



Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.

VVA South Carolina State Council



NEWSLETTER –November - December – 2025

South Carolina VVA Council Officers/Committee Chairpersons

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UPCOMING EVENTS 2025/2026

State Council Meeting February 8th, 2026, 12:00 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
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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.



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

MESSAGE FROM THE SC STATE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

It has been a Month since I attended My First Leadership Conference as Your State Council President in Arlington, Va October 21st thru 25th, 2025. I thought it appropriate to try and brief Everyone on the results of My Journey in this process. I will not go through the day-by-day agenda but only try to highlight the important items that I feel are important.

As of October 2025, there are 93,378 Vietnam Veterans of America Members on the National Register, and We continue to grow, signing up new Members Monthly. There are 11,600 AVVA Members Nationally 929 VVA Members are also Members of the AVVA. There are 544 VVA Chapters across the United States and Puerto Rica, with 44 State Councils Nationally. Some States do not have a State Council, only Chapters.

The National VVA HQ has a budget of 8.9 million dollars for 2025. As of 10/24/2025, 6 million of this budget has been expended. National VVA HQ has their monies invested with a Charles Schwab Investment Broker, with a return of 3.7% in safe investments over a 6-month period for 2025. Our total National assets total fourteen million dollars. Our Broker says that we are in decent shape, but there are concerns; one of which is the tariffs imposed, revenues are 15% behind projected outcomes (budgeted). National Leaders are looking for new sources of income/donors. Household Goods Program continues to grow, with a better outlook for the future.

There are 23 VVA National Committees that support “ALL” Veterans; regardless of Veterans age and or War they participated in!! All forty-four of the State Council Presidents participate in one or more of these Committees and help shape the result for success. Each Committee has a chairperson selected from and by the State Council Presidents. The Committees are as follows; Agent Orange, Constitution, Convention/Conference Planning, Finance, Government Affairs, Homeless Veterans, Legacy Taskforce, Membership, Minority Affairs, National Disciplinary, Pow/Mia, PTSD & Substance Abuse, Public Affairs, Veterans Against Drugs, Veterans Benefits, Veterans Health Care, Veterans in The Justice System, VA Voluntary Service, Women Veterans, Convention Rules, Credentials, Elections, Resolutions. I have listed all the Committees so that you understand and realize how involved the National VVA HQ is in Serving Our Veteran Community, both on a local Level, State and National levels by lobbying in Congress.

Tom Burke (Our National VVA President) will be hosting a Leadership Conference July/August 2026 time limit to finally receive input from all 44 State Council Presidents, Board of Directors, and the National Leadership on the VVA’s Legacy. During this Leadership Conference in 2026, it will hopefully be decided on what Our next step will be, as we as an organization continue to age; to present to the Delegates at the next National Convention in 2027. The National Leadership wants to set an exact date for us to no longer exist and fade away; whereas the State Council Presidents want to have a natural mechanism, whereby when Our National VVA Membership decreases to a point where it is very obvious, we are losing Members due to age, a date would be set by the Delegates for us to pass Our Legacy on to a successor Organization. We as State Council Presidents feel that if we continue to grow in Membership, (as the numbers of New Members currently show) Nationally, that we stay as we are Vietnam Veterans of America. It is the belief of the State Council Presidents that Our VVA Organization has a strong advocate voice in Congress, which must continue to ensure “ALL” Veteran Groups receive the benefits they deserve.

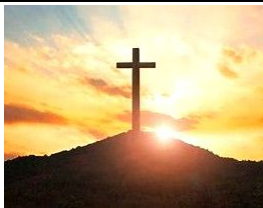
It is my sincere hope that all the above information has made each of you realize how important Our Organization is to Past, Present and Future Veterans.

On a Personal Note, My Wife and I wish Each of You and Your Families a great Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God Bless You All.

Larry L. Miller
President
SC State Council



Chaplain's Coner



Greetings comrades and sisters:

This past month we recognized Veterans Day and we celebrated Thanksgiving. On Veterans Day we should have remembered the words of John 15:13, which says "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends". We as veterans know that we were all called upon, to be willing to do just that. It has been said that only two defining forces have ever offered to die for you: Jesus Christ and the American G. I. One died for your soul, the other for your freedom.

