

CONNECTION



Greater Hartford
Connecticut Chapter 120 **Over 38 Years of Service to Veterans** **March 2022**
 Visit Our Website at www.vva120.org

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National Vietnam War Veterans Day






THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
VIETNAM WAR
COMMEMORATION
50th


NATIONAL
VIETNAM WAR
VETERANS DAY

29 March

Join the Nation
... thank a
Vietnam veteran!

vietnamwar50th.com


Meetings

Chapter 120 membership meeting will be held on Thursday, March 3, 2022 at 7:00pm in the Machinists Union Hall, 357 Main St., East Hartford. *State and East Hartford COVID-19 guidelines apply.*

The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, March 31 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 Newsletter Editor at (860) 282-7470, or e-mail the Newsletter Editor at ctchapter120@aol.com.

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Chapter/State News

Chapter 120 Donates to Woody Williams Foundation

Chapter 120 donated \$500 to the Woody Williams Foundation to be used for the Berlin CT Gold Star Monument. The Foundation sent a thank you/ acknowledgement letter to the Chapter (see below).

February 14, 2022

CHAPTER TREASURER VVACHAPTER 120
24 Carriage Drive
Tolland, CT 06084

Thank you very much for your generous contribution(s) this past year to the Woody Williams Foundation. Because of your support, our organization is able to continue our mission to honor, serve, and recognize Gold Star Families and the legacy of their Loved Ones who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Enclosed with this letter is a summary your contributions to serve as a receipt for tax purposes.

About our organization:

Woody Williams Foundation is a charitable 501c (3) nonprofit organization that pursues specific endeavors and goals through the vision of Medal of Honor Recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams. The Foundation encourages, with the assistance of the American public and community leaders, establishing permanent Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments in communities throughout the country, sponsoring and hosting Gold Star Families Outreach programs, and providing Living Legacy scholarships to eligible Gold Star Children and advocating for educational benefits for all Gold Star Family members. Once again, thank you for your contribution.

In gratitude,

(Signed)

Chad Graham

President and Chief Executive Officer

Woody Williams Foundation, Inc.

Birthday Wishes

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

<i>Norman P. Alderman</i>	<i>David Barrows</i>
<i>Joseph E. Billera</i>	<i>Maurice L. Collin</i>
<i>Maurice Deschaine</i>	<i>Ted Graziani</i>
<i>Stephen E. Hesse</i>	<i>Howard C. Huestis</i>
<i>Angelo Licata</i>	<i>J. Andrew Livingston</i>
<i>Albert G. Michaud</i>	<i>Richard J. Olson</i>
<i>Richard Pikulski</i>	<i>Charles L. Ravenell</i>
<i>Willie E. Scott, Sr</i>	<i>Peter R. Sorensen</i>
<i>William Taylor</i>	<i>Joseph Tkacz, Jr.</i>
<i>Francis M. Zizzamia</i>	<i>Elizabeth Zizzamia</i>

A special birthday wish for Jacob Cutler, grandson of Chapter 120 members Mike Belliveau and John Cutler

Chapter elections coming in April

As Chapter elections for officers, directors and state council delegates will be held at the April membership meeting on April 7, 2022, we ask our members to offer their time and enthusiasm to continue the good works that Chapter 120 is known for in the veterans' community. We need our members to offer their support, expertise, their ideas and their leadership to guide our organization down the right path to attain our basic goals – and establish new goals for our future. We are asking you, our members, to seriously consider running for these important positions. We need your help – we need your leadership and ideas to guide Chapter 120 for the next two years.

Please contact our Election Committee (Ken Lewis, Frank Mello or Tim Siggia) to submit your name for one of these positions. Help our Chapter continue our work to support all veterans and their families.

