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Meetings

The Chapter 120 membership meeting will be held on Thursday, February 2, 2017 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford.

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, February 23 at 7:00pm. Call the Chapter office for any changes in schedule. Chapter members are welcomed to attend.

Notice

If you have moved or changed your address, PLEASE notify us immediately. Call the Chapter office at (860) 568-9212, mail us at the address on the back of this newsletter or e-mail the Newsletter editor at JRCVVA120@aol.com.

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VA's Rule Establishes Presumption Service Connection for Diseases Associated with Camp Lejeune Contaminated Water



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The presumption of service connection applies to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp

Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

- adult leukemia
- aplastic anemia & other myelodysplastic syndromes
- bladder cancer
- kidney cancer
- liver cancer
- multiple myeloma
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

"We have a responsibility to take care of those who have served our Nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "Establishing a presumption for service at Camp Lejeune will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they have earned."

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, and perchloroethylene (PCE), a dry cleaning agent, as well as benzene and vinyl chloride, were discovered in two on-base water supply systems at Camp Lejeune. The contaminated wells supplying the water systems were shut down in February 1985.

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

The rule will be effective either 60 days after publication in the Federal Register, or following conclusion of the 60-day Congressional Review, whichever is later.

Roughly 1,400 disability claims related to Lejeune are already pending, and will be reviewed immediately, according to the VA.

CHAPTER 120 OFFICE 568-9212

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All Telephone Numbers are Area Code 860 unless otherwise noted

Chapter/State News

Chapter 120 Life Member Remembered



Richard B. Nurmi, 70 of Middletown, CT passed away on Sunday, December 18, 2016 at his home. Rich was born on April 28, 1946 in New London, CT. He proudly served in the US Navy during Vietnam from 1963-1968 as an Aviation Ordnance man 3rd Class. Rich was an employee at the CT Department of Veterans Affairs from 1999 until his retirement in May 2016. In 2004 Rich became the Clerical Local Steward of AFSCME Local 318 and in 2013, he was elected as a member of the Local 318 Executive Board. Rich was also a member of Chapter 120 Vietnam Veterans of America. Funeral services for Rich were held on Thursday, January 5, 2017 at the CT Department of Veterans Affairs Chapel, 287 West St. Rocky Hill, CT. Rich was laid to rest with military honors at the

Middletown State Veterans Cemetery, 317 Bow Lane, Middletown, CT. In Lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the CT DVA Veterans Outreach and Support Services Fund, 287 West St. Rocky Hill, CT 06067.



We'll always remember Rich's "pride and joy" – his Chrysler Sebring convertible and the many parades he drove in with Chapter 120.

National Convention Delegate Elections Coming

Elections for six National Convention delegates and two alternates will be held at the Chapter 120 membership meeting on April 6, 2017. Three members of the Nominating Committee will also be elected on that date. If you are interested in running for a Delegate to the National Convention to be held in New Orleans, LA on August 8 - 12, 2017, you should start planning for your trip and consider expenses necessary to attend the Convention. Historically, the Connecticut State Council and Chapter 120 have assisted with the majority of expenses. But there is no way to know how much that financial backup will be this year. If you are interested in a Delegate position or wish to nominate a Chapter member for that position, please contact the Nominating Committee (Pete Lund, Bill Chiodo or Frank Mello). Election Rules will be posted in the March newsletter.

Membership Renewals

Is your membership renewal about to become due? Please renew today so you can continue to receive the Chapter newsletter, as well as the VVA Veteran! And as you renew, please consider joining the other 217 members who have chosen Life membership for \$100. You must submit a copy of your DD214 to qualify for Life membership.

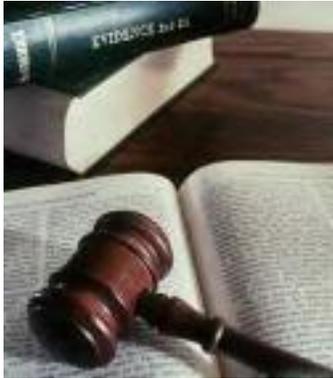
Birthday Wishes

Birthday wishes go to our members born in February. May you have many more!

