



Vietnam Veterans of America Sammy L. Davis Chapter 295



December 2019 Newsletter



VVA 295 Officers

President	Larry Shaw
Vice President	Bob Parsons
Secretary	Mike Dolan
Treasurer	Verne Hanson
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

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 269279, Indianapolis, IN 46226-9279
Physical Address: 9450 E. 59th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46216

Phone: 317-547-4748
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

Important Dates

December—Collecting Hats, Scarves, Gloves & Socks, box in lobby, see page 9 flyer

Dec 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

Dec 11 VVA 295 Board Meeting 6pm; Regular Meeting is 7pm

Dec 13 Decorate for VVA Christmas Party starting at 6pm

Dec 14 VVA Christmas Party; Door open 5pm; Dinner 6pm; main dish furnished; everyone bring a dish according to first letter of your last name: A-H brings Dessert; I-O brings Salad; P-Z brings Vegetables. Door prizes and awards.

Dec 25 Christmas

Jan 1 New Years

Jan 8 VVA 295 Board Meeting 6pm; Regular Meeting is 7pm

Jan 20 MLK Day

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

Dec 31, 1960 900 U.S. military personnel are now in Vietnam; strength of South Vietnamese armed forces is at 243,000.

Dec 4, 1961 Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal is authorized by Presidential Executive Order for award to U.S. military personnel participating in “operations of assistance for a friendly foreign nation.” This applies to U.S. personnel serving in Vietnam after July 1, 1958 and in Laos after April 19, 1961.

Dec 5, 1964 The first Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to a U.S. serviceman for action in Vietnam is presented to Captain Roger Donlon for his heroic action during a battle at Nam Dong Special Forces camp on July 6, 1964.

Dec 8-20, 1965 USMC & 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 19, 67-June 10, 68 Americal Division conducts Operation Muscatine in Quang Ngai Province, I Corps

Dec 18, 69-Jan 10, 71 The U.S. Marines & 51st ARVN Regiment conduct Operation Hoan Dieu-101 in Quang Nam Province, I Corps.

Dec 23, 1971 Laos: In Vientiane, American entertainer Bob Hope tries to negotiate with North Vietnamese authorities there for the release of U.S. POWs. His proposal suggests the payment of \$10 million to a North Vietnamese children’s charity in exchange for the release of Communist held POWs.



The Bunker

Hours: 10am—2pm on Sunday.

Your purchases support VVA 295 and Fort Harrison Veterans Center. The Bunker will be setup December 2-6 at Roudebush VA Medical Center. We need help in the booth and with loading/unloading. Call Steve to help loading/unloading 317-459-6255. Call Holly to work in the booth 317-294-4607

President's Message:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope this finds you well, if not you are in our thoughts and prayers.

This will be my last letter of the 2019 year, and so I will ramble. My hope is that you might recall, or feel the same way too.

December 7, 1941, "A DAY THAT WILL LIVE INFAMY". A sneak attack on our Fleet while anchored in Pearl Harbor. Some of you might have been old enough at the time to hear the radio broadcasts, and remember your family's face's and reactions to the news. Think of those who had loved ones there. The fear and dread they must have felt not knowing if they had been killed, wounded, or were possibly safe. The shock of it all. The tears that were shed. The feeling of hopelessness, and despair. But most of all the prayers that were prayed, not just for family and friends, but for all of those there, and our Country as well. Prayers that our Elected Officials in Washington, as well as our Military Leaders would have the foresight to atone this dastardly deed. To prove to the world that the American people will fight and die for freedom. That was then. Today most people do not know of Pearl Harbor, or what Country attacked us there. The battle of Midway. Death March of Bataan. The Invasion of Normandy. The slaughter of millions of Jewish men, women, and children. Why? Why is this? Because it is not being taught in schools, and no one tells them at home. We do not have homes, family, and friends as we did back then. Teachers in our school systems get their tenure in, and do or say what ever they please. Why? Because they can't be fired. My Government Teacher, who was also our Boys High School Coach, Assistant Principal, and WWII Veteran told us how stupid our parents were for joining unions. One of the strongest unions that we have today is The Teachers Union.



