



# ***Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.***

## ***VVA South Carolina State Council***



### ***Boot Tracks***



## **NEWSLETTER – March – April - 2025**

### **South Carolina VVA Council Officers/Committee Chairpersons**

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### **UPCOMING EVENTS 2025**

State Council Meeting June 8<sup>th</sup> 2025, 12:00 PM. Meeting at the American Legion Post 130, 402 Naples Ave Cayce SC 29033.  
VVA National Convention August 9<sup>th</sup> 2025, New Orleans LA

### **South Carolina VVA Chapters/Contacts**

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1145 Aiken – Reier 'OLE' Olson. –	<a href="mailto:SCGATOROLE@att.net">SCGATOROLE@att.net</a>

### **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](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**

### **Vietnam Vets of South Carolina**

Am writing this as I am waiting to find out status of two VA Claims at an American Legion and SC Sec of Veterans Affairs' hosted Veterans Experience Action Center (VEAC). Am looking to see status of an appeal of a hearing denial for alleged lack of military connection and to determine what is happening to a recent disability claim in process. VEAC started in North Carolina few years ago and our SC American Legion followed suit with programs throughout the state. It is designed for vets to talk in person to VA officials who are handling or overseeing claims. In some cases vets can file and have the entire matter resolved during the day. I got here early 7:30 on Saturday, March 22d. It is last day of the Columbia area event. Vets from all over SC and the geographic area attend. I saw a guy from Atlanta who drove over just for this. We mentioned this at our last state council meeting and had flyers for the program.

UPDATE. Am writing this after attending VEAC . Wait was reasonable with VA visit by zoom in cubicle with earphones and microphone for my use. Reese, the VA rep answered all questions and said my rating would be forthcoming within the week. It was! Got it on Tuesday just after. A well worthwhile visit. Thanks to SC American Legion and SC Secretary of Vet Affairs, Todd McCaffrey, who was there, for doing this. I understand maybe 1,000 vets participated during the three-day event.

We already are working on our National convention in August. Each chapter must be up to date with its reporting requirements to send delegates to the New Orleans event. Candidates for national office are required to declare by the end of March or go through a complicated process at the convention. Also, proposals for resolutions or constitutional amendments must be in by the end of March. We have three proposals for constitutional amendments submitted. One is to clarify the application of Robert's Rules. The other two relate to annual filing requirements—the election and financial reports. Proposal is to remove those requirements and the constitutional draconian effects of failure as unnecessary.

Each chapter can have delegates dependent on the chapter size. Pretty much one for each 50 members. We also may have some extras if a chapter does not use its allocation. Check with me if such is the case. I already understand at least one extra will be needed. The state council will look at financial assistance for convention attendance in our June state council meeting. We have limited funds and chapters have first responsibility to assist.

Chapter Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurers please get your financial and election reports out soonest. If on a two-year election cycle and no election required this year, send in a copy of last year's report with note election not needed this year. Do not delay. Be sure to email all reports. DO NOT mail. National is on a mission to weed out chapters that are weak and unresponsive. No continuances as in past years. In SC we are strong and have been 90% on time in the recent past. We need to be 100% and early. Please at least by June 1st.





## MESSAGE FROM THE SC STATE COUNCIL PRESIDENT CONTINUED

The convention is in New Orleans from 5-9 August at the Marriott Hotel, 555 Canal Street. It is an important convention as the delegates will determine the future of the VVA. There is a strong push to have specific dates for dissolution or whatever the closure is being called with the whittling down of our National programs and affiliations. Already National has shredded some veteran service programs and is looking to cut down board size and other programs. For the near term it is going to continue profit sharing with chapters and state councils. Some funds may be forthcoming in April. Each chapter and our council need to start looking at its plans for the future to include fund raising for support if it has not done so already. Jay Reynolds our Treasurer is already working this. Our Secretary, Zeke Cervantez, has done a great job for Chapter 303 in this area. Our state council meeting on June 8 will look at our future. In the meantime state council Regional 3 presidents will meet and National will have a Special Board meeting at its April meeting to look at all this.

