



Vietnam Veterans of America Sammy L. Davis Chapter 295



January 2020 Newsletter



In present day, with most countries now using the Gregorian calendar as their de facto calendar, New Year's Day is among the most celebrated public holidays in the world, often observed with fireworks at the stroke of midnight as the new year starts in each time zone. Other global New Year's Day traditions include making New Year's resolutions and calling one's friends and family. In some cities the local businesses give prizes to the first baby born on New Year's Day.

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
---------------	------------

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

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

Important Dates

- Jan 1** New Years Day
- Jan 8** VVA 295 Board Meeting 6pm; Regular Meeting is 7pm
- Jan 20** MLK Day
- Jan 27** Indiana Military Veterans Legislative Day at Indiana State House, 8am-2pm
- Feb 12** VVA 295 Board Meeting 6pm; Regular Meeting is 7pm
- Feb 14** Valentines Day
- Feb 17** Presidents Day

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

- Jan 19, 1961** Outgoing President Dwight D. Eisenhower warns incoming President John F. Kennedy that Laos is “the key to the entire area of Southeast Asia” and might require the direct intervention of U.S. combat troops.
- Jan 12, 1962** The U.S. Air Force launches Operation Ranch Hand, a “modern technological area denial technique” designed to defoliate the roads and trails used by the Viet Cong.. Flying C-123 Providers, U.S. personnel will dump an estimated 19 million gallons of defoliating herbicides (Agent Orange) between 1962 and 1971.
- Jan 17, 1965** It is reported that about 30% of South Vietnamese draftees desert within their first six weeks in service.
- Jan 1-8, 1966** Paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade and Australian troops conduct Operation Marauder, a search and destroy operation in Hau Nghia Province, III Corps.
- Jan 26-Mar 23, 67** U.S. Marines and ARVN troops conduct Operation De Soto to relieve an ARVN outpost and clear an area 25 miles south of Quang Ngai City, I Corps.
- Jan 1, 1968** U.S. Navy begins Operation Clearwater to interdict enemy bases and lines of communication on inland waterways in I Corps.
- Jan 20-31, 1968** The U.S. 173rd Airborne Brigade conducts Operation McLain, a reconnaissance in force operation in support of pacification efforts in Binh Thuan Province, II Corps.
- Jan 19-Jul 22, 70** Troops from the U.S. 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and 1st ARVN Division conduct Operation Greene River in Quang Tri Province, I Corps.

Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365 page book. Write a good one.

~ Brad Paisley



The Bunker

Hours: 10am—2pm on Sunday.

Your purchases support VVA 295 and Fort Harrison Veterans Center. The Bunker will be setup January 6-17 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,



Hey, hey, hey! Happy New Year! Welcome 2020 Leap Year

Was that opening too much for those of you who celebrated a little too much? Or just right for those of you who look ahead with hope for a bright, fun filled, enjoyable year. One that allows you to work an extra day, to learn and try new things. To spend more time traveling and being with those you love. Simply, it is just like any other year. The more of yourself that you put in it, the more you are going to get out of it. Nothing that is really worthwhile, and what we want ever just falls into our lap. You must work and earn it. Only in movies and fairy tale books, do things just magically happen, and everyone lives happily ever after.

What am I rambling on about? Simple. Each year at our Christmas party (or in two of our meetings this year) awards were presented to those who have worked to help make VVA 295 better. In December's meeting I presented an award to Dennis Smalling for his many years of helping veterans to get their entitlements and treatments, or to help veterans widows to be properly taken care of. At the Christmas party Holly Tookolo, President of AVVA 295 and myself presented an award for AVVA member of the year to Patty Mabrey. In our January meeting, if he is present, as he was not at the Christmas party, VVA 295 member of the year to _____. If you wish to see who it is, be at the January meeting on the 8th, 7pm. Would you like to receive one of these awards? Something you can hang on your wall to show family and friends that you make a difference for 295, and your fellow veterans. The secret of receiving one is easy. First, do not stay at home; come to the meetings. Second, don't just come to the monthly meeting for a couple of hours and leave. Third, ask what needs to be done in case you can't see anything that needs help. Fourth, volunteer! Steve, Patty and Holly need help at Roudebush VA the first two weeks of the month starting in January. We do not have a janitor service to take care of cleaning and supplying our three restrooms. There is dusting of walls throughout the building, floors to be swept, mopped or vacuumed, windows to wash inside and out. Baseboards to be added where needed, outside area to be policed for trash, and many numerous other things that could be done. Right now, most of what is getting done is by just a handful of people. With close to three hundred members, they should not have to carry the rest of you. In the military, things were done as a team effort. The more hands, the faster and easier it is to get things done.

