



# Vietnam Veterans of America Sammy L. Davis Chapter 295



## June 2019 Newsletter



In the United States, Flag Day is celebrated on June 14. It commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States on June 14, 1777 by resolution of the Second Continental Congress. The United States Army also celebrates the U.S. Army Birthdays on this date; Congress adopted “the American Continental Army” after reaching a consensus position in the Committee of the Whole on June 14, 1775. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day; in August 1946, National Flag Day was established by an Act of Congress.

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The red and white and starry blue  
Is freedom’s shield and hope.  
~ John Philip Sousa

### VVA 295 Officers

President	Larry Shaw
Vice President	Bob Parsons
Secretary	Mike Dolan
Treasurer	Wes Anderson
Asst Treasurer	Jim Pierce
Chaplain	Fred Bishop

### Board of Directors

Steve Anderson	Jim Finney
Mike Hamm	Steve Mabrey
Dennis Smalling	Tom Madden
Wallace Vaughn	Ken Walters

### AVVA Liaisons

Holly Tookolo	Tony Gigli
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### VVA Service Officer

Dennis Smalling  
smallingindy@sbcglobal.net  
Thursday 8am-12pm  
Sunday 10am-2pm  
By appointment, 317-313-1577

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Mailing Address: P.O. Box 269279, Indianapolis, IN 46226-9279

Phone: 317-547-4748

Physical Address: 9450 E. 59th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46216

Website: www.vva295.com

Meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm; Board Meeting 6:00pm

Newsletter Editor: Holly Tookolo If you have any information for the newsletter, the deadline is the last day of the month—email me: htookolo@indy.rr.com

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# Important Dates

**June 6, 7 & 8** Region 5 Conference for VVA & AVVA at Marriott East. Thursday, June 6 is registration noon till 6pm plus Meet & Greet. 7-9pm. Friday, June 7 morning is registration 8-9am and it is education day with many speakers for VVA and AVVA. Saturday is pre-convention discussion with separate rooms for VVA and AVVA.. Saturday's banquet is 6:30pm with entertainment by Steve Jeffris at 7:30pm.

**June 12** VVA 295 Board Meeting 6pm; Regular Meeting is 7pm

**June 14** Flag Day

**June 16** Fathers Day

**June 17-21** Bunker is setup at Roudebush VA Medical Center, call Steve 317-459-6255 to help load/unload.

**June 28 & 29** Vets for Vets Annual Yard Sale 8-5—please donate your unwanted items to our Yard Sale!

**July 3-7** Field of Honor Flag Display, Memorial Park, 9120 Otis Ave, Lawrence,

**July 4** Independence Day

**July 10** VVA 295 Board Meeting 6pm; Regular Meeting is 7pm

**July 11-14** The Wall that Heals will be at Greenfield, see page 8

**July 12** 2019 Women Veterans' Conference, 8am-4pm at Indiana War Memorial

**July 15-20** VVA/AVVA National Convention in Spokane, WA

**July 20** Ride for the Veterans Center and Mayors' Veterans Appreciation Day

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## THIS DATE IN HISTORY

**June 9, 1961** President Diem requests U.S. troops for training his armed forces and asks for U.S. assistance in increasing the South Vietnamese army by 100,000 men, to 270,000, accompanied by “considerable” U.S. build-up with” selected elements of the American armed forces.

**June 12, 1964** In Paris, de Gaulle calls for an end to all foreign intervention in South Vietnam. In Berlin, West German chancellor Ludwig Erhard pledges more aid to South Vietnam.

**June 20, 1964** General Paul Harkins is succeeded as head of USMACV by his deputy, Lieutenant General William C. Westmoreland, who is subsequently promoted to general.

**June 17, 1965** Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, while admitting the complexities of the situation, urges Americans to support President Johnson's policies.

**June 2-21, 1966** The 1st Brigade of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division joins with ARVN units to conduct Operation Hawthorne/Dan Thang-61 in Kontum Province, II Corps.

**June 19-July 1, 66** Elements of the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division and 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne, conduct Operation Nathan Hale, a search and destroy mission to clear and secure the Tuy Hoa Valley.



