

310 Dispatch



*Together We Make
A Difference*

*Charles S. Kettles
Chapter 310*



Never again shall
a veteran coming
home from battle
be made to feel
alone and
unappreciated!

**January 2024,
Washtenaw County,
Michigan**



Editor's Note: -- Worthy of note this month is VVA 310 President Vance McCrumb's reference to the various bricks that have been dedicated to departed Chapter members. Reminds us how precious our time together is. . . . Also, keep an eye on I-94. A section of it has been renamed Washtenaw County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway. No AVVA Report this month, but Jane Kinzinger let us know that Kathy Driscoll is making progress with physical therapy. For the Dispatch Team, Paulo Pereira, Dispatch Editor.

Starting Again . . . 2024!

President's January Message	2
January 2024 Chaplain's Corner	3
VVA 310 Chapter Meeting Minutes	3
Honoring January Anniversaries on the Wall	4
Honoring December Anniversaries on the Wall	6
VA Medical Center Christmas Program	7
Upcoming Events	7
Jocosity	8
Never Forget Your Friends	8
Randy Johnson's Short Autobiography	9
Winter Time and the Ending of Life	10 and 11
All About VVA 310	12

President's Message

By Vance McCrumb



Reflecting on the past year is dominated by the loss of many of our members. Seems our 'Use by Date' is getting closer. Through the efforts of Al Merritt and Lloyd Lee, a bill passed in Michigan State to name a section of I-94 Washtenaw County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway. The signs honor all Vietnam Veterans in Washtenaw County.

Merchandise Chair Stan Harrison had a successful three days at the Clinton Fall festival selling merchandise and signing up a couple new members. We continue to offer our merchandise at the VA on Tuesdays, following our membership meeting, pending approval from the VA.

IBEW employees donated \$3,000 to be used for our Memorial projects. Speaking of projects, the Memorial team was busy last year: new sod and irrigation system at the Memorial, new storage building, and the replacement of the old shed. The new shed at the south end was donated by Home Depot. The new storage building is low maintenance, with metal roof and siding. A second walk-behind mower is to be used at the south shed. A snow blower for the Memorial walkways plus many new hand tools for the mowing crews to use for lawn maintenance. The snow blower is for Wendy's use this winter. If you use it without permission, expect a call for her Uncle Louie:>).

We now have easy access for electricity at the storage building for our annual Memorial Day services. No more struggling to get the small generator running to power the PA system, as well as an outside water faucet for the flowers. The ladies no longer have to haul water to the Memorial.

The Memorial maintenance teams were successful in arranging for construction companies to donate labor and material, to dig the footing and water line

trenches, pour concrete for the footings and floor for the new storage building. Michigan Training and Apprenticeship Local 499 worked the concrete for both the footings/foundation and storage building floor. A new berm has been installed at the west side of the Memorial. Home Depot donated and planted annual and perennial plants on the berm, as well as donating red bark ground cover and a dark ground cover for the berm.

The main building was designed and built by Todd M. Johnson Construction Company, with labor being provided by Ken Moldovan, son of VVA member Kenneth Moldovan, who is remembered on our Memorial bricks.

John Kinzinger continued his VA fundraising for the annual T-shirt and underwear donations, as well as the VA Christmas Party, bringing in former Miss Michigan and current Miss Michigan, as well as Miss Washtenaw County this year. Past President Draper has uploaded the pictures to Flicker.

Putting on my Membership Chair hat, we signed eight new members in 2023. We lost nine from last Memorial Day through December 2023. The following names will be added to the bricks lining the walkway to the Memorial: Bill Abbey - 12/09/2023, Steve Duncan - 08/26, Michael Horsch - 06/29, John McMillan - 06/23 William Christophersen 06/19, Gerold Manners - 2022, (we were not advised until 2023), David Ney - 10/17, Harold Klenk - 10/07 and Dennis Newman - 10/30.