A few months back I asked for donations for our roof. Again, out of close to three hundred people, over that including AVVA, only possibly twelve people donated. At twelve people a year and needing \$60,000, how long will it take us to get the money. Remember the longer we take, the more material and labor will cost, forcing the price higher. Don't want to come to the meetings alone? Offer a ride to one of the other members or sign up a new member and bring them with you.

A few other things that you can help the chapter and community with is visiting assisted living, nursing facilities or call on our members that are hospitalized or confined to their homes. You can sit with them, read to them, run errands, clean house, yard, remove snow, mow grass; the list is endless. Plus, we need to get veterans back into schools to tell the students about Vietnam and those who served there. Some of you were in other countries and could tell them about those also. Plus tell how you felt about being there and how they felt about you being there. You are history and need to share it with others, especially our youth of today.

Do you really want to help veterans but feel that you can't do a lot of physical activity, such as mowing or shoveling snow etc. Become a service officer. We have very few chapters in the state and have a low number of service officers. Some of these will be retiring in a year or two. Take the training, get certified and start working with those that can help you along and lessen their load. Many veterans out there have never filed a claim, which means they are not receiving service from the VA that they are entitled to. Plus, if they should pass, their widow receives nothing. Possibly some of you have not considered what will happen to your wife or any dependent children that you may have. Get them involved in your life. Make sure that they know your wishes for treatments if needed, and possible funeral arrangements, where important papers are such as deeds, insurance policies, bank statements, DD214, etc. If they depend on you now, they will be in a world of hurt if you do not leave them so that they can continue on. Without a will and this information your estate could be tied up in courts for years, leaving them nothing to live on, during that time. Please think and plan ahead to protect your loved ones and the things that you have worked so hard for over the years.

Another reason we need more service officers is a few years ago the State of Indiana awarded \$200,000 each year to the top four veteran organizations that had the most claims turned in by their service officers. They were VFW, DAV, Continued on page 5

Vice President's Corner



Brothers and sister,

As we prepare to ring in the New Year it is perhaps fitting to reflect on this past year. I have noticed an marked increase in attendance at our monthly meetings. Don't know if this is because of more of us retiring with more free time or the fact that some have only recently learned that we even exist. For whatever reason, it is nice to look out into the meeting room and see more new faces. Please get involved in our many projects and consider bringing you acquired experience to the organization by running for the Board of Directors or an office at the upcoming election. At the very least, please inform every vet you meet about VVA 295 and invite them to join us. Since a lifetime VVA membership is now only \$50 there is no reason not to.

As in past years, we have lost some members, including officer, which I suppose is inevitable since we are all hovering around that "70" mark. I won't list them individually for fear of leaving someone out, but they will be truly missed. A huge thank you for those of you that stepped forward and filled unexpected but critical vacancies within the chapter.

At the National Convention in Spokane this past summer it was noted that while over 6 million served during the Vietnam War, on 600,000 remain ! If that number is accurate we have lost 90% of Vietnam Vets in the last 55 or so years. Seems hard to believe but I guess their statistics are accurate. We probably have 10 or so more years to make our mark on history, so get involved at the chapter level so that our legacy will be a lasting and positive one.

On a more positive note, it would be hard not to notice the improvements that Chapter 295 has made this past year. Largely due to the guidance and untiring efforts of VVA 295 President, Larry Shaw we have or will soon have a new heating and air conditioning system for the building and we are well on our way to raising the required funds for a long needed new roof. The "Bunker" has long been our salvation monetary wise and a huge Thank You is due Steve and Patty Mabrey and their dedicated team of volunteers led by our own Holly Tookolo. The "Bunker" will be set up 2 weeks per month at the VA Hospital and volunteers are needed to help staff the "store". Steve and Patty can't do it alone so please sign up with Holly to lend a hand. This is a "Golden opportunity" to finance the new roof and other improvements desperately needed on our home, the Ft. Harrison Veterans Center. Also if you work for or know of individuals or companies who would be willing to contribute to this cause please ask for their participation. We have already had generous contributions from the VVA Indiana State Council and the City of Lawrence as well as individual chapter members. Every amount helps, no matter what the size, so please consider helping out in any way you can.