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Vernon Bertrand</i> | <i>Paul S. Egan</i> |
| <i>Michael F. Kane</i> | <i>Kathryn M. Lechause</i> |
| <i>Robert Longworth</i> | <i>Diana Mello</i> |
| <i>George T. Miller</i> | <i>Ronald J. Pelletier</i> |
| <i>Joseph Rinaldi</i> | <i>Roger Rowley</i> |
| <i>Robert Savino</i> | <i>Earl J. Schofield</i> |
| <i>Francis T. Schulze</i> | <i>Timothy M. Siggia</i> |
| <i>Joe C. Visco</i> | |

Happy Birthday!

Stafford Man Sentenced For Orchestrating Veterans Fraud Scheme



A Stafford CT man who had been accused of defrauding U.S. veterans was sentenced on Tuesday to 18 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release.

Deirdre M. Daly, United States Attorney for the district of Connecticut, announced that John Simon Jr., also known as "Buzzy Simon," 69, of Stafford, was sentenced today

by U.S. District Judge Michael P. Shea in Hartford.

According to court documents and statements made in court, from March 2009 to August 2010, Simon, a Vietnam War veteran, engaged in a scheme to defraud four military veterans by representing that, in exchange for money, he could assist them in obtaining increased benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The veterans suffer from service-related disabilities and/or are chronically ill, according to court documents.

Simon falsely represented that the money the veterans provided to him would be used to pay for the services of an attorney or other expenses, according to court documents.

With respect to one veteran, Simon also falsely told him that he would assist the veteran in obtaining Social Security benefits, Daly said.

Simon did not initiate any claims for the four veterans and he did not incur any legal or other expenses on behalf of the veterans, Daly said.

Rather, he kept the money for his personal use, she said.

As part of a plea agreement, Simon has admitted that he defrauded 11 other military veterans and one non-veteran by representing that he could obtain new or increased benefits from the VA or Social Security Administration.

In total, Simon defrauded 16 victims of approximately \$525,521, Daly said.

Simon also structured approximately \$36,000 in cash deposits into his bank account from October 2009 to June 2010, Daly said.

The funds structured were payments he had received from the fraud scheme, Daly said.

At the time, Simon knew that the bank was required to issue a report for a currency transaction in excess of \$10,000, and that by conducting his financial transactions in amounts less than

\$10,000.01, he intended to evade the transaction reporting requirements, she said.

Federal law requires all financial institutions to file a Currency Transaction Report for currency transactions that exceed \$10,000.

To evade the filing of a CTR, individuals will often structure their currency transactions so that no single transaction exceeds \$10,000, Daly said.

Structuring involves the repeated depositing or withdrawal of amounts of cash less than the \$10,000 limit, or the splitting of a cash transaction that exceeds \$10,000 into smaller cash transactions in an effort to avoid the reporting requirements, Daly said.

Even if the deposited funds are derived from a legitimate means, financial transactions conducted in this manner are still in violation of federal criminal law, she said.

Simon was arrested on a criminal complaint on May 15, 2013. On Oct. 3, 2016, he pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud and one count of structuring currency transactions.

In October 2010, the IRS seized \$210,085.58 from Simon's bank account.

The seized funds will be used to pay restitution to Simon's victims, Daly said.

Judge Shea ordered Simon to pay \$315,435.42 in additional restitution.

From The Hartford Courant

Former VFW Treasurer Who Embezzled To Pay For Porn Sentenced To Prison



A former Air Force pilot who flew reconnaissance missions in Vietnam then flew B-52 bombers for Strategic Air Command was sentenced Friday to prison for stealing nearly \$150,000 from two veteran organizations and spending the bulk of it on internet pornography.

Frederick Brown, 72, of Willington, pleaded guilty in October as part of a plea agreement to first-degree larceny and third-degree larceny. He was convicted of stealing about \$144,000 from the Willington Veterans of Foreign Wars post and about \$12,000 from the Vernon American Legion Post. He served as treasurer of both organizations.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Brown faced up to four years in prison. His lawyer, Brendan Putman of Rockville, persuaded Rockville Superior Court Judge to sentence Brown to

2 1/2 years in prison and five years of probation. While on probation, Brown must pay restitution.

Tolland State’s Attorney Matthew C. Gedansky urged Rockville Superior Court Judge Vernon Oliver to sentence Brown to the four-year maximum the plea agreement allowed.

Brown’s conduct went on for several years and each time he stole from the two veteran organizations he had a chance to reflect on what he was doing. Rather than stop, he chose to keep stealing.