P. S. Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got.



January 2024 Chaplain's Corner

By Rev. Gordon Moore



History has a way of repeating itself by people speaking, in the past, pertinent information that seems to fit the now. I offer words of wisdom from Lord Alfred

Tennyson when he spoke in his poem "In Memoriam":

Ring Out, Wild Bells

Ring, happy bells, across the snow:



The year is going, let
him go;
Ring out the false, ring
in the true.
Ring out the grief that
saps the mind
For those that here we

see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.
Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.
Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out our mournful rhymes
But ring the fuller minstrel in.
Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.
Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

Memories of the Old Year

Submitted by Dave Draper

Novelty brings out the retrospective look of times past. The confluence of the passing year and the coming new time are filled with even greater joy when friends get together. To enhance those special moments, VVA members took time to visit friends at the VA Hospital in fine company, while looking forward to the new.

Click [this link](#) for moments of delight.

Vietnam Veterans of America

Charles S. Kettles Chapter 310

Regular Membership Meeting Minutes

14 December 2023

Call to Order by President McCrumb at 1900 hrs.

Pledge of Allegiance

Opening Prayer: Tim Driscoll

Moment of Silence for POW/MIA'S, their families and those who are serving in hazardous places around the world.

Roll Call: A quorum was established. Welcome Home Everyone!

New Members: US Army veteran, Michael Coleman, served in Germany as a medic.

Motion: by Merritt/Stuart to approve the November Minutes published in the Dispatch. Approved.

President's Report:

Please see my remarks in the *Dispatch*.

Treasurer's Report:

Reports were emailed to the Board and to members who wanted one. Let Bourne know your email address if you desire these reports.

Expenses exceeded revenue on non-restricted funds because of the payments due near year end including Dawn Farm's Thanksgiving Dinner and website hosting fees. We also had end of year expenses from the restricted funds, but income from the Christmas fund and a separate donation to the Support the Troops made the restricted fund come much closer to even. For the year, we are in better position than our budget predicted.

The Board received a copy of the proposed budget for FY 24/25 via email. The Board-approved budget

will be sent to members, along with the notice of the January meetings. Membership will act on the budget at the January meeting.

AVVA Report: No meeting available in the Dispatch Committee Reports

Merchandise: The next sale at the VA this month will be Friday 22 December at 0800.

Washtenaw County Council of Veterans: The Council remains adjourned until February.

Michigan State Council: The Annual Meeting will be in June in Marquette.

Memorial Maintenance: If you would like to join the Memorial Maintenance team, please contact Al (Fredo) Merritt and let him know. The water is off and things are dormant for the season. We have plans to plant a concolor fir tree this spring. We have lost 9 members in good standing since Memorial Day last year.

Website: We have had around 396,000 hits since the website was last rebuilt.

Membership: We are at 212 including tonight's new member and the sudden loss of Bill Abbey.

Newsletter: No report.

Health Care: No report.

LTCCSKMC: No report.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Motion by Luker/Bourne to hold the Annual Recognition Dinner on 13 April 2024 at Local 898, 8975 Textile Rd. Approved.

Good of the Order:

Merritt: Breakfast on Friday: TBD.

Merritt: Bill Abbey and I have been friends for a long time. He was active when he first joined but medical issues slowed him down. I ran into him at Kroger recently. He said he would be at the meeting, but he died the next day.

McCrumb: We need somebody to lead planning the Recognition Dinner. If you are interested, please contact me.

Kinzinger:

- I have a bunch of life magazines from Vietnam era I am giving away.
- The Washtenaw County Honor Guard is looking for more people. They will provide training, uni-

forms and boots. We do about 150 services a year. So far this year, we've done 89.

- I have a copy of our first Articles of Incorporation and the letter of 10 July 1987 saying they are approved by National.

Muller: Most of us have trouble remembering things – especially names. Nevertheless, I like to address people by their name. If I bring name tags to the next meeting, will we wear them? The consensus was that it was a good idea.