All in all 2019 was a great year for VVA 295 and looking forward we have a great future ahead of us. Let's make a concerted effort to bring more Vietnam and Vietnam Era veterans into our organization. We're running out of time because , last I heard they simply ain't making anymore Vietnam Vets !

I have listed my cell phone and email below for a reason...If you have any ideas , concerns or questions please don't hesitate to contact myself or any BOD or VVA Officer. This is YOUR chapter and you have a right to be heard !

Hope you all have a safe and prosperous New Year.

Bob Parsons

Phu Bai, Vietnam 66-67-68

(Phone: 317-919-7589,,,Email: rcparsons47@comcast.net)

Continued from page 3

American Legion and VVA, not AMVETS. This year AMVETS is adding six more service officers around the state in hopes that they will replace one of the present four. If that happens and we are the one replaced, we lose the funds that allows us to help veterans in financial need. You can make a difference not just in your life, but in the lives of others. Isn't that what we are here for – to help others?

Until next time, keep those flags flying. Pray for our troops and their families. Get involved, help the chapter, and your fellow veteran. You can help make VVA and AVVA of 295 Great again. Will you? Or will you continue to sit at home and do nothing? Remember Sammy's words "YOU DON'T LOSE, UNTIL YOU QUIT TRYING". Also "VETERANS MAKE IT HAPPEN".

May GOD bless America and you.

In Comradeship

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

Dennis Smalling received award for his Service Officer work.

Larry Shaw receives the Gene Gigli award.



Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

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/>

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

Community Guest Speaker at Meetings

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

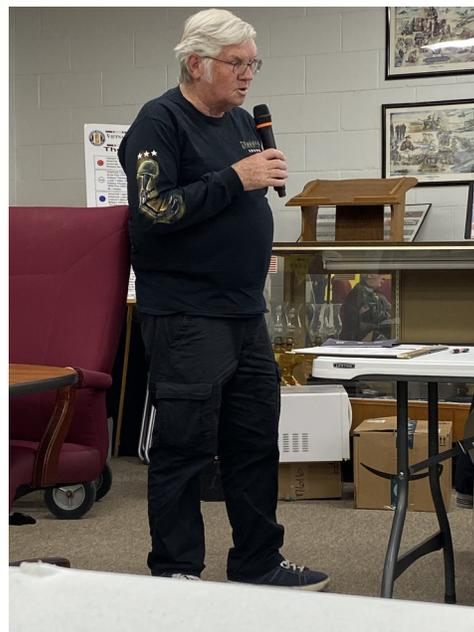
Roudebush VA Medical Center is needing volunteer drivers. Veterans Transportation Service provides Veterans a ride to their medical center or outlying clinic. This is a great way to help Veterans. To volunteer, visit or call Volunteer Services, 317-988-2734 or call driver Pat Parrish, 317-632-4263 (he’s 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

**Patty Mabrey receives
AVVA Member of the Year**

**Bill Smither was Member Speaker
at December meeting**



Traveling Vietnam Wall exhibit finds permanent home

The Journal Gazette, December 30, 2019

The traveling exhibit of the Vietnam Wall has found a permanent home.

The exhibit will be put up permanently at the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum, 2122 O’Day Road, Fort Wayne, Indiana, the organization said in a statement.

“This structure is 80% scale of the original wall and stands 8 feet tall by 360 feet long.” Commander Greg Bedford of the Veterans National Memorial Shrine and Museum said.

The group plans on making the site ADA accessible and putting lighted pathways along the wall and adding reflection benches placed along the length of the structure.

A software package that will help find individuals’ names and locations on the wall will also be available.

