

310 Dispatch

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



*Together We Make
A Difference*

*Charles S. Kettles
Chapter 310*



April 2021
Washtenaw Co.,
Michigan



Editor's Note: This month's AVVA Report contains useful information about vaccines. On another note, volunteers are needed for the August 29th Pig Roast at the Saline American Legion. Contact John Kinzinger to volunteer at 734-645-8647. This fundraiser is very important to support the Chapter budget and projects. Please note that there are two meetings in April: April 8th and April 11th.

-- Paulo-Juarez Pereira, Editor--and the Dispatch Team

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President's Message

By Stan Harrison

This month we will have an extra meeting. It will be on our usual second Thursday at 1900, April 8th. We will discuss and decide whether to file papers to form a new group. The new group would include all VVA 310 and AVVA



members and recruit post-Vietnam Veterans, caregivers, and family members. We will also discuss possibly partnering with WACU (Warriors and Caregivers

United) in future events and projects.

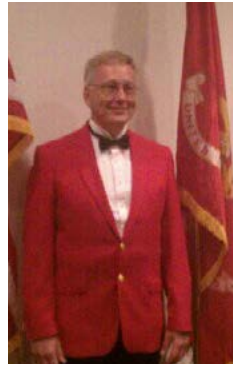
This meeting will be a time to consider our future as the Charles S. Kettles Chapter. We are not at the end of our road yet. We can't even see the end of the road from where we stand, but we had better decide how we want to get there. On Sunday, April 11th, from 1200 until 1500, we will be voting for all elected offices, as we do every year. Please remember to stop by and cast your ballot.

One more note—we WILL have a Pig Roast this year. It will be on August 29th from noon until 1600 at the American Legion in Saline. The Saline Legion has expertise in drive-through service, in case that is what Covid forces us to do. We will need volunteers and monetary donations to pull this off. So, step up and stay proud.

Chaplain's Corner April 2021

By Rev. Gordon Moore

Easter will have come and gone before this edition is out, as it comes so early in 2021. But what never becomes outdated is the work of God through His Christ on the cross to procure salvation—



and with it, forgiveness and restoration to fellowship with God. For that, we shout, "Hallelujah! Great things He has done." But birthing us into His family through the

atonement was only the beginning of His many blessings. Much like welcoming a new child into our world, we then watch that child grow and mature until they become an adult. So we, too, start out on breast milk. We then progress to tougher things to eat and chew on as our growing body demands more nutrition than milk alone can provide. But that only speaks to the physical nourishment needed.

What about the other aspects: mental, spiritual and communion with other people? All need nourishment that starts in the family of origin and quickly expands to the extended family, neighbors, friends, school chums, military and educational families and, not least of all, our church family.

I say all that because we really do need each other—and the older we become, being blessed with age by God, the more reliant we

are on others and their input and support in our lives. That is what makes the VVA, WACU, VFW, American Legion, MCL and other organizations so valuable.

We have come to the autumn of our lives, with grown children, grandchildren, etc., who have developed in part because of our influence in their lives so that they might take their rightful place in society and eventually replace us—sobering thought but a part of life. We have survived wars, the rise and fall of world governments, drastic changes in our own country, economic swings, various diseases, and now, a pandemic that has rocked the world much like the last great one of 1918. That generation survived and eventually prospered as will this generation because we have left our mark on them.

I, for one, have confidence that the world systems will change; but our God, enthroned on High, will assist those who turn to Him for direction. We drastically need to turn our eyes upward from where our help comes . . . God, the maker and sustainer of life.

How ironic that His Son had to die to give us life. And He did so willingly:

"Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing. It is finished. Into your hands I commit my spirit."

Let us celebrate life with the same blessed assurance that we can commit ourselves into God's hands no matter what we are going through, for He can be trusted.

Blessed be His Name!

Honoring April Anniversaries on the Wall

Corporal William Henry Johnson

was born on December 9, 1943 in Union City, Tennessee to Jewell and Johnnie Johnson of Ann Arbor, Michigan. William is a 1961 graduate of Ann Arbor High School.