Very respectfully

Sam Brick,

SC VVA State Council Presidents.



### Chaplain's Coner

Greetings comrades and sisters:

I have often been asked, "how do you know if God exists?" well, that's difficult to answer, because trying to prove it is next to impossible. Faith is the only way I can answer it. Faith is something we all have, in one form or another. We have faith that the lights will come on when we get up in the morning and turn on the light switch, or that the water will flow when we turn on the faucet. Faith is the answer to a lot of questions that can't be proven by mathematics or science.

One of the greatest mathematicians of his day was the French religious philosopher and scientist Blaise Pascal (1623-1662). He is well known in the engineering community for 'Pascal's Law', which describes the actions of pressure in a vessel. This is the basis for which all hydraulic, pneumatic, and vacuum systems work. I said all this to show you that even as brilliant as he was, he still maintained that the only perfect knowledge came through Christian revelation, and he believed that faith was a sounder guide than reason. He stated that "reason can go only so far, but faith has no limits". He also developed what is known as 'Pascal's Wager'. He reasoned that we wager our place in the afterlife, for what we do in this life right here, and what we do depends on whether or not we believe God exists. *If you behave morally, as if God exists, and He does, you win everything. If you behave morally, and God does not exist, you lose nothing, because you have nothing to lose. So, either way you win! But if you behave immorally, as if God does not exist, and you are right, you win nothing. But if you are wrong!! You lose everything!!*

I now leave you with these words. "We live by faith, not by sight." (II Cor. 5:7) "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)

Your Chaplain,

Davey Hare





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



National Vietnam War Veterans Day is observed annually on March 29 in the United States. It is a national observance that recognizes veterans who served in the US military during the Vietnam War. March 29 was chosen as National Vietnam War Veterans Day because on March 29, 1973, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) was disbanded and the last U.S. combat troops departed the Republic of Vietnam. The last unit was elements of MACV's Infantry Security

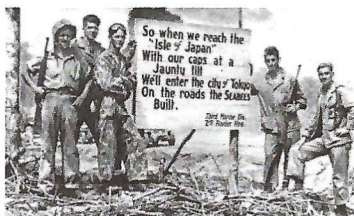
Force (Special Guard), actually special couriers. On March 29, 2012, President Barack Obama proclaimed March 29, 2012, as Vietnam Veterans Day. The proclamation called "upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that commemorate the 50-year anniversary of the Vietnam War. On December 26, 2016, the Vietnam Veterans Day Coalition of States Council presented a letter to President Elect Donald Trump and Congressional leadership outlining the history and timeline of cause to establish March 29 as Vietnam War Veterans Day and requesting that it be one of the first legislations passed and signed into law during the 115 Congress. On March 28, 2017, President Trump signed the *Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017*. This act officially recognizes March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. The Act also includes the day among those days on which the US flag should especially be displayed. *Welcome Home to all our brothers and Sisters.*

## SeaBees Happy 83<sup>th</sup> Birthday



As the prospect of war with Japan loomed in the late 1930s, the U.S. Navy began a massive base-building program on islands scattered across the Pacific, using unarmed civilian contractors. When war was declared following Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the use of civilians who were neither trained to defend themselves nor allowed to carry weapons became untenable, even as the Navy's construction needs became paramount. On Dec. 28, 1941, Rear Adm. Ben Moreell, commander of the Bureau of Yards and Docks (BuDocks) and the Navy's Chief of Civil Engineers, requested authority to activate, organize, and train a new Naval

Construction Regiment comprising three Naval Construction Battalions – men recruited from the construction trades and trained by the Marines in ground combat. Officially designated "Seabees" on March 5, 1942, they were given their motto by Moreell – *Construimus, Batuimus* ("We Build, We Fight") – and their emblem, a bee in Navy uniform, carrying both construction tools and a submachine gun. As they continue to expand their heritage into the 21st century, the Seabees have adopted a second, unofficial, motto – "Can Do Since '42" – reflecting the official theme of the 75th anniversary: "Built on History, Constructing the Future."