The organization also plans on building five new monuments on the grounds in what they call “Monument Plaza”. For more information go to honoringforever.org

Vets with disability ratings can get lifetime access to over 400 national parks for free

The National Park Service offers free lifetime access passes to over 400 national parks and 2,000 recreation sites nationwide to any veteran with at least a 10% disability rating. For Indiana that would be at Monroe Lake in Bloomington, Hoosier National Forest in Bedford, Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge in Seymour, Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge in Madison, Brookville Lake in Brookville, Cagles Mill Lake in Poland, Cecil M Harden Lake in Rockville, and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in Porter. Vets can receive this lifetime pass on the spot at any federal recreation area where passes are issued by presenting proof of disability such as VA rating letter or VA ID card that says service connected. You can also order your pass online for a \$10 processing fee at store.usgs.gov/access-pass For more info:

blogs.va.gov/Vantage/60590/disabled-veterans-eligible-free-national-park-service-lifetime-access-pass/

Blue Water Navy Veterans’ disability claims to be decided beginning Jan 1, 2020

Did you serve in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975? If so, then you’re considered a Blue Water Navy (BWN) Veteran. On Jan 1, 2020, the Blue Water Navy Act of 2019 goes into effect and extends the presumption of herbicide exposure, such as Agent Orange, to BWN Veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles from the shore of Vietnam and have since developed one of 14 conditions related to exposure. See your Service Office to file a claim. For more info:

blogs.va.gov/Vantage/69370/blue-water-navy-veterans-disability-claims-now-decided/

Reconnect with Former Battle Buddies

Rekindle old relationships with friends and battle buddies. On RallyPoint you can reconnect with people you have lost touch with. Go to: rallypoint.com/registrations/step1

Americans are retiring to Vietnam, for cheap healthcare and decent standard of living

Los Angeles Times, Dec 25, 2019 Ralph Jennings

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam—When John Rockhold drew a low number, No. 12, in the 1971 draft lottery, his adolescence in the San Fernando Valley forever changed. Seeking to avoid the Army, he signed up for the Navy just after graduating from Granada Hills High School. As an enlisted petty officer, he spent months operating boats that dropped off SEALs at night along long and humid Vietnamese shorelines where American troops were trying to stop the communist north from taking over the south. More than 58,000 U.S. service members died in the war, and since it ended in 1975, innumerable American veterans have returned to Vietnam, seeking understanding, forgiveness or reconciliation. Now some are coming for more mundane reasons: inexpensive housing, cheap healthcare and a rising standard of living. After his military career, Rockhold worked as a defense contractor. He first returned to Vietnam in 1992 to work on a program to help economic refugees. He settled in Vietnam in 1995, the same year the United States and Vietnam normalized relations. He married a Vietnamese woman in 2009. In fact, he liked it so much that he persuaded his mother to move to Vietnam for Santa Maria, CA, in 2009.

Rockhold, now 66, sits on several boards and is raising two children, 10 and 9, with his wife, Tu Viet Nga. The family lives in a 20th floor condominium overlooking the Saigon River and the sprawling city beyond. Aging American boomers are living a lifestyle reminiscent of Florida, Nevada and Arizona, but in Vietnam. Monthly expenses here rarely exceed \$2,000. Rockhold says he has rarely encountered resentment, even when he talks about his service as a combat veteran. For more about this go to:

[Latimes.com/world-nation/story/2019-12-25/americans-are-retiring-to-vietnam-for-cheap-health-care-and-a-decent-living-standard](https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2019-12-25/americans-are-retiring-to-vietnam-for-cheap-health-care-and-a-decent-living-standard)

How Jimmy Stewart's War Service affected "It's a Wonderful Life"

"It's a Wonderful Life" was Jimmy Stewart's first movie since he returned home after serving as a pilot in World War II, an experience that left him adrift and not without psychological fallout. Author Robert Matzen writes about this postwar period in the actor's career in the new nonfiction book, "Mission: Jimmy Stewart and the Fight for Europe," and said that during the course of his research, he spoke with "the guys that flew with him, who told me about the fact that he went flak-happy on a couple of occasions, which means shell shock, battle fatigue, what we now know as PTSD. Which is to say that much of George Bailey's angst was, to some extent, Stewart's own. Before agreeing to do the film with director Frank Capra (recently back from the war himself), he considered quitting acting altogether. For about this, go to:

[Chicagotribune.com/entertainment/movies/ct-jimmy-stewart-book-mov-1202-20161201-column.html](https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/movies/ct-jimmy-stewart-book-mov-1202-20161201-column.html)

Commissary & PX expands Access

Starting Jan 1, 2020 access will expand to include all veterans with service connected disabilities, veterans who are Purple Heart recipients, veterans who are former prisoners of war and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers. Show your VA ID card that says "serviced connected disability.