A caption in the Ann Arbor High School Yearbook for 1961 states, "Willie came to Ann Arbor High from Slauson. While at the High School,

he participated in all intramural sports. He also likes to swim. His plans for after graduation are not as yet definite. He will either work or join the Army." William enlisted in the Marine Corps in August of 1963 going through Marine Corps Boot Camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. He received further training at Camp Pendleton, California before going to Okinawa.

Corporal Johnson began his tour of duty near Danang, Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam serving as a rifleman with E Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Amphibious Forces. William was killed on April 17, 1966 as a result of small arms fire from a sniper while manning a defensive position.

William Henry Johnson is survived by his parents, a sister and a brother. He lived 22 years, 4 months and 8 days. William'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 06E Line 119.

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Private First Class Clive Vere

Mosier was born on January 3, 1943 in Campbell, Missouri to Mr. and Mrs. John Mosier of Chelsea,



Michigan. Clive was employed as a foreman with Seller's Construction Company before entering the Army on September 1, 1966. According

to his wife, "he was known as "Buster" by all his family and friends. Clive loved baseball. His favorite foods were chocolate chip cookies and fried chicken. He sent a picture of him holding a little Vietnamese girl. He said in his letter, "Honey, I miss you greatly, but these people need us. No one else will help them. We have to."

Private First Class Mosier began his tour of duty in Military Region 3, South Vietnam on February 16, 1967 serving as an infantryman with B Company, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division. Clive was killed on April 24, 1967 as a result of an explosive device. Clive Vere Mosier is survived by his wife, parents, and four brothers. He lived 24 years, 3 months and 21 days. He is resting in Arborcrest Cemetery in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Clive'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 18E Line 080.

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First Lieutenant Robert John

Crabbe was born on June 12, 1941. Crabbe began his tour of duty in Binh Dinh Province, South Vietnam on January 11, 1966 serving as a Field Artillery Unit Commander with Headquarters, Headquarters Battery, Division Artillery, 1st



Cavalry Division. According to a posting by fellow Field Artillery Officer Candidate School Alumni from Fort Sill, Oklahoma,

Randy Dunham, "First Lieutenant Crabbe served as an Aerial Observer with the First Cavalry Division. He was in a UH-1C Helicopter Gunship from Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry that was shot down while making a rocket run on a Viet Cong position. All five men on Board the aircraft died in the incident." He was killed on April 18, 1967 after serving one year, three months and seven days "In-Country."

Robert John Crabbe lived 25 years, 10 months and 6 days. He is resting in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, Section 4, Site 2969-C. Robert'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 18E Line 045.

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Sergeant First Class Michael Jon Wallace was born on November 21, 1939 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Sergeant First Class Wallace began



his tour of duty in Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam at Camp Evans serving as a CH-47 Helicopter Repairer with B Company,

228th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 11th Aviation Group, 1st Cavalry Division. On April 19, 1968 three Army helicopters were shot down in the A Shau Valley of South Vietnam. All three were making supply runs to Landing Zone Tiger in Quang Tri Province. Five men survived the three crashes, and nine men remain missing. On April 19, 1968, Michael was a crew chief on a CH-47 Chinook helicopter flying a mid-day supply mission. The helicopter was descending through an overcast sky and was on its final approach to Landing Zone Tiger in Quang Tri Province when it was struck by enemy .50 cal and 37mm ground fire, caught fire and began to burn. The gunner witnessed Michael and the flight engineer, Anthony Housh, jump from the helicopter when it was about 100 feet off of the ground. The aircraft crash landed and the remainder of the crew was rescued. Michael's body was never recovered and he was listed as Missing In Action (MIA). On February 6, 1974, Michael's status was changed to "Died While Missing In Action." Michael Jon Wallace is survived by his wife and two children, and a sister. He lived 28 years, 4 months

and 28 days. He is remembered with a Military Marker in East Oak Grove Cemetery in Chelsea, Michigan. Michael's name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township as MIA. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on Panel 51E Line 002.