A sign posted by Marines of the Third Marine Division, Second Raider Regiment with a tribute to the Seabees, Jan. 1, 1944. The Seabees and Marine Corps had a special bond of mutual respect, having shared much of the same hardships and dangers in the Pacific War. National Archives photo





## Merchant Marines Happy 87<sup>th</sup> Birthday



The U.S. Merchant Marine Corps was officially founded on March 15, 1938, chaired by Joseph P. Kennedy (father of President John F. Kennedy). The United States Merchant Marine is an organization composed of United States civilian mariners and U.S. civilian and federally owned merchant vessels. Both the civilian mariners and the merchant vessels are managed by a combination of the government and private sectors, and engage in commerce or transportation of goods and services in and out of the navigable waters of the United States. The Merchant Marine primarily transports domestic and international cargo and passengers during peacetime, and operate and maintain deep-sea merchant ships, tugboats, towboats, ferries, dredges, excursion vessels, charter boats

and other waterborne craft on the oceans, the Great Lakes, rivers, canals, harbors, and other waterways. In times of war, the Merchant Marine can be an auxiliary to the United States Navy, and can be called upon to deliver military personnel and materiel for the military. In the 19th and 20th centuries, various laws fundamentally changed the course of American merchant shipping. These laws put an end to common practices such as flogging and shanghaiing, and increased shipboard safety and living standards. The United States Merchant Marine is also governed by more than 25 (as of February 17, 2017) international conventions to promote safety and prevent pollution. In 2022, the United States merchant fleet had 178 privately owned, oceangoing, self-propelled vessels of 1,000 gross register tons and above.<sup>[9]</sup> Nearly 800 American-owned ships are flagged in other nations. The federal government maintains fleets of merchant ships managed by the United States Maritime Administration. In 2014, they employed approximately 6.5% of all American water transportation workers. Merchant Marine officers may also be commissioned as military officers by the Department of Defense. This is commonly achieved by commissioning unlimited tonnage Merchant Marine officers as Strategic Sealift Officers in the United States Navy Reserve. During World War II, nearly 250,000 civilian merchant mariners served as part of the U.S. military, transporting supplies and personnel. Between 1939 and 1945, 9,521 merchant mariners died, a per capita casualty rate greater than those of each U.S. Armed Forces branch.<sup>[15]</sup> The GI Bill Improvement Act Of 1977 P.L. 95-202, granted veteran status to Women Airforce Service Pilots and "any person in any other similarly situated group" with jurisdiction granted to the Secretary of Defense, and delegated to the Secretary of the Air Force. Merchant mariners who served in World War II were denied such veterans recognition until 1987 when a federal court ordered it. The Court held that the Secretary of the Air Force wrongfully denied active military service recognition to American merchant mariners who participated in World War II.

## The Battle of Iwo Jima



The Battle of Iwo Jima (19 February – 26 March 1945) was a major battle in which the United States Marine (USMC) and United States Navy (USN) landed on and eventually captured the island of Iwo from the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) during World War II. The American invasion, designated Operation Detachment, had the goal of capturing the island with its two airfields: South Field and Central Field. The Japanese Army positions on the island were heavily fortified, with a dense network of bunkers, hidden artillery positions, and 18 km (11 mi) of tunnels. Mount Suribachi had been turned into a

mountain fortress and observation point. The American ground forces were supported by extensive naval artillery and had complete air supremacy provided by U.S. Navy and Marine Corps aviators throughout the battle. The five-week battle saw some of the fiercest and bloodiest fighting of the Pacific War. Of the 21,000 Japanese soldiers on Iwo Jima, only 216 were taken prisoner. American casualties were 19,000 wounded, 7,000 KIA. It has been estimated that as many as 3,000 Japanese soldiers continued to resist within various cave systems on the island after most major fighting ended, they eventually succumbed to their injuries or surrendered weeks later.





