

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.

South Carolina VVA State Council

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Veterans Voice

NEWSLETTER - January - February - 2024

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UPCOMING EVENTS 2023

State Council Meeting June 9th 2024. Meeting Location to be determined. National Leadership Conference August 20-24 2024 Reno, NV.

South Carolina VVA Chapters/Contacts

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THE PARTY MANUSCRIPT



Donations

If you wish to make a donation to South Carolina State Council there's two methods of payment, 1. Credit card, go to our website vvasc.org under donations using our PayPal account and follow the steps. 2. Checks, make it out to "South Carolina State Council and mail it to

SC State Council, 71 Summerset Court, Alken SC 29803. Thank you for your Support.



On 11 February 2024 the State Council had elections, the results as follows: SC State Council President - Sam Brick, 1st Vice President - Larry Miller, 2nd Vice President - Charlie Davies, Secretary, - Zeke Cervantez, Treasurer - Jay Reynolds.

"See Page 2 for SC State Council President's Message"

Page 2 VVA South Carolina January – February - 2024 MESSAGE FROM THE SC STATE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Greetings fellow vets.

The January Conference of State Council Presidents and the National VVA Board went well. The budget was streamlined by our new treasurer and it fit our needs. The good will of our donors and our household goods returns finance our operations and it is a healthy organization. We have 91,000 life members with about 20% actively participating in meetings and events.

Our SC State Council met on Super Bowl Sunday with eight of our ten chapters present. Two were absent with the horrible flu running throughout the state. Dave and Vicki Bertges from Walhalla provided a super lunch. American Legion Post 130 and the American Legion District commander, Darlene Walton, hosted us in its Cayce post. Each chapter noted its operations. We are active throughout the state in supporting all vets. We re-elected our five officers, yours truly, Larry Miller, Charlie Davies, Jay Reynolds, and Zeke Cervantes. Each have been active and strong supporters of the council and generally all veterans. The council approved a resolution to help out of the way vets throughout the US get VA transportation benefits for hospital visits. Those without electronic means to do this still can send in a form to the medical center where treatment was handled. If the treatment was by a non-VA facility, the veteran can send the claim on VA Form 10-3542 to whichever VA facility authorized that treatment. Addresses are at VA.Gov locations or call the approving facility for help.

We noted with the upcoming exhaustion of the National Life Membership fund, state council and chapter rebates may be handled differently in the next few years, i.e. less amounts per member. Accordingly, fund raising will be necessary. In this regard, please donate to the council. Our web site provides such an opportunity. See the note at the bottom of the first page of the newsletter in the site. We may change the name of that newsletter since it is very close to the National publication. We are open to suggestions for a new name. Send comments to Charlie Davies, our web master. See his address on the page.

VVA Region Three (Maryland, NC, WV, Ky, TN, VA, and SC) are having a Conference at the end of February in Asheville. It will address aging and the veteran as well as other matters effecting our lives.

Evident in the state council and chapters throughout the state is ongoing camaraderie. Our meetings and get togethers provide super venues for our RVN brothers and sisters to be together and to do good things both for ourselves as we age and our brother and sister veterans from more recent conflicts. We all live longer by this. All our delegates last Sunday agreed that our participation and activities help us health wise.

Stay safe through the rest of our 24 winter and welcome in a great spring.

Very respectfully

Sam Brick, SC VVA State Council President and Chair of the Conference of State Council Presidents.







A little Triva



The other day I was speaking with another Vietnam Veteran. When we pulled his keys out there was a John Wayne attached. I asked him "do you know why they call it the P-38"? That got me thinking! How Many of you actually know what the P-38 (John Wayne) the P-51 stands for? One explanation for the origin of the name is that the P-38 is approximately 38 millimeters long. This explanation also

holds for the P-51, which measures approximately 51 mm (2.0 in) in length. However, use of the metric system in the U.S. was not widespread at this point, and United States Army sources indicate that the origin of the name is rooted in the 38 punctures around the circumference of a C-ration can required for opening. Official military designations for the P-38 include "U.S. ARMY POCKET CAN OPENER" and "OPENER, CAN, HAND, FOLDING, TYPE I". As with some other military terms (e.g., "jeep"), the origin of the term is not known with certainty. The P-38 opener coincidentally shares a designation with the Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter plane, which could allude to its fast performance; additionally the P-51 can opener also has an aircraft namesake in the North American P-51 Mustang.

'Star - Spangled Banner' Born from a Drinking Song!