Luker: Al (Fredo) Merritt, Wendy Hibbitts and I developed a nonprofit (called "22aday.org") to manage the Veteran Suicide Awareness project done with the crosses at various places including at the Memorial. The trailer and crosses are now in Concord, North Carolina and are being placed everyday by American Legion Post 172. We've been talking to Bob Kwiecinski about having somebody in his neck of the woods in Florida be the next host for the campaign. Bobski said to be sure to let you know that he is thinking of us, is looking forward to seeing us on his next trip up north and that he hopes we all have a good and happy holiday.

Closing Prayer: Tim Driscoll

Flag Salute

Meeting Adjourned at 1935 hrs

**Honoring January
Anniversaries on the Wall**

Private First Class Walter Edwin McIntire, Jr. was born on October 2, 1943, in Laredo, Texas, to Mr. and

Mrs. Walter E. McIntire of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Walter graduated in January of 1964 from Ann Arbor High School, where he was active in Junior Achievement and was the Vice-President of his JA company. He was also active in the Cooperative Occupational Training Program at Ann Arbor High School and worked part-time for S. S. Kresge Company.

Private First Class Walter Edwin McIntire, Jr. began



his tour of duty in Hau Nghia Province, South Vietnam, on August 21, 1965, serving as an infantryman with B Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade. On September 18, 1965, Walter earned a Purple Heart when he was wounded by shrapnel in his leg. He recovered from those wounds and returned to his unit four weeks later. On January 2, 1966, Walter was killed by small-arms fire in action near Bien Hoa Air Base.

Walter Edwin McIntire, Jr. is survived by his parents, three brothers, and two sisters. He lived 22 years and three months. He is resting in Washtenong Memorial Park in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Walter's name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Ann Arbor. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC, on Panel 04E Line 051.

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Warrant Officer John David Eddy was born on March 1, 1950, to Mr. and Mrs. Delvord Eddy of Ann Arbor, Michigan. John is a 1968 graduate of Pioneer High School in Ann Arbor. He loved team sports, the out-of-doors, and camping trips to Lake Huron when he was young. John's ambition was to fly.



Warrant Officer Eddy enlisted in the Army in 1970. He completed helicopter flight training at Fort Wolters, Texas. He went through advanced flight training at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Warrant Officer John David Eddy began his tour in An Xugen Province, South Vietnam, on June 16, 1971. John was the co-pilot of a helicopter gunship when it was struck by enemy gunfire and crashed. Warrant Officer Eddy died with three other crew members on January 11, 1972. Warrant Officer John David Eddy earned the Air Medal for heroism, the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, Air Medal, National Defense and Vietnam Service Medals, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. The South Vietnamese Government presented him with the Military Merit Medal and Gallantry Cross with Palm.

John David Eddy is survived by his parents, a wife, two daughters and a son, and two sisters. He lived 21

years, ten months, and ten days. His name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Ann Arbor. He is also listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on Panel 02W Line 096.

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Warrant Officer Michael Woodrow Hunter was born on January 23, 1944, in Durham, North Carolina, to Mr. and Mrs. Woodrow W. Hunter of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Michael is a 1962 graduate of Ann Arbor High School. He also attended Western Michigan University.

Warrant Officer Hunter entered the Army in 1967 going through Basic Training at Fort Benning, Georgia. He

was trained as a paratrooper and a helicopter pilot. Michael received his Wings as an Army Aviator in April of 1968, graduating tenth in his class. He began his tour of duty in Phuoc Long Province, South Vietnam, on July 14, 1969, serving as a helicopter co-pilot on an AH-1G with C Troop, First Squadron, Ninth Cavalry, First Air Cavalry Division. On January 28, 1970, Michael was killed when the helicopter he was co-piloting was struck by enemy anti-aircraft fire during a gun run. The aircraft was struck by a 50- cal. round causing the main rotor to separate. He received the Silver Star, Purple Heart, and Air Medal.

