

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC.

TEXARKANA AREA CHAPTER # 278

P.O. BOX 6608

TEXARKANA, TX 75505-6608

www.vva278.org

VVA # 278's OFFICERS

President.....Gregory Beck.....870/773-8279

Directors: Robert Brown

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Kenneth Cosby

Secretary.....Johnnie Gentry....903/832-1605

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Treasurer....Tom McLeod....903/278-5004

AVVA Liaison....Merle Morris

VVA # 278 JUNE MEETING

VVA # 278's next meeting will be Sunday, June 18, 2017 at 1:30 pm at the Texas Elks Lodge at 3702 New Boston Road. The meal will begin at 1:30 pm and will be pot luck. We ask members to bring a covered dish and/or dessert to share. Topics to be discussed will include: Veterans' issues updates; Committee reports; 2017 fundraising project; Upcoming set-ups and events; Agent Orange Town hall/Hepatitis C seminar; Critiquing our Memorial Day Service, May 29; Report on Gun show June 3 & 4; Preparations for our 30th annual POW/MIA Vigil; Plans for Veterans Day Parade; etc., etc..

We will have VVA hats and t-shirts at this meeting!

REMEMBER: Sunday, June 18 at 1:30 pm at the Elks Lodge at 3702 New Boston Road.

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VVA # 278's JULY 2017 MEETING

VVA # 278's May 2017 meeting will be on Sunday, July 16, 2017 at 1:30 pm at the Elks Lodge at 3702 New Boston Road. The meal will be pot luck dinner. We ask members to bring a covered dish and/or dessert to share. Topics to be discussed: Updates on Veteran's issues; Committee reports; Planning for POW/MIA Vigil; etc., etc..

Remember: Sunday, July 16 at 1:30 pm at the Elks Lodge at 3702 New Boston Road.

*VVA # 278's August meeting will be held Sunday, August 20 at 1:30 pm at the Elks Lodge.

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VVA # 278 MEMBERSHIP

As of April 30 VVA # 278 has 122 members: 97 Life, 20 Annual and/or 3 year; 2 IVI. Since January 2017 our unrenewed member is: Dan Bookout. Remember: You don't have to have served in-country Vietnam to join VVA, you just have to have served during that time. Look at the application in the newsletter for the details.

Of course we would like to see all of our of our unrenewed members renew in VVA # 278.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest member:

Terry MacQueen

WELCOME ABOARD AND WELCOME HOME!!!

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.

ATTENTION New members and new life members: You must submit a copy of your DD- 214 form along with this application and dues payment

AVVA # 278 has 30 members: 21 Life; 9 Annual and/or 3 year. There are 2 unrenewed AVVA members. They are:

Karoni Forrester & Katherine Snyder.

Together Then, Together Now!

VVA # 278 ACTIVITIES

VVA # 278 had several members recognized by the Daughters of the American Revolution in Atlanta for their service during the Vietnam War. We set-up at the Boy Scout Scout-a-Rama where we passed out veteran related information, worked on our fundraising projects, and let the scouts put on our flak jackets, helmets, etc. and take their picture. We set up 2 days at Wadley Hospital in their Salute to Veterans with information and Vietnam memorabilia. We set up at the annual Texarkana RailFest distributing information and working on our fundraiser. We held our 21st annual "Veterans Information Fair" where we had over 20 different agencies with programs for veterans. We had over 70 veterans and/or their families come in. We would like to thank all the different agencies and a big thanks to the Elks Lodge # 2771 for allowing us to have it at their lodge!!! The Elks also furnished lunch for all the vendors and they furnished a free breakfast for the veterans as they do every third Saturday! We were honored to present the Elks # 2771 with the VVA Texas State Council's annual "Friend of VVA" award at this Fair! At our May meeting we approved a \$500 scholarship for a grandson of a Vietnam veteran. We will have at least two more scholarship applications come in. We were proud to award Raymond Calhoun with the Texas State Council "Boot Award" for his work with VVA # 278! We hosted our 34th Memorial Day service where we read the names of those on our Korea/Vietnam Memorial which were killed 50 years ago in 1967. We also read the name of Earnest Leroy Garner, the name we just added plus the five names which their status was updated. His wife was present and we presented her with a Gold Star pin and the 50th Anniversary pin. We would like to thank Memorial Arts for adding this name and doing the updates and adding the names to the Police Officers Memorial VVA # 278 built! We also read these recently added names at our Memorial Day Service! We also participated in the Texarkana Area Veterans Council's Memorial Day Service and attended two others, some made three others.