Positions open for candidacy:

- Officers:** President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer
- Board of Directors:** Five positions
- State Council Delegates:** Five positions
- Elections Committee:** Three positions

Election Rules are posted here:

Connecticut Chapter 120 Election Rules

Revised November 2, 2006

Section 1. Annual Elections

- A. The Chapter officers will be elected on even numbered years at the April meeting and will serve a two (2) year term in office. They are the following: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- B. The Board of Directors will be elected on even numbered years at the April meeting and will serve a two (2) year term of office.
- C. The State Council Delegates will be elected on even numbered years at the April meeting and will serve a two (2) year term of office.
- D. The Delegates to the National Convention will be elected on odd numbered years at the April meeting and will serve a two (2) year term in office.
- E. The three (3) member Nominating Committee will be elected at the April meeting and will serve a one (1) year term.

Section 2. Candidates

- A. Candidates must have been a member for a minimum of fifteen (15) days prior to the election.
- B. Candidates must have on file with the Chapter, or present to the Nominating Committee their DD-214, or other proof of qualification for membership.
- C. Candidates may be nominated from the floor on the night of the election. Candidates must be present to accept the nomination or have submitted a letter of intent to the Nominating Committee.
- D. Candidates will be allowed space in the newsletter to campaign but not to defame or slander the other candidates. Space allowable will be at the discretion of the Newsletter Editor.
- E. Candidates will be allowed five (5) minutes to speak at the April meeting if desired.
- F. Candidates may use the membership list for a mailing pursuant to the Chapter rules and Federal laws governing the membership list.

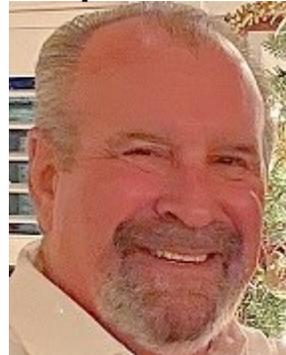
Section 3. Voters

- A. To be eligible to vote, you must have been a member for fifteen (15) days prior to the election. This would include new members or reinstated members that are not paid up for the prior year.
- B. Voting members must have on file with the Chapter, or present to the Nominating Committee, their DD-214 or proof of qualification for membership.
- C. Voting members must have paid their dues for the current fiscal year. Membership may be renewed the night of the election, but must be paid prior to casting their vote.

Section 4. Election Procedures

- A. The voting period will be from the close of nominations until 8:00 PM.
- B. The quorum required to hold the election should be 10 members.
- C. A candidate can request a recount of the ballots for his or her office if the margin between the candidates running for that office is 10% or less based on the number of total votes cast.
- D. The ballots will be kept for one (1) year in a sealed envelope signed by the Nominating Committee or their appointees.
- E. Results will be announced the night of the election.
- F. If a Nominating Committee member is running for an elected position, they shall appoint a volunteer vote counter from the floor.
- G. The vote will be taken by a secret paper ballot.

**Robert Olivieri
Chapter 120 Life Member**



On February 7, 2021, Bob Olivieri, a loving husband and father of two children and four grandchildren passed away at age 73. He was preceded in death by his father Ralph, his mother Louise, and sister Janice. He is survived by his loving wife Bonnie, his two sons Craig and Eric, his brother Ralph, several cousins, his niece Lindsay, his nephew Ryan, and his beautiful grandchildren, from oldest to

youngest: Paige, Heath, Amaya and Indi. He was so proud of them and would say without hesitation, that he had the best sons and grandchildren one could wish for.

Bob was a life member of the DAV, VFW, and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 120. He was also a monthly contributor to Wounded Warriors and St. Jude Research Hospital. He spent four years of his youth in the Marine Corps, of which half was spent in two different tours of Vietnam. Bob was so fortunate in life (putting aside all his health issues) and he had always wondered why he survived Vietnam. He said that maybe now he'll find out and he hopes it's all good.

In Bob's own words, "You all know how I loved to tell stories, which at times seemed endless, like this one I'm sure, but one thing is for sure, I had a full life with MANY ups and downs. I had many friends from all parts of this great USA and elsewhere. Thanks to you all who were a part of my life, you touched me in more ways than you know. So play a round of golf in my name and remember that I'll always be there in spirit. It was a very interesting journey with many fun times and some not so fun. Hopefully, we'll all meet up again in the afterlife where I'll have more stories. I love you all."