Michael Woodrow Hunter is survived by his parents, two sisters, and a son. He lived 26 years and five days. He is resting in the Swedish Mission Cemetery located in Centerville Township, Leelanau County, Michigan. Michael's name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Ann Arbor. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC, on Panel 14W Line 075.

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Major George Frederick Vlisides was born on December 31, 1924, in Detroit, Michigan, to Mrs. Elena Vlisides of Ann Arbor, Michigan. George is a 1943 graduate of Ann Arbor High School. George enlisted in the Army Air Corps and received his Second Lieutenant's commission and Bombadier Wings in 1944. He flew heavy bombers but never made it overseas. He graduated from the Military Academy



at West Point near the top of his class in 1950, where his classmates called him "Gorgeous One." George enlisted in the Air Force after graduation from West Point. He earned a Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal, and the Air Medal with two clusters flying 84 missions in the F-84 during the Korean War. He graduated from the Air Command and Staff College in 1961.

Major Vlisides began his tour of duty in Bien Hoa Province, South Vietnam, on November 5, 1964, serving with the 1st Air Commando Squadron, 34th Tactical Group, 13th Air Force. George earned another Air Medal in Vietnam. He also was shot down twice, with the last time occurring on December 29, 1964. He celebrated his 40th birthday on December 31, 1964. On January 27, 1965, George died when his A-1E Skyraider crashed in a landing attempt at Bien Hoa Airfield. He earned another Distinguished Flying Cross and two more Air Medals during his tour.

George Frederick Vlsides is survived by his mother, a brother, and a sister. He lived 40 years and 26 days. He is resting in the Greek Orthodox Cemetery in Ann Arbor, Michigan. George's name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Ann Arbor. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on Panel 01E Line 084.

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Corporal Eddie Wallace was born on January 12, 1949, in Birmingham, Alabama, to Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Lee of Ypsilanti, Michigan. Eddie graduated from Ypsilanti High School in 1968. He worked for Gar Wood Industries before enlisting in the Army in 1968.



Corporal Wallace began his tour of duty in Phong Dinh Province, South Vietnam, on December 20, 1968, serving as a Petroleum Supply Specialist with the 271st Assault Support Helicopter Company, 307th Aviation

Battalion, 164th Aviation Group, 1st Aviation Brigade. Eddie was killed on January 13, 1969, when a hand grenade was thrown at him on guard duty. Eddie had been "In-Country" for only 23 days.

Eddie Wallace is survived by his parents, four brothers, and a sister. He lived 20 years and one day. Eddie is resting in Westlawn Cemetery in Inkster, Michigan. Eddie's name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Ypsilanti. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC, on Panel 35W Line 086.

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Private First Class Michael Dean Cribelar was born on June 27, 1949, to Mr. Woodrow Dean Cribelar and Mrs. Virginia Cribelar. Michael attended Willow Run High School in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He worked for Ford Motor Company at the Ypsilanti Plant before entering the Army on June 9, 1967.



Private First Class Cribelar completed Basic Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky. He began his tour of duty in Pleiku Province, South Vietnam as an infantry-man with B Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division on November 22, 1967. On January 11, 1968, Michael was killed from small-arms fire after being "In-Country" for one month and eleven days.

Michael Dean Cribelar is survived by his parents, wife, two-year-old son, and two sisters. He lived 18 years, 6 months, and 14 days. He is resting in Washtenong Memorial Park in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Michael's name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Ypsilanti. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC, on Panel 34E Line 028.

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Private First Class Larry Gene Gray was born on March 19, 1945, in Missouri to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gray. Larry is a 1963 graduate of Dundee High School located in Dundee, Michigan.

Private First Class Gray entered the Army on July 18, 1966, receiving his Basic Training and Cook's School



at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Larry began his tour of duty in Hau Nghia Province, South Vietnam, on January 5, 1967, serving as a Food Service Specialist with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. On January 17, 1967, he was killed

when the helicopter he was riding on during a combat support mission disintegrated in flight. He was "In-Country" for only 12 days.