### The Bunker

Hours: 10am—2pm on Sunday.

Your purchases support VVA 295 and Fort Harrison Veterans Center.

The Bunker will be setup at Roudebush VA on June 17-21.

Call Steve if you are going to help load/unload, 317-459-6255.

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**President's Message:**

Brothers and Sisters,

I hope this finds you well, or getting better.

For those of you, who may not know our Chapter Treasure and good friend to many Wes Anderson passed away. Rest in peace Brother., you have earned it. To his wife Sheila, Children, and Grand Children you have our thoughts and prayers. Member James Womack lost his beloved wife, Jolande. Rest in peace. Prayers to James and family.



Here it is June already, with lots to do. Starting with our VVA and AVVA Regional Conference Friday the 7th, and Saturday the 8th, in the Marriott East, located 21st and Shadeland, Indianapolis.

Chapter Meeting, Wednesday the 12th

Flag Day Friday the 14th

Fathers Day Sunday the 16th

Summer begins Friday the 21st

Vet For Vet Yard Sale, Set up on Thursday the 27th, Sale on Friday 28th, and Saturday 29th.

We are still trying to get the building back in shape after our leak in March. As those of you know, who attend meetings, or read the news letter our air conditioning unit needs repaired, or replaced. Add to that, our parking lot is getting in pretty bad in spots. But our roof is going to supersede all projects. We must get the leaks stopped, and that will be our main goal. Then the air followed by the parking lot.

With Memorial Day just passed, and the countless requests for donations from various veterans groups and others to help our fellow veteran, and their families. Little of what is taken in will filter down to help just a few. Most of the money stays with the organization for advertising, promotions, travel, and numerous other expenses. If you truly want your money to help, then donate locally. A lot less overhead, and fewer fingers in the pie.

What's my point? We have 280+ VVA Members, with 34 AVVA Members. Most have never attended a meeting, or even seen the building. Yet they are part of the problem, and the solution. We have members who faithfully come to the meetings, yet they too are part of the problem, and the solution.

What is the problem? No one wants to do anything. Let the other guy do it. He or she should have done that by now. What are they waiting on? Why are they looking at me? I have stayed out of their way. I didn't get under foot, or in the way. They didn't have to work around me. no matter your branch of service, or rank. Just imagine what it would be like if we all worked as a team. It took team work in the military. Each unit with their own MOS, their specialty, yet alone they could not accomplish very much. But as a team, they became a fighting machine. That is what we need here in our chapter. The other groups in the building look to us to keep things running properly, as the building is leased to us. They nor we need to hear excuses, and those days are gone as of now. We need results, and results only come if something has been done. We boast that when we were in Vietnam that the Government and citizens did not support us. But we fought that much harder for us, as us is all we had. Now is the time to do that again. We have not received any grants. We have not had a fund raiser in many years, which has really left us in bad shape.

Now is the time to act. I know that a lot of the members can not afford \$100.00 donation. But if each could, we could pay for the roof repairs, with money left over to start an air conditioner fund. I challenge each and every one of you to donate to the building fund, for roof repairs. If you donate, send your check to; Vietnam Veterans of America P.O. Box 269279, Lawrence, In. 46226. In the bottom corner of the envelope, as well as on the remark line on the check, put Building Fund. Thank you.

**Continued on page 4**

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## Vice President's Corner



**Bob is on vacation at this time.**

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### Continued from page 3—President's Message

Don't talk the talk, if you can't walk the walk. Sammy says, "YOU DON'T LOSE, UNTIL YOU QUIT TRYING". I am still trying. Are you?

Prove to me and others that you care, Donate to the building fund. Sign up a new member. Donate to the Vet For Vet Yard Sale, then come and buy lots of stuff from them, as they will be using those funds to donate to the building. While there ask how you can join them. Several VVA and AVVA Members are all ready members. It is important to remember, when you help them, you also help us. It's a win, win situation for all of us. Keep those flags flying. Pray for the safety of our troops around the world, and their families.

May GOD bless America, and you.

