



Vietnam Veterans of America Sammy L. Davis Chapter 295



August 2017 Newsletter

President's Message



Hello all,
As we close in on the VVA National Convention, I want to wish all of our delegates and their partners safe travel. This will be the first time for some members to attend and I

hope you bring back a feeling about what the VVA brotherhood is all about. Your opinions are important so don't be reluctant to express them.

I know you have heard our Agent Orange coordinator, Mmoja Ajabu, express his opinion on what we need to do to push for more presumptive illnesses associated with exposure to Agent Orange. With that in mind, I suggest that we all send the included letter on page 8, authored by Mmoja, to Secretary Shulkin to express our concern. If you respect my opinion, I feel that this letter says it well and I am sending it right away. In conversation with VVA National, we are hoping to have this letter available so that our entire membership has the same opportunity to express their opinion to Secretary Shulkin.

Please consider sending this letter and remember that we are delaying the Chapter meeting one week. See you then.

Michael L. Hamm

President

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 295

August 16th Meeting

6:30pm Board Meeting

7:00pm Regular Meeting

VVA 295 Officers

President	Mike Hamm
Vice President	Ron Sukenick
2nd Vice President	Larry Shaw
Secretary	John Brocklehurst
Treasurer	Tom Donovan

Board of Directors

Steve Mabrey	Jim Finney
Steve Anderson	Jim Pierce
Wes Anderson	Ken Walters

Agent Orange Advocate

Mmoja Ajabu

AVVA Chapter Representative

Holly Tookolo

AVVA State President

Tony Gigli

VVA Service Officer—Dennis Smalling

Call 317-313-1577 to schedule an appointment for your VA benefits and claims.

Important Dates

- Aug 2 Soldiers & Sailors Monument designated as National Historic Landmark at 2pm with Governor Eric Holcomb presiding. Open to the public.
- Aug 4 Indiana's 4th Annual Salute to Veterans Golf Open at Valle Vista Golf Club. VVA has a team playing in this consisting of Mike Hamm, Dennis Smalling & Wes Anderson. See flyer page 6.
- Aug 5 3rd Annual Ride to Support Fort Harrison Veterans Center, see flyer on page 7
- Aug 8-12 VVA & AVVA National Convention, New Orleans
- Aug 16 VVA 295 meeting; Board meeting at 6:30pm; Regular meeting 7:00pm. Changed to 3rd Wednesday because of National Convention.
- Sept 6 Stand Down 2017 Setup—time to be determined.
- Sept 7 Stand Down 2017 at National Guard Armory at 3912 W Minnesota, Indy; 8am doors open for vendors/organizations; 10am opening ceremony; 3:30pm booths tear down.
- Sept 13 VVA 295 meeting; Board meeting at 6:30pm; Regular meeting 7:00pm.
- Sept 14 The Texas Tenors Salute to Hoosier Vietnam Veterans at Murat Theatre; This concert also includes a special preview of The Vietnam War, a new film by Ken Burns & Lynn Novick which premieres Sunday, Sept 17 at 8pm on WFYI PBS in 10 episodes. WFYI will also show "9000 Miles", a video collection of memories from Hoosiers Vietnam Veterans.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

Aug 22, 1962 Kennedy administration officials quoted in the New York Times estimate that there are 20,000 guerrilla troops in South Vietnam. Despite hundreds of engagements during the preceding two months and encouraging victories for South Vietnamese forces during the first six months of the year, the Viet Cong have grown in numbers, and some U.S. officials feel that the war has become stalemated.

Aug 18-24, 1965 U.S. Marines conduct Operation Starlite on the Van Tuong Peninsula 16 miles south of Chi Lai, Quang Ngai Province, I Corps. In this the first major operation of the Vietnam War conducted only by U.S. troops, 5,500 marines from the 3rd, 4th, and 7th Marines destroy a Viet Cong stronghold, scoring a resounding victory. Ground forces, artillery from Chu Lai, naval gunfire, and air support combine to kill nearly 700 Viet Cong soldiers.

Aug 11, 1972 The last U.S. ground combat unit in South Vietnam, the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, Task Force Gimlet, is deactivated, along with G Battery, 29th Field Artillery. Delta Company had completed the 3rd Battalion's last patrol on Aug 5, ending the U.S. infantry war in Vietnam.

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Website: www.vva295.com

Meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm; Board Meeting 6:30

Newsletter Editor: Holly Tookolo If you have any information for the newsletter, please send it to my email: htookolo@indy.rr.com

Vice President's Corner

Hope that everyone is having a safe and fun Summer with friends and family –

As many of you have noticed, with the help from Jill Fewell & the generous grant from Home Depot I'm sure that you're as thrilled as I am with the many improvements to our building.

