



**Vietnam Veterans of America
Sammy L. Davis Chapter 295**



April 2021 Newsletter



The egg, an ancient symbol of new life, has been associated with pagan festivals celebrating spring. ... From a Christian perspective, Easter eggs are said to represent Jesus' emergence from the tomb and resurrection.

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 317-844-3554 or cell 317-294-4607

VVA 295 Officers

President	Larry Shaw	comdshaw@yahoo.com	765-618-4067
Vice President	Don McFarland	dmac101@comcast.net	812-593-2554
Secretary	Mike Dolan	michaeledolan@prodigy.net	317-374-5578
Treasurer	Fred Bishop	fbishop89@gmail.com	765-621-5515
Chaplain	Robert Wright	gospelbobw@gmail.com	317-714-4618

Board of Directors

Steve Anderson	asteton@aol.com	317-431-9683
Ron Ayres	ron.ayers@att.net	317-319-6968
Rick Brown	rbrown46140@gmail.com	317-509-2022
Mike Hamm	indyhambone@sbcglobal.net	317-371-9833
Verne Hanson	ver61el.handon@comcast.net	317-439-7982
Steve Mabrey	spmabrey@comcast.net	317-459-6255
Ken Walters	kennethgwalters@gmail.com	317-372-2231
Dennis Smalling	smallingindy@sbcglobal.net	317-313-1577

AVVA Liaison

Tony Gigli	Anthony.gigli@gmail.com	317-965-1976
Holly Tookolo	htookolo@indy.rr.com	317-294-4607

WARRIORS HOPE

Every Thursday evening at 6pm you will find John Smitha at the Fort Harrison Veteran Center leading and helping a group of veterans with fellowship. Coffee and donuts are usually available. All veterans are welcome. It is good to talk with other veterans. If you have questions, call John Smitha, 317-439-6304.



If

Reminder: The Veteran Magazine is online at www.vvaveteran.org

The March/April issue is out there now. Collecting pictures of all the names on The Wall is a very interesting article. They have all of them except about 150. Thanks for their hard work.

Important Dates

- April 2** Good Friday
- April 4** Easter
- April 14** VVA 295 Board Meeting at 6pm; Regular meeting at 7pm
- May 9** Mother's Day
- May 12** VVA 295 Board Meeting at 6pm; Regular meeting at 7pm
- May 15** Armed Forces Day
- May 15** VVA Indiana State Council Meeting in South Bend; 11am Finance; 12pm regular meeting
- May 31** Memorial Day

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

- April 4, 1959** In an address at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania, President Eisenhower makes a commitment to maintain South Vietnam as a free and independent state. He asserts that our own national interests demand U.S. support of South Vietnam.
- April 15-18, 1964** Former VP Nixon, returning from his 24 day trip through Asia, gives a number of speeches in which he criticizes the Johnson administration's handling of the situation in Vietnam and calls for extending the war into North Vietnam and Laos.
- April 25, 1964** President Johnson announces that General William Westmoreland will replace General Paul Hawkins at head of U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam as of June 20.
- April 1, 1965** U.S. Air Force begins Operation Steel Tiger to strike targets in the Laotian panhandle to interdict troops and supply movement down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.
- April 24, 1965** President Johnson issues an executive order designating Vietnam a "combat area" and authorizes "hostile fire" pay, retroactive to January 1, 1964.
- April 5, 1966** U.S. Navy TF116 (River Patrol Force) begins Operation Game Warden, the interdiction of enemy traffic in South Vietnamese inland waterways.
- April 6, 1967** The 26th Regiment of the U.S. 5th Marine Division is attached to the 1st Marine Division for combat operations in I Corps.
- April 5-Oct 12, 1967** Two brigades of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division conduct Operation Francis Marion, a follow-on operation to Sam Houston in the western highlands of Pleiku Province. The purpose of the operation is to preclude North Vietnamese infiltration through the Ia Drang Valley, II Corps.
- April 15, 1968-Feb 28, 1969** U.S. Marines and soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division conduct Operation Scotland II as a follow-on to Operation Pegasus in I Corps. The objective of the operation is to clear North Vietnamese forces out of Quang Tri Province.



The Bunker

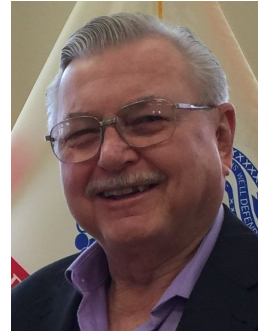
Hours 10am-2pm Sunday

Your purchases support VVA 295 and Fort Harrison Veterans Center. The Bunker is scheduled to be at the VA most of the year. Steve is still looking for another manager to help with the Bunker. Right now Steve and Wallace Vaughn take turns as manager at VA. To volunteer call Holly 317-294-4607; to manage, call Steve 317-459-6255.
Hours 7am-3pm at VA

President's Message:

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

April is here with Good Friday, and Easter. For most people this means a new life. A new beginning. Hope for the future. That things will be brighter. The trees are budding. Plants and seeds for sale. Farmers anxious to get into their fields. Time to put away the snow blowers, shovels, ice melt, and remove storm windows. Break out the rakes, tillers, hoes, mowers, put in, or on the screens to allow air in, and keep the bugs out.