December 7, 1941, was 78 years ago. More recent was the 911 attack on American soil, killing thousands and doing millions of dollars in damages. Flags were flown every where, speeches were given, people worked together again for a common goal. "ANOTHER DAY IN INFAMY". My how fast that has been forgotten by so many. But we put up Memorials to remind of those who died, and what happened that fateful day. It will not be forgotten is what they are saying. Yet all over America today they are taking down or destroying statues that were erected to remind us of our history. Why? So they can give a new account that expresses the views of a few. Who cares? Who Suffers? The Veteran and his family. If you are a Veteran, or know of a Veteran please tell your story. YOU ARE HISTORY. Your family, friends, neighbors, fellow workers, and your Church need to know. You helped give them the freedoms that they enjoy, and take for granted.

December 25, Christmas Day. A day for rejoicing, and celebrating. Why? Because 2019 years ago our Savior was born. so today is a special. Today is not about snow, or beautifully decorated Christmas trees. How many presents one gives or receives. Nor how much is spent on each, or for whom. Today is for love. a love to share with others. You may have a big fancy home, cars, a place at the lake or beach, a cabin in the mountains ,or travel the world on a whim. But without love, you can still be lonely. I am not talking about the love that a man and wife share. But a love for family, friends, nature, and the beauty of life that surrounds us each and every day. The way a ad face lights up as we greet a stranger on the street, or hold open a door for someone to pass through. Allow someone with less items to go ahead of us in line, or even helping to pay their bill, if they come up a little short. The love you share as you take food to a lonely neighbor, or shut in. Ask how they are, or is there is any thing that you can do for them. Love is as simple as a kind word, gentle touch, a smile, or time spent over a cup of coffee. Share your love. Make some ones day brighter, and see how much it brightens your day as well.

December 31, New Years Eve. May next year be your best yet. Full of love, family, friends, good health, and wealth. To you, our Troops serving around the world, and their families MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR. May GOD bless AMERICA, and you.

An update on the building. the new heating system, pumps ,and motors have been installed. Plus the State VVA has given us \$10,000.00 towards our roof, and the City Council Of Lawrence voted to give us \$20,000.00. Plus I have asked our contractor to put us in some out side out lets so that we can have trucks plug in so that we might have fish, chicken, and tenderloin all-you-can- eat dinners. This is a way for us to earn money for our roof, and chapter. Air conditioning will be installed in February.

In Comradeship

Larry Shaw

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

Vice President's Corner

VVA 295 Brothers & Sisters,



Hope that all of you had a great Thanksgiving with friends and family. Personally, our's was somewhat low-key but that's OK because it gave me an opportunity to discover whether one can overdose on cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie !

Seriously, though, I think that it gives, me at least, time to reflect on my life and all of the blessings that I have enjoyed. It is also a time to remember Thanksgivings past both here and in the military. The military units that I was stationed with, both in Vietnam and later Europe went all out to provide us with the best Thanksgiving (and Christmas) dinner possible. Hopefully we were not alone and your units made a similar effort. Holidays were always a rather melancholy time when you were that far from home but a nice dinner made it a bit less so.

As you are all aware, the Veteran's Day Parade was cancelled this year due to weather concerns and the organizers stated that with our vintage ??? Perhaps it would be best to cancel it for this year. As it turned out, that actual parade day was not all that bad but I guess no one could predict that. Most of us have experienced inclement weather but I guess we were a bit younger then.

The bunker will soon be back at the VA soon and Steve and Patty need your help manning it. Please sign up to help if you can by contacting Holly or Steve.

Our less fortunate brothers and sisters need our help with food. Please bring non-perishable food items to the next meet so that the HVAF and us can make their Christmas just a little brighter. Just remember "But for the grace of God, there go I" !! I know that no matter how I feel or what kind of mood that I am in when I go to the VA Hospital , I always leave with an overwhelming sense of gratitude after seeing what others are enduring.