Larry L. Shaw

VVA 295 President

765-618-4067

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**Roudebush VA Medical Center** is needing volunteer drivers. Veterans Transportation Service provides Veterans a ride to their medical center or outlying clinic. This is a great way to help Veterans. To volunteer, visit or call Volunteer Services, 317-988-2734 or call driver Pat Parrish, 317-632-4263 (he's a VVA member). Most recently members Bob Parsons and Mark Fix have become volunteers Thank you Pat, Bob and Mark.

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**HVAF needs volunteers.** Volunteers help sort and stock donations that come to HVAF. They provide essential services to Veterans to help promote them towards self-sufficiency. Volunteers also beautify housing properties by raking leaves, painting and landscaping. Call 317-951-0688 or email [hvaf@hvaf.org](mailto:hvaf@hvaf.org)

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**Company/Coffee** All Veterans WWII to present day are invited for free coffee & safe space to share. Come every Tuesday 10am—2pm at Higher Grounds Coffee Shop inside Geist Christian Church, Promise Rd & 126th St. Fishers. If you have questions, contact John Smitha 317-439-6304 or [jonsmitha@comcast.net](mailto:jonsmitha@comcast.net)

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## Food Drive for HVAF

Bring non-perishable food to the next meeting for HVAF (Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation) for the Veterans they are helping. What they need the most is canned meat & tuna, pasta and noodles. You can visit their website to see what they do. <http://www.hvafindiana.org/>

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The flag stands for all that we hold dear, freedom, democracy, government of the people, by the people, and for the people. These are the great principles for which the flag stands. ~Henry Cabot Lodge, "What the Flag Means," in The World Court: A Magazine of International Progress, October 1915

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## **IU School of Medicine researchers develop groundbreaking test for post-traumatic stress disorder**

**PUBLIC RELEASE: 12-MAR-2019, INDIANA UNIVERSITY**

A cutting-edge blood test discovered by Indiana University School of Medicine researchers could help more accurately diagnose military veterans and other people experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, and potentially provide more precise treatments and prevention.

A study led by psychiatry professor Alexander Niculescu, MD, PhD, and published this week in the high-impact Springer Nature journal *Molecular Psychiatry*, tracked more than 250 veterans in over 600 visits at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis to identify molecules in the blood that can help track stress intensity. The researchers used a careful four-step approach of discovery, prioritization, validation, and testing. According to Niculescu's findings, the blood test can accurately identify people who are at risk of stress disorders or are experiencing them severely.

"PTSD is a disorder that affects a lot of veterans, especially those involved in combat. They deserve our gratitude and the very best care, and we are making every effort to deliver that. It's also an underappreciated and underdiagnosed disorder among the civilian population, whether it be the result of abuse, rape, violence or accidents" said Niculescu, who worked with other Department of Psychiatry and VA researchers on the study, as well as collaborators at The Scripps Research Institute and University of California Irvine. "Countless people are underdiagnosed with stress disorders, which may manifest themselves by drinking more, other addictions, suicide or violence. Our research has broader relevance for not just veterans but the general public."

The decade-long study looked at the expression of genes in the blood, starting with the entire genome, which has over 20,000 genes. Over the course of multiple visits, researchers tested participants in both low- and high-stress states--their blood analyzed for detectable changes in expression of genes between those two different states that could serve as biological markers (biomarkers) for stress. Researchers were able to narrow the study's focus down to 285 individual biomarkers (related to 269 genes) that can objectively help diagnose patients with PTSD, as well as determine the severity of their stress and predict future hospitalizations.

They also compared these biomarkers with other well-known markers of stress and aging, such as telomere length. The biomarker signature helped identify new potential medications and natural substances to treat stress disorders that could be paired in a personalized way with individuals.

"There are similar tests like this in other fields, like cancer, where a physician can biopsy the affected part of the body to determine the stage of disease. But when it comes to mental health, biopsying the brain isn't an option," Niculescu said "Our research is applying similar concepts from other areas of medicine, but we're engineering new ways that will allow us to track mental symptoms objectively, including stress, using blood, or so-called 'liquid biopsies.'"

Much like with his recent breakthrough in developing a blood test to measure pain, and his past work on suicide, Niculescu said this research could be life-changing for individuals who have been exposed to or are about to enter high-stress environments. Such biomarkers will allow doctors to classify people in terms of their current severity or risk for future stress disorders, which can guide career choices as well as treatment options. Additionally, the biomarkers could measure response to treatment in an objective, quantifiable manner.

