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Meetings

The Chapter 120 membership meeting will be held on Thursday, January 4, 2018 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford.

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, January 25 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 ctchapter120@aol.com.

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National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey: Nearly 25% of U.S. veterans have diabetes



More than 20% of U.S. veterans have diabetes and 3.4% have undiagnosed diabetes, a combined figure that is more than double the diabetes rate in the overall U.S. population, according to findings published in Preventing Chronic Disease.

In an analysis of five cycles of U.S. National Health and Nutrition

Examination Survey (NHANES) data conducted between 2005 and 2014, researchers also found that diabetes was most prevalent among veterans aged at least 65 years (27%), male veterans (22%) and veterans with less than 12 years of education (33.5%). Hispanic veterans had the highest prevalence of both diabetes (25.7%) and obesity (43.5%).

“The available evidence strongly suggests that problems faced by U.S. veterans in this area are severe,” said Ying Liu, PhD, assistant professor in the department of biostatistics and epidemiology at East Tennessee State University College of Public Health. “Based on the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, diabetes in U.S. veterans was very prevalent. Disparities of diabetes also existed in U.S. veterans.”

Researchers also found that the overall prevalence trend of diabetes increased from 15.5% in 2005-2006 to 20.5% in 2013-2014, and peaked in 2009-2010 at 22.6%. Both poverty level and education were associated with the odds of having diabetes.

“Unlike previously reported findings, our findings showed that the prevalence of diabetes by poverty level did not decline with increasing income, and this trend persisted over time,” the researchers wrote. “This persistence may be due to a small number of diabetes cases and some unidentified confounders.”

The researchers noted that NHANES data can serve as a more appropriate resource vs. VA data when analyzing the rate of diabetes among veterans; in fiscal year 2014, more than 70% of veterans sought care outside the VA system despite being enrolled. Future investigations, the researchers wrote, should combine the nationwide data with VA data to obtain estimates that are more accurate.

“Cost-effective prevention and intervention approaches are needed for U.S. veterans to lower the diabetes prevalence and ultimately improve their general health and life of quality,” Liu said.

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Chapter/State News



On December 2nd, Chapter Members honor the youngest Vietnam casualty from Connecticut, Tom Blanchard on what would have been his 66th birthday

Holiday Dinner Dance

Despite the snow storm on the evening of our Holiday Dinner Dance, nearly 50 brave souls attended. Needless to say, there was plenty of food and the music and holiday cheer continued as the snow fell outside. Thanks to those who braved the storm and supported our fundraiser this year.

Member of The Year



Phil Morneault, Life member and National Convention Delegate, was selected as the Chapter 120 Member of The Year for 2017.

Appreciation Award



Ken Lewis, Life member and State Council Delegate, was selected for the Chapter 120 Appreciation Award for 2017.

Birthday Wishes

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

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| James G. Ashwell | Vernon Biederman |
| Stephen Brown | William Coney |
| Andrew Crafa | Arthur N. Desrosiers |
| Stanley T. Duro | Henry E. Jackson |
| Samuel L. Lavoie | Helen McDonald |
| Thomas Parker | William M. Quirk |
| Penny Siggia | Jim Tackett |

Happy Birthday!

Receive "The Connection" by E-Mail

The monthly Chapter 120 newsletter, *The Connection*, is available by e-mail. Currently, 97 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 ctchapter120@aol.com

Important Note: Add ctchapter120@aol.com to your email address book so your email provider will recognize our email address. We have experienced problems in the past with cox and gmail accounts.

Connecticut Hall of Fame, Class of 2017 Inducted

The induction ceremony for the Connecticut Hall of Fame, Class of 2017, was held Monday Dec. 4 in the atrium of the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.