## The Battle of Iwo Jima Continued



The invasion of Iwo Jima was controversial, with retired Chief of Naval Operations William V. Pratt stating that the island was useless to the Army as a staging base and useless to the Navy as a fleet base. Numerous damaged American Bombers, go on to utilize the Island as an emergency Landing location. Experiences with previous Pacific Island battles suggested that the island would be well-defended and result in significant casualties. The lessons learned on Iwo Jima served as guidelines for American forces in the Battle of Okinawa two months later, as well as for the planned invasion of the

Japanese homeland. Joe Rosenthal's Associated Press photograph of the raising of the U.S. flag at the summit of the 169 m (554 ft) Mount Suribachi by six U.S. Marines became a famous image of the battle and the American war effort in the Pacific. The above pictures were taken on 02/23/1945, the American flag was raised over Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima. More than 80,000 Marines fought for 36 unrelenting days during this pivotal battle of WWII. Picture # MC-3379 WWII v.1 No 482 & 483.

The six Marines who raised the flag on Iwo Jima are identified as: Michael Strank, Harlon Block, Franklin Sousley, Ira Hayes, Rene Gagnon, and Harold Schultz

Strank, Block and Sousley died on Iwo Jima less than a month after the raising of the flag

## VVA Chapter Activities Chapter 1049

On February 15 and 16, 2025, several Members of VVA Chapter 1049 Spartanburg, spent their weekend at the Spartanburg Gun Show (Saturday/Sunday) introducing Our Chapter to the Public and Veterans looking for a great Military Organization to join!! We not only gain a few Members but received \$320 in donations for Our Chapter. All in All, a great weekend!! Our Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1049, Spartanburg and My Wife's Church Group, donated a car load of candy to over 100 Children in Swannanoa, North Carolina Area for the Hurricane Helene disaster to brighten those Children's Valentines Day February 14, 2025!! VVA Chapter is having a Gun & Pistol Raffle





## **Chapter 1145**

Chapter 1145 Aiken will hold their annual Vietnam Veteran day ceremonies at 1100 at Wade Hampton Park in North Augusta. The MC for the ceremonies will be past president Donald Jenkins. Guest speaker will be Retired Army Sgt. Major Phil Homan. Sgt. Major Homan is also the commander of American Legion post 71 in North Augusta and a member of VVA chapter 1145. Prayers will be offered by chapter chaplain Ken Eaton. Laying of wreaths at the memorial will done by board members Kevin Joy and Bruce Campbell, V.P. Reier Olson and Past President Ralph Wainwright. Also laying wreaths will be members of DAR. Taps will be played by member Bobby Snider. At 1300 There will be a dinner for members of Chapter 1145 and their guest. There will be awards presented to this year's past guest speakers as well as this past year's officers and directors. The American Legion post 71 in North Augusta will donate the post for the dinner and the post kitchen crew will prepare the food. The chapter will pay for the food and there is no cost to members and guest.

**#NEVER AGAIN WILL ANOTHER GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER,**



## **Chapter 303**

March was a month of Commemoration and Awards for Chapter 303. On March 28<sup>th</sup> Chapter 303 was recognized for our Volunteer Services at VA Dorn Hospital. We were presented with the Commemorative Proclamation of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, National Vietnam War Veterans Day we held a Ceremony at the SC Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Memorial Park in Columbia. USC Army ROTC provided the Color Guard and a patriotic poem was read by Member Jim Tourgee. Following remarks by Senior Commander Tommy Olds of the SC Combat Veterans Group we held our traditional Welcome Home greeting with the Combat Veterans. Chapter 303 was also honored by DoD as a Top Fifty Partner in Vietnam War Commemoration. Our membership meeting in February featured a presentation by LTC Dudley, the Professor of Military Science at the University of South Carolina Army ROTC. The guest speakers at the March meeting were Sallie Wallace and SSG Christopher Osborne from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment (Training) at Fort Jackson. Chapter 303 membership continued to increase to 208 members currently.