"Untreated pain and stress can lead to suicide, that's how we became interested in these disorders, and decided to move upstream and see if we can better understand, treat and prevent them," Niculescu said. "We think that one of the key uses of our research would be to test people before they have symptoms of an illness to see who's at risk and possibly treat them early. It's much better to prevent things for the person, and for the health care system, than to treat somebody who is in an acute crisis."

**Continued on page 6**

**Continued from page 5—IU School of Medicine**

With this study, Niculescu said the ultimate goal is prevention--pairing the ability to better predict those pre-disposed to PTSD with a more targeted approach to medicating those suffering from its affects. It's preventive medicine done in a precise way, which aligns with the IU Grand Challenge Precision Health Initiative launched in 2016.

"We want to prevent the needless tragedy and suffering in people's lives. By understanding in a biological way a patient's illnesses and their mental health challenges, we could treat what they have better, preventing future episodes," Niculescu said. "I have an excellent team and group of collaborators, and we are excited to partner with other groups of experts and people who can carry this forward. There is a lot of good work being done in the field right now."

The study was supported by an NIH Director's New Innovator Award and a VA Merit Award. Moving forward, Niculescu's group looks to secure more funding through grants and private donations, as well collaborate with other institutions and organizations to advance these studies--with the hope that ultimately the cutting-edge tests developed at IU School of Medicine be implemented in clinical settings.

"If you treat a medical disorder in general, you improve someone's quality of life; sometimes you save lives. But if you treat a mental health disorder, you can change somebody's destiny," said Niculescu, who is also a practicing psychiatrist at the VA and Indiana University Health. "You can help change someone from being a person who suffers, is unhappy, is unemployed--maybe goes down the route of addiction, violence or suicide--to somebody who can become a happy, well adjusted, productive member of society. That's the challenge and the privilege--we can really change people's destinies if we do our job."

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Other investigators involved in the study were Helen Le-Niculescu, PhD, Kyle Roseberry, Daniel Levey, Jordan Rogers, Kaitlyn Kosary, Shashi Prabha, Tammy Jones, Seth Judd, Morgan McCormick, MD, Ann Wessel, Andrea Williams, Peter Phalen, Firoza Mamdani, Adolfo Sequeira and Sunil Kurian.

The research was supported by the National Institutes of Health under Award Number IDP20D007363 and VA Merit Award 2I01CX000139. The content is solely the responsibility of Indiana University School of Medicine and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health or the VA.

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**Speaker Program at Meetings—Fred Bishop, Chairman 317-918-1142**

Call Fred to sign up. Speakers signed up so far:

- June Bob Parsons
- July Verne Hanson
- Aug Joe Williams
- Sept Ron Ayres



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**Guest Speaker at Meetings**

Last month our guest speaker was Diane Dove from the Better Business Bureau - BBB spoke about scams. To check charities to see where their money is spent, go to Give.org. You can check businesses on BBB.org. You can report a scam on BBB.org. If you win anything, you do not have to pay for anything to receive it. Sign up for BBB on Facebook. There are apps available to stop scams. You can ask Diane questions at 317-713-6088 or report scams.

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# **Birth Defect Numbers in Children of Vietnam Veterans Alarm Experts**

**By Steve Andrews of WFLA**

Orlando, Fla (WFLA) - Rates of cancer, learning disabilities and physical birth defects in the children of Vietnam Veterans are staggering when compared to those in children of non-veterans. Birth Defect Research for Children's latest research shows mounting evidence that these children, now in their 30s, 40s and 50s exhibit health problems across the board. "It's so compelling to look at the data, I mean every time I look at it, I go wow!" said Betty Mekdeci, Executive Director of Birth Defect Research for Children.

More than 2.5 million Americans served in South Vietnam during the war. Each one was presumably exposed to a harmful herbicide called Agent Orange, which is known to cause cancers, leukemia, heart disease and more. Ms. Mekdeci is alarmed by what she sees in children of Vietnam Veterans. "The proof is mounting every day. Because you don't like it, that doesn't make it go away.," she said. Her research reveals birth defects showing up at a higher rate in children of Vietnam Veterans than non-veterans.