Larry Gene Gray is survived by his wife, parents, a brother, and three sisters. He lived 21 years, nine months, and 28 days. He is resting in the London Township Cemetery located near Milan, Michigan. Larry's name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Milan.

His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC, on Panel 14E Line 044.

VA Medical Center Christmas Program

By John Kinzinger

In 1988, VVA held its first Ann Arbor VA Medical Center Christmas program of room visits. Jack McManus



and I started this annual program. Except for the COVID years we have held this annual event every year. This VA program, which does things throughout

the year, is funded separately through an annual letter mailing to supporters. Several contributors are VVA310 members. We also receive gifts from other VVA Chapters, VFW Posts, Unions, businesses and individuals. All, 100%, of these funds go to our VA Medical Center projects and program for Veterans receiving treatments there.

For many years we have given the hospitalized patients a special embroidered shirt, done by Linda



Colby, wife of deceased Chapter member David Colby. Her business, Unique Apel, is located at 1675 Plymouth Road, A2. Throughout the year she purchases a variety

of shirts and embroiders themed with a Flag and the words "PROUD VETERAN" above the Flag and "FREE-DOM IS NOT FREE" below the Flag. The patients love them.

On December 19th we had our best medicine with us, Miss Michigan 2023-4, Miss Michigan 2022-3 and Miss Washtenaw County 2023-4. One played the

violin, and the other two signed photos, chatted, and smiled, cheering up every patient. We VVA and AVVA members, of course, had great enjoy-

ment bringing smiles to the patients and nursing staff, too. And thanks to Meni Draper for taking the photos. Each nurse's station received a wonderful candy tray made by Sandy Martinez. Thank you all for contributing and participating.

Current Events

By Ann Dempsey-Pereira

16 Jan: Merchandise Sales, 0800 hrs, VA Canteen

27 Jan: Vietnam Cease Fire (1973)

08 Feb: Monthly Meetings: AVVA, 1800 hrs; VVA Board 1800 hrs; VVA General Mtg 1900 hrs

09 Feb: VVA 310 Monthly Breakfast, 0900 hrs

13 Feb: Merchandise Sales, 0800 hrs, VA Canteen

19 Feb: Coast Guard Reserve Birthday (1943)

19 Feb: President's Day

** Visit Veterans Radio online ([click here](#)) and make a contribution to help keep this vital program on the air.

Jocosity

By Ken Rogge



A couple in their nineties are both having problems remembering things. During a check-up, the doctor tells them that they're physically okay, but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember.

Later that night, while watching TV, the husband gets up from his chair and asks, "Want anything while I'm in the kitchen?"

"Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?"

"Sure."

"Don't you think you should write it down so you can remember it?" she asks.

"No, I can remember it."

"Well, I'd like some strawberries on top, too. Maybe you should write it down, so as not to forget it?"

He says, "I can remember that. You want a bowl of ice cream with strawberries."

"I'd also like whipped cream. I'm certain you'll forget that. Should you write it down?" she asks.

Irritated, the husband says, "I don't need to write it down. I can remember it! Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream. I got it, for goodness' sake!"

Then he toddles into the kitchen. After about 20 minutes, the husband returns from the kitchen and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs. She stares at the plate for a moment and says, "Where's my toast?"

Of Interest to Veterans

Submitted by Dave Draper and Chaplain Bob Bull

The COMPACT Act: Chaplain Bull brought up the subject of the COMPACT Act, which stands for Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment Act. It was implemented by the VA at the beginning of 2023. This Act gives free emergency care to veterans who are in a suicidal crisis. You do not have to be signed up for the VA or receive VA benefits to be eligible. For more information, please click this [COMPACT ACT link](#).