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PRISONERS OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION (POW/MIA)

AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR: The number of US personnel missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War is still 1,611. The total accounted for since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is 972. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and identified before the end of the war, bring the total of US personnel accounted for from the Vietnam War to 1,035. There follows a breakdown by country of the 972 Americans accounted for since the April 30, 1975 end of the Vietnam War: Vietnam, 661; Laos, 268, Cambodia, 41 and the PRC, 3. Of the 1,611 still missing (POW/MIA) and unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR), 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,258 (VN-463, VS-795); Laos-297; Cambodia-49; PRC territorial waters-7. These country-specific numbers can and do fluctuate when investigations result in changes to loss locations. Of these 1611, 15 are from Arkansas; 24 are from Louisiana; 32 are from Oklahoma; and 102 are from Texas.

There are still 126 Americans unaccounted for from the Cold War: 2 from AR; 1 from LA; 3 from OK; and 4 from Texas. There are still 7,751 Americans unaccounted for from the Korean War: 102 from AR; 147 from LA; 146 from OK; 432 from TX. There are still 73,061 Americans unaccounted for from World War II; 852 from AR; 984 from LA; 1235 from Ok; 3660 from TX. Iraq Theater & Other Conflicts – 6 Americans unaccounted for.

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LEAVE NO MAN BEHIND

VVA # 278 has on hand copies of Garnett "Bill" Bell's book "Leave No Man Behind." This book is Bill's story of his quest to find and bring home the POWs and MIAs of the Vietnam War. From his days as a young infantryman on covert missions, to receiving American POWs as part of "Operation Homecoming," being one of the last Americans to get on a chopper as Saigon fell, to being the first U.S. government POW/MIA Office Chief in Vietnam, to testifying in front of the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, Bell shares his perspective as a witness to history as it unfolded. Get your copy now while they last - \$20. Could be the most informative \$20 you'll ever spend!

30th ANNUAL POW/MIA VIGIL

ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 & 2, 2017, THE TEXARKANA AREA CHAPTER # 278 OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC. WILL STAGE THEIR 30th ANNUAL POW/MIA VIGIL AT THE KOREA/VIETNAM MEMORIAL AT 7th STREET & STATE LINE AVENUE IN DOWNTOWN TEXARKANA.

THIS VIGIL IS TO HONOR AND REMEMBER THOSE WHO ARE/WERE CLASSIFIED AS PRISONERS OF WAR/MISSING IN ACTION (POW/MIA), BOTH THOSE WHO RETURNED AND THOSE STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR, FROM ALL WARS, TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THIS ISSUE AND TO LET THE FAMILIES OF THESE MEN AND WOMEN KNOW THEY ARE NOT ALONE IN THEIR QUEST OFR ANSWERS AND FOR CLOSURE.

WE WILL SPEND ONE MINUTE FOR EACH AMERICAN WHO IS UNNACOUNTED FOR FROM THE VIETNAM WAR (1611), AND ONE MINUTE FOR EACH AMERICAN UNACCOUNTED FOR FROM THE KOREAN WAR WHOSE NAME IS ENGRAVED UPON THIS MEMORIAL (37) PLUS ONE MINUTE FOR EACH AMERICAN UNACCCOUNTED FOR FROM THE GULF WARS (3) AS OF NOW THIS IS 1651 MINUTES (27 HOURS AND 31 MINUTES).

