



# VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

James Huard Chapter #267

## “LISTEN UP”

2021 - 2022

To James L. Huard who had been missing in action in North Vietnam from July 12, 1972 until May 1, 1997.



# MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022

From the Chapter President

It is good that we're back to almost normal at the monthly meetings. Things always change, sometimes at the spare of the moment. With this epidemic, which remains around us, we need to be careful and watch what we're doing. We're not getting any younger, and we have lost a few members, not all because of COVID.

We have been doing a quarterly newsletter sent by electronic mail. We have emails for the most part, but if we don't have an email from the member or AVVA member then they won't get a newsletter, so if you supply us with your email, would be greatly appreciated.

During this whole evolution, my email was hacked by someone, and I am pretty sure everyone received notification that I was in the hospital with heart issues, and send some cards to my nieces. I hope no one responded to this email to send things, as it was a hoax. I do not have heart issues as I am aware of, and was not in the hospital. So, saying that, I will be rebuilding my group emails as I lost all those, and will need your emails if I cannot get them from the webmaster.

This month we will send out a paper newsletter, the reason we are sending electronic is to save funds. We do fundraising, but that is to defray the cost of expenditures to send our delegates or others on trips like conferences and conventions when we need to go. We not in hopes spend money or funds unwisely.

Our Chapter meeting on December 15th, 2021 will also be our Chapter Christmas Party, so will need to know how many members and wife's will be attending please respond to my email at marret94@aol.com.

Lastly, I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving, and will soon have a Merry Christmas and Happiest of New Years.

Semper Fi,  
Phil Smith

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 15, 2021 - VVA Meeting and Chapter Christmas Party - let us know how many will be attending

Feb 13, 2022 - Super Bowl Party - American Legion 364 meeting location - Raffle

Mar/Apr 2022 - Annual VVA 267 Help a Veteran Dance - more to follow

Monthly meetings are on the 4th Wednesday of the Month, so put that on your calendars

## From the Veterans Benefits Side

submitted by: Phil Smith

Most of you are aware by now, that three new conditions has been granted on the Agent Orange (Herbicide Dioxin) list

### *Hyperthyroidism*

### *Symptoms of Parkinson*

### *Bladder Cancer*

These three conditions have been listed a presumptive conditions and those who were on appeal, should have been notified or will be, if not then contact your veterans representative. If not file a claim for benefits. Those Naval personnel or Marines or Army who were 12 nautical miles off land can also file, and maybe on appeal as well.

As most know I am a Consultant with VVA, and remain to do claims, but also consult to help you out. The Office number remains the same, however don't ask for me, as they will tell you he retired.

For widow's of veterans who pass away, the spouses need to follow-up and file a claim, they will not get as much as the veteran did if he or she was 100 percent, they will get about half.

As we get older we need to look at filing claims either for service connection or non-service, it protects the spouse if you have one.

Burial Benefits, other benefits etc.

Funeral Directors handle burials of course and contacting the appropriate military service, please ensure the spouse or children tell the funeral director, "we would like military honors and have DD214 with them. Remember; being buried at a National VA Cemetery is free, opening and closing, vault, headstone and military honors.

If buried at a local cemetery a headstone or marker is free, but you have to pay for the setting.

**VVA Newsletter** Submitted by Tom Malotke  
tommalotke@yahoo.com

Hi all, I want to write what I thought was important to and pertaining to the future of the VVA at the convention.

I attended with Phil Smith, Dave Klein, Roy Flores, Mike Cardosi, Jim Bailey, and Andy Anderson

The convention center was huge, and the meetings were in different ballrooms which meant a lot of walking.

I attended the legislative meeting in which many things, proposals were covered. The most important one was the future of the VVA. Unfortunately, the issue was NOT resolved. Many delegates voice their opinions and I thought one delegate was going to come to blows.