The Willington VFW post had nearly \$150,000 in its bank account because it had sold its building and planned to donate the proceeds to St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital, the Boy Scouts and a scholarship fund that benefits Willington students.

“When Mr. Brown depleted our bank account, he not only stole from the VFW, he stole from those organizations,” Raymond Gantick, the commander of the Willington VFW post, told the judge. “We felt anger and disgust that Mr. Brown violated our trust. We are comrades. We thought Mr. Brown was a comrade. He betrayed us with his lies and deceit.”

Post members were also disgusted to learn that so much of their money went to pay for pornography, Gantick said. He urged the judge to sentence Brown to four years.

Putman told the judge that Brown had a distinguished military record and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross during his service in Vietnam. He has lived an otherwise law abiding life and has a variety of serious health issues, Putman said. He urged the judge to sentence Brown to house arrest.

Brown told the judge he knew that he did was wrong and that he had to be punished. “I’m sorry I did what I did,” he said. “I betrayed the trust of my family. I betrayed the trust of my fellow veterans.” Brown also talked at length about his health issues and his concern that healthcare in prison would not be adequate.

The judge said that the question that had not been answered was why Brown stole the money. He said he suspected Brown did it out of boredom. And he said he was struck by how the thefts went on for nearly five years.

Incarceration was necessary, the judge said.

“You can’t steal \$150,000 from charity, spend it on pornography, then come here and say you’re too sick to go to jail,” Oliver told Brown.

Receive “The Connection” by E-Mail

The monthly Chapter 120 newsletter, *The Connection*, is available by e-mail. Currently, 96 members receive the newsletter by e-mail, saving the Chapter over \$600 in postal fees annually. The newsletter is available in Adobe format (.pdf), attached to your e-mail. If you wish to receive the newsletter via e-mail, please e-mail the newsletter editor at jrcvva120@aol.com

At The Capitol

Veterans Proposed Bills Introduced



The 2017 session of the State General Assembly began on January 4, 2017. In the first few weeks of the session, sixty-one (61) proposed bills relating to veterans and their families were introduced. Of those 61 bills, several dealt with:

- Veterans’ funeral honors and the lack of funding for rifle salutes
- Veterans’ property and income tax reductions
- DMV fees for veterans
- Housing for veterans and families

For a current list of all bills and links to each bill, go to: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2017/vadata/cbr/va.asp>

VA Committee Members

Due to the Senate General Assembly split of equal Democrats and Republicans this year, an additional co-chair and vice-chair from the Republican Senate were added to the VA Committee. Committee members are:

- **Senate Co-Chairs:** Mae Flexer (D), Henri Martin (R)
- **House Co-Chair:** John “Jack” F. Hennessy (D)
- **Senate Vice Chairs:** Edwin A. Gomes (D), George S. Logan (R)
- **House Vice Chair:** Liz Linehan (D)
- **House Ranking Member:** Charles J. Ferraro (R)
- **Senate Members:** Catherine Osten (D), Len Suzio (R)
- **House Members:** Patrick S. Boyd (D), Antonio Guerrero (D), Kim Rose (D), Bob W. Siegrist (R), Kevein Skulczyk (R), Greg Stokes (R)

On The Hill

Bevy of Bills to Boost Vets

Members of the 115th Congress began introducing a deluge of legislation targeting veterans, including bills aimed at extending benefits to Blue Water Navy veterans, revoking bonuses paid to VA employees, and expanding the rules of concurrent receipt of retired and VA disability pay.



Here are some of the bills recently introduced.

H.R.27 - Ensuring VA Employee Accountability Act.

The Secretary of the VA would be required to retain any reprimand or admonishment as a permanent part of an employee's record. Currently,

disciplinary actions are destroyed from employee records after three years.

H.R. 92 - CHAMPVA Children's Protection Act. The bill would increase the age to 26 for adult children eligible for care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA). This would align the program with TRICARE and civilians covered under the Affordable Care Act.

H.R. 103 - Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act. The bill would require the VA to provide chiropractic care at no fewer than 75 medical centers by the end of this year and to all medical centers by the end of 2019.

H.R. 299 - Blue Water Navy Veterans Act. This would extend the presumption of Agent Orange exposure to Blue Water Vietnam Veterans.

H.R. 303 - Retired Pay Restoration Act. This bill expands concurrent receipt for military retirees with less than a 50-percent disability rating.