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Private First Class James Roy Bihlmeyer was born on November 12, 1946 in Manchester, Michigan



to Mr. and Mrs. Roy J. Bihlmeyer. James is a 1965 graduate of Manchester High School. He worked at the Saline Plant for Ford

Motor Company prior to entering the Army on May 16, 1966.

Private First Class Bihlmeyer went through Basic Training at Fort Riley, Kansas. James began his tour of duty in Long An Province, South Vietnam on December 1, 1966 serving with A Company, Second Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division as an infantryman. He died as a result of enemy small arms fire on April 15, 1967.

Private First Class James Roy Bihlmeyer is survived by his parents, a brother and a sister. He lived for 20 years, 5 months and 3 days. He is resting at the Bethel Church Cemetery in Manchester, Michigan. His name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Manchester. James Roy Bihlmeyer also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in

Washington, DC on Panel 18E Line 028.



VVA 310 Chapter Meeting Minutes

Vietnam Veterans of America Charles S. Kettles Chapter 310 Regular Membership Meeting Minutes

11 March 2021

Call to Order by President Harrison at 1900 hrs.

Pledge of Allegiance

Opening Prayer: Bob Bull 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. Three attended via Zoom. Welcome Home Everyone!

New Members: Paul Dunlap, with the Army Security Agency, embedded with the infantry on the ground in Vietnam, intercepting enemy communications.

Guests: None.

Motion to approve the February Minutes as published in the Dispatch. Bull/Hitte. Approved.

Meeting Recessed for Nominations for Elected Offices: (Second Round) Wilson For President: Harrison (accepted) Vice President: Rivers (declined) McCrumb (accepted)

Secretary: Luker (accepted)
Treasurer: Bourne (accepted)
One Year Board: Moving from two-year Board to one-year Board are: Bob Bull, Sandie Wilson, Steve Hitte, Chris Wetzler and Larry St. Antoine.

Two-Year Board (accepted) Bauder, Betz, Bayha (declined) Hall, Perrault, Henry, Driscoll, Merritt, Kinzinger, and Draper

Sgt at Arms: Clarke (accepted)

Regular Meeting Resumes

President's Report:

We are working on two major things: The Pig Roast, which will be held at the Saline American Legion; and strategic planning, especially discussion of starting a new nonprofit corporation.

Treasurer's Report: Reports were emailed to the Board. Reports were also made available to members and others via email on request. Our year started out with a prediction that expenses would exceed revenue for unrestricted accounts by around \$6,700. We amended the budget when Covid hit to reduce that deficit. Our actual year-end result was a net gain of \$92, so we did very well in controlling our costs.

The Memorial building project has brought in around \$11,000, of which \$9,600 has been spent. We hope that most of the rest of the expenses will be met through in-kind contributions. There were no questions.

AVVA Report: The report is printed in the Dispatch.

Merchandise: No activity since the last meeting. We are planning to do an inventory on 21 February. We will have some things to sell at the Open House here on 20 March.

Washtenaw County Council of

Veterans: No Report. The next council meeting is set for 15 March.

Michigan State Council: Luker. No report.

Memorial Maintenance: Merritt. We are waiting for the frost laws to come off to begin construction of the Memorial Maintenance Building. Work should begin this month. Diversified Excavating will be onsite first, preparing the site for concrete and running the water line.

Wendy, Luker and I were able to find a trailer, and we are getting it ready to do a Veterans Suicide Awareness Demonstration at the American Legion in Howell beginning 18 March – National Supreme Sacrifice Day.

Website: McCrumb. It is still working fine. We are following up on the recommendations from Uproar Communications. I added a link on the links page to a website that provides interesting Vietnam statistics from 1998.

Membership: The official number will go up to 210 with tonight's new member but will go back down to 209 because a member, Richard Rupert, died.

Newsletter: Pereira. No report.

Healthcare: Wilson.

- I have a 90-minute video on Agent Orange. Dogmen will send it out to members.
- Tomorrow, the VVA National Board is voting on whether to change the convention date to 2 through 6 November, still in Greensboro, North Carolina. If it is approved, it will be an in-person convention, not virtual.
- VVA National stood up a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit called Veterans Voice of America. 80% of the members of

the new nonprofit are also employees of VVA National. The new nonprofit is in the process of taking over the Veterans Service Officer work that VVA does. They are not taking over any of the rest of the VVA mission. They are in the process of getting VA accreditation so they can take cases on their own, though they will continue to work on the VVA cases as long as there are VVA cases to work.