Leukemia, thyroid cancer, along with ovarian cysts are showing up at 10 times and higher than the rate of children of non-veterans. "We're also starting to see auto-immune problems, childhood cancers, increases in allergic conditions," she said.

Learning disabilities numbers are eye-popping. "We have an avalanche of children with the main thing are these neurodevelopmental problems," Ms. Mekdeci added. Dyslexia, attention deficit disorders and depression rates are all much higher than those in children of non-veterans.

"We have had a lot of indication that the mothers may be having some effect from the fathers being exposed, mental disorders, female cancer, things like that," Ms. Mekdeci explained. "We know that there are chemicals that are found in seminal fluid, this is not new stuff."

Agent Orange ravaged Navy veteran Lonnie Kilpatrick's heart. He was exposed on Guam. "I've had heart issues my whole life." Lonnie's daughter Keri Ackerson said. Keri and her daughter Emma suffer from brain malformations tied to Agent Orange. By age 9, Emma had to have brain surgery. "You've got lots of the veterans dying but the children and the grandchildren are going on and we're talking about thousands and thousands," Ms. Mekdeci stated.

Following my report last year raising questions about passing on the poison to grandchildren, Birth Defect Research for Children began more research. The findings are preliminary, but concerning. "It's very concerning, it's very much like what we're seeing with the children," Ms. Mekdeci added. "You can't afford to ignore this because you don't like what we're finding, you can't afford to say, it's going to go away if just look the other way."

If you know of someone that should be investigated call our \* On Your Side Helpline at 1-800-338-0808 or contact Steve Andrews at [sandrews@wfla.com](mailto:sandrews@wfla.com)

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## **Permanent Vietnam Wall in Perryville, MO**

Missouri's National Veterans Memorial in Perryville, Mo. held its grand opening May 20. The memorial features a permanent full-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. The 46-acre site has a visitors center and museum space designed to honor all the nation's veterans, from all conflicts. Missouri's Vietnam Wall uses the same black-granite as the Washington, D.C., memorial, and is etched with the names of the nearly 59,000 men and women killed during the Vietnam War. The nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that runs Missouri's National Veterans Memorial does not charge admission but is hoping suggested donations of 10 dollars from the planned 30,000 visitors a year will help grow and sustain the memorial.

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**The Wall that Heals**  
**Greenfield, Indiana**  
**July 11-14, 2019**

We will be helping to sponsor this event and taking part in it. It should be a well attended program since the primary sponsor has TV ads running now on Channel 8 and they have planned a parade upon the Wall's arrival to be led by the "Indiana Patriot Guard" motorcycle group.

To help ensure its success, we need many volunteers from our chapter to help out. Review the job options and time spots available online at <http://signup.com/go/wRzTDfz> or you may phone Nick directly at 317-462-5536. Those who sign up first get their choice of time and jobs. A training class will be held on Wed, July 10 at the site below to explain specific duties. All volunteers will receive a t-shirt with sponsors listed.

We will be the only group permitted to setup a booth at the wall for signing up new members. Please consider helping with it as well.

Location: Pasco-Stillinger Funeral Chapel  
1780 W. Main St.  
Greenfield, IN



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**Orange Heart Medal Foundation**  
501(c)(3) Non Profit Charity Foundation  
Ken Gamble  
President  
[kengamble68@gmail.com](mailto:kengamble68@gmail.com)  
(615) 973-5279  
for your free medal application visit:  
[orangeheartmedal.org](http://orangeheartmedal.org)



# INSIDE YARD SALE

**Where:** 59<sup>th</sup> & Lee Rd, Indy  
Ft Harrison Vet Center

**When:** Fri, June 28 8am-5pm  
Sat, June 29 8am-?

Lots of  
goodies  
inside  
building!



Something  
for  
everyone  
inside  
building

**Drop off donated items on Thur, June 27,  
12 noon-7pm, or any Sundays, 10am-2pm**

**Sponsored by Vets for Vets. Proceeds help homeless and needy veterans.**