H.R. 333 - Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act. This bill is MOAA's ultimate concurrent receipt goal. It expands concurrent receipt for military retirees with less than a 50-percent disability rating and includes full concurrent receipt for all Chapter 61 retirees. The Senate companion to this bill is S. 66.

H.R. 369 - The measure would extend funding to the Veterans Choice Act. The Choice Act allows millions of qualified veterans to seek VA-funded health care in the private sector. Under current law, funding for the program is set to expire this August.

S.57 - The Secretary of Veterans Affairs would be required to revoke bonuses paid to employees involved in electronic wait list manipulations.

VVA Applauds Introduction of New Blue Water Vietnam Veterans Act



“For over a decade, Vietnam Veterans of America has sought legislation to restore presumptive Agent Orange exposure status to members of the Armed Forces who served in the territorial waters of Vietnam,” said John Rowan, VVA National President. “We applaud Congressman David Valadao

(CA-21) and the original cosponsors of H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, and we will work with them to pass this much-needed bill.

“We could not agree more with Congressman Dennis Ross (FL-15), that ‘there is absolutely no reason those veterans who served in the waters off the coast of Vietnam and currently suffer from diseases related to Agent Orange exposure should not qualify for current VA care,’” Rowan said.

“Presumption of service connection exists for Vietnam veterans who served in country, on land and inland waterways. Enactment of H.R. 299 will bring a modicum of justice to several thousand Navy personnel who have been denied service connection by the VA since 2002. They no longer will have to prove direct exposure to Agent Orange, and they will receive expedited consideration for VA benefits if they are afflicted

with any of the health conditions associated with exposure to this defoliant,” Rowan said.

“VVA fully endorses the sentiments expressed by Congressman Tim Walz (MN-1): ‘When Congress allowed the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to expire, the need for this legislation became absolutely critical. Our nation must exhaust every effort to identify, prevent, and heal the injuries, illnesses, and wounds our military service personnel received during their service.’”

Veterans Affairs News



Chief of Staff Snyder to serve as interim department secretary



Robert Snyder

The Veterans Affairs’ interim chief of staff is getting a temporary promotion to the department’s top job.

Robert Snyder, who has overseen day-to-day operations at the department for a year and a day, was announced as the acting VA secretary effective Friday at noon, when President-elect Donald Trump is sworn into office.

VA officials announced the change as current political appointees said their farewells at the department’s Washington, D.C., headquarters. Snyder is an Army veteran who spent 26 years in the service, including a stint on the faculty at West Point.

Snyder will serve in the role until the Senate confirms Dr. David Shulkin, Trump’s pick to replace outgoing VA Secretary Bob McDonald. Shulkin is the current VA under secretary for health and would be the first non-veteran ever to head the bureaucracy.

No date has been set by Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee leaders for Shulkin’s confirmation hearing, but incoming administration officials are pushing for one before the end of the month.

Snyder took over as chief of staff Jan. 18, 2016, after the sudden departure of his predecessor, Rob Nabors. He has been directly involved with most of McDonald’s department reform efforts since then, serving as executive director of the MyVA Task Force.

He has worked in the department since 2009. Between his military career and joining VA, he worked as a consultant at Accenture Management.

VVA Applauds President-elect Trump: Dr. Shulkin is a Terrific Choice as Next VA Secretary



“Vietnam Veterans of America fully endorses President-elect Trump's intention to nominate David Shulkin as the next Secretary of Veterans Affairs,” said John Rowan, VVA National President. “Dr. Shulkin has done terrific work over the past year-and-a-half years as Under Secretary for

Health; he has assembled a gifted staff to integrate community care into VA health care, enabling the VA to live up to the challenge of providing the best care available.

“All veterans ought to applaud Mr. Trump's decision,” Rowan said. “Dr. Shulkin, a board-certified internist, is intimately familiar with the challenges facing the VA, including the urgent need to improve access to VA healthcare services. As Dr. Shulkin noted in an interview with NPR, ‘The first responsibility that we have to our veterans is to make sure those that need urgent care are getting care on time.’”

“Five weeks ago, Vietnam Veterans of America sent a letter to the President-elect’s transition team, urging that Dr. Shulkin be re-nominated as Under Secretary for Health,” Rowan said. “In the course of his career, Dr. Shulkin has been named as one of the ‘Top 100 Physician Leaders of Hospitals and Health Systems’ by Becker’s Hospital Review; and as one of the ‘50 Most Influential Physician Executives in the Country’ by Modern Healthcare and Modern Physician.