Met a guy the other day who was working as a guide at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum and since I was wearing a Vietnam Vet sweatshirt he struck up a conversation with me. After chatting for a few minutes and connecting the dots we realized that we had served in the same unit in Vietnam at the same time although we didn't know each other. I asked him if he was a VVA member and guess what ? He had never heard of us. Well, he has now ! Sadly this is all too often the case. We need to get the word out about who we are, where we meet and what we do.! Don't know if he will join us or not but I sure "bent his ear" in that direction for 10 minutes or so. Let's face it, in not too many years Vietnam Veterans will be extinct, as the "ain't making any more of us". We need to swell our ranks as much as possible now to afford us the opportunity to not only help them enjoy the comradery that we share but perhaps more importantly to help them obtain the benefits that they have earned and may not even be aware of.

See you at the next meeting, and don't forget the Chapter 295 Christmas party, it is always a lot of fun.

Bob Parsons
VVA 295 Vice-President
Phu Bai, Vietnam , 1966-67-



President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress on December 8, the day after the crushing attack on Pearl Harbor. "Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan." He went on to say, "No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again."

FOOD DRIVE for Oct-Nov-Dec

With the holidays coming soon, we need to build up our food table. We all need to bring food to each meeting so we can help the Veterans that HVAF are supporting. Don't come to a meeting without bringing some food for our table. Our organization is supposed to help Veterans. Let's see how much food we can collect!



Member Speaker Program at Meetings— Call Fred Bishop, 317-918-1142 to sign up.

The December Member Speaker is Bill Smither

Community Guest Speaker at Meetings

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

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

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



Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis has a new monument. The "Living Monument" — made of Indiana limestone from Bloomington — was placed on the east end of the circle November 19, 2019. It's a first-of-its-kind monument, that allows veterans to be a part of the monument.

"Most monuments are there to look at and to recognize," Michael Clark, the account supervisor for MillerBrooks, said. "We actually want visitors to engage. We want folks to sit on the monument, stand on the monument, take photos and use social media to share the pictures."

MillerBrooks is the organization that pitched the idea of the unique monument to Gen. Stewart Goodwin and the Indiana War Memorials Commission.

"I got to tell you, we had never heard of anything like this before," Gen. Goodwin said.

Goodwin says the Living Monument is a great addition to the circle.

"This is going to give us an opportunity to allow veterans to get their picture taken with the (Soldiers and Sailors) monument in the background," he said. "I couldn't imagine anything cooler than how this worked out."

A sign that explains the monument is expected to be installed before Thanksgiving and the Circle of Lights Festival. MillerBrooks and the Indiana War Memorials Commission are working on an official dedication to the new monument in the next few weeks.

To learn more about the creation and the idea behind the monument, go to WIBC.com or search "The Living Monument" on YouTube.

Veterans Issues

- Veterans going to the Federal Building have to park blocks away putting disabled vets in harms way.
- PX/EX privileges due to start Jan 1. They are trying to gear up to read your VA Medical access card, but no info yet.
- Access to your Primary Care Physician is still limited. They won't make appointments forcing you to call in on the day you want to visit to establish a time. This puts undue stress on people who have to arrange transportation. They are basically improving their backlog at your expense.
- Many of the C&P exams have been shoveled off to specialist who are unqualified and/or have no understanding of military type of injuries and diseases.
- Our Vet Center is staffed correctly, but I'm hearing from lots of vets around the country that PTSD programs have been slashed.
- Office of Management and Budget has delayed implementation of Herbicide Exposure Presumptives to include bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinsons-like symptoms, hypertension, and stroke.

Leave No Veteran Behind!

Guidelines for Dealing with Veterans Administration

Veterans Health Administration

Point of contact, insist on quality from Primary Care Physician or doctor you are dealing with. I realize this is the main source of frustration.

Go to "Patient Advocate Office", "A: elevators, second floor. Phone (317) 988-2602. They will attempt to resolve the problem by working with veteran and hospital. Don't lose your temper. Be firm but polite

After that you are forced into contacting legislature as there is not a higher appeal process in the medical system, short of a tort claim.

Don't let it go. Don't quit. If the medical system doesn't help you, fight, there is another veteran coming in behind you for the same services. You might help him.