A memorial service will be held on Wednesday, March 17 at 12:00 Noon at the State Veterans Cemetery, 317 Bow Lane in Middletown. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Wounded Warriors or St. Jude Research Hospital or that you will do an unexpected and unsolicited act of kindness for some poor unfortunate soul "in Bob's name."

POW/MIA News



Still Missing – 82,395

“Keeping the Promise“, “Fulfill their Trust” and “No one left behind” are several of many mottos that refer to the efforts of the Department of Defense to recover those who became missing while serving our nation.

The number of Americans who remain missing from conflicts in this century are: World War II

73,025 of which over 41,000 are presumed to be lost at sea, Korean War 7665, Vietnam War 1589 (i.e., VN-1,246, Laos-288, Cambodia-48, & Peoples Republic of China territorial waters-7), Cold War-111, Iraq and other conflicts 5. Over 600 Defense Department men and women -- both military and civilian -- work in organizations around the world as part of DoD’s personnel recovery and personnel accounting communities. They are all dedicated to the single mission of finding and bringing our missing personnel home.

On The Hill

Tester, Moran Bill to Expand VA Health Care for Post-9/11 Veterans Unanimously Clears Senate

On Feb.16, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed bipartisan legislation introduced by Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Ranking Member Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), bringing it one step closer to law. The Senators’ Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act would expand Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care for Post-9/11 combat veterans—including those suffering from conditions

related to toxic exposure.

The legislation now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.

“Unanimous passage of our Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act sends a clear message to toxic-exposed veterans across the country that we are committed to moving the needle on addressing toxic exposures in a comprehensive and bipartisan way,” said Chairman Tester. “Our bill is a necessary step in connecting an entire generation of veterans with the VA care they need and cannot wait for any longer. This kind of swift action is a testament to what can be accomplished when we all row in the same direction, and I encourage my House colleagues

to join us in getting this bill across the finish line to quickly deliver relief where it’s most needed.”

“Supporting our veterans has a way of bringing us together, and I appreciate my Senate colleagues understanding the urgency of this bill and working to quickly pass it by unanimous consent,” said Ranking Member Moran. “Addressing the needs of veterans exposed to burn pits cannot wait, and I urge my colleagues in the House to follow suit, pass this important legislation and bring us one step closer to fulfilling our duty to Post-9/11 veterans.”

Approximately 3.5 million Post-9/11 combat veterans may have experienced some level of exposure to burn pits during their service, and nearly one-third of those veterans are currently unable to access VA care. Among its many provisions, the Senators’ bipartisan Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act would extend the period of health care eligibility for combat veterans who served after September 11, 2001 from five years to ten years following discharge—enrolling a new wave of previously-ineligible veterans into the VA system.

This bill also includes critical measures to improve training on toxic exposures for VA employees, mandate clinical toxic exposure screenings, and bolster federal research on the effects of toxic exposures.

The Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act is the first of a three-step approach to expand access to health care for toxic-exposed veterans, establish a new process through which VA will determine future presumptive conditions, and provide overdue benefits to thousands of toxic-exposed veterans who have been long-ignored or forgotten.

Veterans Affairs News



From Air Force Times

Vets’ disability benefits for tinnitus, mental health issues may change

Proposed changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs disability ratings system will mean

lower payouts for veterans with sleep apnea and tinnitus in the future but higher payouts for veterans facing mental health challenges like post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.

The changes are part of a months-long review of the department’s Schedule for Rating Disabilities, which governs how VA staffers evaluate and compensate veterans with service-connected injuries.

In a statement, Thomas Murphy, acting VA undersecretary for benefits, said the goal of the work was not to reduce or increase the number of veterans receiving disability benefits but instead to ensure that “veterans receive decisions based on the most current medical knowledge relating to their condition.”

For veterans currently receiving those payouts, the changes will not take away any existing benefits or lower their disability rating. They could see their ratings increased based on the changes, if the new rules end up more advantageous to their health situation.