With these things in mind, it is time to bide one's time. Inside, or outside. At work, or home. In the yard, field, or garden. Dusting the house, crop, and garden. Planning what to sow. Taking time to hoe. Watching it bloom and grow. Row upon row. Some for now. Some for later. Hope it's not just all taters. Be it a garden, a life, or an idea, they all start with a small seed. What it becomes, is developed by you. You can nurture it along the way to it's full potential. Or turn your back and wonder why it did not become fruitful, and multiply. The more blood, sweat, and tears you put in to anything, the more you will get out of it. Food for now. Food for canning. Seeds for next years planting. Each year in life we hope that it will be better than the last year. Our hopes and dreams are what keeps us going. A better tomorrow. with less aches, pains, and sorrows.

Speaking of new beginnings, we have a couple for you in the chapter. VVA 295 has a new Vice President. Don McFarland was elected by the membership, at our last meeting. He accepted his new position, and we wish him well. Please give him your full support. Among any new duties, he will still be the POW/MIA Chairman.

Steve has new ideas for the Bunker, and is constantly ordering new things to sell. If you have not been to the VA lately, you need to go and see what he has. Better yet volunteer to help in the Bunker hours are 7am to 3pm, Monday through Friday; that's when the VA is open. You can work one, two, three, four, or five days a week if you wish. This is open to VVA and AVVA Members alike. Call Holly, and tell her what days you would like to help. This is your chance to meet new people. Possibly hear an interesting story or two. plus be able to get some thing for yourself, or someone else. By volunteering, you help others, the Bunker, the chapter, as well as yourself. It is a win win situation for everyone. Would you like to be a manager? If so please contact Steve for more information. He hopes to keep people at the VA in September, plus be set up for the Howard County Vietnam Veterans Organizations Reunion. So as you can see, your help is needed.

A big THANK YOU to those of you who have already stepped up to help.

Don't forget to come to chapter meetings, to see old friends, and make new ones. Possibly learn of other things to do.

May GOD bless America, our troops, and you.

"REMEMBER WE NEVER LOSE, UNTIL WE QUIT TRYING" and "WE CAN EACH DO A LITTLE, BUT TOGETHER, WE CAN DO A LOT".

In Comradeship,

Larry Shaw
President VVA 295
765-618-4067, comdshaw@yahoo.com

Important VA Number

VA has a new national phone number to call if you get medical care at a non-VA facility in a urgent or emergency situation. That number is 844-724-7840. You have 72 hours to call this number once you are treated so that the VA will pay that medical bill. They will give you an assigned number for your case that starts with 9000 and includes the date. Later, if you receive a medical bill, you tell them this assigned case number so VA will pay the bill.

Vice President's Message

Greetings;

I hope everyone is ready to get out and enjoy the warm weather when it finally gets here to stay. I wish to thank you all for voting me in as VP

I'm not very good at this, but I will do my best with the help of all of you.



There is something I would like to start with and that is we only have one fund raiser going at the present and that is the bunker at the V.A. Hospital. It is doing quite well, but there is only a hand full of members helping out. We all need to get involved in helping out and I really wish to thank those who have been helping out. Some say they live too far away or don't have time, well if you want to keep the Vet Center at the Fort open so we can continue to have our meetings as well as the other groups housed there then we are all going to have to step up and lend a hand. I drive 60mi. one way to help out and Larry and Ron come from Marion and Steve lives on the other side of Indy. So if ever one would volunteer at least two days per month we could lessen the load on those who already man the booth. Let's all see what we can do.

We also need to get more members to come to the monthly meetings. If you know of any members or friends that are members who don't come to the meetings ask them to come along with you the next time.

Summer is coming soon and hopefully we will all be able to get together with friends and party. Well for the homeless it's just another day survival and looking for food, so don't forget to bring your food items to the meetings. Food is what they are asking for at this time.

Stay alert and watch for motor cycles, our eyes aren't as good as they used to be. (Mine never were)

So be safe and see you at the next meeting.

Don McFarland

VP VVA 295

812-593-2554

dmac101@comcast.net

Two things I've learned from the Easter Bunny:

Everyone is entitled to a bad "hare" day.

Some body parts should be floppy!



VVA Service Officers

Dennis Smalling
317-313-1577
smallingindy@sbcglobal.net

Michael Dolan
317-374-5578
michaeledolan@prodigy.net

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.hvafofindiana.org/>

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).

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

Member Speaker Program at Meetings– Call Fred Bishop, 765-621-5515 to sign up.