Never Forget Your Friends

Submitted by George Perrault

A newlywed young man was sitting on the porch with his father on a hot, humid day, sipping ice tea. As he talked about adult life, marriage, responsibilities, and obligations, the father thoughtfully stirred the ice cubes in his glass and cast a clear, sober look on his son. "Never forget your friends," he advised. "They will become more important as you get older." "Regardless of how much you love your family and the children you happen to have, you will always need friends. Remember to go out with them occasionally, do activities with them, call them."

"What strange advice!" thought the young man. "I just entered the married world. I am an adult, and surely my wife and the family that we will start will be everything I need to make sense of my life."

Yet he obeyed his father, kept in touch with his friends, and annually increased their number. Over the years, he became aware that his father knew what he was talking about. In as much as time and nature carry out their designs and mysteries, friends were the bulwarks of his life.

After 60 years of life, here is what he learned:

Time passes. Life goes on. The distance separates. Children grow up. Children cease to be children and become independent.

And to the parents, it breaks their heart, but the children are separated from the parents. Jobs come and go. Illusions, desires, attraction, sex ... weaken. People do not do what they should do. The heart breaks. The parents die. Colleagues forget the favors. The races are over. But true friends are always there, no matter how long or how many miles away they are.

A friend is never more distant than the reach of a need, intervening in your favor, waiting for you with open arms or blessing your life. When we started this adventure called LIFE, we did not know of the incredible joys or sorrows that were ahead. We did not know how much we would need from each other. Love your parents, take care of your children, but keep a group of good friends. Dialogue with them, but do not impose your own views. Stay connected to your friends (even those you seldom see); they help make sense of your life.

To quote Michael Norman in his book *These Good Men*: “As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that, when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades... such good men.” Never forget your friends.

Randy Johnson – A Brief Autobiography

Born and raised in the hills of eastern Kentucky. My Dad was a coal miner and moved his family to Ann Arbor, MI in summer of 1966. I entered senior year of high school at Ann Arbor Pioneer.

In August of 1967, I received my draft notice from Uncle Sam. On a chilly morning Oct. 4th of 1967, my family went with me to the American Legion, which at the time was located right beside the Big House. After coffee, donuts, some gifts, shaving materials, writing materials and hugs, we bound a big bus for Ft. Wayne, Detroit Michigan. All day we tested, took physicals and finally took the oath, still puzzling why grown men would be dressed in black silk panties!

We took the bus to Metro Airport for a short flight to Louisville, Ky. Boarded another bus for a short ride to Ft. Knox. The next morning, while I was in line to receive clothing, the American Red Cross came and told me I had to go back home. My brother had been killed in an auto accident.

Two weeks later I went back to Ft. Knox for the beginning of Basic Training. A short 8 weeks later, I boarded a train for Ft. Polk Louisiana, for Advanced Individual Training, in my case, INFANTRY.

This was hard, intense training, all bullshit aside; we were headed for Nam and better take our training seriously. The final week of A.I.T. we were sent to Tiger Land., an area set up like a village in Nam.

After graduating in March, I was given a 30-day leave prior to shipment to Vietnam. Telling my parents and the rest of my family goodbye, I set out for the war in Vietnam.

Arriving in Camh Ranh Bay, Vietnam I exited the plane, not expecting what I would see. The heat was the first thing I noticed, hard to breathe. A line of men who were

DEROsing or ETSing home waited in line to board the same plane that I had just exited. Off the left I saw what someone told me later there were 300 silver caskets full of dead Americans, ready to be loaded on the plane.

I was introduced to barracks, wooden with canvas covering. Details broke up the monotony as we waited for orders to head out to our units. Finally we were loaded on C-130 troop plane, and supplies and equipment.

We landed at Ah Khe and anxiously awaited our assignments. Standing in long lines in the huge steel sided building, I received my orders, 1st Cav Div, currently base camped at Camp Evans in I Corp. Another C-130 flight to Evans and I was ready for combat, yeah right!

