



**Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.**  
**VVA South Carolina State Council**



**Boot Tracks**



**NEWSLETTER – March - April - 2026**

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**UPCOMING EVENTS - 2026**

State Council Meeting June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 11:00 PM. Meeting at the American Legion Post 130, 402 Naples Ave Cayce SC 29033.

**South Carolina VVA Chapters/Contacts**

- 303 (Col. Jack Van Loan) – Columbia, David Eisenhauer – [davidike44@gmail.com](mailto:davidike44@gmail.com)
- 523 Foothills – Greenville, Walter “Jay” Phares – [walterphares48@yahoo.com](mailto:walterphares48@yahoo.com)
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- 960 – Manning, - William Rogers - [wgr1947@yahoo.com](mailto:wgr1947@yahoo.com)
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- 1145 Aiken – Reier ‘OLE’ Olson – [SCGATOROLE@att.net](mailto:SCGATOROLE@att.net)

**Donations**

If you wish to donate to South Carolina State Council there are two methods of payment, 1. Credit card, go to our website [vvasc.org](http://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.



**See Page 2 for SC State Council President’s Message”**

## **MESSAGE FROM THE SC STATE COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

On Sunday March 29, 2026, Larry Miller, South Carolina State Council President was the guest speaker for National Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony at Cleveland Park Vietnam Memorial, Greenville SC. Below is the speech that Larry Miller delivered at the ceremony.

President Donald Trump signed the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017 on March 29, 2017, to officially recognize as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. The significance of this date being the last day Combat Troops were withdrawn from Vietnam on March 29, 1973.

The Vietnam War originally began as a civil war between the North Vietnam and South Vietnam Government. The North Vietnamese Army supported by communist allies and the South Vietnamese Army was supported by anti-communist allies. The US began providing Military Advisors and aid in the early 1950's, with US Combat involvement beginning on March 8, 1965, when 3,500 Marines landed in Da Nang, South Vietnam. When the US finally decided to pull out of Vietnam on May 7, 1975, approximately 2.7 million Military Personnel, of which 11,000 were Women, had served in Vietnam and with the total world-wide active-duty Military Personnel being 8.7 million, with a total of 265,000 being Women.

By the end of May 1975, 58,300 Military Service Members had lost their lives during the Vietnam War, of this number a total of (8) eight were Women Service Members. While 11,000 thousand Women served during the Vietnam War.

As of March 2026, approximately 1,573 Vietnam Veterans remain unaccounted for: 1,237 in Vietnam; 288 in Laos; and 48 in Cambodia.

As Vietnam Veterans began returning home from the Vietnam War, they returned to a Country deeply divided by the war, often facing indifference, isolation, scorn, and open hostility. Even Veteran Organizations like the American Legion and the VFW rejected Vietnam Veterans because older WWII and Korean War Veterans argued that Vietnam was not a “declared war,” using this technicality to deny entry, and harboring resentment over the war’s unpopularity, creating a hostile environment where Vietnam Vets were told they didn’t belong, leading to deep divisions and slow Membership growth for the American Legion and VFW for years.

Though shaken and feeling rejected, a small group of Vietnam Veterans had decided to start their own Veteran Organization. In 1978 a group of activists came to Washington, DC searching for allies to support the creation of an advocacy organization devoted exclusively to the needs of the Vietnam Veteran. The VVA, initially known as the Council Vietnam Veterans was born. By the summer of 1979, the Council of Vietnam Veterans had transformed into the Vietnam Veterans of America with total assets of \$46,506. The Vietnam Veterans of America is the only National Vietnam Veterans Organization Congressionally Chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era Veterans and their Families, with current total assets of \$19,000,000. Currently with a Membership of 94,000 Vietnam Veterans of America is one of the leading advocates lobbying Congress representing not only Vietnam Veterans, but “ALL” Veterans, which has forced Washington and the VA Medical Hospital System to live up to the promises made by Our Government. The VVA’s motto/slogan is “NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER” This is commitment to support Fellow Veterans and ensuring they receive the respect and care upon returning home that many Vietnam Veterans were denied.

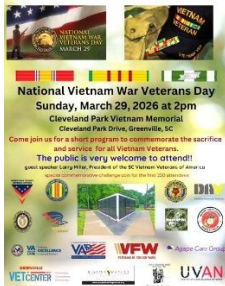


The Vietnam Veterans of America have over 600 Chapters spread out across all 50 States and territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, Philippines, and Virgin Islands. In South Carolina there are 10 VVA Chapters across the State led by a State Council as the States advocate representing “ALL” Veterans in the State.