Two committees were formed at the 2019 convention. One was to see if the younger vets were interested in coming into our organization with a name change. The other committee was to check into keeping our organization and let it die, last man standing. When we met at the convention floor, there were many protests and the outcome was tabled till the next convention. One proposal that was made was the name VVA could NOT be changed unless voted on by the delegates! The one resolution to let it die would take years and the individual chapter would still go on without support (money) from the VVA.

As reported from a committee that the younger vets are not interested in a "brick and mortar" organization because they are all on electronically, cell phones. Computer's device. The whole thing was tabled till the next convention.

My own opinion is to let it die as are many of the delegates I talked to from all over the country 'to let it die.

For more information come to the monthly meetings and ask questions

*Keep Healthy and have a Merry Christmas. Tom*

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## Vietnam Veterans of America National Convention 2021 Issues Addressed

submitted by; Jim Bailey, Delegate - Chair Fishing Trip

### **I. Resolutions**

a. Proposed Constitutional Amendment 09

i. Article 3 Chapter Provision Section 1 AMENDED to address rural area members' concerns about not meeting minimum threshold of 25 persons to create a new chapter. Now requiring 15 persons instead of 25 to create a new chapter.

b. Resolution 11

i. PASSED.

1. We shall be maintaining our current organization name. The matter will be addressed again in two years' time.

2. Presently, we will be abiding by the Last Man Standing Policy.

a. When the last member passes on the organization will cease to exist.

c. Resolution GA-XX

i. PASSED

1. Designed to correct the dates for the Vietnam Service Medal as it is presently only accounts for service up through March 28, 1973.

We proposing it be corrected to April 29, 1975.

### **II. Election**

a. New treasurer elected.

b. New president elected.

i. Jack McManus

## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2022 FOR CHAPTER 267

THE BELOW EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO COVID RESTRICTION.

I. Superbowl---February 13, 2022

II. Veterans' Dance---April 2022

III. Fishing Trip---Mid June 2022



December 2021 II

The 29th National VVA Convention is over and the direction of the VVA is set: We will continue as we have been until the “Last Man Standing”. I believe that was the censuses of most members that belong to the VVA. We started the VVA decades ago, when no one was listening to our voices and ignored us and called us “whiners”. You all remember what they said about our war and how veteran organization wouldn’t even accept us into their membership. It took us many years of organizing and lobbying to get the benefits that we have now. The VVA took point on our issues and as Vietnam Veterans were being elected to office we broke through the Old Guard barriers. It was hard work and it was done by the continuing charge of Vietnam Veterans. Little did they know that they were melding us together with their rejections? Not only did we fight for our issues, we also fought to make sure that those who served after us would get proper medical and educational benefits. Personally; I feel relieved. I have been a veteran advocate and active member for over 50 years and always felt that the VVA was my personal veteran’s organization. This organization wasn’t an easy ride, we had many opinions on issues and there were a lot of “nose to nose” deliberations to get things done. National VVA in an effort to expand tried to add membership by having younger veterans join us somehow. They found that there wasn’t a substantial organization out there wanting to join. It would have been a quagmire to get it done and if they found new membership, most Vietnam vets wouldn’t stand for it. Unfortunately the Iraqi, Afghan and Dessert Storm vets aren’t interested in unifying into veteran organizations. Maybe we did our job to good when we were fighting for their benefits along with ours. They didn’t have that drive for benefit issues like we did, thus not having to organize and fight for them. The best thing that happened to the Vietnam Veterans is; the “Vietnam Veterans” and it will always be that way. We stood shoulder to shoulder all these years, demanding that our concerns be heard. (And we’re not done.)

From the start until now, I’ve had the privilege of meeting thousands of veterans, which many became close friends who I still hear from. There aren’t many places that I go that I don’t run into someone I know; Veterans, chapter members, neighborhood friends, fellow co-workers and UAW contacts. It’s a blessing. Fortunately for me; because there has been times in my life when I needed my Brother Vietnam Vets. Just to have someone know what you were talking about or just be your friend when you needed one. I believe that there are a lot of us who feel the same. We supported each other and always were there if someone needed us. Our VVA chapter reflects those feelings, just look at our membership, past and present and you can feel how the time has flown by these last 40 years.