The other day I was watching the History Channel, the segment was about "Lost History". They were talking about the "Star-Spangled Banner" This was never taught in schools on how the words written as a poem were put into Lyrics of a Enfleshed Gentlemen Club beer song became our National Anthem for the United States. Good thing it wasn't 99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall. Francis Scott key penned what came to be known as "The Star-Spangled Banner" as he observed the American flag still flying over Baltimore Harbor's Fort McHenry after a night of British bombardment. He set his lyrics to "The Anacreontic Song." Mr. Key's question was how in the heck did that big flag over Fort McHenry in Baltimore harbor survive an attack by British warships? Was the American Republic going to survive? He set his question to "The Anacreontic Song" and it was a good choice because a lot of people knew it. There are also a number of songs that have their own identities and significance now, but whose origins are as drinking songs, including "Jingle Bells", which was allegedly written by a "jerk", and the American national anthem, the music for which was originally a French drinking song called "Anacreon". Interesting!

Aiken Standard Person of the Year Dwight Bradham a dedicated advocate for local Veterans



Congratulations goes out to Dwight Bradham for being the Aiken Standard Person of the Year! Not long after Dwight Bradham began serving as Aiken County's Veterans Affairs Officer in January 2016, he knew for sure he had made the right career move. The third person he helped in his new job was a man who was suffering from cancer after being exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. "His house was in foreclosure because he couldn't make the mortgage payments, and he had filed for bankruptcy with his business," Bradham said. "He had been fighting the VA (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) for eight years, because the VA said, 'We cannot find

anything that shows you went to Vietnam." A friend of Bradham's pointed him in the right direction, and he was able to obtain quickly the evidence required. As a result, the man received around \$365,000 from the federal government. "All his debt and bankruptcy were gone," Bradham said. "When that happened, I'm like going, 'I think I'm in the right job. I'm where I need to be." Following the veteran's death soon afterward, Bradham assisted the man's spouse, and she was able to receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation,



Page 4 VVA South Carolina January – February - 2024 **Aiken Standard Person of the Year Dwight Bradham Continued**

which provided her with a tax-free benefit of approximately \$1,500 per month. Because of his efforts on behalf of that veteran, his wife and others like them, Bradham, 59, is the Aiken Standard's Person of the Year for 2023. "I have never known anyone as dedicated as Dwight," said Aiken County Administrator Brian Sanders. "He has taken the service that his office renders to unprecedented heights. They don't just focus on one or two things, they try to do it all, and they do it in During Bradham's first year, the claims handled by the local Veterans Affairs Office increased 935%, and they have gone up each year since. From 2021 to 2022, the number rose 197%. There are 14,109 active veteran accounts, and the ongoing benefits received by Aiken County veterans and their families are more than \$3.6 million per month. Bradham "works tirelessly," said Lowell Koppert, chairman of the Aiken County Veterans Council. "He doesn't just show up and punch a time clock. He really enjoys what he does and it shows. He is a guy that people truly think cares about them." S.C. Sen. Tom Young described Bradham as conscientious, kind, attentive and diligent. "He is totally committed to helping our area's veterans and their families," Young added. The South Carolina Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers honored Bradham as its Veterans Affairs Officer of the Year for 2020-2021. He currently is the president of the organization. "That, in itself, tells you how good Dwight is," Koppert said. When asked about what motivates him, Bradham replied: "It's about taking care of veterans like we're supposed to. It's the right thing to do. Less than 1% of the United States' entire population is willing, for the lack of a better term, to sign a blank check saying, 'I'm willing to support and defend this country and the ideals that are here with my life if necessary.' Bradham, a graduate of Aiken High School, stepped up enthusiastically to do his duty. He enlisted with the S.C. Army National Guard in 1981, began his active service in 1987 and retired as a major in 2014. His career with the National Guard included tours in Iraq (2003-2004) and Afghanistan (2012-2013). Among the military awards earned by Bradham were the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star and Meritorious Service Medal. He also was an honor graduate of the Accelerated Officer Candidate School program. "I was a third-generation soldier," Bradham said. "My great uncle was killed during World War II in Europe during the Malmedy massacre. My dad always wanted to be a soldier when he was growing up. He was my recruiter. My family had served and it was something that I wanted to do." In addition, after joining the military, Bradham received funds to help pay for his education. He was a star soccer goalie in high school with scholarship offers, but they dried up following an injury. "I got the side of my face kicked in during the state playoffs," Bradham said. He took courses at USC Aiken, the University of South Carolina in Columbia and Limestone College (now known as Limestone University) before earning online a bachelor's degree, with a focus on business, from New York-based Excelsior College prior to leaving the National Guard. Bradham's first job following his military service was with the CVS Health Corporation. Bradham was a logistics supervisor at the company's distribution center in Beech Island. "I enjoyed the work, but it was only myself and one other veteran there," Bradham said. "I missed the opportunity to interact with veterans." Bradham found more satisfaction as a military employment adviser with South Carolina's Operation Palmetto Employment, which helps reservists and veterans find "meaningful" civilian careers, according to its website: ope.sc.gov. Nikki Haley launched the initiative in 2014 while she was governor. Her husband, Michael, a commissioned officer in the South Carolina National Guard, urged Bradham to get involved. Michael thought a position with Operation Palmetto Employment would be "a good fit" for Bradham because of his experience as a recruiter at the executive officer level with the National Guard. Bradham agreed. "It was a chance for me to give back to veterans," he said. Aiken, Edgefield and Barnwell counties initially were in Bradham's assigned area. By the time he decided to accept the offer from the Aiken County Legislative Delegation to become the county's Veterans Affairs Officer, Bradham's territory was significantly larger and covered much of the Palmetto State's western section. Bradham said he wanted to be a Veterans Affairs Officer because in his role with Operation Palmetto Employment, he discovered that veterans weren't aware of the VA benefits to which they were entitled. "I started unofficially sitting down with them and saying, 'Here's how you do it (apply), and here's the records you need to get," Bradham recalled. "I helped them put together claim packets and had some success with it." He said there were 72 applicants for the Aiken County Veterans Affairs Officer job, but according to Koppert, who was an adviser to the Legislative Delegation during the search process, there were more than 100. What made Bradham stand out, according to Koppert, was his PowerPoint presentation and emphasis on the future. "When everybody applies for a job, they say, 'Hey, this is what I can do for you and this is what's going on right now,' "Koppert remembered. "Dwight was like, 'Hey, we're already behind the curve, and you guys need to understand what's coming in the next five years."

