



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



Boot Tracks



NEWSLETTER – May - June - 2026

South Carolina VVA Council Officers/Committee Chairpersons

President	Larry Miler	miller.larry33@gmail.com
1 st Vice President	Charles Davies	tazzcd@aol.com
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Secretary	Willard “Mike” Field	Willard.field@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Jay Reynolds	jayreynolds45@gmail.com
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Chaplain	Davey Hare	ahare@homesc.com
Newsletter, Website	Charles Davies	tazzcd@aol.com
AVVA	Hope Summers	hopesu@aol.com

UPCOMING EVENTS - 2026

State Council Meeting 11 October 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
- 523 Foothills – Greenville, Walter “Jay” Phares – walterphares48@yahoo.com
- 644 Piedmont – Union, John Gist - johngist23@yahoo.com
- 780 Low Country – Charleston, Janet Chisholm-Richards Janetcr14@gmail.com
- 828 Salkehatchie – Barnwell, Robert Birt – roberthbirt@gmail.com
- 925 Grand Strand – Myrtle Beach – Rich Gregory – rgreg12229@aol.com
- 960 – Manning, - William Rogers - wgr1947@yahoo.com
- 1017 Roger Merck – Walhalla, - Ernest Riley – gibson4956@yahoo.com
- 1049 Westmoreland – Spartanburg, Larry Miller – miller.larry33@gmail.com
- 1145 Aiken – Reier ‘OLE’ Olson – 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 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.



MESSAGE FROM THE SC STATE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Your South Carolina State Council had its second meeting for the year on June 14, 2026, at American Legion Post 130, in Cayce, SC (near Columbia). Seeing that we do not meet as a Council in April, we held Our next 2 Year Cycle 2026-2028 for State Council Election at Our June Meeting. As is the case in most Chapter/State Council Elections, most of your Leadership stays the same as follows?

Larry Miller	State Council President
Charlie Davies	1 st Vice President
Forrest Stegelin	2 nd Vice President (New to State Council)
Willard (Mike) Field	Secretary (moved from 2 nd Vice President)
Jay Reynolds	Treasurer
Adam (Davy) Hare	Chaplain

The State Council welcomes Forrest Stegelin to the Board and looks forward to working with him for the next two years.

On a sad note, Zeke Cervantez, who was Our Secretary until the Election of June 14, 2026, decided not to run again and has decided to travel more ending a very long career in several Leadership Positions not only in his Home VVA Chapter 303, but the SC State Council as well. Zeke was Secretary of the State Council for over 6 years, serving under Sam Brick, then under the current State Council. Zeke was a valuable Member of Our Council and will be missed by all. Though he will be around for a couple more months helping Willard get set up in his new position.

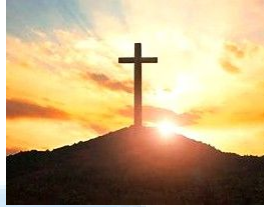
On another sad note, Bill Rogers from VVA Chapter 960 informed the State Council that after 21 years, his Chapter Leadership has decided to dissolve their Chapter due to non-participation by elderly Membership. Bill stated that He has tried several different options to increase participation at meetings. The State Council reluctantly approved President Rogers request after He turned in the Chapter 960 Charter. Members will be able to transfer to Chapters close to them or they will be placed in the “At-Large” Membership assigned to the State Council.

Some of the highlights from my attending the April 7th thru 12th, 2026 Conference held in Arlington, VA are as follows: Our National President Tom Burke spoke at length the first day about the outlook of the National VVA. Revenues are down on a National level by 30% from 2025, with cutbacks to be expected by the National Leadership. As you can imagine the cost of doing business in the DC/Arlington and Maryland areas are becoming cost prohibitive for the National VVA. The decision has been made to move most of the Headquarters from Silver Spring, Md to another location, with an eye on Pittsburg, Pa, or other locations. RFP's have been sent out looking for a new cheaper home, with only keeping a small office in the DC area for the Governmental Affairs Office for lobbying Congress. Lots of things happening with our organization!! If you read your Veteran Magazine for March/April on page 3 and page 12; Our National President Tom Burke talked about ideas on where we as an organization are headed. Several options and solutions are being discussed and will be talked about at the August 10th-15th Conference being held in Jacksonville, Fl. One of the main topics being discussed is the options available to our organization. Your State Council has decided to send representative to this Conference to ensure Our voice is being heard. An option to follow will be discussed and potentially be finalized as to the direction we are headed and will be presented to the Delegates/Members for approval at the 2027 National Convention. After the August Convention in Jacksonville, Fl 2026, it is my sincere hope to inform Our Membership as to where we are headed. **THERE ARE RUMORS FLOATING AROUND ABOUT THE POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF THE NATIONAL VVA HEADQUARTERS. PLEASE NOTE THAT AS OF THIS WRITING, I HAVE NOT SEEN ANYTHING THAT WOULD INDICATE OF THIS HAPPENING. OUR NATIONAL PRESIDENT HAS INDICATED HIS WISH TO CONTINUE OUR LEGACY AS THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA. LET'S CONTINUE TO RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS AND GROW OUR SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTERS!!**

Larry L. Miller
President
SC State Council



Chaplain's Corner



Greetings comrades and sisters:

With the June meeting we elected and installed a new slate of officers for the ensuing year. As your chaplain, I once again would like to solicit your continued support.