The Class of 2017 includes:

Alfred Adinolfi, U.S. Air Force, Cheshire

Alfred Adinolfi served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War with the Tactical Air Command, training air control and artillery from behind enemy lines to attack enemy sites. After military service, Mr. Adinolfi spent 34 years working at DNE Technologies in Wallingford where he helped design a safer approach to rescue missions that was recognized by the U.S. Department of Defense with a commendation. He also served as the Town of Cheshire Wetlands Commissioner, Town Councilor, and as a State Representative where he was Ranking Member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and worked to help veterans and their families.

Robert Bailey, U.S. Navy, Clinton

Robert Bailey followed in his father's footsteps when he joined the U.S. Navy. After his service, he went on to support veterans through active participation in the VFW Post 10153 where he is a Gold Legacy Life Member. Mr. Bailey established the Patriot Pen Scholarship to help veterans and their families, and he continues to help veterans navigate VA eligibility requirements and obtain services. Mr. Bailey serves as a children's scouting and sports coach, works at his local food bank, and is a key participant in ceremonies that honor Connecticut's military.

Philip Cacciola, U.S. Army, Middletown

During the Vietnam era, Philip Cacciola, a U.S. Army veteran, was stationed in Germany as a tank platoon leader and recon platoon leader with the 3rd Armored Division. After leaving the military, he continues to serve through volunteering with the VFW, American Legion, and many other veteran-centered organizations. Mr. Cacciola sits on the Board of the Middlesex Country Chamber of Commerce and is the Chair of the Support the Troops & Honor the Veterans Committee. He assists active duty and veterans in navigating the benefits process to ensure they have the support and resources they need, and he works with local employers to bolster veteran hiring.

Benjamin Cooper, U.S. Army, West Hartford

Ben Cooper served as a combat medic in the 45th Infantry Division Thunderbirds during the height of World War II. On April 29, 1945, the 45th Infantry liberated Dachau concentration camp. Reflecting his motto "no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted," Mr. Cooper has spent the last 30 years speaking to thousands of students, veterans, civic leaders, and others about the Holocaust, his wartime service, and the powerful struggle to preserve freedom. He also established Roll Call at the West Hartford Senior Center, a community discussion about the impact of World War II.

Dominick Cortese, U.S. Air Force, Norwich

After leaving the military, Dominick Cortese went on to lend his expertise and advocacy to veterans in Connecticut. He serves at the Judge Advocate General for the Norwich Area Veterans Council, is a Service Officer for the Disabled American Veterans and the VFW, and is an active member of the Norwich Vet Center. Mr. Cortese assists area veterans who are homebound, ensuring they get to medical appointments. He has traveled to Bethesda Naval Hospital as part of "Operation Gift Card" to visit veterans, and he is a founder of the annual Norwich Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony.

Lawrence Herrmann, U.S. Marine Corps, Cheshire

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, Lawrence Herrmann immediately went on to serve veterans as a pro bono attorney and advocate. He is active as an officer and National General Counsel of the Marine Corps League and serves on the Board of the Chapel of Four Chaplains, a Pennsylvania-based non-profit organization that recognizes exemplary service in the community. Mr. Herrmann was also a volunteer mentor in Veterans Court, part of Queens Supreme Court, and worked to bring the model here to Connecticut. He is known nationally for successfully advocating for veterans, especially those with post-traumatic stress.

Chester Morgan, U.S. Army, Vernon

After spending 30 years in the Connecticut Army National Guard, Chester Morgan now serves his community in a variety of roles. As a former state representative, Mr. Morgan spearheaded the effort to ensure that National Guardsmen/women would qualify for free tuition at Connecticut colleges and universities. Mr. Morgan also founded the Vernon Memorial Day parade and served as its chairman, he was the Military Volunteer Coordinator for the Rockville Elks, and was part of an effort to raise \$30,000 to have Armed Forces flags installed in locations throughout Vernon.

Thomas Pandolfi, U.S. Army, Woodstock

Thomas Pandolfi, a Vietnam-era veteran, is an active member of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve group, the American Legion, the Soldier, Sailors & Marines Fund, the Connecticut Veterans Military Coalition, and many others. He is a staunch advocate for the needy, veterans, and senior citizens and volunteers wherever he is needed. Mr. Pandolfi distributes clothing, ensures that veterans and seniors have medical devices, heat, and that they can pay their rent. He is known as a man of action and is called upon in his community for his insight and love of his fellow soldiers.