Aiken Standard Person of the Year Dwight Bradham Continued

During Bradham's tenure as Aiken County's Veterans Affairs Officer, Koppert has been impressed further by his go-getter attitude. "Dwight is very proactive," Koppert said. "He's out there saying, 'Let me tell you who I am, come and see me, let me see what I can do for you.' Before, there was a guy who just sat in his office and was like, 'Oh hey, you found me [when a veteran showed up]." In the beginning, Bradham had only one person working for him. Now he has a staff of four. Two employees are full-time, and two are part-time. "We're at the grassroots level in the foxhole with our veterans, and it's a total team effort," Bradham said. "I have the best staff I could ask for. I definitely couldn't do it without them." But Bradham, who is based at the Aiken County Government Center in Aiken, isn't content with the status quo. "I want to continue to expand the capabilities of this office, so we are continuing to reach even more of our veterans," said Bradham, who is married and has two daughters. "Every day, I find a new veteran out there, under a rock, who has never come in to see us. I want to make sure, through outreach, that our veterans are informed, our veterans are recognized and respected in our communities, and that Aiken County is the best county in South Carolina to live in if you are a veteran. Those are my goals." The above article appeared in the "Aiken Standard" by Dede Biles dated 29 December 2023

AVVA is the extended family of VVA.



We are made up of Veterans of all eras, families and friends of Veterans and all persons who support Veterans' issues. AVVA is the extended family of VVA.

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Elections AVVA 2024

AVVA South Carolina, we are now in an election year. If you are planning on running for an office whether it is President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or just the elected Representative, I will need to have you LETTER OF INTENT by the end of February. This way I will know how many people will be having elections. If you do not have an election for one or the other of these positions, then your chapter will lose the vote for next year's National Convention where we vote for National and Regional Officers.

I will not be running for an elected position in my chapter, but I will be putting in my letter of intent to run for State Representative. Also, if you are keeping up with your Vista Hours, please send them into Kathy Andres. Its best that they are sent in by month or bi-monthly. That way there is not as much work trying to sort out what hours are legal and what hours are not. Just remember that she is dealing with the whole country on these and it does get to be a headache keeping up with them, but it is necessary that we do since they can be shown to congress if the need arises when we have to show that our national organization is doing work for the veterans and how much work we do.

I hope that everyone had a good Christmas and that your New Year will be fulfilling and exciting. Take care and stay well.

Love to all,

Hope Summers

South Carolina State Point of Contact

Newsletter Name

At our last State Council Meeting I requested the Council to have our newsletter name "Veterans Voice" to be changed because it is too close to the VVA "The Veteran" magazine. If you have some ideas for a catchy or creative name, please send it to me at tazzcd@aol.com. The Name will be picked at our next State Council meeting in June, 2024.

