

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.  
South Carolina State Council

The generosity to help us endure the recent travails of Hurricane Helene' is most appreciated. We never thought such a tropical storm would veer to the right and sneak up the Appalachian Mountains to rip our trees apart, destroy houses, kill our neighbors, and play havoc with our lives. Many of us up in the South Carolina mountains prepare for winter storms and have generators to get us through some tough mountain winters.

We never thought a tropical hurricane would be a worse visitor. Trees already with roots loosened by recent heavy rains fell all around us. Our SC VVA State Chapter President faced losing several friends. One killed a first responder Fire Chief and his passenger, a new young 18-year-old recruit who was on his first ride. Both were crushed in their fire truck as it was rushing to help some folks with live power wires dancing around them. Another friend was killed as he got out of his truck to see how to get out of his neighborhood during the storm.

Our Vietnam Vets lost power for days, losing frozen and refrigerated foods. Trees hit our houses damaging roofs and closing off rural driveways impeding access. In one case a 200-year-old oak crashed into a home destroying a kitchen where the chapter 828 president had just been drinking some coffee. He had heard some creaking and got up to see what it was. Insurance helped but his five thousand deductible was not covered. Nor were the attendant costs that had to be undertaken immediately. So many other stories. You helped us pay 30 members, which our state council disaster committee determined was a fair set rate of \$350 for food loss for those without electricity for over two days.

This storm demonstrated that we Vietnam Vets are a family. You helped brother and sister members of the VVA and two recent AVVA widows who lost electricity for over a week in the Greenville area. On behalf of our Upstate South Carolina chapters who bore the brunt of Helene' thank you for your help and that you cared enough to get us through some very difficult times. You reinforced what the VVA can be for a bunch of old folks who realized they were part of a family that was there for them in a tough time.