On Thanksgiving we should have been giving thanks to our God, for the many blessings we have been given and for the willingness of those who continue to serve our country, granting us our freedom.

Christmas is just around the corner, and I pray that we all will have a joyous time with family and friends. I pray too that we will remember that the birth of the 'Christ Child', is the reason we celebrate. So, let us also remember the words of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Your Chaplain,
Davey Hare

Happ 250th Birthday Marine Corps



On November 10, 1775, the United States Marine Corps was founded at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. Since that historic day, for 250 years, the United States Marine Corps has served honorably in every clime and place. Marines have fought from the shores of Tripoli to the valleys of Afghanistan – always the most ready when the nation is least ready.

Coming from all walks of life, Marines are forged by the fires of the Crucible, turning everyday citizens into adaptive warfighters with problem-solving skills and a willingness to win against any adversary. No matter what their ranks, Marines stay true to the uncompromising standards found in their core values of honor, courage, and commitment. Those who have worn the uniform continue to serve their nation and their Corps through their lived examples of our ethos, leading the way in business and their communities, and embodying the spirit of "Once a Marine, always a Marine."

Marines always answer the call of the Nation – distinguishing themselves in battles at Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, the Chosin Reservoir, Hue City, Fallujah, and Marjah. The same fighting spirit that led Marines then thrives in our Marines today. On any given day, nearly 38,000 Marines are forward deployed around the globe, enabling the Corps to be first on scene, first to help, first to contain a brewing crisis, and if required to do so, first to fight anywhere for as long as it takes. Marines always stand ready. For 250 years, the United States Marine Corps has prided itself on exemplifying its motto of "Semper Fidelis" or "Always Faithful." Please join in celebrating 250 years of the Marine Corps faithful service to our nation. OOHRAH!!



Happy Birthday Space Force



The United States Space Force was founded on 20 December 2019. It is the newest of the six Armed Forces of the United States. It is also one of two independent space forces in the world. It traces its origins to the Air Force, Army, and Navy's military space programs that began at the onset of the Cold War. The first participation of utilizing space forces for combat operations was during the Vietnam War, and it has participated in every major military operation since.

Happy Birthday National Guard



On December 13, 1636, the first militia regiments in North America were organized in Massachusetts. Based upon an order of the Massachusetts Bay Colony's General Court, the colony's militia was organized into three permanent regiments to better defend the colony. Today, the descendants of these first regiments - the 181st Infantry, the 182nd Infantry, the 101st Field Artillery, and the 101st Engineer Battalion of the Massachusetts Army National Guard – share the distinction of being the oldest units in the U.S. military. December 13, 1636, thus marks the beginning of the organized militia, and the birth of the National Guard's oldest organized units is symbolic of the founding of all the state, territory, and District of Columbia militias that collectively make up today's National Guard.

November 11, 2025 Veterans Day



Veterans Day (originally known as Armistice Day) is a federal holiday in the United States observed annually on November 11, for honoring military veterans of the United States Armed Forces. It coincides with holidays in several countries, including Armistice Day and Remembrance Day, which also occur on the anniversary of the end of World War I. Major hostilities of World War I were formally ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918 when the Armistice with Germany went into effect. At the urging of major U.S. veteran organizations,^[c] Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day in 1954. Veterans Day is distinct from Memorial Day, a U.S. public holiday in May: Veterans Day commemorates the service of all U.S. veterans, while the older Memorial Day, which grew out of Civil War commemorations, specifically honors those who have died while in military service. Another military holiday that also occurs in May, Armed Forces Day, honors those currently serving in the U.S. military. Additionally, Women Veterans Day is recognized by a growing number of U.S. states that specifically honor women who have served in the U.S. military.

December 7th, 1941



The "Day of Infamy" speech, sometimes referred to as The Infamy speech, was a speech delivered by Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd president of the United States, to a joint session of Congress on December 8, 1941. The previous day, the Empire of Japan attacked United States military bases at Pearl Harbor and the Philippines, and declared war on the United States and the British Empire. The speech is known for its famed first line, which opened with Roosevelt saying, "Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy..."