Thomas Quinn, U.S. Army, Fairfield

After leaving the U.S. Army, Tom Quinn turned his attention to advocating for veterans in his community. He served as Post Commander and Vice Commander for American Legion Post 143 and marshalled the Town of Fairfield Memorial Day parade, he coordinates fundraisers to support veterans, leads town memorial services and celebrations, and regularly serves on the funeral Honor Guard. Mr. Quinn is known as a strong advocate and a voice for veterans, fighting for funding and supports to meet the needs of our veterans. He also leads Veterans Day school assemblies and focuses on reminding students of the sacrifice made by our veterans.

William Sullivan, U.S. Army, Waterbury

William Sullivan served in Vietnam as the Field Artillery Unit Commander of the 33rd FA. After Vietnam, Justice Sullivan returned to Waterbury to practice law. He was appointed to the Connecticut Superior Court, the Appellate Court, and in 1999, he was appointed to the Connecticut Supreme Court. Throughout his service to the state and its people, Justice Sullivan also volunteered for many service organizations and boards and commissions. The Waterbury Veterans Memorial Committee recognized him for his military service, and he received the Patriotism Award from the Waterbury Sportsmen Club.

John Turk, U.S. Army, Southbury

John Turk served in the U.S. Army and then went on to become a four-term Commander of the American Legion Post 147 in Southbury and a life member and supporter of the VFW. Mr. Turk also participated on a ceremonial honor guard and helped establish the Veterans Wall of Honor. He has served in each municipality in which he's lived, holding positions on the City Council in Danbury, on the Board of Selectman in Southbury, and on the Charter Revision Commission in both. Mr. Turk is an active member of the National Association of Accountants and is currently the assistant treasurer of the Southbury Interfaith Thanksgiving Meal.

The Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame was established to increase the awareness of the lifetime contributions of Veterans after completion of honorable military service. The Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame is not a military hall of fame; instead it seeks to recognize Veterans for their countless contributions to society after their service.

Newsletter articles/stories/photos

Any articles, stories and/or photos submitted for the newsletter must be received by the "cut off" date for any given month. Photos must be accompanied by text which describes the event, names, dates and any other pertinent facts so our readers understand the story behind the photo(s). The newsletter editor will announce the "cut off" dates at each Chapter meeting. The "cut off" date for our February newsletter is 19 January 2018. Due to space availability, the editor reserves the right to include or not include photos for a given month.

POW/MIA News**USS Pueblo Incident - 50 Years Ago**

On January 23, 1968, the USS Pueblo, a Navy intelligence vessel, is engaged in a routine surveillance of the North Korean coast when it is intercepted by North Korean patrol boats. According to U.S. reports, the Pueblo was in international waters almost 16 miles from shore, but the North Koreans turned their guns on the lightly armed vessel and demanded its surrender. The Americans attempted to escape, and the North Koreans opened fire, wounding the commander and two others. With capture inevitable, the Americans stalled for time, destroying the classified information aboard while taking further fire. Several more crew members were wounded.

Finally, the Pueblo was boarded and taken to Wonson. There, the 83-man crew was bound and blindfolded and transported to Pyongyang, where they were charged with spying within North Korea's 12-mile territorial limit and imprisoned. It was the biggest crisis in two years of increased tension and minor skirmishes between the United States and North Korea.

The United States maintained that the Pueblo had been in international waters and demanded the release of the captive sailors. With the Tet Offensive raging 2,000 miles to the south in Vietnam, President Lyndon Johnson ordered no direct retaliation, but the United States began a military buildup in the area. North Korean authorities, meanwhile, coerced a confession and apology out of Pueblo commander Bucher, in which he stated, "I will never again be a party to any disgraceful act of aggression of this type." The rest of the crew also signed a confession under threat of torture.