Tinnitus, depression most common ailments in generational study of troops' health

But veterans who apply for benefits in the future will see a different set of standards applied to their cases than their older peers, and that could have significant financial ramifications for those individuals.

Under VA rules, a disability rating of at least 10 percent can mean monthly payouts of more than \$140 for a veteran. One who receives a disability rating of 100 percent — either from a single service-related condition or a combination of injuries and illnesses — can get about \$3,100 a month in disability compensation.

VA did not provide any information on how the changes will affect its budget.

Outside critics have lamented that the current ratings system too frequently compensates veterans for conditions that are treatable and do not prevent them from maintaining a full-time job.

But veterans' advocates have said the system is still cumbersome and difficult to navigate, often forcing veterans to wait for months or years to get compensation for disabling conditions that are obvious to even those without a medical degree.

The number of veterans receiving compensation for sleep apnea — interrupted breathing during sleep — has risen sharply in recent years, from less than 1 million individuals in fiscal 2015 to more than 1.3 million in fiscal 2019, according to the department's inspector general.

Under proposed changes outlined in the Federal Register, VA officials for the first time could offer a "0 percent evaluation" for asymptomatic sleep apnea, allowing the department to formally acknowledge a veteran's condition without requiring any compensation if the condition is easily controlled with treatment.

Veterans would receive ratings of 10 percent or more for sleep apnea "only when treatment is either ineffective or the veteran is unable to use the prescribed treatment due to comorbid conditions." Currently, veterans can receive a rating of 10 percent or more for the condition even if treatments are effective at dealing with the condition.

Similarly, veterans diagnosed with tinnitus — a high-pitched ringing caused by damage to the ears — would face a higher bar for higher levels of disability compensation. More than 1.5 million veterans are currently receiving disability benefits for the condition.

Instead of evaluating veterans just on the frequencies they can discern in hearing tests, evaluators in the new plan would review whether veterans can understand specific words or if the condition is "a symptom of an underlying disease, rather than a stand-alone disability."

Officials said those changes would likely reduce the number of veterans qualifying for disability ratings of 10 percent or more, although they noted the number of veterans who have the condition entered into their case files for future reference would not change.

Mental health resources are available for veterans unsettled by Afghanistan news

In contrast, veterans dealing with mental health issues would see a lower bar for getting increased disability ratings under the changes.

Conditions like anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder would be evaluated on how they affect veteran's ability to perform everyday functions, with even mild impairment available for compensation.

The proposed rules state the changes better recognize the impact of mental health on individuals' well-being "by placing greater emphasis on a disabled veteran's ability to function in the work setting, rather than focusing on symptoms alone."

Past VA studies have estimated as many as one in every eight veterans may suffer from post-traumatic stress or related mental health issues, but outside experts have said the requirements for proving impairment under the current disability ratings system remains difficult.

VA officials do not have a planned implementation date for the ratings changes. The public has 60 days to provide feedback on the proposals before any final deadlines can be set.



Extracted from *Connecting Vets*

Changes to VA caregiver support program will be reviewed to ensure fairness



Changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance to Family Caregivers will be reviewed by Deputy VA Secretary Donald Remy to make sure that those currently participating in the program are treated fairly as the program is set to expand.

Under the changes, a caregiver's benefits will be eliminated if a veteran or their caregiver works outside the home. A veteran must also have a minimum 70% disability rating to receive benefits and fail to achieve their Activities of Daily Life independently 100% of the time.

“We work for caregivers, we work for the veterans,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough, who made the review announcement during his monthly press conference on Feb. 16. “We want to make sure that they’re getting the information they need and clarity about why we’re making the decisions we’re making.”

A coalition of around 20 veterans’ service organizations has formally objected to changes in the program, which provides monthly payments to those who care for veterans who cannot take care of their own basic needs.

VA anticipates more than 6,500 families will no longer be eligible for the program due to the planned changes.