- The VA caregiver program has been expanded to include caregivers of Vietnam era Veterans. A spouse can be compensated up to \$1,800 a month in some cases. Caregivers are also able to get classes to help them take better care of themselves and to better understand how to work with a Veteran suffering from PTSD. Other supports are available as well.
 - Dr Skinner, from the University of Washington, has been studying kids on the autism scale. He recently reported that the kids who were highest on the autism scale were also the ones whose dads had the highest toxin load.
 - The biological samples that were taken back when Operation Ranch Hand was being investigated will not be destroyed after all. The VA is obligated to maintain them.
- CSKMC (Formerly VAAHS):** Kinzinger. The VA is still nearly closed and not letting volunteers do much. The committee is working on plans to provide inpatients with a special meal, like steak, on a holiday like Flag Day or the 4th of July.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

Motion by Bull, seconded by Rivers, to hold a regular meeting on 8 April in addition to the Annual Meeting on 11 April. Approved.

Good of the Order:

Luker: The 8 April meeting is being conducted to give members a time to discuss a motion to start up a new nonprofit that Post Vietnam Veterans can join with us. Details will be sent out prior to the meeting.

Bull: The Veteran Resource Center had 20 visitors yesterday. Although we had younger vets, we also provided a birthday cake to a Veteran to commemorate his 98th birthday.

There is a new metal cabinet near the kitchen cupboards that is being used to hold food that is available for our food pantry program. The food is provided by VCAT. Veterans may obtain a bag of food when the Resource Center is open. A Veteran with a family may receive two bags of food.

Our next Open House is on 20 March. We really need more people from VVA 310 to participate.

Three tables will be available for you. There will be lots of resource providers there. And there will be hotdogs and such.

VVA, VFW and the American Legion all participated at the local, regional and state levels to ask the State Legislature to support the Green Alert proposal.

Bourne: The law changing the name of the VA has been signed for some time, but we are still waiting to hear about the details of when and how the Ann Arbor VA will be rededicated in its new name.

McCumb: A couple people who

will be at the Open House provide a photography course for Veterans. I took the class. It was twice a week for 13 weeks. It was a good course. If you are interested in learning about photography, be sure to check them out.

St. Antoine: Please be thinking of ways our Chapter can reach out to Post Vietnam Veterans. How do we communicate with them? What events would they like to attend? Please let one of the Board members know your suggestions and what you think about attracting newer Veterans.

Closing Prayer Bob Bull

Flag Salute

Meeting Adjourned at 20:00 hrs.

Chapter Breakfast (9 April 2021): TBD.



AVVA Newsletter April 2021

By Kathy Driscoll
AVVA President

The Pfizer, Moderna and J & J vaccines are approved, and all Michigan residents over 16 can be vaccinated. The Ann Arbor VA Healthcare system is now vaccinating Veterans and their spouses plus all volunteers. Henry Ford, U of M and St. Joseph (IHA)

are rolling out their vaccinations. You can also apply to Washtenaw County Health Department to get your shots. Vaccine supply is very limited. You will get a message via email or on the portals. As soon as you receive your invitation, schedule your vaccination. Please check with your primary physician if you have concerns regarding the vaccination and your health. Here are the websites to request a vaccination:

<https://www.washtenaw.org/3269/COVID-19-Vaccination>
<https://www.uofmhealth.org/coronavirus/vaccine-info-update>
<https://www.stjoeshealth.org/health-and-wellness/covid-19/vaccine>
<https://ihacares.com/resources/covid19/covid-19-vaccine>

I received my vaccination from Washtenaw County Health Department at their clinic at EMU. Today, Wednesday, March 24th, I am fully vaccinated. This week I was notified that both Henry Ford and U of M have open appointments. Please register everywhere you have a healthcare provider not just where your Primary Care Physician practices. Meijer Pharmacy is also taking registrations. If you shop at Meijer, please check the Pharmacy for more information.