The prisoners were then taken to a second compound in the countryside near Pyongyang, where they were forced to study propaganda materials and beaten for straying from the compound's strict rules. In August, the North Koreans staged a phony news conference in which the prisoners were to praise their humane treatment, but the Americans thwarted the Koreans by inserting innuendoes and sarcastic language into their statements. Some prisoners also rebelled in photo shoots by casually sticking out their middle finger; a gesture that their captors didn't understand. Later, the North Koreans caught on and beat the Americans for a week.

On December 23, 1968, exactly 11 months after the Pueblo's capture, U.S. and North Korean negotiators reached a settlement to resolve the crisis. Under the settlement's terms, the United States admitted the ship's intrusion into North Korean territory, apologized for the action, and pledged to cease any future such action. That day, the surviving 82 crewmen walked one by one across the "Bridge of No Return" at Panmunjon to freedom in South Korea. They were hailed as heroes and returned home to the United States in time for Christmas.

On The Hill



Isakson Urges Senate to Pass 'Caring for Our Veterans Act'

U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, is urging the Senate to pass the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2017 (S.2193), bipartisan legislation he introduced to streamline and strengthen veterans' community care services at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Earlier, VA Secretary David Shulkin notified Congress that funding for veterans' community care, called the Veterans Choice Fund, will be expended

within the next month if Congress does not act. Isakson's legislation would provide critical funding to ensure veterans continue to have seamless access to care outside of the VA.

"It is critical that we pass this bipartisan legislation before the end of the year to ensure veterans continue to have access to efficient, timely and quality health care," said Isakson. "The Caring for Our Veterans Act makes much-needed improvements to the community care programs offered by the VA and helps ensure that our veterans continue to get the very best care when and where it makes the most sense for them.

The Caring for Our Veterans Act was passed by the committee in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 14-1. It currently awaits full Senate action.

The Caring for Our Veterans Act would establish a permanent, streamlined 'Veterans Community Care Program' to provide veterans with access to health care and services in their own communities. Under this legislation, a veteran and his or her doctor will decide where that veteran will receive care, taking into consideration the veteran's healthcare needs and the availability and quality of both VA and community care.

In addition, the legislation will help improve existing VA health care and services by removing barriers for VA healthcare professionals to practice telemedicine, strengthening opioid prescription guidelines for VA and partnering community care providers, and eliminating impediments to hiring and retention of VA healthcare professionals.

The Caring for Our Veterans Act also expands eligibility for the VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to veterans of all generations, including Vietnam-era veterans.

The bipartisan legislation has received broad support from leading veterans groups that represent millions of veterans in the United States. Last week, a group of 26 veteran and military advocacy organizations wrote to Senate leadership calling for a vote on the Caring for Our Veterans Act.

Veterans Affairs News



From Military.com

VA Suspends Applications for New ID Cards

The Department of Veterans Affairs has suspended applications for its new veteran identification card program due to a large number of applicants, according to a Dec. 4 notice on its website.

The new, free ID card was ordered by Congress in 2015 as a way to give veterans proof of service at businesses without carrying a copy of their DD-214 forms. The VA a week ago rolled out the online application for the card for all honorably discharged veterans, but the system appeared to immediately face technical problems.

Tests by at least two Military.com reporters accessing the site with their own VA logins and military service credentials encountered repeated errors. One was able to successfully complete the process despite multiple rejections and system timeouts.

Currently, however, veterans who look to apply for the card are instead told they need to come back later.

"Thank you for your interest in the Veteran Identification Card! Currently, we are experiencing a high volume of traffic. We apologize, and want you to know we're working to fix the problem," the notice states. "In the meantime, please enter your email address and we'll send an update when the Veteran Identification Card application is back online."

Officials with the VA did not respond to requests for information on when the application will be reopened, how many users successfully applied for the ID card before applications were suspended, or how many users started but did not complete the application process.

"We are aware some veterans have experienced issues with the application process, but leaders of VA's Office of Information and Technology are actively engaged in fixing them," Curtis Cashour, the agency's press secretary, said in a statement.