The National Vietnam War Veterans Day is not about fanfare. Most Veterans will tell you that medals and monuments were never the point. What matters is recognition, genuine meaningful acknowledgment of what we have endured and what we gave. Not for Ourselves, but for the Brothers and Sisters we lost, and the Families who waited through long deployments and longer silences and endured post-war challenges. This day also helps build bridges. Observances like this one remind us that We Veterans are not distant figures. We are part of our communities.

If you are someone who is thankful for today’s Military, take a moment and thank a Vietnam Veteran. You will always be able to recognize a Vietnam Veteran, He or She is the one wearing the Military ball cap with US Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Marine Corps written on the cap. We the Vietnam Veterans of America wear our Military caps not to impress you, but so we can recognize Our Brothers and Sisters in Arms and Welcome them Home and thank them for their Service. To all the Veterans present here today, and Our fallen Brothers and Sisters who did not come Home, I Salute You, Honor You, and am Proud to have served with you. I believe WE; THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA ARE THE GREATEST GENERATION OF ALL TIME.

Larry L. Miller  
President  
SC State Council



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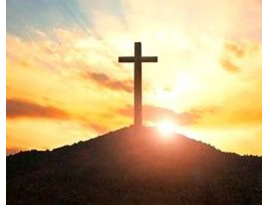


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#1-Flyer for the ceremony, #2-Sign for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, #3-Honor Guard Presenting colors for the ceremony, #4-Alan Dabney Director of Veterans affairs for Greenville, introduced Larry as the Guest Speaker, #5-Larry Miller Delivering his speech #6-Overall view of the ceremony.



## Chaplain's Coner



Greetings comrades and sisters:

In the month of April, we celebrated the most significant time on the Christian calendar, Easter. In the account given by Matthew, it started with the triumphal entry into Jerusalem by Jesus. The crowds had gathered to show him praise with shouts of "Hosanna in the highest!" But things quickly began to change as Jesus entered the temple and drove out those who were buying and selling there. Then the authority of Jesus was brought into question. Things then began to get worse, as a plot unfolded to capture and kill Jesus. Judas, one of His chosen twelve, even agreed to betray Him. Jesus was then arrested, whipped, mocked, and hung on a cross to die. All His followers had deserted Him, even Peter.

If the story of Easter had ended here, we would not be celebrating this time of year. But we know the ending of this Easter, and the wonder and beauty of the resurrection.

I leave you with this thought. If this were a play, and we were to be members of the cast, where would the casting director place us? Would we be part of the crowd that praised Jesus, and then rejected and mocked Him? Would we be considered as the ones buying and selling in the temple? Would we be considered as some of the priests and elders, who questioned Jesus, on His authority? Or would we be considered as some of the ones who plotted to kill Jesus? Could we even be considered as Judas, or one of the others, of the twelve?

I pray that you consider your part in life and play it well.

Your Chaplain,  
Davey Hare

## Information About Veterans' Exposure to Burn Pits within Vietnam

Due to the size of the report, I was unable to download it onto the newsletter. If interested in reading the full report go to SC State Council Website [yvasc.org](http://yvasc.org) under "Things of Interested-4". The report was released back in July 2025 concerning the burn pits that occurred in Vietnam between 1967 – 1975. The report was by United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) "Report to Congressional Committee #GAO-25-107504" This information was supplied to me by a fellow Vietnam Veteran that deals with Agent Orange. Interesting Article!



## **Vietnam Veterans Day March 29<sup>th</sup>**

**On 29 March 2026, Vietnam Veterans Day, we pause to honor the men and women who served during one of the most challenging chapters in our nation's history. Their courage, sacrifice, and unwavering sense of duty stand as a testament to the strength of the American spirit.**

**On this day let us remember those who returned home and rebuilt their lives with quiet resilience, as well as those who never made it back. We acknowledge the hardships they endured, the burdens they carried, and the service they rendered with honor—even when that service was not met with the gratitude they deserved.**

**Let this day serve as a reminder that our Vietnam Veterans are heroes. Their legacy lives on in the freedoms we enjoy, the lessons we have learned, and the commitment we hold to ensure that every generation of Veterans is welcomed home with respect.**

**To all Vietnam Veterans: thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and your enduring patriotism. We honor you today and every day. Welcome Home Brothers and Sisters.**

**Charles Davies  
1967-1968**

### **When Was the Last US Military Draft?**

**The U.S. military is now an all-volunteer force, but for most of the nation's history, it relied on conscription to fill its ranks.**



For most of its history, the United States used a draft—a process of involuntary military conscription—to fill out the ranks of the U.S. armed forces during times of war. The first peacetime draft was enacted on September 16, 1940, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the Selective Training and Service Act, which required all men between the ages of 21 and 45 to register. After World War II, the U.S. government reinstated the peacetime draft, which lasted from 1948 to 1973, a period

of heightened Cold War tensions that included the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

The draft came under fire in the late 1960s when hundreds of thousands of young people each year were conscripted to fight the war in Vietnam. Richard Nixon, campaigning for the 1968 presidential election, promised that he would end the draft if elected. In 1971, President Nixon signed legislation authorizing the end of the draft but later extended it for two more years. The very last draftees reported for duty on June 30, 1973.

