercede local laws.
- **A pay freeze for general and flag officers** — Troops will see a 1.3 percent pay increase in January, lower than the rate of expected private-sector wage growth but more than their senior officers will get. General and flag officer pay will stay at fiscal 2015 levels.
- **Another ban on a new BRAC round** — Like in past years, the measure includes a prohibition on defense officials starting another base closing round.

- But lawmakers did include language allowing military officials to conduct studies on how much excess capacity exists in their stateside footprint, which could ease the path to such a move in the future.
- **A ban on "paid patriotism" with sports leagues** — The bill includes language that would prohibit the department from entering into contracts "making payments for honoring members of the Armed Forces at sporting events," in response to congressional reports that several professional sports teams were given tens of thousands of dollars to conduct on-field military appreciation events.
- **Easier rules for military animal adoption** — The measure changes the rules on adopting military dogs and other animals to make it easier for former handlers and families of injured handlers to adopt them following their military service.
- **Developing "gender-neutral" standards for military jobs** — In response to a push to open more military specialties to female troops, lawmakers want Pentagon leaders to craft "gender-neutral occupational standards" that would allow "decisions on assignments (to) be based on objective analysis."

[Source: NavyTimes | Leo Shane | November 25, 2015 ++]

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.



Application for Membership to VVA

Open to all who served incountry Feb 28, 1961 - May 7, 1975
and Era Vets who served Aug 5, 1964 - May 7, 1975



Date: _____ Membership # _____

Branch of Service - _____

Name: _____ Sex: _____ DOB: _____
Place OB: _____

Address: _____ Apt # _____

City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____

Home # [] _____ Cell # [] _____

E-Mail: _____ Recruited by: _____

Marital Status: _____ Spouse's name: _____

Life Membership Options: (check all that apply)			1 Year	\$20.00
VVA Member number _____	change to Life Member		3 Year	\$50.00
	Only Through Chapter		3 Years \$30.00	
<input type="checkbox"/>	56-60 yrs		\$200	
<input type="checkbox"/>	61-65 yrs		\$175	
<input type="checkbox"/>	66-71yrs		\$150	
<input type="checkbox"/>	72 & up		\$100	
Life Membership 8/1/15-12/31/15 all ages			\$100	

- () Receive Printed copy of the monthly newsletter
- () I will read the the monthly newsletter at www.vva203.org (no mailed copy)

Make your check payable to: Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 203

Mail to: Chapter 203
Vietnam Veterans of America
PO Box 23405
Chattanooga, TN 37422-3405

Applicant must submit a DD214 or SS180 with this form.



Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.



* SPECIAL ONE-TIME LIFE MEMBERSHIP OFFER *

**This application is for the Life Membership Special being offered from November 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015 only. The application must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2015 to be accepted.*

This application can be filled in online and printed to sign and mail, or it can be printed blank and filled out by hand.

State: _____ Chapter: _____ At-Large? Yes No

Are You a Veteran? Yes No Are you eligible for VVA? Yes No

I am a new member: I am renewing a current membership:

Member # _____

Name: _____ Sex: M F

Address: _____ Date of Birth: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (Home): _____ Phone (Cell): _____

Email: (please print clearly) _____

Payment must be made in full for \$100.00.
No payment plans are offered with this special.

DO NOT SEND CASH
(Checks, money orders or credit cards accepted)

Payment Method (Credit Card)

Check <input type="checkbox"/>	Money Order <input type="checkbox"/>	Visa <input type="checkbox"/>	American Express <input type="checkbox"/>	Master Card <input type="checkbox"/>	Discover <input type="checkbox"/>
Card #: _____			Expiration Date: _____		
Cardholder Signature: _____					

MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO AVVA,
AND MAIL WITH APPLICATION TO:

Monument Bank, AVVA Lock Box | 8602 Colesville Road | Silver Spring, MD 20910