“Dr. Shulkin came out of the private sector less than two years ago. He has been relentless in his pursuit of improving medical care for veterans, working to increase timely access, all the while holding managers and other VA staff accountable. He continues to lead by example, practicing medicine and seeing patients on an ongoing basis, not only in Washington but also in New York City.

“The President-elect has done us one better in selecting Dr. Shulkin to succeed Bob McDonald,” Rowan said. “We will do everything we can to assist Dr. Shulkin in his mission to right the wrongs in the VA, to improve veterans’ access to health care, and to remedy the unacceptably long time to resolve claims and appeals for disability compensation.”



From the Service Rep’s Desk



Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors of:

- Service members who died while on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, OR
- Veterans whose death resulted from a service-connected injury or disease, OR
- Veterans whose death resulted from a non-service-connected injury or disease, and who were totally disabled from their service-connected disabilities for
 - at least 10 years immediately preceding their death, OR
 - since the Veteran’s release from active duty and for at least five years immediately preceding death, OR
 - at least one year immediately preceding death if the Veteran was a former prisoner of war who died after September 30, 1999.

Who is Eligible?

You may be eligible for DIC benefits if you are a surviving spouse who:

- was married to a military Service member who died on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, OR
- married the Veteran before January 1, 1957, OR
- married the Veteran within 15 years of discharge from the period of military service in which the disease or injury that caused the Veteran’s death began or was aggravated, OR
- was married to the Veteran for at least one year, OR
- had a child with the Veteran, AND
- cohabited with the Veteran continuously until the Veteran’s death or, if separated, was not at fault for the separation, AND
- is not currently remarried.

You may be eligible to continue receiving DIC benefits if you remarried on or after December 16, 2003, and were at least 57 years of age.

How to Apply

You may apply for DIC benefits by filling out VA Form 21-534EZ or VA Form 21-534, Application for DIC, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse

The completed form should be mailed to the Pension Management Center that serves your state and has jurisdiction over your claim. Your Veterans Service Officer (VSO) can also help you with this form and submit your claim for you.

Department of Defense Extends Online Military Exchange Shopping Privileges to Veterans



The Department of Defense announced a policy change that will extend limited online military exchange shopping privileges to all honorably discharged veterans of the military.

The veterans' online shopping benefit will be effective this Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

While shopping privileges exclude the purchase of uniforms, alcohol and tobacco products, it includes the Exchange Services' dynamic online retail environment known so well to service members and their families. This policy change follows careful analysis, coordination and strong public support.

"We are excited to provide these benefits to honorably discharged veterans to recognize their service and welcome them home to their military family," said Peter Levine, performing the duties for the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

"In addition, this initiative represents a low-risk, low-cost opportunity to help fund Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs in support of service members' and their families' quality of life. And it's just the right thing to do," Levine added.

The online benefit will also strengthen the exchanges' online businesses to better serve current patrons. Inclusion of honorably discharged veterans would conservatively double the exchanges' online presence, thereby improving the experience for all patrons through improved vendor terms, more competitive merchandise assortments, and improved efficiencies, according to DoD officials.

"As a nation, we are grateful for the contributions of our service members. Offering this lifetime online benefit is one small, tangible way the nation can say, 'Thank you' to those who served with honor," Levine said.

35th Anniversary of The Wall begins with Milestone

The 35th Anniversary year for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial begins with milestone for the virtual Wall of Faces - 50,000 photos collected

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) is commemorating the 35th anniversary of The Wall in 2017 and the year began with a milestone for the virtual Wall of Faces effort with the 50,000th photo being submitted to the Wall of Faces this week.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in 1982 with a promise to never forget the 58,315 service members who sacrificed all in Vietnam and to honor all those who served in the Vietnam War. Nearly 5.6 million visit The Wall each year, making it one of the most-visited memorials in America. Visitors are struck by just how many names there are on The Wall but visitors without a personal connection to anyone on The Wall don't always understand the lasting impact the Vietnam War has had on American families.

The Wall of Faces effort to collect a photo of each service member on The Wall began in 2009. It personalizes the individual sacrifice by displaying the faces of the more than 58,000 lives cut short and families changed forever by their loss. It allows for family members, friends and comrades to leave remembrances and stay connected to those they lost. The Wall of Faces further preserves the legacies of those on The Wall and educates current generations about the impact of the Vietnam era.