“As I testified to Congress, I am worried that we do not reduce participation through the review, but that in fact, we increase it by as much as we can,” McDonough said.

The program will expand to include support for caregivers of veterans who served between the Vietnam War and Afghanistan beginning in October, he added.

Remy’s review is expected to take several weeks to complete. McDonough predicted that caregivers “will be a bigger part of the backbone as our aging veterans demonstrate that they, like the rest of the country, want to age in place. And so we want to get this right.”



From *The Veterans' Press*

The shrinking veteran population

INTRODUCTION

The first veterans of the United States served during the American Revolution in the Continental Army, created in 1775 when colonial militias formed a common army under the command of George Washington. Since then, the United States has declared war 11 times and fought in conflicts around the world. More than 41 million Americans have served over the course of the nation’s history. More than 16 million did so in World War II alone.

Who are America’s veterans? Throughout history, they have included the Green Mountain Boys, Buffalo Soldiers, Tuskegee Airmen, Women Airforce Service Pilots, Screaming Eagles and Green Berets. They are the men and women who served their country at home and abroad, on land, sea and air — and since 1973, have served as an all-volunteer force.

This report looks at the roughly 18 million Americans, or about 7% of the adult population, who were veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces in 2018. Ranging from 18 to over 100 years old, they served in conflicts as diverse as the Korean War and the global War on Terrorism. This report provides an overview of these men and women, such as how many veterans alive today served in World War II, the characteristics of Vietnam veterans and how many Gulf War veterans are disabled. The report primarily uses data from: The 2018 American Community Survey to describe the demographic, socioeconomic and health characteristics of veterans by their period of service in the armed forces. Importantly, the report focuses on veterans who were alive in 2018. It does not describe all veterans who served during a specific period in the military or the characteristics of veterans at the time that they left service.

The U.S. Census Bureau reviewed this data product for unauthorized disclosure of confidential information and has approved the disclosure avoidance practices applied to this release. CBDRB-FY20-POP001-0048.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The number of veterans in the United States declined by a third, from 26.4 million to 18.0 million between 2000 and 2018.
- There are fewer than 500,000 World War II veterans alive today, down from 5.7 million in 2000.
- Women make up a growing share of veterans. Today, about 9% of veterans — or 1.7 million — are women. By 2040, that number is projected to rise to 17%.
- The largest cohort of veterans alive today served during the Vietnam era (6.4 million), which lasted from 1964 to 1975. The second largest cohort of veterans served during peacetime only (4.0 million).

- The median age of veterans today is 65 years. By service period, Post-9/11 veterans are the youngest with a median age of about 37, Vietnam era veterans have a median age of about 71, and World War II veterans are the oldest with a median age of about 93.

- Veterans from more recent service periods have the highest levels of education. More than three-quarters of Post-9/11 and Gulf War veterans have at least some college experience, and more than one-third of Gulf War veterans have a college degree.

- Post-9/11 veterans had a 43% chance of having a service-connected disability, after accounting for differences in demographic and social characteristics among veterans — significantly higher than veterans from other periods.

- Among veterans who had a service-connected disability, Post-9/11 veterans had a 39% chance of having a disability rating of 70%. A service-connected disability is an injury, disease, or disability that was the result of service in the armed forces.

THE DECLINING SIZE OF THE VETERAN POPULATION

Roughly 18.0 million veterans are living in the United States today. They served during times of war (such as during the Gulf War and Vietnam Era) and times of peace (from 1955 to 1964 and 1975 to 1990). The largest single group of veterans (6.4 million) is from the Vietnam era. The fastest declining group of veterans is from World War II. Between 2000 and 2018, the number of living World War II veterans in the United States declined from 5.7 million to fewer.

Estimates in this report come from the American Community Survey and may differ from other data sources. For example, the Department of Veterans Affairs estimated that there were 19.6 million veterans living in the United States in 2018.

By 2030, it is projected there will be fewer than 8,000 World War II veterans.

Indeed, the veteran population has been declining for decades. Between 2000 and 2018 alone, the veteran population declined by one-third, from 26.4 million to 18.0 million.