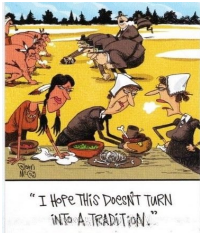


December 7th, 1941 Continued

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, the United States Navy base at Pearl Harbor in the Territory of Hawaii was attacked by 353 Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service aircraft in a surprise military strike, destroying various American ships and aircraft, and killing over 2,400 civilians and military personnel. After consulting with his cabinet, Roosevelt decided to deliver an address before the joint session of the Congress the next day.

Roosevelt's speech was worded to reinforce his portrayal of the United States as a victim of unprovoked Japanese aggression and appealed to patriotism rather than to idealism. Roosevelt's choice to speak promptly helped to make the speech rhetorically powerful. According to author Sandra Silberstein, the speech followed a well-established tradition of how "through rhetorical conventions, presidents assume extraordinary powers as the commander in chief, dissent is minimized, enemies are vilified, and lives are lost in the defense of a nation once again united under God". The speech had an immediate positive response and long-lasting impact. It is one of the most famous speeches of American politics. It was broadcast live by radio and attracted the largest audience in American radio history, with over 81% of people tuning in to hear the speech. Soon after the speech, Congress almost unanimously declared war against Japan, formally entering World War II. The White House later received a number of telegrams praising Roosevelt's stance. The speech has since been used in various films. Roosevelt's description of December 7, 1941, as "a date which will live in infamy" has been compared with November 22, 1963, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the September 11 terrorist attacks, and January 6, 2021, the storming of the United States Capitol.

Thanksgiving (Turkey Day)



Over the years Thanksgiving has been a tradition, watching football games and having a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. As you can see football all started back on November 24, 1621, when the pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indians shared their autumn harvest feast. Not knowing who won the game but it has continued for over four centuries!!



Thanksgiving has passed and hope your stuffing was tasty the turkey was plump, the potatoes and gravy have nary a lump, the pies take the prize, and your Thanksgiving dinner stay off your thighs. Hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving.



As the Holidays approach, the South Carolina State Council Board Members would like to take this time to wish all South Carolina Chapter members and their families Happy and Healthy Holidays. May 2026 bring Good Health, Peace, and Happiness? During these holidays remember all the people who are deployed, fellow Veterans who are continuing to battle their injuries, and those who made the alternate sacrifice for our



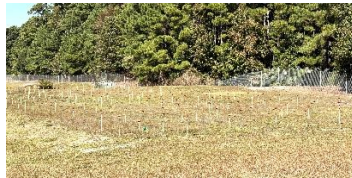
Country.



Chapters Activities

Field of Flags – Chapter 925

On 5 November 2025 City of Myrtle Beach Public Works with approximately thirty volunteers from several Veterans organizations including VVA Chapter 925 helped to mount a field of American Flags located in an open area within War Bird Park, Market Common. There were 250 flags mounted on this day. The flags will be on display until Veterans Day 2025. They will be remounted on Memorial Day 2026. The flags start from the first flag by Besty Ross showing the thirteen colonies to present. What is their meaningful sacrifice? While there is no specific time to create this eye-catching exhibit, it is common to see them on military holidays like Memorial Day and Veterans Day.



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Pictures left to right. 1. Open field where the flags will be mounted. All flags were mounted onto r-bar. 2. 250 flags folded and brought to the field by City of Myrtle Beach Public Works, 3. Chris Aranda from the Vet Center and Ron Thornton, VVA Chapter 925. 4. Volunteers mounting the flags. 5. VVA Chapter 925 President Rich Gregory, Charlie Davies 1st Vice President SC State Council, and member of VVA Chapter 925, Ron Thorton. 6. Ron Thorton and Hector Ramos VVA Chapter 925. 7. Bob McCann, Ron Thorton, and Rich Gregory VVA Chapter 925. 8. Volunteers mounting the flags. 9. A welcome sign at the entrance of the exhibit. 10. All the Volunteers who participated in this event. 11 12. Each flag has a tag that gives a little history in the year posted. 13. Posters for the 250th birthday of this great nation. 14. Showing the inside of the rows of flags.

VVA Chapter 925 presented the colors on 9 November 2025 at the First Presbyterian Church Myrtle Beach. The Long Bay Symphony Orchestra performed “Sounds of War and Peach” a free concert for Veterans.