"Still, many Veterans have successfully registered for the card since the program was announced, and we are excited finally to begin providing this resource to Veterans, fulfilling a promise that was made to them more than two years ago under the previous administration," he added.

To apply for a card, users had to log in to the VA website using either a DS login or the ID.me system, provide a variety of personal information, and upload a copy of a government-issued ID. They also needed to provide a shoulders-up photo to be displayed on the ID card. VA officials said Nov. 29 that users could expect to receive their new ID cards within 60 days of application.

Some veterans, such as those who receive health benefits from the VA and military retirees, already have IDs that can provide proof of service. The new IDs will not qualify as official government-issued identification for air travel or other uses. The ID card program is voluntary.

From the New London Day

Courtney says more military personnel may seek treatment for sexual trauma

At a meeting of his Veterans Advisory Board on Monday Dec. 4, U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, told the head of the VA Connecticut healthcare system that there might be an uptick in people accessing VA services.

Courtney authored language included in a massive defense policy bill passed recently by Congress to expand sexual trauma counseling and treatment to members of the National Guard and Reserves. The bill still has to be signed by President Donald Trump, and Congress must still find a way to pay for the \$700 billion measure.

A technicality in an existing law prevented most members of the guard and reserves from using the military sexual trauma program at the VA. Under a 2014 law, active duty members were authorized to access services and counseling through the VA's MST program without a referral from the Department of Defense. The thinking was that service members would feel more comfortable seeking care outside of their chain of command or military treatment facilities.

It appears, though, that the initial 2014 law has yet to be implemented.

"Despite the VA having reported to have begun collaborating with Department of Defense Health Affairs to discuss the implementation of this vital legislation, our review of the situation reveals very disturbing findings," said Kate O'Hare Palmer, chairwoman of the Women Veterans Committee of Vietnam Veterans of America, in an emailed statement. "We have learned that three years after this legislative victory, the program has not been implemented—this, despite the acknowledgement that the implementation of authorizations included in this legislation for VA counseling, care, and services is urgently needed for the health, wellbeing, and safety of these survivors."

From the Service Rep's Desk



VA loan history 101: From World War II to today's benefit

When Congress created the VA home loan program in 1944, the maximum loan guaranty was \$2,000.

That was one of the shortcomings of the original version of the program, and is one of the many aspects that have changed in 73 years. Now, service members

and veterans can borrow up to \$424,000 without a down payment in most areas of the country. The limits are higher in certain high-cost areas.

The VA home loan program is one of the most popular benefits offered to veterans, and was conceived in 1944 "as part of an attack on the harsh aftermath associated with wars," according to the Legislative History of the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program, compiled by the Veterans Affairs Department.

The objectives were to ease as much as possible the economic and sociological problems of the post-war readjustments of millions of men and women who served in the military, the document states. The idea was an alternative to a cash bonus, because it would be much less expensive to the government and would provide more help to veterans.

Supporters of the concept felt this would be a way for the government to help veterans obtain favorable credit. There was a concern that military members, because of their service, hadn't yet been able to establish a credit rating in order to borrow money for a home or to establish a business. The program "was an attempt to place the veteran on a par with his/her nonveteran counterpart," the VA document states.

It also helped the economy by providing an investment outlet for large amounts of money that became available after wartime restrictions eased.

Between the end of World War II and 1966, one-fifth of all single-family residences built were financed by the home loan program for veterans of World War II or the Korean War. From 1944 through 1993, the VA guaranteed 13.9 million home loans. Now, that, number is well over 20 million.

The VA loan program was part of the original Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, also known as the World War II GI Bill. According to the VA, the VA home loan program is the only part of the original GI Bill that is still in force.

In addition to a \$2,000 initial maximum guaranty, those loans were limited to a maximum term of 20 years, and no applications were to be received more than five years after the end of the war. In 1945, amendments to the law increased the maximum guaranty to \$4,000, and allowed veterans to buy a home within 10 years of the end of the war.