Please let me know if you need anything. AVVA and VVA 310 have resources available to assist you.

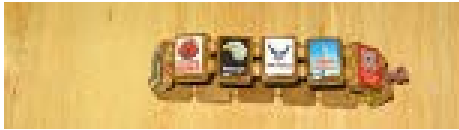
We have an anonymous AVVA member willing to deliver cereal and drinks on Wednesdays and a hot meal on Fridays to any AVVA or VVA family in the Dexter, Ann Arbor, Saline, Chelsea, Whitmore Lake, or Pinckney area.

Our Zoom meeting on March 11th went well. Six members attended.

I upgraded my personal Zoom account. This way we can have longer meetings. We need more than 40 minutes for our meetings.

Fundraising Projects

- Wrist Story Bracelets are available for \$5 donation. We have 48 available. Proceeds will benefit Fisher House Michigan. Please contact me.
- Agent Orange Masks \$10 donation. Please make your



check payable to "Birth Defects Research for Children." I have a few, but Sandie Wilson is the main contact for this fundraiser for Birth Defects Research for Children. <https://birthdefects.org/> Please contact me for a mask.



- Our "No Bake/Bakeless" Fundraiser raised \$450. 36.3% of our members donated to this fundraiser. Thank you to all who donated. Proceeds will benefit our specified line items as requested by our donors. Thank you letters were mailed out to all donors.
- * Operating Fund \$105
- * Special Projects \$75
- * Fisher House MI \$205
- * Lois Perrault Memorial Fund \$65

Paper Safes

We have AVVA Paper Safes from Nancy Switzer. Please let me know if anyone would like a Paper Safe.

Service Projects

- Fisher House Michigan is requesting travel size items of shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, body wash, etc., as well as pocket size tissues. They would like volunteers to make stress balls using large loop yarn in Red, White and Blue. I will forward the pattern from Meni from her church member, who is the spouse of a VVA 310 member. You can drop off your donations to me, Meni or directly to Fisher House Michigan.
- Meni needs volunteers to assist the Veteran Resource Center on Wednesdays or Saturdays at the VFW Post 423. The Center is open from 09:30 am to 5:00 pm. You will assist in keeping Post 423 clean and sanitary. Please consider volunteering an hour or two. Breakfast and lunch provided by Rev. Bob Bull, VVA 310 member. For more information, please contact Meni at 734-214-0664.
- Members volunteered and attended the Open House at the VFW Post 423 on March 20th. We had AVVA Paper Safes, AVVA Membership Applications, and Wrist Story Bracelets available. Thank you to all who attended.
- Please consider donating food to your local community food banks. American Legion Post 46 food drive was successful. Thank you to all members who volunteered.
- Our members are making

stress balls for Fisher House Michigan. If you need the crochet instructions, please email Kathy at dkathyr16@gmail.com. Thank you to all who are busy crocheting.

Legislation Action!

H.R. 1273 Vietnam Veterans Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act

The last movement of this bill was on May 29, 2019. This bill was referred to the Subcommittee of Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. As of today, Thursday, December 17, 2020, there are 17 co-sponsors to this bill. Tim Walberg (R-17) is the only Michigan US Congressman to co-sign this bill. If you live in another congressional district, please contact your representative to have him or her co-sign this bill. Our AVVA 310 has widows whose Veteran husbands suffered and died from Liver Cancer. Please consider writing your US Congressional Representative to support this bill in honor and memory of them.

AVVA Chapter 310 Fundraising Report

Lois Perrault Memorial Fund – 2021 Girls' State Update!

The fund balance is \$3,348.25. We will not be sponsoring delegates to Girls State 2021, as it is unclear if this program will be held this year. We plan to sponsor delegates next year (Girls State 2022).

AVVA Michigan State Association News

- Next meeting is scheduled for April. Location to be determined. I will only attend a Zoom meeting.
- **AVVA National**
- **2021 National Convention, November 2 – November 6,**

2021 at the Four Seasons Hotel, Greensboro, NC. More information to follow.

