



Vietnam Veterans of America Sammy L. Davis Chapter 295



December 2021 Newsletter



Some Christmas History

It wasn't until the early 1800's that the American Christmas began to take shape. Washington Irving wrote a series of stories of a wealthy English landowner who invites his workers to have dinner with him. Irving liked the idea of people of all backgrounds and social status coming together for a festive holiday. So, he told a tale that reminisced about old Christmas traditions that had been lost but were restored by this wealthy landowner. Through Irving's story, the idea began to take hold in the hearts of the American public.

In 1822, Clement Clark Moore wrote *An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas* for his daughters. It's now famously known as *The Night Before Christmas*. In it, the modern idea of Santa Claus as a jolly man flying through the sky on a sleigh took hold. Later, in 1881, the artist Thomas Nast was hired to draw a depiction of Santa for a *Coke-a-Cola* advertisement. He created a rotund Santa with a wife named Mrs. Claus, surrounded by worker elves. After this, the image of Santa as a cheerful, fat, white-bearded man in a red suit became embedded in American culture.

After the civil war, the country was looking for ways to look past difference and become united as a country. In 1870, President Ulysses S. Grant declared it a federal holiday. And while Christmas traditions have adapted with time, I think Washington Irving's desire for unity in celebration lives on. It's become a time of year where we wish others well, donate to our favorite charities, and give presents with a joyful spirit.

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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

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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.



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

There is a situation with the November/December issue. The printer could not find enough paper. Currently, the November/December issue is NOT online. So I am not sure when we will get an online or printed copy.

Membership Report

VVA membership total as of October 31, 2021 is 346. By Steve Anderson

AVVA membership total as of October 31, 2021 is 36. By Holly Tookolo

Important Dates

Dec 7	Pearl Harbor Day
Dec 8	VVA 295 Board Meeting at 6pm; Regular meeting at 7pm
Dec 25	Christmas
Jan 1	New Year's Day
Jan 12	VVA 295 Board Meeting at 6pm; Regular meeting at 7pm
Jan 17	Start of Operation Desert Storm 1991
Jan 18	Martin Luther King, Jr Day
Jan 27	Vietnam Cease Fire 1973

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

- Dec 22, 1951** Napalm is used for the first time in Vietnam, against Viet Minh forces at Tien Yen.
- Dec 16, 1961** Joint Chiefs of Staff authorizes U.S. Air Force pilots serving as advisers engaged in Operation Farm Gate to undertake combat missions, providing at least one Vietnamese Trainee is carried on board the strike aircraft for training purposes.
- Dec 26, 1962** Specialist Fourth Class George Fryett is the first American captured by the VC.
- Dec 31, 1962** President Kennedy authorizes the expansion of Operation Farm Gate.
- Dec 31, 1963** Some 16,300 U.S. military personnel are now in Vietnam.
- Dec 3, 1964** It is announced that the first U.S. women to serve as military advisers will be assigned to a South Vietnamese Women's Army Corps training camp at Saigon.
- Dec 8-20, 65** USMC and South Vietnamese forces join to conduct Operation Harvest Moon/Lien Ket-18, an operation intended to clear Viet Cong forces from the Que Son Valley in Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces, I Corps.
- Dec 8, 67-Feb 24, 68** The U.S. 25th Infantry Division conducts Operation Yellowstone in War Zone C, Tay Ninh Province, III Corps.
- Dec 1,68-May 31,69** Elements of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division, including the Mobile Riverine Force, conduct Operation Speedy Express in the Mekong Delta south of Saigon.
- Dec 15, 1969** Operation Danger Forward II begins with elements of the 1st Infantry Division and 5th ARVN Division conducting offensive operations to neutralize enemy forces in the area northwest of Saigon.
- Dec 18,70- Jan 19, 71** The U.S. Marines and 51st ARVN Regiment conduct Operation Hoan Dien—101 in Quang Nam Province, I Corps.



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 all 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

Biden Signs 4 Bills for Veterans on 11/30/2021

President Joe Biden signed four veterans reform bills into law on Tuesday, calling the changes part of the country's "sacred obligation" to care for military members and their families even after their service.

"We prepare those we send into harm's way, and care for their families when they're gone, and care for them and their families when they're home," Biden said. "That's a lifetime commitment the nation owes to every one of our veterans."

None of the measures were controversial, and all passed out of Congress by wide bipartisan margins. But the grouping of bills allowed Biden an opportunity to highlight veterans one last time in November, just a few weeks after the nation celebrated the annual Veterans Day holiday.

The president was joined for the event by Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester, D-Mont., committee ranking member Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano, D-Calif., and a host of other lawmakers and veterans advocates.

The short ceremony also gave Biden a chance to again publicly reflect on his own role as the father of a service member. Beau Biden, the president's late son, served in Iraq with the Delaware National Guard.

"It is personal," Biden told the crowd. "It's a commitment [to care for veterans] that we are helping to keep today because of the leadership of the women and men in this room."

The first bill — the Protecting Moms Who Served Act — invests \$15 million in new maternity care coordination programs at VA facilities. The move requires VA officials to address gaps in care for veteran mothers as well as studies into prenatal and postpartum health.

It will also mandate that VA facilities begin offering childbirth preparation classes, parenting classes, nutrition counselling, breastfeeding support and similar services.

The Hire Veteran Health Heroes Act will require VA leaders to work with Defense Department officials in helping separating troops with health care skills who apply for open medical jobs in veterans hospitals.