OUR TENATIVE SCHEDULE IS:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1:

OPENING CEREMONIES.....4:59 PM

CANDLELIGHT CERMONIES....8:00 PM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2:

POW MEAL...12 NOON

"RIDE TO REMEMBER"....3:00 PM

(LEAVES ARKANSAS WELCOME CENTER @ 2:40 PM)

POW/MIA REMEMBRANCE SERVICE...3:10 PM

CLOSING/CANDLELIGHT SERVICE...8:00 PM

AT THE ARRIVAL OF "RIDE TO REMEMBER" AT THE MEMORIAL A BALLOON RELEASE OF 174 BALLOONS (ONE FOR EACH AMERICAN UNACCOUNTED FROM THE VIETNAM WAR FROM ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, OKLAHOMA & TEXAS)

WILL BE CONDUCTED. This will be our 23rd annual "Ride to Remember." FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 870/773-8279, 903/628-7216 OR 903/824-2727 OR AT THE VVA # 278 WEBSITE AT www.vva278.org OR ON

FACEBOOK @ VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA # 278.

AN EVENT OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION. (ARKANSAS WELCOME CENTER @ RED RIVER ON HWY 71 NORTH OF TEXARKANA).

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TEXARKANA AREA VETERANS COUNCIL (TAVC)

The Texarkana Area Veterans Council meets the first Thursday of every month at 6:00 pm at the American Legion Post at 525 East Broad Street. The TAVC is made up of six local veterans organizations which have come together to better help veterans by exchanging information and working together to accomplish more such as providing a van to transport veterans to the VA Medical Center in Shreveport. The TAVC has just ordered a new van for this purpose. It should arrive in June or July. **We are looking for volunteer drivers for this!** Volunteer Drivers just need a clean driving record, have car insurance (to prove you're insurable), and pass a free medical exam performed by the VA.

The TAVC also hosts the annual Veterans Day parade in November and the Memorial Day service at East Memorial Gardens and our annual Chili Cookoff in February. And we are working on the 2017 Veterans Day Parade – Saturday, November 11, 2017. We are looking for Women veterans – one each from WWII, Korea, Vietnam Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, to be our Parade Marshalls as our theme is:

Women in the Military Thru the Years!

And we are looking for volunteer drivers for the two vans we will have!!!

VVA NATIONAL CONVENTION

The VVA National Convention will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana August 6 -12, 2017 at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, 500 Canal Street • New Orleans, LA 70130 • 504-525-2500. This is the time VVA members and AVVA members from across the nation come together to elect the VVA National officers and to adopt resolutions and amendments to the VVA Constitution. AVVA members will do the same for the AVVA.

As per the VVA Constitution: "The Corporation shall hold a national biennial convention in odd-numbered years at such times, dates, and places as may be designated by the national board. The national convention shall be the highest authority of the Corporation."

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ELKS LODGE# 2771 VETERANS BREAKFAST

On the third Saturday of each month Elks Lodge # 2771 located at 3702 New Boston Road provides a free, all you can eat breakfast for Veterans, Police officers, Firemen, and First Responders. All others just pay \$5.00. The breakfast goes from 7:00 am until 11:00 am. Eggs, bacon, sausage, biscuits, gravy, pancakes, coffee, juice, and milk!

Thank you Elks Lodge!!! This is a fantastic breakfast and a fantastic Lodge!

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CHUCKWAGONS FOR VETERANS

VVA # 278 is working on a fundraising project where we will have several chuckwagons come into town and serve meals from them for a nominal price. This is scheduled for April 14, 2018. This will be a different approach to fundraising for us but we are excited about trying this. We already have four wagons signed up! More information to come as received. We will be looking for sponsors for each wagon.

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VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

Registry for Veterans and Servicemembers

VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry allows eligible Veterans and Servicemembers to document their exposures and report health concerns through an online questionnaire.