- Our budget will pay the delegate fee and AVVA luncheon for one voting delegate. Please let me know if you plan to attend. I need to submit our Delegate and Alternate Delegate Registration by September 30, 2021. Please note that the actual VVA convention registration and hotel reservations are a separate form from the AVVA Delegate/Alternate Delegate form.

Candidates for National Office

President: Sharon Hobbs
 Vice President: Kathy Andras
 Secretary: Nina Schloffel
 Treasurer: Kaye Gardner,
 Don Jones

Region 5:

Director: Penny Meinhardt
 Deputy Director: Vivian Heidenrich

- 2022 Leadership Conference, Hyatt Hotel, Greenville, SC
- 2023 National Convention, Orlando, FL

WCCV

Next Meeting is Monday, April 19th. I will attend.

Upcoming Events!

-- Sunday, April 18th 9:00 am
 -- 6:00 pm. Creative Memories Fundraiser to benefit Fisher House Michigan.

Cost is \$10 - \$15 with goodies.

Please pre-order from Meni at her webpage: <https://www.creativememories.com/user/menidraper>

Next meeting Sunday April 11, 2021 in person on VFW Post 423 patio at 12:00 noon. Masks

are mandatory. I will have Zoom session available for those members who will attend virtually. VVA 310 has their elections between 12:00 noon and 4:00 pm. Please bring a potluck dish to share.

Keep up to date with our Chapter: All AVVA and VVA 310 events are posted on our Chapter's webpage, www.vva310.org in the VVA News Flash section on the right column on the homepage.

AVVA Charles S. Kettles Chapter 310 proudly supports the AVVA Mission and Vision Statements.

AVVA Mission Statement:
 To provide support to Veterans and their families through programs, projects, and education.

AVVA Vision Statement:
 To create a better everyday life for Veterans and their families.

Kathy Driscoll
 Chapter Representative, AVVA Chapter 310
 Past President, AVVA Michigan Association
dkathyr16@gmail.com
 734-355-4897



Jocosity

By Ken Rogge

Morris, an 82-year-old man, went to the doctor to get a physical. A few days later, the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm. A couple of days later, the doctor spoke to Morris and

said, "You're really doing great, aren't you?" Morris replied, "Just doing what you said, Doc: 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful. The doctor said, "I didn't say that. I said, 'You've got a heart murmur; be careful.'"

[For many Veterans, the sight of a Vietnamese map brings back memories.]



Dispatch Recipients

Editor's Note: We would like to recognize our Dispatch supporters. Especially this month, we recognize a generous donation from Sarah J and Brent L Gephart Sr., Bal Harbour, FL. Our thanks from the Dispatch Team.

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VVA 310 award winning newsletter reaches approximately 516 people each month with 115 mailed USPS, 52 hits off the VVA310 website (vva310.org), and 349 emailed. With good stewardship and networking, the cost to print the

Dispatch approximates \$1,380 per year.
 If VVA 310 members or others receiving the Dispatch via USPS desire to assist with the printing cost, a suggested donation would be: one year at \$12.00, two years at \$22.00, and three years at \$30.00. Payment can be made payable to VVA 310 and mailed to P.O. Box 3221, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3221 indicating Dispatch on the memo line.

All other donations may be made payable to VVA 310 at the same mailing address by indicating Donation on the memo line.

RECIPIENTS

- George F Boone ~ October 2021
- Berryman Bourne ~ August 2023
- Cynthia Calhoun ~ April 2023
- Tim Clarke ~ March 2022
- Joseph Flint ~ January 2022
- Edward Fuller ~ September 2023
- Sarah and Brent Gephart Sr. ~ March 2031
- Steve and Shirley Hitte ~ June 2024
- Darlene Imus ~ July 2024
- Jane and John Kinzinger ~ June 2021
- Mary Kate Kirkpatrick ~ September 2021
- Rudy and Jane Kozal ~ May 2022
- Linda Lamey-Leonard in memory of Lavern Lamey ~ July 2021
- David Marshall ~ June 2022
- Sandy Martinez ~ September 2021
- Del Mayes ~ March 2022
- David L. Ney ~ April 2021
- Ronald Oliver ~ November 2021
- Paulo and Ann Dempsey Pereira ~ October 2021
- George Perrault ~ October 2022
- Mira and Bob Pierson ~ October 2021
- Helena Prince in memory of