*What was the draft lottery?*

For the first few years of the Vietnam War, the Selective Service System worked by drafting recruits from oldest to youngest—starting with 26-year-olds and moving down to 18-year-olds. That changed in 1969, when Nixon urged Congress to bring back the draft “lottery” system last used during World War II. The first Vietnam draft lottery was broadcast on live TV on December 1, 1969. The lottery randomly assigned draft priority numbers to the birthdates of young men turning 20 that calendar year. For birthdates assigned a low number, there was a high probability of being drafted. The first 195 numbers called in the 1969 lottery were conscripted in 1970. Additional lotteries were held in 1970, 1971 and 1972.

*What were draft deferments?*

During the Vietnam War, local draft boards determined if young men were qualified and available to serve. Recruits with medical conditions, for example, could receive a 4-F deferment, meaning they were deemed “unfit for service.” Medical deferments were controversial because well-connected draftees could convince friendly doctors to exaggerate or even invent a disqualifying medical condition.



For much of the Vietnam War, draftees could also get [deferments](#) for being full-time students, farmers, and fathers. Again, the student deferment gave an unfair advantage to draftees who could afford to attend college, leading to a disproportionate number of poor and working-class men sent to the front lines in Vietnam.

In 1971, the student deferment, the fatherhood deferment and most occupational deferments were phased out.

*Who was the last draftee?*

A 24-year-old plumber's assistant named Dwight Elliott Stone is widely credited as being the very last person drafted by the U.S. military. Stone received his first draft notice in 1969 but admitted that he tried everything to avoid conscription, including hiding from the draft board. Threatened with arrest, Stone finally reported for duty in Sacramento, California, on June 30, 1973, the very last day of the Vietnam draft.

*How does the U.S. military work without the draft?*

Starting in 1973, the U.S. military became an all-volunteer force. When American males turn 18, they are still required to register with Selective Service, but no one has been drafted involuntarily in more than 50 years. Instead, service members are recruited with incentives like career training, bonus pay and appeals to patriotism. In the event of a national emergency, however, the **DRAFT COULD BE REINSTATED!** Several weeks ago, on the News there was some Talk about bring back the DRAFT because with the war with IRAN. Could you imagine if they brought back the DRAFT? There would be so much chaos. Years ago, I was part of the Selective Service back in NJ. That was an experience!

## Myrtle Beach Vietnam Veterans Memorial Update

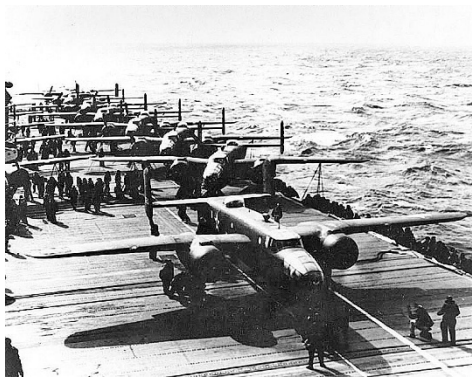


Back Wall they started to insert the mural. Looking Good!

On 22 April 2026, a site inspection was conducted at the proposed Myrtle Beach Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be dedicated on 25 May 2026, Memorial Day at 1100. If you plan to attend, make sure you get there early due to the number of people that will be attending. Parking will be limited.

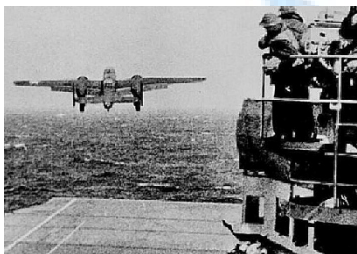


## The Doolittle Raid 18 April 1942



“This Day in History.” “The Doolittle Raid, also known as the Tokyo Raid, was an air raid on 18 April 1942 by the United States on the Japanese capital Tokyo and other places on Honshu during World War II. It was the first air operation to strike the Japanese archipelago. It demonstrated that the Japanese mainland was vulnerable to American air attack, served as retaliation for the attack on Pearl Harbor, and provided an important boost to American morale. The raid was planned, led by, and named after Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, later General of the United States Air Force. Sixteen B-25B Mitchell medium bombers were launched without fighter escort from the U.S. Navy's aircraft