Eligible Veterans and Servicemembers include those who served in:

- Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn
 - Djibouti, Africa on or after September 11, 2001
 - Operations Desert Shield and/or Desert Storm
- Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990

In total, 106,937 Veterans and Servicemembers completed and submitted the registry questionnaire between April 25, 2014 and May 1, 2017. For more information go to:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp>

Check your eligibility and sign up. It takes about 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You can do it in one sitting or save it and come back later.

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VVA TEXAS STATE COUNCIL WOMEN VETERANS COMMITTEE Cheryl Van Syckle, Chair

Cheryl is trying to identify and contact all Women Veterans affiliated with VVA in Texas. She wants contact information. She is doing a survey on VA's medical treatment on Women veterans, addressing Women veterans research, finding support for Women veterans, maintaining a VVA Women Veterans Proudly Served frequently asked questions (FAQ), and identifying Women veterans needs and issues, and addressing Military Sexual Trauma. For VVA # 278's Women veterans I'm asking for your permission to give her your contact information or you can contact her directly at: stormywac@att.net

TEXARKANA CVEB (COMMUNITY VETERANS ENGAGEMENT BOARD)

We have recently formed a CVEB in Texarkana, under the umbrella of the one at Overton Brooks in Shreveport. We have outlined four issues that we can see needs action ASAP:

1. Fast tracking claims.
2. Establishing a local Veterans Court.
3. Homeless Veterans.
4. Getting information to Veterans and their families.

Plus we are working on a Resource list/combining what is already available.

This list could and very possibly will grow as will the size of the CVEB but we decided to do it slowly. Right now attendance to the CVEB is by invitation only but if you have any ideas we are open to suggestions and ideas.

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Veterans Legislation Clears the House and Senate:

The House and Senate passed several bills this week which would help veterans. The House provisions include a reform to the burdensome process veterans must use to appeal a disability rating decision. This reform passed unanimously 418-0. Additional House legislation would improve requirements for scheduling appointments to help ensure that hidden appointment lists do not happen again; more support for veterans needing adult day care; and an annual cost-of-living adjustment for veterans equal to what is given to Social Security recipients if such an increase is granted this year. Three bills on the Senate side passed unanimously this week. The first is a bill which requires the reduction of the federal annuities of individuals removed from the Department of Veterans Affairs Senior Executive Service if they are convicted of a felony; legislation that would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses for certain high-level employees.

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DEATHS IN VIETNAM BY YEARS

1956-59.....4	1960.....5	1961....16	1962....53
1964....216	1965....1928	1966....6350	1967....11,363
1968....16,899	1969....11,780	1970....6173	1971....2414
1972....759	1973....68	1974....1	1975....62

BY BRANCH

U.S. ARMY....38,224	U.S. MARINE CORPS....14,844	U.S. NAVY....2559
U.S. AIR FORCE....2586	U.S. COAST GUARD....7	

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2017

May 29...VVA # 278 Memorial Day Service	June 1....TAVC meeting
June 3 & 4....Gun Show	June 17....Elks breakfast
June 18....VVA # 278 meeting	June 24... "Sparks in the Park"
July 6....TAVC meeting	July 15....Elks Breakfast
July 16....VVA # 278 meeting	August 3....TAVC meeting
August 8 -12...VVA National Convention	August 17, 18 & 19 New Boston Pioneer Days
August 19....Elks' Veterans Breakfast	August 20....VVA # 278 meeting
September 1 & 2....POW/MIA Vigil	September 7....TAVC meeting
September 16...Elks' Veterans Breakfast	September 17....VVA # 278 meeting
September 21...VA Town Hall meeting	October 5...TAVC meeting
October 7...DeKalb's Oktoberfest	October 15...VVA # 278 meeting
November 2....TAVC meeting	November 4...Cullen Baker Festival, Bloomburg
November 9....Red, White & Blue Expo	November 11....Veterans Day Parade
November 18...Elks Breakfast	5. November 19...VVA # 278 meeting