Last month our membership had seen a new and improved agenda with structure, lot's of energy, and our speaking program has really picked up steam.

We have formed various committees and put leadership in place to help our chapter stay healthy strong and growing.



Special thanks to Jim Rosebro for his compelling story on being a helicopter pilot and some of the challenges he went through.

As a reminder, because of the upcoming National VVA conference that many of us are attending beginning on Aug 8th, we are moving our next meeting to Aug 16th which is the 3rd WED of the month.

We need your energy – We love your ideas – And most importantly, we would love to have your participation in building a chapter that meets and exceeds you expectations.

If you would like to speak, I'm always open to hearing from you. Feel free to communicate your thoughts to me at – 317-696-1367 or – rs@ronsukenick.com

Regards,

Ron Sukenick

Vice President - VVA Chapter 295, 317-696-1367

2nd Vice President's Corner

Hope you are doing well. If not, please let us know. As Vietnam Veterans we are brothers and sisters, which makes us all family. Lately families have taken a tremendous hit with the crash of an airplane killing Marines and a Navy Corpsman and the loss of two police officers. Their families and co-workers will change drastically. We must stay working together to help each other, our fellow Veterans, and our communities.



We will start having fundraisers to raise money so that we can get The Moving Wall next year. Plus get togethers besides the monthly meetings so that we can have more comradeship among the members, and share ideas to make VVA Chapter 295 and AVVA Associates an even better place to belong.

We need new members, and we need you. Please come and get involved, as this is your chapter. It is only as good as you make it.

Remember we each can do a little, but together we can do a lot.

Larry Shaw

2nd Vice President—VVA Chapter 295, 765-618-4067

Caregiver Support Program

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Caregiver Support is offering a free, six-week online workshop for caregivers of veterans of all eras who are caring for someone with dementia, memory problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, a serious brain injury, or any other serious injury or illness. We need to get people signed up for this worthwhile opportunity. If you are interested in learning more, please call the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274 and ask to sign up for Building Better Caregivers, or <https://va.buildingcaregivers.org>

National Monument to Gold Star Mothers & Families

The Gold Star Mothers National Monument Foundation (GSMNMF) has gained authorization for the monument to be located on federal land, adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery. According to foundation literature, “The monument will honor all mothers and families, whether members of an organization or not, who know the grief of losing a loved one, and will promote a bond of kinship among those who memorialize our nation’s defenders.” The prototype of the statue under consideration for the Gold Star Mothers Family Monument resides in Carmel, N.Y. The statue concept is of a mother receiving a telegram with news of her child’s death.



Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2017

The new legislation, released by the committee last week — and supported by VA officials — includes an expansion of benefits for reservists, Purple Heart recipients and surviving dependents, as well as the elimination of a requirement that veterans use their education benefits within 15 years of active-duty service, among other provisions. July 24 the H.R. 3218 bill passed in the House on July 24, 2017 and goes to the Senate next for consideration. This bill is also known as the Forever GI Bill.

H.R. 3327, the Jack Alderson Toxic Exposure Declassification Act Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA-5th) introduced H.R. 3327, the Jack Alderson Toxic Exposure Declassification Act. Thompson’s stand-alone bill that would require the Department of Defense to declassify documents related to any known incident in which no less than 100 members of the Armed Forces were exposed to a toxic substance. “This bill will go a long way to benefitting veterans of all generations whose health has been impacted by exposure to toxins during their military service,” said John Rowan, Vietnam Veterans of America national president. .

VETERANS AID AND ATTENDANCE BENEFIT

If you are a veteran overwhelmed with the high cost of long-term elder care, such as paying for assisted living facilities, home care aids, adult daycare, or skilled nursing, the Veterans Aid and Attendance benefit could be the solution to help offset these rising care costs. Wartime veterans or their surviving spouse with limited income may be eligible to receive a non-service connected pension. To learn more, contact Dave McCarty -

Dave McCarty B.S. CHC

Certified Healthcare Consultant / Government Benefits Specialist

317-823-3713 - dave@dmcgrouponline.com

The Bunker is open 10am—2pm on Sunday. They will be setup at VA from Aug 7 thru Aug 11. Physical help would be appreciated to unload/load van at 6:30am Aug 7 and 3:30pm Aug 11.

Your purchases at The Bunker support VVA 295 and Fort Harrison Veterans Center.

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).