Now as our chapter moves forward we continue to look for new members. There are a lot of Vietnam and era veterans out there who have never joined VVA. It’s harder to recruit new members now because many of our issues have been settled and veterans think that there are no incentives to join. There are many veterans out there who have no idea of the benefits they may be eligible for from the VA. These are the people we can recruit and add them to our membership. Veterans are always interested in getting some type of benefit. Our chapter draws members from all over the Detroit metropolitan area. If you look at our rosters you will see how our membership is spread out over southwest Michigan and out of state. Our chapter meetings are held in Dearborn and the chapter was started by Dearborn veterans; but less than 20% of chapter members are from Dearborn and Dearborn Heights. The rest of us are from nearby communities, many from downriver and other nearby suburbs plus out of state. Most of the income that we hold in our accounts came from the dances and a large contribution from out of state veteran advocates. I was the dance committee for over 10 years and every year those dances brought in more than \$6000.00 a year. Most of the attendees of those dances were from outside of Dearborn.

The reason that I bring this up is because our leadership thinks we should only donate or contribute to local residence or nearby venues. He feels that there are other veteran organizations to cover outside the chapter’s area. The chapter hasn’t donated any funds out to anybody in a while; our food bank is spilling over and growing every meeting. The chapter needs to look around and help any one they can anywhere. We could have donated to “Wreaths across America” that put wreaths on veteran’s graves in our national cemeteries, The USO, the VA Hospital in Detroit and Ann Arbor and if you open your eyes you can find many good institutions to contribute funds to. Most of all, we need our newsletter back in print every quarter to keep all our members in touch with chapter issues and functions. National VVA started their newsletter again because so many members were out of touch and missing the personal impact of a paper newsletter. Not everybody looks at their phone or has a computer to check all the time. It’s certainly not about the finances; we have resources. If you feel the same as I do about the newsletter, let me know or let your president know.

As I recall past members, I’d like to continue with Joe Stumpo, U.S. Army; 9th Infantry Vietnam: Joe grew up and went to school in Dearborn, along with Harry Hoy and other members of our chapter. I believe that he was one of our early members, I didn’t know Joe right away but as the chapter became active you would hear his voice in the building of our chapter. He was on hard times for awhile and the chapter pulled together some funds to send him out west for employment. He stayed out there for some time then returned and went back to work as an Iron Worker, purchasing a house near the American Legion. Although Joe was divorced, he was a dedicated father and loved all his children. He never could keep a drivers license and that sort of kept him local. What I remember most was his cooking. Whenever we had pig roast, Joe was part of it, his barbequed ribs were to die for. One year at an annual football get together at the Legion, he made spaghetti with neck bones. Man were they good, you couldn’t help from getting sauce on you somewhere while sucking on the neck bones. Joe was a good man liked by everybody, who was taken from us by Agent Orange. We all miss him!

Jim “Jimbo” Talanges, USMC: I’m not sure when Jim joined our chapter but it was in the early years. Jim was sort of strange person and at first I thought he was like that because of the war. Later some of the people that went to school with him told me that he was always a little strange. All in all, we were pretty good friends. Jim was part of our Color Guard and as strange as he was he was a good Marine and knew how to count cadence. We use to tease him that he was always out of step, but it was mostly the person next to him. He loved going on the canoe trips up at Norm Kluska place and brought his whole family up with him. Jim had two Purple Hearts and we had some long discussions about the war over a bottle of Tequila in the rain one weekend up there. I went to visit him in the hospital; when I got to his room he was sleeping. I sat in a chair by him and when it looked like he was waking. I said “you’re out of step”. With out opening his eyes, he smiled and said “F--- you Flores” and we both cracked up. When Jim passed, he was buried in his Color Guard uniform. If you hadn’t known Jimbo, you missed his dry humor and undying patriotism to his country.

Linda and I wish all of you and your families a wonderful MerryChristmas and a Happy Healthy New Year.