Various changes in law brought the program to where it is today. It was first extended to Korean War veterans in 1952. Over the years, Congress extended the amount of time veterans would be eligible for the loans and eventually removed the limitations. Congress has added the ability to refinance loans; and they've added Special Housing Adaptation Grants for severely disabled veterans and service members.

The Veterans Housing Act of 1974 expanded the VA home loan benefit by making it possible for veterans who had already used their benefit, to regain the use of that entitlement.

The law also repealed VA's authority to guarantee farm and business loans, although VA can still guarantee loans for

veterans to purchase or build farm houses where the veteran will live.

There have been various iterations of the VA funding fee; in 1982, the law set a funding fee for all VA loans, except for certain individuals such as those receiving VA compensation; that has gradually increased over time.

Through the many changes, more service members and veterans are more easily able to use their VA home loan benefit.

And according to VA statistics, even 72 years after the program started to benefit World War II veterans, it's still benefiting World War II veterans and certain surviving spouses who are eligible. There were 492 VA loans made in 2016 that were based on World War II service or entitlement.

From We Are The Mighty, By Eric Milzarski

5 life lessons today's troops could learn from Vietnam vets

It's easy to look at different eras of veterans and write them off as coming from a different time, a different place, a different war. The truth is, the old Vietnam vet you met at the Legion while trying to get cheap drinks isn't all that different from our men and women fighting today in Iraq and Afghanistan. Toss a drink or two his way and share some stories. Life sucks in the sandbox, but things in the jungle weren't any better.

Whether you're out to avoid the same pitfalls of their generation, find out that your struggles aren't unique, or even joke about the military across eras — pick their brain. We could all learn a thing or two from them. Here's what you might learn:

5. Things could always get worse.

Back in Afghanistan, I thought the worst conditions imaginable were summer heat, sandstorm season, and the wash out from the week of rain. Boy, just doing a Google search of weather conditions in Vietnam put my heart at ease.

Comparing one person's hell to another isn't always appropriate or beneficial, but I'll admit full-heartedly that damn-near everything from the country to living conditions to the enemy to contacting folks back home was much, much worse for our older brothers.

4. Cleanliness regardless.

If there's one clear trait shared among nearly all Vietnam vets, its cleanliness. This isn't just a "different military back then" kind of a thing. Nearly everything from the clothes they wear to the house they live in and the weapons they take to the range: Spotless.

In war, constantly changing socks and uniforms kept them healthy, living areas needed to be spotless to keep vermin out, and their trusty rifle needed to be cleaned constantly to stay trustworthy.

3. Winning hearts and minds is tricky.

In both wars, troops are out in the middle of some foreign country, fighting an enemy they can't easily identify. Our wars weren't as simple as looking at an enemy dressed in a clearly distinguishable uniform fighting under a clearly identifiable flag. Winning hearts and minds isn't so easy when you're focusing on who's the good guy and who's not.

The famous counter-insurgency tactic of winning over the hearts and minds of the locals wasn't the brainchild of modern Generals trying to get a warm and fuzzy about the war. In fact, President John. F. Kennedy started it and President Lyndon B. Johnson repeated exact phrase on record 28 times during the Vietnam War.

2. The fight against burn pits will be a rough one.

Getting recognition for health concerns over the dispersal of deadly chemicals in the air because of the negligent decisions of corner-cutting big wigs is the heart of the fight against burn pits. There's a reason saying there is nothing wrong with burning literal trenches filled with garbage and human sh*t just feet away from the tents troops live in for twelve months is called the "Agent Orange of our generation."

With the actual Agent Orange, it wasn't until 1984, eleven years after the end of American involvement in the Vietnam War, that a class action lawsuit against the government for using the substance first came out. To this day, Vietnam vets are still fighting for recognition of health concerns related to Agent Orange exposure.

1. Not everyone will thank you for your service.

Not to call anyone out or pass judgement, not having year-round veteran discounts isn't the most disrespectful thing ever done to a returning veteran, so maybe don't raise hell at some minimum-wage retail worker about it.