Independence Day is just around the corner, and with this year's celebration we will be celebrating the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Independence, as defined by Webster, is "the condition of being independent; freedom from the control, influence, support, or help of others." Independence can be a good thing, as it was 250 years ago, but it is our interdependence on one another that makes us stronger. Some of us would not be where we are if it were not for the support and help of others.

Christ taught us to love one another, as he loved us. I Corinthians 13 say that "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres....And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love."

Let us remember these words, and show our love and respect for one another, as we support and help each other this year.

**Your Chaplain,
Davey Hare**



Hum Good Hose Water



Do you remember playing in the backyard on a sizzling summer day, desperate for something cold to drink? There was nothing quite like the refreshing taste of water straight from the garden hose to cool your entire body down.

You do not have to wait any longer to enjoy that taste again. "HOSE WATER" is now available in supermarkets. It is exactly as good as you remember.

Only Kidding but how true is this? Today one would never think about taking a drink out of a garden hose!

Myrtle Beach Pelicans Military Appreciation Night

On Saturday 16 May 2026 Myrtle Beach Pelicans held their annual Military Appreciation Night. At this game during the pre-game ceremony all branches of the military were honored. Also, local Veterans were honored with their own personal baseball card highlighting their military honors and accomplishment and were recognized during the pre-game ceremony. VVA Chapter 925 Presented the colors, rifle salute, and Taps. Market Common Veterans held a large American Flag in center field.



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#1. VVA Chapter 925 Honor Guard along the 1st Base Line prior to presenting the colors. #2. VVA Chapter 925 members L to R American Flag Jeff Barley, POW/MIA Flag - MJ Hayes, State Flag – Gerry Nugent, Rifle Squad Ron Thornton, Bob McCann, and Richard Fritz, Bugle – Hector Ramos. #3. VVA Chapter 925 Presenting the Colors with a Rifle Salute. #4. Hector Ramos – Playing Taps. #5. Market Common Veterans displaying the American Flag. #6. Blue Star Mothers- displaying their Children Silhouettes. #7 One of the Motorcycle Clubs on the field honoring the Veterans. #8. Charlie Davies 1st Vice President South Carolina State Council and member of VVA Chapter 925. Also, during the ceremony two persons were inducted into the Army.



Memorial Day 2026



Memorial Day is a time for visiting cemeteries and memorials to mourn the military personnel who died in the line of duty. Volunteers will place American flags on the graves of those military personnel in national cemeteries.

The first national observance of what would become Memorial Day occurred on May 30, 1868. Then known as *Decoration Day*, the holiday was proclaimed by Commander-in-Chief John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic – a fraternal organization of veterans – to honor Union soldiers who had died in the American Civil War. This national observance followed the example of many local observances which were begun between the end of the Civil War and Logan's declaration. Many cities and people have claimed to be the first to observe it, however, the National Cemetery Administration, a division of the Department of Veterans Affairs, credits Mary Ann Williams of the Ladies Memorial Association of Columbus, Georgia with originating the idea of an annual date to decorate the graves of Civil War veterans with flowers.

Official recognition as a holiday spread among the states, beginning with New York in 1873. By 1890, every union state had adopted it. The world wars turned it into a day of remembrance for all members of the U.S. military who fought and died in service. In 1968, Congress changed its observance to the last Monday in May, and in 1971 standardized its name as "Memorial Day." Two other days celebrate those who have served or are serving in the U.S. military: Armed Forces Day, which is earlier in May, a ceremonial U.S. day of commemoration for honoring those currently serving in the armed forces, and Veterans Day on November 11, a legal holiday which honors all those who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

D-Day June 6th, 1944



D-Day refers to June 6, 1944, the day Allied forces launched the massive amphibious and airborne assault on Nazi-occupied France, beginning the liberation of Western Europe during World War II. It remains the largest seaborne invasion in history and a turning point in the war. D-Day was the opening phase of Operation Overlord, the Allied plan to establish a foothold in Normandy. The assault phase itself was called Operation Neptune. 160,000 Allied troops crossed the English Channel and attacked a 50-mile

stretch of fortified coastline. The five landing beaches were:

- Utah (U.S.), Omaha (U.S.), Gold (U.K.), Juno (Canada), and Sword (U.K.)

