



The Veteran's Voice

Newsletter

August 2024

Edition

THE VETERANS VOICE

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VOLUME I ISSUE 8 AUGUST 2024

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President

Conrad Letellier
Vice-President

Secretary
Conrad Guay

Treasurer
Ted Sirois

Jim Davis
Quartermaster

Chaplain

Jim Davis
AVVA Chapter
Representative

Board Members
Joe Armstrong
Conrad Letellier
Conrad Guay
Paul Therrin
Eric Lozier
Carl Rabida



NOT ALONE AT THE WALL

The old vet walked up slowly, not sure that he could bear

To see the names of his old friends, etched oh so clearly there

Unsteady on his feet he was, and so he thought it best

If he took just a moment, to sit awhile and rest

The echoes of those days long past, when they were all so young

Blended with the present, and somehow became one

He heard a voice he'd known quite well, from boot camp to Da Nang

Well bless my soul its Bobby Lord, he died in so much pain!

Oh! Awful at Ah Shaw Valley, where we fought so hard, so long

One single wayward bullet, and Bobby Jones was gone

I've surely lost my mind! He thought, as bobby took his hand

Lifting him back to his feet, though he could barely stand

Said Bobby, "hey you finally came!", To see me at "The Wall"

I know how hard this is for you, I've seen your teardrops fall

But listen close, you need to know, that you are not alone

That's what they told me as we walked, toward that golden light
Assuring me that never more, would I be asked to fight
What joy it was to see the boys, Hey! You remember Jim?
And good ol' George who always shared , the goodies sent to him
They're all right here, why even my brother Joe
He bought it on that bloody hill, 875 Dak To
Joe says to me "now brother, we have lots of work to do
Watching over these old vets, the new young soldiers too
He said "you see the men who live, the lucky ones they're told
Will have some special troubles, even as they're as they're growing old
We've got to send them hope because, the times when they are weak
There memories will come to life, and haunt them while they sleep
So like Joe said, I went to work and stayed here at my post
I know I probably scared you, HA! You never see a ghost
They come here by the thousands to, this place known as "The Wall"
And I just knew some day for sure, you'd come and see us all
Oh man I tell you I have got, some friends to share with you
We, who never came back home, from "nam" are just a few
Right here with me are men who died, for naught at Belleau Wood
In that great war,"to end all wars", as if there's one that could
For you, along beside me, are boys who made a stand
At Normandy, Corrigador, the battle of Bataan
These fellas from the second war, want me to wish you well
And tell you there's a heaven, for those who've been to hell
Here also are the men who say, they sure know all about
The wars some call "A conflict", the wars that leave a doubt

They fell for good and always on, Korea's northern plain

No real war? More conflict, death found them just the same

You see, there are so many here, who know what broke your heart

They've been with you since you came home, to help the healing start

For all a band of brothers, for each another man

Whose shared your sadness, fear and pain, in wars on foreign land

So walk away from this dark wall, and know it to the bone

That as you walk, where "ere" you walk, you've never been alone

By Sharon Thornton Palmer



President's Corner

Hello Everyone

WOW! I can't believe that here we are going into August. Where did the month of July go? LOL. Pretty soon our thoughts will be turning to the colder weather and with that comes the snow and ice but for now lets all enjoy the nice warm (HOT) weather that we have now.

Last month we had the honor of having the Vietnam Veterans of America Region 1 director Justin Latini and his lovely wife Kim attend our meeting. We had a great time and a lot of information was shared. If you were not able to attend you missed a great meeting.

Also last month we had the Wall that heals come to Biddeford. I was asked to give the opening speech for the opening ceremony.

It was a meaningful even that offered those veterans and family members that have never seen or are able to go to the Wall in D.C. A chance to come and reflect and honor the memory of those names etched on the wall.

If you have an idea for a show please email me and we can talk about it.

**Respectfully
Joseph Armstrong
President**

From the Desk
Of
Conrad Letellier
1st Vice-President

Hello Brothers and Sisters

As mentioned by our president the traveling Wall That Heals came to Biddeford. I had the honor to be able to read the names of those still missing from our great state of Maine. It is our hopes and prayers that one day they will all be returned to us.

This even will also give us an opportunity for exposure to let the public know that we have a local chapter and to hopefully expand our membership.

Respectfully
Conrad Letellier
1st vice-president

Membership Corner

By
Conrad Letellier Membership Chairman

Membership is an on going event. I am amazed at how many Vietnam veterans right here in Biddeford that have no idea that we (our chapter) even exists.

Its important that we take every opportunity to inform them of who we are and where we meet. If you meet a Vietnam veteran is simple just asked them “Did you know that we have a local chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America right here in Biddeford?” Chances are they will say NO. That gives you a chance to in form them of where and when we meet.

We have plenty of brochures to hand out. Stop by on Wednesdays and pick up a couple and keep them handy to hand out

It is so very important to keep up updated on your contact information. Otherwise we can not update you on events and news important to our chapter.

Conrad Letellier
Membership Chairman

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

Conrad Letellier

Hello Brothers & Sisters

My duties as your service officer is going very good. I am averaging about two new cases a week and receiving two maybe three phone calls a week as well.

Whenever I help a veteran process their claim I also ask them to keep me updated of their Progress when ever they receive any information on their claims. I have been receiving a lot of awesome responses from the veterans on their claims, which makes me feel that what I am doing is well worth the time and efforts.