The population of veterans is projected to continue declining by 2.5 million over the next decade. By 2040, it is projected there will be about 12.9 million veterans living in the United States, down from a high of 28.6 million in 1980.

For projections of the veteran population, see Veteran Population Model (VetPop 2016), calculated by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp.

Estimate does not include people who became veterans after 2000 but died before 2018.

Note: Except for peacetime only, the periods of service are not mutually exclusive. Veterans may have served at any point during the time listed for the service periods; they may not have necessarily served in the war for which the period is named.

Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, non-sampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 1-Year American Community Survey.

**Fifty Years Ago
North Vietnamese Easter Offensive
March 30, 1972**

The North Vietnamese launch the Nguyen Hue Campaign, also known as the Easter Offensive, with a multipronged attack across the DMZ and the Laotian and Cambodian borders into multiple regions of South Vietnam. The attacking forces are well equipped: armed with new weapons, heavy artillery, and tanks from the Soviet Union and China. It is the largest offensive launched by the North Vietnamese Army in the war. There are fewer than 70,000 U.S. troops left in Vietnam.

U.S. military advisers play a crucial role rallying South Vietnamese units in retreat. After suffering heavy losses, the South Vietnamese army—with ample help from U.S. air support—slows and reverses the offensive by the end of the summer. They stabilize the front in Quang Tri Province and successfully hold out against attacks around Hue, Kontum, and Saigon.

The North Vietnamese lose much of their armor and equipment and as many as 100,000 troops. South Vietnamese casualties are approximately 43,000, including 10,000 killed.

The Easter Offensive also results in the deaths of about 25,000 Vietnamese civilians and leaves almost one million homeless.

The Mark 18 40MM Grenade Launcher



On Aug. 18, 1968, a U.S. Navy armored troop carrier came under fire as it prepared to land Army troops on the bank of the Hai Moi Tan Canal. The mechanized landing craft took several hits from rocket-propelled grenades as it reached the bank. Enemy fire destroyed one of the 50-caliber machine guns. An Army sergeant then rushed to the mount and fired a Mark 18 40 mm grenade launcher. Working the firing crank as rapidly as he could, the sergeant swept the enemy's defenses as the boat

desperately struggled to back off the bank. The craft cleared in time to avoid the supporting fire of U.S. river monitors, but a jammed ramp prevented the troop unloading.

The Mark 18 grenade launcher has the distinction of being America's last hand cranked fast-firing weapon. Designed by Honeywell as an inexpensive, lightweight rapid-firing weapon to increase infantry firepower, the single-barrel manually operated Mark 18 used a split breech fed by two synchronized rotors. The operator fired the weapon by turning a crank that fed the rounds into the firing chamber. Each complete revolution fired two rounds. Belt-fed from 48- or 24-round ammunition boxes, the Mark 18 fired the same 40-by-46 mm cartridge as the M79 single-shot grenade launcher. The belts were hand loaded. The Mark 18 could be mounted on a pintle or the standard tripod for M60, M2 or M1919 machine guns.

The Navy ordered 1,200 Mark 18s between 1965 and 1968. Too heavy to be carried in the field, the grenade launchers were commonly mounted on river patrol boats, armored river troop carriers and monitors. They also were positioned in bunkers at riverine bases, usually near machine gun posts. Viewed as an interim stop-gap weapon, the Mark 18 gave way to the lighter and more powerful fully automatic Mark 19, starting in 1970. The last Mark 18s left naval service in the late 1970s.

An anonymous author once wrote: "War drew us from our homeland in the sunlit springtime of our youth. Those who did not come back alive remain in perpetual springtime, forever young, and a part of them is with us always."

GEORGE FREDERICK EDWARDS



GRATITUDE

98% of Americans will wake up and enjoy freedom. . .
2% will wake up and defend it!

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 April 2022 newsletter is 25 March 2022. Due to space availability, the editor reserves the right to include or not include photos for a given month.

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