“Feliz Navidad”, Raul Roy Flores

Vietnam 1965-1966

Chapter 267 member from day 1, 1986

Early in November I got to go to the convention in North Carolina. It was my first time attending a convention and I was a little bit apprehensive of what to expect. As is typical at the beginning of any large function, there are some hiccups before everything gets sorted out. Our shuttlebus didn't arrive at the airport for quite some time. And when it did arrive it could only take 9 people and we had 15. I decided to stay back and wait for the next one, and was surprised when it arrived within 15 minutes.

Checking in at the hotel was busy but the line moved quickly. After I got my room, I had to go back downstairs and check-in as the AVVA rep. There were a lot of Covid protocols in place, such as mask wearing and verification of vaccination. I think the unvaccinated had to get tested. Everybody that was OK had to wear a sticker on their badge. This was done each day with a different color sticker for every day. It seemed like overkill to me, but I found out later that because of this they discovered someone who was positive on the first day of the event. That person was quarantined throughout the entire convention. Disaster averted!

So, let's talk about the main reason I was there. I was there to participate in the general session which included voting on several amendments to the bylaws. There was probably about a dozen or so amendment proposals, but most were simple changes to make the bylaws more readable. Things like grouping all the term limits into a single paragraph rather than repeating them each time for each position. And removing the specific time of year meetings needed to be held to allow flexibility when scheduling yearly meetings. This was brought on by all the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

There were however 2 proposed amendments that were significant. One was to allow Dual members (AVVA and VVA) to have the right to vote in AVVA meetings. Presently Dual members cannot vote, hold office or chair any committees. AVVA members have full privileges and Dual members have none. I'm glad to say that this change was voted in. Now Dual members can Vote during AVVA meetings, however they still cannot run for office or chair any committees.

The other significant proposal was to create a 3rd class of member. Presently there are Regular members and Dual members. The proposal was to create a 3rd class called Incarcerated Veteran members. They wanted to do this to give them a price break. But before we voted, it was amended to strike the word Veteran so that the new class would be called Incarcerated members. When it was voted on, it passed. So now we have Regular members, Incarcerated members and Dual members. In my opinion, I don't like this change. Why are we segregating out incarcerated members? Just give them a price break and leave them alone. If you want to give incarcerated Veterans a break, I am for that because we are a veterans organization helping other veterans. But to separate out incarcerated members and give them a price break while still allowing them full privileges just doesn't make sense to me. It's possible that because this was the first item voted on, some of the delegates might have been unclear about what they were voting on. Whether it was the overall amendment or the change to remove Veteran from the amendment. I did notice a lot of delegates were first timers. In any case, the votes are in and these are the results.

The other thing I was there for was the election of new officers for the AVVA. Most people ran unopposed, however there were a few offices that had more than one candidate. The existing president decided not to run for reelection and a former president decided to throw her hat in the ring. In the end, after the dust had settled and all the votes had been counted, we ended up with the following;

National President: Sharon Hobbs  
National Vice-President: Kathy Andras  
National Secretary: Nina Schloffel  
National Treasurer: Kaye Gardner  
Region 5 Director: Jennifer Ellis  
Region 5 Dep. Director: Rosa Fuentes  
I only listed the offices we are concerned with in Michigan.

For the full list, go to [www.AVVA.org](http://www.AVVA.org).



## Written for the end of the year newsletter in 2020 submitted by Roy Flores

2021 is here and hopefully everybody who wants a Covid 19 vaccine will be able to get one sooner or later. Eventually people will feel safe to go out shopping, go to restaurants and start socializing again. I for one miss my friends and family, Linda and I are very social and enjoy eating out and visiting with friends. I finally got both of the vaccine shots from the Ann Arbor VA; they were highly efficient and did a great job of making it an easy in and out. Linda also is scheduled to get her shots soon at Meijer's in Southgate, and then we can move on with our lives.