I am still in the process of contacting the warden of the Main State Prison to try and get into the prison and talk with the veterans that are incarcerated there and try to help them file any VA claims they may have for disabilities or other VA related issues

Being a service officer is very rewarding and helps me keep my head straight and focused, which is a very good thing for me.

See you next month

Respectfully
Conrad Letellier
Veterans Service Officer

***Never be a Prisoner of your Past.
It was just a lesson, not a lifer sentence
By Walt Whitman***

***Submitted by
Pricilla L. Miles AVVA member***

POW MIA INFORMATION

Conrad Letellier

Hello Brothers & Sisters

Not much has changed during the past month with POW/MIA accountability here in the State of Maine or anywhere else. There are still 12 from Maine that are still missing, hopefully one day they will be able to come home to their families. I will keep you all informed of any new information that becomes available.

Respectfully

Conrad Letellier

STATUS OF THE POW/MIA ISSUE

March 1, 2024

1,577 Americans are now listed by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War: Vietnam - 1,237; Laos - 285; Cambodia = 48; Peoples Republic of China territorial waters - 7.

On March 23 rd, DPAA posted the accounting for two USAF officers, listed MIA in Vietnam on April 12, 1969/ Their identities - Colonel Ernest DeSoto and Captain Frederick Hall were released on April 7, 2023.



History of the POW/MIA Flag

In 1970, Lt. Commander Michael Hoff went missing in action when his plane crashed over Laos, Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. His wife, Mary Hoff, felt there was a need for the nation to have a symbol in which those who were lost to war would not be forgotten, thus becoming the pioneer of the POW/MIA flag. She read an article in the Jacksonville Florida Time Union about how Annin & Co. Helped to design and manufacture flags for newer UN member nations. Mrs. Hoff contacted Annin and their VP of Sales, Norman Rivkkes commissioned graphic designer Newt Heisley to design a flag to represent the group/

Newt Heisley found inspiration for designing the flag from his past experiences as a WWII pilot: “I used to fly within range of the Japanese and wondered how I would hold up if I ever got captured. When I did the design, I thought how easy it would be to forget those guys.” The now familiar slogan :You are not forgotten” was born of that sentiment. Heisley’s son, Jeffrey, upon returning home ill from Marine training, inspired the gaunt appearance of the flag’s silhouette. In addition to the slogan and silhouette, the flag also boasts a 5-point star, a watchtower with a guard on patrol, a strand of barbed wire, and a black and white wreath.

WHAT DOES THE POW/MIA MEAN?

The POW/MIA flag is a reminder for Americans to never forget our Prisoners of War (POW) and those Missing in Action (MIA). Prisoners of War are individuals - whether military personnel or civilians - who are captured and imprisoned by the enemy during times of war. The status of life for those who are MIA have not yet been confirmed. According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, over 83,00 Americans who fought in wars since World War II are still; missing.

On November 18, 1997 the 1998 Defense Authorization Act was signed into law. A section of the act required that the POW/MIA flag be flown from Military Installations, National Cemeteries, V.A. Medical Centers and many other Federal Buildings

From The Desk of the Events Coordinator

Jim Davis



NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE SUNDAY 04 AUGUST 2024. MEETING WILL START AT 1:30 PM 13:30 HRS. THERE WILL BE NO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING PRIOR TO OUR REGULAR MEETING.

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1044

Launches FREE COFFEE FOR VETERANS WEDNESDAYS

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1044 is located at 508 Elm Street Biddeford, Maine (basement of the American Legion Post 26). Our founding principle is "Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another".

Meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month. Meetings start at 1:30 pm (13:30).

On Wednesday 17 July 2024 Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1044 will open their doors for the newly established FREE COFFEE FOR VETERANS WEDNESDAY program at their R&R center located at 508 Elm Street Biddeford, Maine 04005 (Downstairs of the American Legion Post 26). The R&R center will be a place where a veteran from ALL eras not just Vietnam can come down and just get away from the daily grind of everyday life.

At the center we will offer to the veterans a place to sit and enjoy a cup of fresh coffee and a pastry or donut, read a book or magazine or just talk with fellow veterans. We also have several tables set up with board games such as chess, checkers.

A veteran's service officer will be available to answer any questions on veterans benefits or to help file a claim for disability thru the VA system.

Also available will be a veterans assistance officer to help those veterans and or families in need of assistance with heating fuel or other issues.

For more information contact our chapter president Joseph Armstrong at (207) 494 – 9287 or visit us at <http://www.vva1044maine.org>

LOCATION: 508 Elm Street Biddeford, Maine 04005

WHEN: Wednesdays

TIME: 09:00 am – 11:00 am

Membership in VVA is the Right Choice

First I want to say "WELCOME HOME "

The goals of Vietnam Veterans of America are to promote and support the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans. To create a new identity for this generation of veterans and to change public perception of Vietnam veterans.

VVA is a "home of our own" - a community of fellowship with people who share our experiences, needs, and hopes for the future.

Be as active as your time, talents, and interests allow. Or, simply be a proud member of VVA, knowing that your membership helps VVA work for you and your fellow Vietnam veterans.

Membership includes a subscription to our award-winning newspaper, The VVA Veteran, bringing you updates on issues and legislation affecting veterans, as well as unique articles on the people, places, and history of the Vietnam experience.

Membership is open to U.S. armed force 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.

Our chapter is working very hard to help our brothers and sisters, their families and veterans of today.

We meet once a month at the American Legion Post 26 located at 508 Elm Street Biddeford. Meetings start at 1:30 (13:30)

If you would like further information on joining our chapter please email me your mailing address at **cwomaine@metrocast.net** I will send the information to you.