Military ID Cards, Just a Reminder

The Department of Defense is now in the process of relacing all military ID cards by 2024 including VA 100% and retirees. This includes indefinite cards with no expiration date. To schedule an appointment to replace your existing card go to https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/#/ on your browser. When you open the site there are four boxes. Click on the far-left box for appointments. Select the closest base and follow the prompts. Read the material and make sure you bring enough additional ID's. Just to give you heads up!!

Vietnam War Cease-fire - 1/27/73



From August 5, 1964 through March 28, 1973, many of you, our Veteran brothers and sisters were among the 8,744,000 activeduty U.S. military personnel who proudly served our Nation during the war in Vietnam, with 2,594,000 of you serving within the borders of South Vietnam, some deployed as early as 1954 and leaving as late as 1975. The Vietnam Era also includes all Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam as early as 1955.

Background

On January 27, 1973 the Paris Peace Accords were signed declaring a cease-fire in Vietnam. The U.S. government, South Vietnam and North Vietnam governments pledged to "respect the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Vietnam as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam." The "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam" was the official title of the signed text. Over several years beginning as early as 1961, the U.S. escalated its forces in the Vietnam war assisting South Vietnam in opposition to communism - to deter Soviet-based expansion and control throughout Southeast Asia. By 1968, there were 529,000 Americans fighting in Vietnam. By the end of the war over 58,000 American soldiers had given their lives fighting for our country. Aug. 2-4, 1964, after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the Johnson Administration escalates U.S. involvement in the war. -On August 5, 1964, Operation Pierce Arrow was ordered - which consisted of 64 strike sorties from the aircraft carriers Ticonderoga and Constellation against the torpedo boat bases of Hon Gai, Loc Chao, Quang Khe, and Ben Thuy, and the oil storage depot at Vinh. -Operation Rolling Thunder & Operation Starlite(65-68): By the end of 1965, there was a buildup of U.S. troops from 184,000 to 429,000 in 1966, and by 1968 there were 529,000 Americans fighting in Vietnam. -Vietnamization (69-74): With Nixon elected as president, the U.S. began a slow disengagement from the war, while building up the South Vietnamese Army to fight on its own. -The U.S. further agreed to continue withdrawing troops, which resulted in a complete removal of soldiers by March 29, 1973. Thank you to our Vietnam Veterans and **WELCOME HOME!**



Gary Sinise and his Lt. Dan Band are returning to Beaufort. Here are the concert details

Jan. 18—Gary Sinise and his Lt. Dan Band are coming back to Beaufort for a concert. It will be the second time the actor's cover band has performed in the coastal South Carolina city and it comes 30 years after Sinise starred as Lt. Dan in the movie "Forrest Gump," which was filmed in the Beaufort area. Sinise will perform at the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Feb. 23, with gates opening at 5 p.m., the actor's foundation and the air station announced.

The Lt. Dan Band's performance falls on the same weekend of the Beaufort International Film Festival, where Sinise will receive the Pat Conroy Lifetime Achievement Award on the 30th anniversary of the release of "Forrest Gump." The concert is open to local residents and all military personnel. Check out the ticket link here or go to ltdanband.com or the air station Facebook page for more information. However, Gunnery Sgt. Kayla D. Rivera, a Marine spokesperson, said the ticket link was set up only as a way to gauge attendance and tickets are not required. "We're expecting between 2,000 and 3,000," Rivera said. "We're supporting anybody who is willing to come. And we don't have a cap." The concert will be conducted outside of the barracks area. See our website vvasc.org for more information concerning the concert.

The Wall that Heals



























The Wall that Heals Continued





Local Volunteers about 60 started building the wall on Nov 7th from 07:30 am to 5:00 pm we finished. Members from our VVA Chapter 1049 Spartanburg Helped provide security at the Wall 24/7 wall was open. We helped set wall up, provided security and then tore wall down Sunday Nov 12 at 2:00 pm. Members from VFW's, American Legions, Marine Corps League and civilian Volunteers helped at the wall. Members who helped from my Chapter 1049 (first photos are: Larry Miller, Paul DeAngelo, Mike Owensby, Dean Yeargin, and Michael Holcomb.