- deceased member Tom Prince ~ April 2023
 - Glenn Sakcriska ~ November 2026
 - Edith L. Semark ~ September 2023
 - Larry St. Antoine ~ March 2022
 - Elizabeth Wong ~ September 2023
- *****

Veteran Suicide Awareness Demonstration

By Jon Luker

Several years ago, three Michigan combat Veterans discovered they had something in common: They each knew a battle buddy or Veteran family member who had committed suicide. They researched the matter and became aware of a VA study that estimated that, on average, 22 Veterans commit suicide every day. While the Veteran community generally knows that number, the researchers found out that civilians seemed unaware that Veterans were ending their lives. The survivors developed a nonprofit aimed at reducing Veteran suicide by employing strategies. One strategy was the Veterans Suicide Awareness



Demonstration. The idea was to put up 22 crosses a day, every day, for one month. They hoped that the visual impact of seeing the field



of crosses growing relentlessly for one month would impact the people who drove by the area of crosses regularly. Civilians have the power to direct Congressional efforts toward issues of importance to them. Less than 7% of voters are Veterans. So, the only way the VA will ever get a budget that will allow them to serve the 25% or more of the Veterans who need help is if citizens inform Congress that taking good care of Veterans is vital to the United States, not just to Veterans. However, the originators quickly discovered that putting up 22 crosses a day was a significant commitment of time and a fair amount of work. Still, each day brought to mind the people they lost and the people they have learned about since they conducted the first demonstration. After putting up the crosses a few times, they stopped doing it. They focused on other ways to help Veterans find hope and the resources they need to solve challenges. A year later, Ypsilanti Township Supervisor Brenda Stumbo asked Wendy, Fredo, and me to determine if we could get the demonstration set up for the township. We were able to find the project originators and learned about the difficulty they had had: Every day, they

saw the crosses with their battle buddies' names on them. But they agreed to loan us the crosses and explained how they did the original demonstrations. We were able to obtain the crosses and start doing the demonstration on Huron River Drive, just west of Veterans Memorial Drive, during September, National Suicide Prevention Month. A year later, we asked to borrow the crosses again, and they decided to just give us the crosses in the hope that we would continue that work. That's when we noticed that the crosses were in bad shape. We decided to build new crosses.

The originators had built the crosses planning to do the demonstration only once. They got all 660 crosses constructed and painted in one weekend. It was time for us to make crosses that could last longer despite being handled more. The originators were happy about our decision and provided the funding for the materials and paint. A youth group at First Baptist Church in Fowlerville took the project on as one of their missions for the year. They helped with assembly and painting. We made 720 crosses over six months.

Next, we realized we needed a place to store the crosses between demonstrations, and we needed to take as much effort out of transporting and deploying the crosses as we could. An enclosed trailer seemed to be a great answer to both issues. We bought a new, 7 by 12-foot, enclosed V-nose trailer and outfitted it with storage racks. We added a solar-powered generator and enough batteries to run all the lights we would need. We also acquired all the tools and

materials required to set up the field and install the crosses. The American Legion in Howell has provided a location for the trailer, and the Legion Riders are taking care of putting out the crosses and lights. If you ever are around the intersection of M-59 and Grand River in Howell (just north of the I-96 exit), please check out the display.

It has been rewarding to see the different reactions people have. Some people stop and talk to us when they see us adding crosses. Several write the name of a Veteran who committed suicide on one of the crosses. The demonstration then becomes a traveling memorial as well as a Veteran-suicide awareness demonstration. Others are just shocked that the problem is that big. Occasionally, somebody will tell us about a Veteran they are worried about and give us a chance to intervene.