DOD Top 50, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Vietnam War Commemoration







**COMMEMORATION OF THE 50TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM WAR**  
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
A PROCLAMATION

Today, I lead our Nation in somber reflection as we continue the 13-year Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War that began in 2012. We salute our brave Vietnam veterans who, in service to our Nation and in defense of liberty, fought gallantly against the spread of communism and defended the freedom of the Vietnamese people.

Fifty years ago, in 1967, nearly 500,000 American troops served in South Vietnam, along with approximately 850,000 troops of our allies. Today, during Veterans and Military Families Month and as the Federal Government observes Veterans Day, I am in Vietnam alongside business and political leaders to advance the interests of America, and to promote peace and stability in this region and around the world. I cherish this opportunity to recall, with humility, the sacrifices our veterans made for our freedom and our Nation's strength.

During this Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, we embrace our responsibility to help our Vietnam veterans and their families heal from the heavy toll of war. We remember the more than 58,000 whose names are memorialized on a black granite wall in our Nation's capital for having borne the heaviest cost of war. We also pay tribute to the brave patriots who suffered as prisoners of war, and we stand steadfast in our commitment not to rest until we account for the 1,253 heroes who have not yet returned to American soil.

To ensure the sacrifices of the 9 million heroes who served during this difficult chapter of our country's history are remembered for generations to come, I signed into law the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017, designating March 29 of each year as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Throughout this Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, and every March 29 thereafter, we will honor all those who answered our Nation's call to duty. We vow to never again confuse personal disapproval of war with prejudice against those who honorably wear the uniform of our Armed Forces. With conviction, our Nation pledges our enduring respect, our continuing care, and our everlasting commitment to all Vietnam veterans.

We applaud the thousands of local, State, and national organizations, businesses, and governmental entities that have already partnered with the Federal Government in the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. Because of their remarkable leadership and dedication, countless Vietnam veterans and their families have been personally and publicly thanked and honored in ceremonies in towns and cities throughout our country. During my Administration, I promise to continue coordinated efforts to recognize all veterans of the Vietnam War for their service and sacrifice, and to provide them with the heartfelt acknowledgement and gratitude that they and their families so richly deserve.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby confirm the commitment of this Nation to the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, which began on Memorial Day, 2012 and will continue through Veterans Day, 2025. I call upon all Americans to offer each of our Vietnam veterans and their families a thank you on behalf of the Nation, both privately and during public ceremonies and programs across our country.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand seventeen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-second.

**Proclamation presented to Chapter 303 at VA Dorn Hospital  
On 28 March 2025.**



**Salle Wallace, MAED, ATC, LAT Fort Jackson  
SSG Christopher Osborne, NCOIC 3/39 Inf Bn  
Aid Station. Guest Speaker at VVA Chapter  
303 March 2025 Membership Meeting.**



**LTC Dudley PMS Army ROTC  
Guest Speaker at VVA Chapter  
303 February Membership  
Meeting**







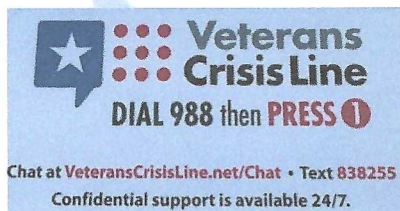


Any Chapter who would like their departed members or Sick Call listed in the Newsletter, please send the information to me [tazzcd@aol.com](mailto:tazzcd@aol.com). Thank You Charlie Davies

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



*Happy Birthday" 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 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.*







Service to America

## 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**

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