"When The Wall was dedicated, no one could have imagined the impact it would have 35 years later. As a Vietnam veteran, I look at The Wall with pride for serving my country and with respect for all those who served and especially those who sacrificed everything and didn't make it home. It's important that we never forget what they gave for their country," said Chuck Hagel, 24th Secretary of Defense and Chairman, 35th Anniversary of The Wall Committee. "It's important that we remember the names and the faces of each service member on The Wall. We ask for the public's help in finding the remaining photos so that all of their faces can be remembered. It would be incredible to have all of the photos by the end of this 35th anniversary year."

The 50,000th photo collected was of Bobby Joe Quinn of Morristown, Tennessee. The photo was submitted by VVA Chapter 1036 in Florida, a group of veterans that have been involved in photo collection efforts over the past year.

"We are so pleased to start this anniversary year with collecting our 50,000th photo for the Wall of Faces. We have dedicated volunteers across the country who have been looking for photos and we are so appreciative of their hard work. As we commemorate the 35th anniversary of The Wall this year, we're asking all Americans to 'keep the promise' that was made 35 years ago to never forget the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam veterans," said Jim Knotts, president and CEO of VVMF.

The Wall of Faces can be found online at www.vvmf.org/wall-of-faces and visitors can search to see the photos that are still needed.

From the anniversary of the groundbreaking in March to the anniversary of the dedication of The Wall in November, 35 years of healing at The Wall will be commemorated in 2017. To stay updated on 35th anniversary events and learn about ways that you can 'keep the promise,' please visit: www.vvmf.org.

50 Years Ago

- **February 7** - GEORGE K. SISLER, MEDAL OF HONOR
- **February 7** - LOUIS E. WILLET, MEDAL OF HONOR
- **February 14** - KOREAN MARINES FIGHT THE BATTLE OF TRA BINH DONG. The 11th Company of the Republic of Korea's 2d Marine Brigade's (Blue Dragon) is assigned near the village of Tra Binh Dong. The 294 Marines hold a 300- by 200- meter clearing surrounded by barbed wire. At 4:10am approximately 2,400 Viet Cong surround the base camp. Communist forces are able to breach the perimeter and Korean Marines resort to grenades and hand-to-hand combat. The following morning, 243 enemy forces are found dead. The Koreans lose 15 men.
- **February 15** - MINESWEEPING SUFFERS SETBACK. The Navy's minesweeping efforts along the shipping lane leading to Saigon suffer a setback when MSB-45 is destroyed by a mine. Two Sailors die in these incidents and another ten are injured.
- **February 16** - ELMELINDO R. SMITH, MEDAL OF HONOR
- **February 16** - JAMES H. MONROE, MEDAL OF HONOR
- **February 24** - HILLIARD A. WILBANKS, MEDAL OF HONOR
- **February 26** - MAXIMO YABES, MEDAL OF HONOR
- **February 26** - AERIAL MINING OPERATIONS BEGIN. The A-6 Intruders from the carrier Enterprise (CVN-65) conduct the first aerial mining operation of the Vietnam War, planting underwater weapons in the mouths of the Song Ca and Song Giang rivers in an effort to stop the flow of enemy supplies into South Vietnam.
- **February 28** - JAMES ANDERSON, JR MEDAL OF HONOR
- **February 28** - MATTHEW LEONARD, MEDAL OF HONOR
- **February 28** - MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE FORMED. MACV establishes the Mobile Riverine Force, which launches a series of daring amphibious assaults in the Mekong Delta.

Helping Hands for Our Fellow Veterans



Won't You Please Give a Helping Hand to a Brother or Sister Veteran?

Several veterans have contacted Chapter 120 asking for help in paying the most basic of needs for themselves and their families. These veterans are those who do not qualify for regular federal, state or local assistance – they fall into that financial category where they make too much to qualify for assistance, but not enough to afford basic needs for their families, like food, fuel for heat, or clothing for their children.

Chapter 120 has decided to ask you – our members – to lend a helping hand to your fellow veterans and their families. Even a small amount of \$5 can make a difference – or more if you can afford to help a fellow veteran and his or her family.

Please send your generous gift, made out to Connecticut Chapter 120, to:

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
Connecticut Chapter 120
Attention: Helping Hands for Veterans
P.O. Box 4136
Hartford, CT 06145

And don't forget, your donations are tax deductible.

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