Our older brothers came home to a country that shifted cultures drastically after they were, in some cases, drafted into the fight. Until you've had a former childhood friend abandon you for serving, paying full price for a damn coffee shouldn't even be on your radar.



50 Years Ago

- **January 6** - PATRICK HENRY BRADY, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **January 6** - JERRY WAYNE WICKAM, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **January 10** - CLARENCE EUGENE SASSER, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **January 12** - WILLIAM D. PORT, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **January 15** - DWIGHT H. JOHNSON, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **January 15** - OPERATION IGLOO WHITE BEGINS. Operation IGLOO WHITE begins. It is an Air Force covert program to use electronic sensors, computers and aircraft to attempt to gather target information along communist infiltration routes. It would continue until February 1973.
- **January 16** - GORDON DOUGLAS YNTEMA, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **January 21** - BATTLE FOR KHE SANH STARTS. People's Army of North Vietnamese troops overrun the village of Khe Sanh and begin to shell the Khe Sanh Combat Base, initiating a seventy-seven day siege. The siege of Khe Sanh would be one of the defining battles of the Vietnam War. Supplied by air and supported by massive artillery and air bombardments, including B-52 strikes, the 6,000-man Khe Sanh garrison holds out against elements of an estimated 17,200 North Vietnamese until it is relieved by U.S. forces on April 14. On April 1, the siege ends and the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division begins Operation Pegasus to re-open route 9 to the base. During the course of the siege, the allied artillery fire over 150,000 rounds at PAVN positions, and aircraft drop over 100,000 tons of bombs in a close air support operation code-named NIAGARA. The U.S. Marines lose 199 killed in action and 830 wounded while the Pegasus relief force loses 92 killed and 629 wounded; ARVN lose 34 killed and 184 wounded. PAVN lose an estimated 10,000-15,000 killed.
- **January 22** - SOUTH KOREAN FORCES DEAL BLOW TO VIET CONG. From January 22 to April 8, 1968, following contact with an enemy force near Phu Cat in South Vietnam, the South Korean Capital Division deploys six companies in an encircling maneuver, trapping the enemy. The Korean troops gradually tighten the circle, fighting the enemy during the day and maintaining a tight cordon at night. They kill 278 North Vietnamese soldiers while suffering 11 Koreans killed. By 1968 South Korean military strength in Vietnam would reach 50,003.
- **January 30** - VIET CONG LAUNCH TET OFFENSIVE. From January 30 to February 28, 1968, an estimated 84,000 communist forces carry out a countrywide offensive that starts during the Vietnamese Tet holidays. Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops strike 36 provincial capitals and capture most of Hue, the old imperial capital of Vietnam. In Saigon, Viet Cong fight their way into the U.S. Embassy grounds before being killed, but not before four Army MPs and one Marine embassy guard are also killed. In the Mekong Delta,

enemy troops attack every major population center. While providing the Communists with some political and propaganda successes, their forces suffer heavily with losses estimated at between 25,000 and 30,000. In the central coastal area, the fighting starts on January 29 because enemy commanders there use a different lunar calendar.

- **January 31** - BATTLE OF HUE BEGINS. From 31 January to 2 March 1968, in the battle for Hue City, the North Vietnamese capture most of the city except for small pockets of resistance. Elements of the 1st Marine Division Task Force X-Ray, along with the South Vietnamese 1st Division and the 1st Cavalry Division, retake the city with significant losses suffered by both sides during the month-long house-to-house fighting. The capture of Hue, the ancient imperial capital, has significant symbolic reverberations throughout the country and is the one partially successful element of the enemy Tet offensive. The defeat of the Communist forces at Hue possibly prevents them from taking the two northern provinces of South Vietnam.
- **January 31** - DREW DENNIS DIX, MEDAL OF HONOR.
- **January 31** - FREDERICK EDGAR FERGUSON, MEDAL OF HONOR.

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