The Veterans Suicide Awareness Demonstration will come back to Ypsilanti in September. By the way, the 22-a-day number was one of the first estimates the VA made of the problem. Organizations dedicated to helping Veterans know that number relatively well. There have been other estimates produced since then from various places, including the VA. The estimates are guesses extrapolated from data collected by the few sites that note whether the death was suicide and whether the victim was a Veteran. But we can be sure that estimates likely underestimate the actual number. The point is, too many people have served their county with courage and are committing suicide because they have no hope of

getting the help they need. The estimate of 22-a-day is likely too small. But it is large enough to make a shocking demonstration. Let's hope it is impressive enough that people will want to know what they can do to help Veterans find hope—or not lose hope in the first place.



Current Events

By Ann Dempsey-Pereira

08 Apr: Special Meeting: Development of Our New Corporation, 1900 hrs, Zoom link: To Open [Click Here](#)
09 Apr: Chapter Breakfast, 0900 hrs, Location TBD
11 Apr: Elections for Officers and Board Members, 1200–1500 hrs; AVVA meeting 1200 hrs.
14 Apr: Air Force Reserve Birthday (1948)
23 Apr: Army Reserve Birthday (1908)
Team Red, White & Blue: Saturdays @ 0930 meet at the Southeast parking lot of Gallup Park for their walk and run
** Visit Veterans Radio online (Veteransradio.net - [click here](#)) and make a contribution to help keep this vital program on the air. To stay current, please visit

VVA310's website and check out their "Current Events." Click here: [vva 310 website](#).

—**—

KN95 Masks Available

*Michael G. Smith Jr.
Judge Advocate, MACVC*

Dear Members of the WCCV:

I am writing to inform you that Washtenaw County received a very large shipment of KN95 Masks from the State of Michigan. The goal is to distribute masks to the community to as many people who want them.

I ordered 1,400 masks. They come in packs of 50. If you would like KN95 Masks to distribute to the members of your units or to other community agencies with whom you have contact, please let me know and we can coordinate a time to meet at our building, or a place more convenient to you so I can get these masks to you. Again, please let me know if you would like KN95 Masks to distribute to your members and others, to include your family. Please take care and stay safe!

Veterans Memorial Building Project

By Jon Luker

As the weather gets warm and the frost leaves the ground, things start to get moving again—including the Memorial Building project.

The building project will make things easier for our Chapter and our maintenance crews. It will



be bigger than the current shed. With 10x16 dimensions, the new building will have loft storage and will be stick-built with green metal siding and roof. We plan to hide the building with Arborvitae trees to avoid distracting visitors who stop by to remember loved ones at the Memorial.

The building is outfitted with electricity and will have facilities to recharge any electric equipment that eventually may replace our gas-burning gear. That change will make it easier to perform equipment maintenance and provide light and sound on days of ceremonies or events at the Memorial.

Further, the building will have



running water for cleaning and irrigation. The Luker family and the Moldovan family will be installing in-ground irrigation for the garden, the infield grass, and the boxwood bushes.

The building design will facilitate use by people with mobility issues. We already have the material for the building on site. A big thanks to Ypsilanti Township for storing it for us over the winter. Todd Johnson Construction Company will supervise the building work. Also, the kids of our deceased member Kenneth Moldovan are helping us. Heather is on our grounds crew. Her brother, also named Kenneth, is a contractor and has promised to send a crew to help with the construction. Last fall, OHM Advisors staked out the location for the shed. Utilities in the area have now been flagged up. Although the shed is close to many things, we are clear and may proceed with construction now. Diversified Excavating is going to install the water and prepare the building site for concrete. They will dig the trench to the utility pole as well. They will get started as soon as we get permission from YCUA and Ypsilanti to proceed. Doan Construction has promised to make their local crew available to do the concrete work as soon as Diversified has completed its work.

VVA 310 Veterans celebrate the National Vietnam War Veterans Day—March 29th.



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, 09, 11, & 15

E-Newsletter of the Year 2017

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Vice President: Marv Rivers

Secretary: Jon Luker

Treasurer: Berry Bourne

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VVA 310 Dispatch

April 2021

Vietnam Veterans of America

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Please Forward. Thank You!