USDVA proposes rule to extend presumed areas of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides, making it easier for exposed Veterans to receive their earned benefits

VA continues to expand access to health care and benefits for toxic-exposed Veterans as a part of President Biden's Unity Agenda for the nation

WASHINGTON, D.C. (USDVA) — The U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs issued a proposed rule outlining plans to expand the locations and time frames for which VA presumes exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides. If this proposed rule becomes final, VA will implement a new presumption of exposure to locations where herbicides were

tested, used, or stored outside of Vietnam. Specifically, this proposed rule would add locations in the United States (<u>full list of US locations where Agent Orange was tested or stored</u>), <u>Canada</u>, and <u>India</u> to the existing presumptive for Agent Orange in Vietnam, Cambodia, Johnson Atoll, Guam, American Samoa, Korea, Laos, and Thailand. A presumption of exposure means that VA automatically assumes that Veterans who served in certain locations were exposed to certain toxins. Presumptive lower the burden of proof required to receive disability benefits, helping Veterans get the benefits they deserve as quickly as possible. This expansion of presumptive will help Veterans who served in the specified locations receive health care and benefits for <u>certain cancers and chronic conditions</u>. To be eligible, a Veteran must have served in the identified location(s) during a specific time period and currently have a condition(s) presumptively associated with herbicide exposure.



Agent Orange Expansion Continued

Delivering world-class health care and benefits to toxic-exposed Veterans is a top priority for VA and the Biden-Harris Administration. As a part of President Biden's pledge to serve Veterans with military toxic exposures, over the past few years, VA has expanded presumptive service connection for more than hundreds of health conditions related to toxic exposures under the PACT_Act – the <a href="https://harris.org/h

"This proposed change would make it easier for Veterans exposed to herbicides who served outside Vietnam to access the benefits they so rightly deserve," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "Our goal is to provide every Veteran – of every era – with the VA health care and benefits they deserve, and this is another step in the right direction."

Veterans who want to file an initial claim for a herbicide-related disability can visit <u>VA's website</u>, use <u>VA Form 21-526EZ</u>, <u>Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits</u>, or work with a VA-recognized <u>Veterans Service Organization</u> to assist with the application process. Veterans may also contact their <u>state Veterans Affairs Office</u>. <u>Survivors</u> can file claims for benefits based on the Veteran's service if the Veteran died from at least one of the recognized presumptive herbicide diseases.

This proposed rule also codifies provisions in the <u>PACT Act</u>, the <u>Blue Water Navy Act of 2019</u>, and the <u>National Defense Authorization Act for 2021</u>.

<u>For additional information on the above, go to our website vvasc.org under things of interest-2 for the full</u> article.



Any Chapter who would like their departed members or Sick Call listed in the Newsletter, please send the information to me tazzcd@aol.com. Thank You Charlie Davies

Every month we are putting out Birthday wishes to all VVA and AVVA members in South Carolina.



Happy Birthday" to all of you with birthdays during the months of January - February



The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of

Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available.

The "Veterans Voice" is the official publication of the Vietnam Veterans of America, South Carolina Chapters and is a bimonthly publication meant as a service to the members of the VVA and any other interested organization. The view expressed herein are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect positions of VVA, Inc., the State Council or other South Carolina VVA Chapters. All VVA members are invited to submit articles, pictures and opinions for publications on subjects that are of interest to veteran's affairs. The publication committee and editor reserve the right to edit for length only and to reject any material that is libelous and obscene.



Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc



Revised: Nov 2018

Application for Membership

Welcome to all Veterans who served during the Vietnam Era

Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975.

Name:			Date of Birth:			
Mailing Address:						
City:			State:	Zip:		
Email:						
Phone:			Gender:			
(OPTIONAL) Chapter N	lumber:		Sponsor:			
VVA has only one category of membership: Life Membership: \$50						
ATTENTION New members: You must submit a copy of your DD- 214 form along with this application and dues payment.						
Payment Method: Credit Card Number: Signature:			Exp. Date:	MasterCard, American Express, Discover)		
Return the required doo Vietnam Veterans of PO Box 64299 • Bal	of America		Add Local	l Chapter information here		



ASSOCIATES OF VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

8917 Colesville Rd • Silver Spring • MD • 20910 www.avva.org

NEW MEMBER: State/Chapter: At-Large? Name: ______ Phone: _____ Mailing Address: RENEWAL: Membership #, if known: State/Chapter: At-Large? Name: Email: Mailing Address: DUES Life Membership Full payment \$100 Annual Membership \$20 Life Member Time Payment Option : \$25 down / \$25 monthly until paid in full VVA Dual Membership: Life Membership: \$50 PAYMENT METHOD DO NOT SEND CASH Check Visa Master Card Discover American Express Credit Card #: Expiration Date: Card holder's signature:

Make your check payable to AVVA

Remit this application and payment to: AVVA

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