Community Guest Speaker at Meetings

Call Larry Shaw to schedule a speaker from our community. 765-618-4067.

Membership Report

As of February 28, 2021 the VVA membership total is 344.

By Steve Anderson

AVVA membership total as of February 28, 2021 is 33.

By Holly Tookolo

COVID 19 Vaccinations at VA

All Veterans, even if not enrolled in VA, their spouses and caregivers can get COVID 19 vaccinations under SAVE LIVES ACT signed into law March 24. Call 317-988-4899 to schedule an appointment.

Bricks of Honor

The Indiana War Memorials Foundation commemorates veterans with “Bricks of Honor”. Each brick is engraved with a veteran’s name, rank, branch and dates of service, and placed around the Soldiers & Sailor Monument ensuring that our heroes will not be forgotten. You can order a brick for \$100 tax deductible donation. You may request the location of your brick and schedule a ceremony to have it installed. For more information, please visit IWMF’s Bricks of Honor page: indianawarmemorials.org/commemorate/

April, dressed in all its trim, hath put a spirit of youth in everything.

~ William Shakespeare

Vaccine Refusal Rate at 3% Among Veterans, Slightly Higher in Rural Areas

1 Apr 2021, Stars & Stripes, By Nikki Wentling

WASHINGTON—About 3% of Veterans have refused coronavirus vaccines when offered them by the Department of Veterans Affairs—an amount lower than the agency anticipated, a VA official said Thursday.

The refusal rate is slightly higher in less populated areas, equating to 4% among veterans in rural places and 5% in areas designated as highly rural. Refusal rates are lower among the populations of Black and Hispanic veterans.

“We were worried we’d see more vaccine hesitancy and disparities across different groups, and we’re pleasantly surprised we’re not seeing that in large part, at least so far,” said Dr. Ernest Moy, executive director of the VA Office of Health Equity. “We are concerned about rural rates—that seems to be the biggest disparity that’s out there that we need to address.”

In his role, Moy coordinates efforts to reduce disparities in health care among veterans. In the summer, his office began holding focus groups with different demographics of veterans, asking them about their hesitancy to get a coronavirus vaccine.

Based on what they learned during the swine flu pandemic in 2009, veterans of color were more likely to be hesitant about receiving vaccines. For the VA, that was a “major concern,” Moy said. During the focus groups, the VA learned Black veterans wanted to hear scientific evidence about the vaccines from their health care providers.

Black veterans also wanted the department to address the “Tuskegee experiment” - a study that has led many Black Americans to mistrust medical systems. The U.S. Public Health Service, working with the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, recruited hundreds of rural Black men for a study of syphilis in 1932, and them withheld medical treatment from them.

“They said we couldn’t just pretend Tuskegee didn’t happen. We got the advice that we needed to address it,” Moy said. “[With Tuskegee], they were denied the right to make a choice for themselves and not offered treatment. We see this as the exact opposite situation. We’re offering a vaccination, this isn’t research.”

Veterans also advised the VA to make it as easy as possible to sign up for a vaccination and communicate by calling or texting. When VA patients are eligible to receive a vaccine, they get a call from a VA health care provider who schedules their appointments over the phone, Moy said

As of Thursday, the VA has fully vaccinated about 1.9 million people. About 45% of VA patients ages 75 and older had been vaccinated, as well as 42% of patients between 65 and 74, and 25% of patients ages 64 and younger.

Black and Hispanic veterans older than 75 have been vaccinated at a slightly higher rate—50% had been vaccinated as of Thursday.

“We continue to see higher rates of vaccination among Black and Hispanic veterans than among white veterans,” Moy said.

The largest disparity in refusal rates is between urban and rural veterans, Moy said. However, the difference is at least in part due to the lack of availability of vaccines in rural places, he said. The VA has found some rural veterans are refusing vaccines because they don’t want to make the long drive to a VA facility to receive one.

As vaccines become more widely available, the department expects refusals to drop. So far, it’s difficult to compare the refusal rates among VA patients to the larger U.S. population because many other health care systems aren’t tracking refusal, Moy said.

For the full article, go to [military.com](https://www.military.com).

Bunker Schedule at VA in March & April

Below is the schedule for the next four weeks. We could still use more volunteers. Call Holly to volunteer 317-294-4607 or to manage, call Steve 317-459-6255 Hours open at VA are 7am-3pm.

April 5	Andy Thimlar
April 6	
April 7	Mike Dolan
April 8	Larry Shaw & Ron Jones
April 9	
April 12	
April 13	
April 14	Mike Dolan
April 15	
April 16	
April 19	
April 20	
April 21	Mike Dolan
April 22	
April 23	
April 26	Andy Thimlar
April 27	
April 28	Mike Dolan
April 29	
April 30	Ron Ayres (PM)



Steve is still looking for a manager. If we could have several managers, they could take turns at the VA.