carrier USS Hornet deep in the Western Pacific Ocean, each with a crew of five men. The plan called for them to bomb military targets in Japan and to continue westward to land in China. The bombing raid killed about 50 people, including civilians, and injured 400. Fifteen aircraft reached China, but all crashed, while the 16th landed at Vladivostok in the Soviet Union. Of the 80 crew members, 77 survived the mission. Eight airmen were captured by Japanese Army in China; three were later executed. The B-25 that landed in the Soviet Union was confiscated and its crew interned for more than a year before being allowed to "escape" via Soviet-occupied Iran with the help of the NKVD. Fourteen complete crews of five returned to the United States or to American forces, except for one crewman who was killed in action.



The raid caused negligible material damage to Japan, but it had major psychological effects. In the United States, it raised morale. In Japan, it raised doubt about the ability of military leaders to defend the home islands, but the bombing and strafing of civilians also steeled Japanese resolve to gain retribution, and this was exploited for propaganda purposes.<sup>[2]</sup> It also pushed forward Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's plans to attack Midway Island in the Central Pacific, an attack that turned into a decisive defeat of the Imperial

Japanese Navy (IJN) by the U.S. Navy in the Battle of Midway. The consequences were most severely felt in China, where Japanese reprisals caused the deaths of 250,000 civilians and 70,000 soldiers.”

At one point in my career, I worked with the grandson of Jimmy Doolittle. Interesting character, he had some remarkable stories about his grandfather, including photos.

## Chapter's Activity

### Chapter 925



March 29th VIETNAM VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION, held in Market Common, the Person in uniform received the quilt of Valor is Gerry Nugge, also part of VVA Chapter 925 Honor Guard.



On 20/04/26 VVA Chapter 925 held services for an Army Colonel who passed away.



## Chapter 303



Chapter 303 Members 29 March



Tina McKenzie of  
Blue Star Mothers



Welcome Home Ceremony



Wreath donated by  
Blue Star Mothers

Chapter 303 traditionally holds a ceremony on National Vietnam War Veterans Day, 29 March. This year 2026 this holiday was on a Sunday. Nevertheless, we held our traditional Welcome Home Ceremony at the South Carolina Vietnam Veterans Memorial beginning at a very chilly 0900. This was a solemn and prayerful remembrance ceremony enhanced by the attendance of some of the South Carolina Blue Star Mothers of the Midlands. Commander Tommy Olds of the SC Combat Veterans Group gave an inspiring speech and led us in prayer. Mr. Tim Frambes, Veteran Services Director, South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs spoke about some of his military experience and Services provided by the SC DVA. This was followed by the recitation by Jim Tourgee of the Poem "We Remember Them." Blue Star Mothers presented Chapter 303 with a beautiful wreath. Ms. Tina McKenzie assisted Chapter 303 President David Eisenhower with the laying of the wreath while Robert Taylor played TAPS. Following the conclusion of the ceremony we perform a tradition to honor all assembled VVA members and Combat Vets. After forming a single line in front of the Memorial each veteran proceeds to shake hands and say "Welcome Home" to all fellow veterans.



Any Chapter who would like their departed members or Sick Call listed in the Newsletter, please send the information to me [tazzcd@aol.com](mailto: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

*Happy Birthday” to all of you with birthdays during the months of March - April*



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 988 then 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.



Call or text the Women Veterans Call Center at 1-855-VA-WOMEN ([1-855-829-6636](tel:1-855-829-6636)) or use [the online chat feature](#). Women Veterans Call Center representatives are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. ET, excluding federal holidays. If you contact the Women Veterans Call Center after hours and leave a message, you will receive a return call the next day the call center is open.

*The “Boot Tracks” 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 is those of the writers and does 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 veterans’ 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

## 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 Number: \_\_\_\_\_ 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:    Check    Money Order    Credit Card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover)

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Return the required documents and payment to:

**Vietnam Veterans of America**  
PO Box 64299 · Baltimore · MD · 21264

*Add Local Chapter information here*



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

8917 Colesville Rd • Silver Spring • MD • 20910 [www.avva.org](http://www.avva.org)

**NEW MEMBER:**

State/Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_ At-Large?   
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**RENEWAL:**

Membership #, if known: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_ At-Large?   
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**DUES**

Annual Membership \$20       Life Membership Full payment \$100  
 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**

**Sandy Spring Bank • 8401 Colesville Rd • Silver Spring • MD • 20910**