At the last Chapter board meeting it was voted to take our newsletter back to print for those who do not have a valid email address. I believe that the newsletter has always been the best instrument to keep our members informed of chapter functions and events. In this time and age some believe that everyone should be connected to the internet through a computer or a smart phone. Many of us do have these capabilities but to some, it is just another job or something to learn. I guess if you had your grandchildren around all the time you could have them show you some skills or just do it for you. I've been posting in our newsletter ever since it started back in 1986 and I can remember how members commented on articles or came to meetings because of some article that they read in our newsletter. So I'm glad to see it come back even if it is a partial distribution. I brought up a concern by Wes Norton after we had discussed an email newsletter years ago. Wes said that it was hard for him to take his computer into the bathroom where he enjoyed reading it. I guess you could print your own issue off the internet if you had a printer.

As far as our chapter having a shortage of funds, I don't think the six digit figure in our accounts indicate that we are in need. When we started this chapter we always felt that we just needed enough funds to keep us going and to help those in need along the way. We were happy to have a few bucks to function with. Every time we would give money away to somebody or a needed charity, it always came back to us in some way or form. Our national VVA leadership is talking about ending the VVA as such in a few years. There will only be a couple more national conventions before that happens. Will our chapter go on? We are all getting older and getting out to meetings is not what it used to be when we were younger. The Food Bank fund hasn't dispersed any funds lately because the Covid 19 pandemic has limited our meetings. It is hard to find a legitimate veteran in need these days. We are always asking if someone needs assistance. So what are we saving money for??

In the last newsletters I have been writing about some of our members who are no longer with us. Being an involved member of our chapter since the very beginning, I knew most members and I am passing on my thoughts on them so you can remember them also. "We promised we wouldn't forget them"

Gino Polidori - US Army: Gino was a State of Michigan Legislator and was very proud of his service and his membership in our chapter. Frank Rodriguez - US Army; when Frank joined our chapter his name was Frank Rogers. Frank was of Mexican decent and looked it. I asked him one day how he got the Roger name? I told him that I could pass for a Roger but he didn't look like his name. To make a long story short, a few years later I received a letter in the mail from Frank. He had sent me documentation that he had changed his name to Frank Rodriguez, when I read that it made me smile. He must have taken what I said to heart. Member Albert (Butch) Rost - USMC; Butch never came to any meetings but I knew him from the VFW in Trenton, That was one of the hardest head Marine that I had ever met and ornery as hell but for some reason we got along pretty good. Mike Ross - US Navy was an early member of our chapter, he was sickly and never had much money. Mike always volunteered to help and tried to make all the chapter field trips on his limited income. Before we had a Food Bank or any money to help fellow veterans, Mike and another chapter member were in the process of filing for disability Social Security. It was the Christmas holidays and SS awards took some time to make decisions. Working as a UAW rep at Rouge Steel, I knew most of the veterans that worked there, since I was the Vet Rep too. There was a lot of overtime and we were all making good wages. So I went around and visited those veterans and asked for contributions for a couple needy vets that I knew. I had a good reputation and collected a substantial amount of money from my fellow workers.

I remember visiting Steve Adolph who was a supervisor at Rouge Steel. I told him what I was doing and he pulled out his check book and asked how much money I wanted. Steve was generous.

I gave that money to Mike and the other veteran in time for them to enjoy the holidays.

Thom Rouselle: US Army, Thom was my mailman; He told me that he was a Nam vet also after noticing a helicopter painted on my upper cabinets in my garage. I gave him a nice shirt with a helicopter embroidered on it for Christmas and visited him at home when he got cancer. He retired from the post office and started to come to monthly meetings. He volunteered for funeral details and enjoyed being with other members of our chapter. He told me one time that I was the only one of all his friends that came to visit him while he was sick. He then asked me if I would do his funeral service when he died. I told him that he wasn't going to die but that I would proudly do it for him. Thom lived a few more years; he built a home in Florida and was there when he passed. His wife called me and told me that she was bringing Thom home for burial and if I would make some arrangements. Thom Rouselle, 25th INF / 4th INF, Vietnam. Had a great burial ceremony, he was a good friend and I miss him.