Veterans Benefits Administration

Educate yourself. Talk to other vets and make sure they are aware of what they are eligible for. I'm surprised by the amount of misinformation that exists. Stay in touch with your VSO. They have experience with all of your rights and avenues of appeals. VSO's can't change the laws or policies of VA, you have to contribute to that by taking time to contact the legislative branch about issues and bills that are important to veterans issues. "DON'T GIVE UP!"

Continued on next page

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

These folks do pay attention to what they hear from constituents. Be respectful, ask for the person who handles veterans affairs. Do your homework and be precise, accurate and straight to the point. Have any info that they may need (phone numbers, names, congressional bill numbers, etc...) on hand before you call. Again, you catch more flies with sugar than vinegar.

The Honorable Mike Braum
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Ph: 202-224-4814
Fax: 202-224-5011

The Honorable Todd Young
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Ph: 202-224-5623
Fax: 202-228-1820

The Honorable Andre Carson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Ph: 202-225-4011
Fax: 202-225-5633

The Honorable Susan Brooks
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Ph: 202-225-2276
Fax: 202-225-0016

Whitehouse VA Hotline — 855-948-2311

If you are in a different district, call me for their info.

Thanks,
Dennis Smalling 317-313-1577

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/>

Why the Star Spangled Banner is Played at Sporting Events

From History.com, by Becky Little

The instantly-recognizable song is played before thousands of sporting events every year, but just how did the Star-Spangled Banner come to be a staple of sports in the first place? The answer, it turns out, has to do with World War I.

Baseball fans in the late 19th century might've heard live military bands play the Star-Spangled Banner at a game every so often, but the song—which hadn't yet been designated as the national anthem—wasn't really a common occurrence at sporting events. That began to change on September 5, 1918, during Game 1 of the World Series between the Boston Red Sox and the Chicago Cubs. It was an era when the Red Sox still had Babe Ruth, and the phrase “the last time the Cubs won the World Series” wasn't yet a joke. In fact, the two teams had won six of the last 15 world championship titles.

Yet even though the event featured two teams at the top of their games, the crowd was somber that day, writes *ESPN The Magazine*. Since entering the Great War a year and a half ago, more than 100,000 U.S. soldiers had died. And just a day before the game, a bomb had exploded in Chicago, (the city in which the game was held), killing four people and injuring dozens more. In addition, the U.S. government had recently announced that it would begin drafting major league baseball players.

All this sat heavy on the shoulders of both the players and the smaller-than-usual crowd of fans that day. But during the seventh-inning stretch, the U.S. Navy band began to play the Star-Spangled Banner; and something changed.

As the song began, Red Sox infielder Fred Thomas—who was in the Navy and had been granted furlough to play in the World Series—immediately turned toward the American flag and gave it a military salute, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. Other players turned to the flag with hands over hearts, and the already-standing crowd began to sing. At the song's conclusion, the previously quiet fans erupted in thunderous applause. At the time, the *New York Times* reported that it “marked the highest point of the day's enthusiasm.” The song would be played at each of the Series' remaining games, to increasingly rapturous response. And patriotism played a part right from the start, as the Red Sox gave free tickets to wounded veterans and honored them during the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner before the start of the decisive Game 6.

Other baseball parks began to play the song on holidays and special occasions, and Red Sox owner Harry Frazee made it a regular part of Boston home games. The Star-Spangled Banner officially became the U.S. national anthem in 1931, and by the end of World War II, NFL Commissioner Elmer Layden ordered that it be played at every football game. The tradition quickly spread to other sports, aided by the introduction of large sound systems and post-war patriotism.

The anthem's adoption also gave way to a new American pastime, almost as beloved as sports itself: complaining about people's behavior during the national anthem. By 1954, Baltimore Orioles general manager Arthur Ehlert was already bemoaning fans he thought disrespected the anthem by talking and laughing during the song. Ehlert briefly stopped playing the anthem altogether, before relenting to pressure and reinstating it a month later.

**PLEASE JOIN VETS FOR VETS FOR
OUR ANNUAL DRIVE FOR**



Hats, Scarves Gloves & Socks

**DONATION CONTAINER AT FT HARRISON VETERANS
CENTER**

**THEY WILL BE TAKEN TO VA HOSPITAL AFTER
DECEMBER 19, 2019 TO GIVE TO VETERANS**