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 meats, pasta and noodles. You can visit their website to see what they do. <http://www.hvafofindiana.org/>

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. Contact Robin Close at 317-951-0688 or rclose@hvaf.org

Lawrence 4th Fest Parade

Thank you to all VVA & AVVA members who participated in the parade. Hopefully we can get more participation next year.

Below is Tony Gigli carrying the POW flag.



The Moving Wall in Columbus, IN

Several VVA & AVVA members visited The Moving Wall when it was setup in Columbus in July.

I always pay respects to those I know on the Wall and those who served with my husband. It is always moving.

There were lots of people there which is good, including young people. I also learned different ways to setup/present the Wall and displays we could setup.



Indiana's 4th Annual Salute to Veterans Golf Open

Sponsored in Partnership with the Pat McAfee Foundation



Friday, August 4, 2017

Valle Vista Golf and Conference Center

755 East Main Street

Greenwood, Indiana 46143

- **\$75 Entry Fee - \$300 Per Team**
- **Entry fee includes all green fees, golf cart, complementary beverage cart, and all you can eat gourmet buffet after golf.**
- **Registration: 7:00 a.m.**
- **Tee Time: 8:00 a.m.**
- **Florida Scramble**
- **Prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams**
- **Prizes for longest drive (Men & Women), closest to pin, and longest putt**

Red Sponsor: \$1,000 (Beer Cart Sign/Hole Sponsor/Reception Signs)

White Sponsor: \$500 (Beer Cart Sign/Hole Sponsor)

Blue Sponsor: \$150 (Hole Sponsor)

Donations are greatly appreciated!

A Portion of the Proceeds go to the Pat McAfee Foundation

The Pat McAfee Foundation was formed to provide scholarship assistance to the sons and daughters of US Military Personnel



RSVP

Ray Baker: rbaker@dva.in.gov

Matt Vincent: mavincent@dva.in.gov

Phone: 317-234-8653

Address: Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs

302 West Washington St. RM E-120

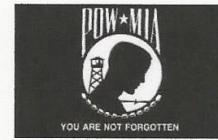
Indianapolis, IN 46204



**The Pat McAfee
Foundation**



**Third Annual
Ride to Support the
Ft. Harrison Veterans Center
Saturday, August 5th, 2017**



**Support your
Indiana Veterans**



The Ft Harrison Veterans Center provides meeting space for the following Veteran Organizations and we need your help.



Post 438



82nd Airborne



Chapter One
POW/MIA



VVA 295



Navy Club
Ship 35



Task Force
Omega



Vets for Vets



Indy
Sea Cadets



CVMA 14-1



Ride Details

Location: Ft Harrison Veterans Center
Address: 9450 East 59th Street, Lawrence, IN
Registration Time: 9:00am —10:45am
Depart Time: 11:00am
Cost: \$20.00 for rider and \$5.00 for passenger

Featuring

Ride through the Indiana back roads.
Display of the Hoosier POW/MIA Memorial Wall.
Enjoy great Food, Silent Auction, and much more.
The Bunker will be open where you can find assortment of military items to purchase.
Visit the Mobile Veterans Center and see what services they provide.

All proceeds will go to support the Ft. Harrison Veterans Center

Point of Contact

Mike Clark, Email: mike.clark@indianarollingthunder.com



Hoosier POW/MIA Memorial Wall



Ft Harrison Bunker Store



VA Mobile Vet Center

Dr. David J. Shulkin
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shulkin:

I write to you today to express my concerns about treatment and compensation of veterans exposed to Agent Orange. As you may know, since the 1970s, veterans have suffered from high blood pressure and strokes to be the result of their exposure to Agent Orange. The Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine published in November 2016 the study (Herbicide Exposure, Vietnam Service, and Hypertension Risk in Army Chemical Corps Veterans) commissioned by President Barack Obama confirms that vets exposed to Agent Orange are more likely to have high blood pressure and strokes as compared to those who weren't exposed. I write to urge you to use the Department of Veterans Affairs' existing statutory authority to quickly make high blood pressure and strokes presumptive to being exposed to Agent Orange. Center For Disease Control estimates that 115 veterans die daily because of exposure to Agent Orange. Each day delayed is more Vets dead.

When the men and women of our Armed Forces volunteer to defend our country, they do so believing that their government will do everything possible to keep them safe and healthy. They deserve access to top quality benefits and services, especially when they sacrifice their health for our nation. We have a responsibility to help these men and women live lives that are as active and productive as possible, which is why I hope you can commit to using your full authority to address this critical issue.

Thank you for your continued service to the men and women who fought to keep our nation safe and free. I look forward to your response and to working with you to improve care for our veterans in the future.

Sincerely,