Next morning boarded my first Huey along with 3 other men, taking us out to our unit, A company, 2nd battalion, 7th Cav. After meeting CO, we were introduced to our Platoon Leader and assigned to 1st. Platoon, 1st. squad. I lucked out, every man in my squad was from the south, FL, TX, LA, KY, and GA. Eight men who had lots of combat experience and I knew this was a big plus for me. The first night I could not sleep. The squad leader said we were gonna sweep through tree line and assault a pagoda and cemetery to take out a sniper. All night long, I prayed to God to not let me show cowardice. No one knows what they will do until it happens. I was so afraid I might run.

Next morning, woke up early, getting my stuff together, ammo, M-16, and watching the guys to see if there was something I needed to do. A big guy from TX asked me what my religion was, and I said, no preference. “Better get one, ‘short round.’” There it was, my nickname that would follow me back to the World.

The next few hours were horrifying. Our squad leader was killed on our first assault. I fell in behind a dude from NC and he coached me through the rest of the morning. Four KIA enemy soldiers lay on the ground as the firefight subsided. The smells of the gunfire, smoke grenades, the smell of blood that had oozed out of the dead bodies, were my welcome to Nam.

For the next year, I endured skeeters, big enough to rape a goose, leeches, pythons, the little ‘two step’ viper, ants, elephants, tigers, monkeys, and the ever present FU lizard. Booby traps, pungi pits, snipers, thirst, sometimes drinking water out of ruts in road, or

rice paddies.

Air assaults were a daily occurrence. The ride in the choppers was scary, but not as scary as approaching a LZ, (landing zone), would it be a 'hot' or 'cold' LZ?

Walking point, I carried a Winchester Model 94 pump 12 gauge shotgun and a machete as I carved my way through the jungle.

Then one day, LT said you can go to the rear for a job for the rest of your tour. I had 2 months remaining. KP he said. No Way I said. So I stayed out in the boonies with my buds till the last 10 days. On my last day in country, the men gave me a going-home party. Drank lots of beer.

Leaving them was bittersweet. I wanted to go home, but I didn't want to leave my brothers who were going back out into the jungle.

I received a Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, with 'V' device, Air Medal, also known as Aerial Combat Assault Badge, and the big one, CIB, Combat Infantryman's badge.

Welcome Home, Brothers!

Spotlighting Activities in December and January, 2024

Photos show visitors at the Ann Arbor VA Hospital, as Chapter members and various guests visit the sick.



Miss Michigan gives an autographed photo to one of the patients.



Visitors and VVA 310 Chapter members take the time to visit various rooms, entertaining the patients. This is a traditional activity that happens every year, mostly through the constant work by VVA 310 Chapter member John Kinzinger.



It was just a regular day at the hospital, and then, Miss Michigan walked in. But organizers for this event do more than just this visit. Throughout the year, they prepare for this event. The big day happens almost by magic. Shirts are completed and picked up; volunteers arrive at the VA, prepared to walk the floors, visit patients, and distribute gifts; photographer Meni takes great photos; customary after-visit to the Sidetrack for camaraderie. (Tab for all meals picked up by a noisy sailor seated nearby.) It's a magic mixture of hard work and lots of joy.

**Winter Scenery:
There is beauty, also, in the ending stages.**



Visitors brought their smiles and, occasionally, music also. Those were moments of wellbeing. It became clear that the ancient practices of visiting the sick indeed make a difference. Beauty has healing powers as well.



... and more music, bringing the day's joy to the sick.



All About VVA 310

Vietnam Veterans of America
Charles S. Kettles Chapter 310
National Chapter of the Year:
1999 & 2007
Newsletter of the Year:
2007, 2009, 2011, & 2015
E-Newsletter of the Year 2017

Chapter President: Vance McCrumbs
Vice President: Marv Rivers
Secretary: Jon Luker
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Vietnam Veterans of America
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Please forward. Thank you!