Airborne divisions from the U.S., U.K., and Canada parachuted behind enemy lines to secure bridges, roads, and exits before the beach landings began. By the end of the day, the Allies had established a beachhead despite heavy casualties—over 10,000 Allied casualties, including 4,400 confirmed killed. This foothold allowed more than 100,000 troops to push inland, beginning the liberation of France and ultimately contributing to the defeat of Nazi Germany.



MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL IN WAR BIRD PARK GRAND OPENING

A tribute to the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and to the service, sacrifice, and enduring legacy of those who answered our nation's call.



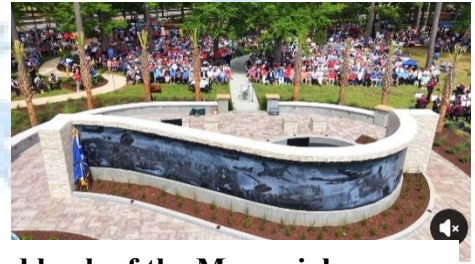
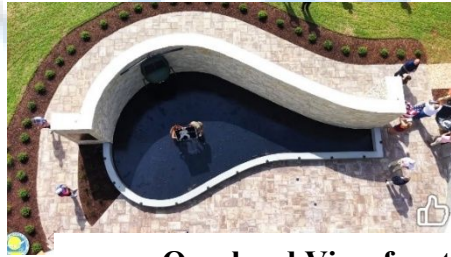
Front of Vietnam Veterans Memorial



Back Wall of the Memorial



Welcome Home to all Vietnam Veterans at entrance to the Memorial!



Overhead View front and back of the Memorial



On May 25, 2026, the City of Myrtle Beach dedicated the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in War Bird Park at Market Common in a ceremony that brought together veterans, families, community members, and honored guests in a shared act of remembrance. Members of VVA Chapter 925 Honor Guard participated in the dedication, helping mark the occasion with dignity and respect as the community gathered to honor the service and sacrifice of Vietnam veterans. More than 1,000 veterans and guests attended the event, reflecting the deep gratitude and lasting remembrance inspired by this memorial.

The memorial stands as a lasting tribute to those who served during the Vietnam War and as a place of reflection for all who visit. Its dedication on Memorial Day affirms the community's commitment to remembering those who served, those who were lost, and the families whose lives were forever shaped by their sacrifice.

May this memorial forever stand as a place of honor, reflection, and gratitude for the men and women who served during the Vietnam War.



Happy 251st Birthday Army

Since its official establishment, June 14, 1775 — more than a year before the Declaration of Independence — the U.S. Army has played a vital role in the growth and development of the American nation. Drawing on both long-standing militia traditions and recently introduced professional standards, it won the new republic's independence in an arduous eight-year struggle against Great Britain. At times, the Army provided the lone symbol of nationhood around which patriots rallied.

Flag Day 2026



When the American Revolution broke out in 1775, the colonists were not fighting united under a single flag. Instead, most regiments participating in the war for independence against the British fought under their own flags. In June of 1775, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia to create the Continental Army, a unified colonial fighting force—with the hopes of a more organized battle against its colonial oppressors. This led to the creation of what was the first “American” flag, the Continental Colors.

For some, this flag, which was comprised of 13 red and white alternating stripes and a Union Jack in the corner, was too similar to that of the British. George Washington soon realized that flying a flag that was even remotely close to the British flag was not a great confidence-builder for the revolutionary effort, so he turned his efforts towards creating a new symbol of freedom for the soon-to-be fledgling nation.

Chapters Activities

Chapter 828

VVA Chapter 828 President Bobby Birt, and VVA members Chaplain Clyde Myrick, 1st Vice President Harry Newton, 2nd Vice President Ray Ekseth, and VVA 828 Associate member Pam Salvo were part of our Memorial Day 2025 at The Veterans Memorial Park in Barnwell.

VVA Chapter 828 joined with The Barnwell County USMC Leatherneck Detachment 1227 to provide a well attended event with our guest speaker and recently retired USMC Captain Breeland Gloster.

Also, VVA Chapter 828 members officially dedicated (6) new composite park benches, recognizing those members who paid for the composite benches and bronze plaques park additions.

Barnwell High School JROTC presented the colors for our event.



Chapter 303

17 March 2026 meeting, guest speaker Paula Flesch VVA National Headquarters VSO.

21 April 2026 chapter elections, all incumbent + 2 new directors

On 29 March 2026 attended National Vietnam War Day Ceremony

30 April 2026 “Last Person Out” annual dinner.

19 May 2026 held a cash raffle.

On 20 May 2026, a poppy drive was held at Fourt Jackson.

On 3 June 2026, 4/39, Troop Symposium

Monthly Bingo, Dorn VA CLC 2nd Thursday.

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 May - June

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential -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

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