Another member Sam Siemer - US Air Force: Sam served in Thailand as a crew chief on fighter jets. He lost 2 pilots while serving their air craft and had PTSD from it. He was a humble man and lived in a tiny apartment in Trenton while waiting on his case at the VA. One day Sam called me to inform me that he finally got his VA award at 100% and was moving to a bigger place in Woodhaven. About a month later I went to visit him at his new place and couldn't find him. I went to the manager's office to ask and was told that he had passed a couple weeks ago. Like so many veterans who apply for benefits from the VA, they don't live long after they get their awards. We always thought back then that the VA would, "Deny, Deny; until you die".

Pete Simon - USMC: Pete was another hard charging Marine. He was our Color Guard Sergeant when it first started and he came to meetings back then. Pete had PTSD and would not try to get help or take anyone's advice. It seemed to get worst after he retired, drinking heavily, aiming weapons at people and terrorizing his family. I always thought Pete would commit "suicide by cop". He had numerous run ins with them and they all knew where he lived. Although I must admit Pete and I had a lot of good times together, playing cards and shooting pool in his man cave. Back then a lot of us were self medicating and leaned on each other for support and camaraderie. But when it was time to move on and get on with life, some vets couldn't make that step. His wife called me one day to say that Pete was in the hospital and it wasn't looking good. I went to visit him but he was out of it and I wasn't sure if he knew that I was there.

I told him that he really f--ked up now, even though he couldn't hear me. I was mad at him for doing this to himself, when it could have been

very different. He had a great wife and family, a good job, retirement and was financially set. When the demons would get so bad that he couldn't drink them away, he would call me. He would say that he was back in Nam going through the same traumatic experience over and over again. He never did tell me what it was that was bothering him, it was just bad and alcohol couldn't drown it. So Pete drank himself to death. At first his wife asked if we would have some kind of memorial service for him. A few days later she called me to say that they had changed their minds and didn't want any memorial. She said that Pete had put them through so much that they had enough and were relieved that it was over.

Unfortunately, Pete was a textbook case of PTSD and as a result his family ended up with it also.

I still have some members to write about and if you have any thoughts on any of these names or any others that you would like to share, give me a call; Joe Stumpo, Jimbo Talanges, Bill Simpson, Bob Timberlake, Dennis Walker and Jimmie Williams.

**Roy Flores; US Army 1964 - 1966  
Proud Vietnam Veteran**

**Dennis Speck was honored at nursing home on 11/11/21 - Dennis Speck is a former President of Michigan VVA. The Mayor of Elmhurst & Nursing Home Administrator gave him a certificate of appreciation for receiving the Achievement Award from John Riling & Gary Estermyer this past Spring for years of service as MI State Council President. Dennis now resides in Illinois in a Assitant Care Living Nursing Facility in Chicago**



**Lighters from Vietnam**

While in country a lot us smoked cigarettes: they came in all the C ration boxes.

There was every brand of smokes that were made during the 1940's. Lucky Strike, Camels, Pall Malls and even some filter tip cigarettes inside of every package. If you smoked, you needed something to light them up with. Most every Soldier, Marine, Airman or Navy personal had a lighter. Zippo was the main brand of lighters, but if you purchased one in Vietnam there was no telling what brand you would get. Everybody had them engraved with something, your unit insignia, the place where you served or your wives / girlfriends name and the years that you were in Vietnam.

If you still have one of those lighters that you purchased while serving in Vietnam or elsewhere. I would like to see them or a picture of them and maybe something about the lighter or the circumstances when you purchased it or the reason behind the engraving. We could make a collage out of the pictures and post them for nostalgic remembrances of your time in the service.



Raul Roy Flores



29th National VVA Convention 2021



**Chapter Meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of every month.**  
*Notice: If you know of any member that is sick or has passed, please notify a chapter Officer.*  
 For more information or to join call **313-562-9090** or E-mail: **[marret94@aol.com](mailto:marret94@aol.com)**  
 Web: **[vvachapter267.org](http://vvachapter267.org)**

\*\*\* non-profit organization \*\*\*



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