The Colonel John M. McHugh Tuition Fairness for Survivors Act will guarantee that children and spouses of veterans who die from service-connected injuries will get in-state tuition rates. The change is expected to affect about 150,000 surviving dependents, potentially saving them tens of thousands in higher education expenses each year.

The final measure will require the Government Accountability office to investigate potential disparities in VA benefit awards based on race and ethnicity. Past studies have indicated that minorities may receive lesser benefits or face additional obstacles to disability payouts than their white peers.

The veteran-specific bill signing event may not be the final one for Biden this year. Lawmakers are expected to try and advance a series of veterans measures in the final weeks of session next month.

From Military Times: <https://www.militarytimes.com/military-honor/salute-veterans/2021/11/30/biden-closes-veterans-month-by-signing-a-series-of-va-reform-measures/>

Veteran Uses Crocheting to Deal with PTSD

Like many others who have served, Josh Apel struggles with PTSD and anxiety. Apel found a way to cope and heal through crocheting. Inspired by his Grandma, Josh started creating colorful blankets, scarves and pot holders as a positive therapeutic outlet. I was looking for something to help me relax and calm myself. I remembered watching my Grandma crochet as a kid how relaxed she always was when she did it. So I gave it a try. Through crocheting Apel found something he said is therapeutic and healing. It was like a form of meditation and when I crocheting on projects, I'm completely focused on the project. Everything else is blocked out. He has posted pictures, videos and live streaming classes to teach people how to crochet and use it to deal with PTSD. You can find out more about it on his Instagram or his YouTube channel.

Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF)

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs is asking for your help in raising awareness of the Military Family Relief Fund (MFRF) with your members and stakeholders. We are coordinating this outreach to community partners, statewide agencies, veterans' organizations, community groups, food pantries, churches, and nonprofit organizations—all groups who touch the lives of Indiana veterans in meaningful ways.

The IDVA is focused on ensuring that Indiana veterans and the Indiana service community are aware of this important financial assistance, which can provide up to \$2,500 in support to Veterans and their dependent family members to cover their most central and basic needs, such as:

- Housing (rent/Mortgage)
- Utilities
- Food
- Current Medical Expenses
- Transportation (vehicle payment/basic emergency repairs /insurance)

Your support will mean expanding awareness on the MFRF among your members and network, so we can reach the key audience across the state. We invite you to learn more about MFRF here:

<https://www.in.gov/dva/about-idva/links/military-family-relief-fund/>

We have developed a special marketing toolkit of materials for you to use in your outreach to help us raise awareness of the MFRF. To support all outreach efforts, we encourage you to visit our Marketing Toolkit page by clicking here: <https://www.in.gov/dva/about-idva/links/military-family-relief-fund/marketing-toolkit/>

This toolkit contains social media graphics for you to use on your social channels, suggest email copy for communications to your members, an one-page info flyer and even a table tent you can download, print and place in visible locations where Indiana vets can see this important message.

We highly appreciate your help in delivering this important message about the Military Family Relief Fund to veterans across the state. So please feel free to share this information with other organizations that you feel may help us spread the word about MFRF as well.

Postal Service unveils stamp honoring Japanese American WWII veterans



The U.S. Postal Service has unveiled a new commemorative stamp honoring WWII veterans representing the all Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442 Regimental Combat Team from Kauai, HI.

“The Nisei soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion are exemplary role models who displayed perseverance, bravery and aloha. This stamp includes their motto ‘Go for Broke,’ which became the basis for their teamwork and victories on the battlefield,” Democratic State Rep. Nadine K. Nakamura told The Garden Island.

The “Go for Broke: Japanese American Soldiers of World War II” stamp honors the second generation Japanese Americans, or Nisei, who fought during the war and faced discrimination in the U.S.

The stamp features Shiroku “Whitey” Yamamoto from the Big Island, a member of the combat team. It was designed by Antonio Alcalá based on a 1944 photograph.

33,000 Japanese American soldiers fought in the U.S. Army during the war.

Bunker Schedule at VA

We need volunteers every week at the VA. Call Holly to volunteer 317-294-4607. Steve is still looking for another manager so they can take turns at the VA. To manage, call Steve 317-459-6255. Hours open at VA are 7am-3pm.



Dennis Smalling 317-313-1577 smallingindy@sbcglobal.net	VVA Service Officers	Michael Dolan 317-374-5578 michaeledolan@prodigy.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.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

Community Guest Speaker at Meetings

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

Last Combat Soldier to Leave Vietnam was Killed in 9/11 Attacks

Max Beilke was in the Army for 20 years already by the time he deployed to Vietnam in 1972. His time there would be much shorter than the many others who did tours in the Vietnam War. His last day in Vietnam was the U.S. military's last day in Vietnam. What made his last footstep on Vietnamese soil so unique was that it was captured on tape for the world to see.

On March 29, 1973, Master Sgt. Beilke was given a rattan mat before he boarded a C-130 bound for home. The giver of the gift was Bui Tin, a North Vietnamese observer, there to ensure the last hundred troops at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airport left as agreed. Back home, his family watched live as the man they loved, drafted to fight in Korea in 1952, headed for home from the next American war. He retired from the Army.

He eventually became the deputy chief of the Retirement Services Division, with an office in Virginia. Part of his duties brought him to the Pentagon on the morning of September 11, 2001. He was in a meeting when United Airlines Flight 77 hit the outer ring of the Pentagon. He never knew what hit him. He was 69 years old. He was interred at Arlington National Cemetery. The man who had survived the ends of two American wars (Korea and Vietnam) was one of the first casualties of a new one.

Merry Christmas to All!