Chapter 303



Left to Right: Dave Barnes, Forest Steglin, Al Hethcox, Mike Field, Ed Hogue, Jay Reynolds, Jerome Shaw, Ed Ott, Tony Lolas, Ron Hagell, Richard Walker, David Eisenhower. The Board and Membership of VVA Chapter 303 of Columbia, SC, are spearheading the Recognition and Memorial of those of our comrades still MIA. The Chapter has chosen four of the twenty-seven still Missing in Action from South Carolina. The Chapter follows through with a legacy of recognition.

- **Recognition of National POW/MIA Day, held annually on the 3rd Friday of September. Honoring all Service Members who were prisoners of war or are still missing.**
- **Meetings include the honoring of the presence of the 'Empty Chair,' which is a physical symbol of the VVA's commitment to achieving the full accounting of ALL U.S. Servicemembers with emphasis on the Vietnam Conflict.**
- **The continuing promise for the veterans and families who lived through this chapter of history. The recognition of Vietnam MIAs is not just a commemoration but a promise of commitment to those who served. It is a promise that we will never forget those who were held captive or never came home.**

On Veterans Day, 11 November 2025 Chapter 303 held our traditional ceremony at the South Carolina Vietnam War Memorial in Columbia's Memorial Park. The ceremony included the pledge of allegiance, remarks, poem, and Taps. We then participated in the annual City of Columbia Veterans Day Parade, another chapter 303 tradition. Some of our members marched and passed out hundreds of small flags to spectators while others rode on our float.



Veterans Day 2025 Ceremony



Joe Williams and Al Hethcox carry Banner.



Ron Hagell on Veterans Day

In November, our Board of Directors approved the development of a new Chapter 303 website expected to be live on the Web very soon. This website will include a secure portal with a Member Directory. The objectives of our website include better member communication as well as public relations and new member recruiting.

Other recent activity in our chapter includes a focus on Vietnam War POW/MIA's. We have identified four MIA's still unaccounted-for with hometown addresses in our chapter area. We intend to contact the families of these veterans to offer our support.



Chapter Activities Continued

Chapter 1049



Three Members of VVA Chapter 1049 Spartanburg, helped celebrate the Marine Corps Birthday (250 Years) November 10, 2025!! Left to right, Gary Swistak, Larry Miller, and Bob Roy. Also, members of Marine Corps League Detachment.



On Oct 16, 2025, three Members of VVA Chapter 1049 Spartanburg; left to right, Carroll Owings, Mike Owensby, Art Allum were recognized and honored to be inducted into the Veterans Hall of Hero's for their continued Service and Dedication to Our Country!! Congratulations!!



On Oct 23, 2025, at the Leadership Conference in Arlington, VA towards the end of the day, this American Flag was presented to Tom Burke VVA National President to be held and cared for by VVA National. Supposedly this flag had flown on top of Hill 937 (Hamburger Hill) after 12 attempts had been made to take the Hill from the NVA!! (May 10-20, 1969) 1,800 US and South Vietnamese Troops finally made it up on top of the 3,000 ft hill. 72 Americans died, seven were MIA, 410 were wounded. 600 NVA were killed. Supposedly after Johnny Andrew's passed away recently, his apartment was being cleaned out and in his closed, a shoe box was found and when opened this American Flag was found!! With a short story written saying that after the 10 days battle this American Flag was flown on top of the hill and Johnny Andrew's packed it up and placed it his possession and had it all these years. He had no living relatives that could be found, so it was donated to the VVA on Oct 23, 2025, in Arlington, VA.

Vet Center Veterans Expo 2025



On 24 November Vet Center in Myrtle Beach held their annual Veterans Expo and food drive. There were 139 Veterans who attended this event with approximately 20+ vendors. This expo is geared for needy and homeless veterans. At the opening ceremony VVA Chapter 925 presented the colors.



Free Military Service Plaque



Free Military Service Recognition Plaque

A gift for the holidays! Together We Served is offering all Veterans a FREE, hi-resolution military service recognition plaque, ready to print and frame. Printable in 11 and 17-inch width sizes to suit any wall.

1. Use this link (<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVA/bulletins/3c57c7b>). This will get you into the VV newsletter. Or go to VVA State Council website vvasc.org, go to links if interested, see VA newsletter 12-11-2024 and use the button, it will pull up the VA newsletter. The link is on the first page. Just follow the instructions. It is a unique plaque to have.



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 November - December



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

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**

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