

## **VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**

**TEXARKANA AREA CHAPTER # 278, P.O. BOX 6608, TEXARKANA, TX 75505-6608, [www.vva278.org](http://www.vva278.org)**

### **June/July Newsletter**

#### **VVA # 278's OFFICERS:**

President: Gregory Beck (903) 556-1613

Vice-President: Harry Campbell (903) 855-2157

Secretary: Johnnie Gentry (903) 832-1605

Treasurer: Jimmy Smith (903) 277-8597

Directors: Robert Brown, Kenneth Cosby, Freddie Weathers

AVVA Rep: Merle Morris

#### **VVA # 278 JUNE MEETING**

VVA # 278's next meeting will be Sunday, June 16, 2019 at 1:30 pm at the Texas Elks Lodge at 3702 New Boston Road. The meal will begin at 1:30 pm. We ask members to bring a covered dish &/or dessert to share. Topics to be discussed will include: Veterans' issues updates; Committee reports; Our 2019 fundraising project; Upcoming set-ups and events; 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual POW/MIA Vigil; Critique & review of the 2nd "Wagons for Veterans"; Review & critique of "Veterans Information Fair; Memorial Day Services; etc. There will be chapter t-shirts at the meeting: M, L & XL are \$15, 2X are \$18. Also have VVA hats for sale at \$5.00 each.

**REMEMBER:** Sunday, June 16 at the Elks Lodge at 3702 New Boston Road.

#### **VVA # 278's JULY 2019 MEETING**

VVA # 278's May 2019 meeting will be held Sunday, July 28 @ 1:30 pm at the Elks Lodge at 3702 New Boston Road. Remember we moved the date to the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday because of the VVA National Convention. The meal will begin at 1:30. We ask members to bring a side dish and/or dessert to share. Topics to be discussed will include: Updates on Veterans' issues; Committee reports; 3rd Annual Wagons for Veterans; 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual POW/MIA Vigil etc., etc. **REMEMBER:** Sunday, July 28 @ 1:30 pm at the Elks Lodge @ 3702 New Boston Road. VVA # 278's August meeting will be Sunday, August 18 @ 1:30 pm at the Elks Lodge.

#### **VVA # 278 MEMBERSHIP**

As of May 31, VVA # 278 has 148 members: 134 Life, 11 Annual and/or 3 year; 2 IVI. Remember: You don't have to have served in-country Vietnam to join VVA, you just need to have served during that time. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest member of the VVA # 278 family: WELCOME ABOARD & WELCOME HOME!!!, Wilbert C. Johnson, Quince Gurley, Jr., Lee Sands, Jr 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. New rates for VVA memberships, all effective immediately: Life membership for \$50.00. Three-year memberships will no longer be offered, but at the end of any current 3-year memberships, the member will be given (at no additional cost) a life membership in VVA. One-year memberships will no longer be offered, and at the end of each 1-year membership, the member will be encouraged to become a life member.

**ATTENTION:** New members: You must submit a copy of your DD- 214 form along with the application and dues payment! See attached application. Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America # 278 has 35 members: 21 Life; 14 Annual and/or 3 year. **Together Then, Together Now! We want YOU in the VVA # 278 family!!! JOIN VVA and/or AVVA.**

#### **VVA # 278 ACTIVITIES**

Since our last newsletter VVA # 278 we held our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Wagons for Veterans" which was a success thanks to all of our members and other volunteers' work. We set up an informational table at the Texas Work Force's Job Expo. The VVA Texas State Council meeting April 26 & 27 here in Texarkana, was in my opinion, a success! We were presented with a plaque from the Region VII Director Allan Manual proclaiming VVA # 278

as Region VII Chapter of the Year – 2019; \$1800 was raised for the Hero's Pantry, along with a buggy load of foodstuffs; and Fay J Durant raised \$1000 with his wine raffle which he donated to the Texas State Council's Scholarship fund! And our 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual "Veterans Information Fair" held May 18 we had 13 agencies or organizations and had over 50 veterans register. On May 27 we hosted our 36<sup>th</sup> annual Memorial Day Service and had a great crowd.

## **TEXARKANA COMMUNITY VETERANS ENGAGEMENT BOARD**

### **What is a Veteran-Friendly Community?**

The Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB) model enables Veterans, Service members, Military Families, Veteran advocates, community service providers, and stakeholders to have a collective voice in identifying their community goals and work to resolve gaps in service at the local level to improve service delivery for Veterans, Military Families, Caregivers, and Survivors. VA leaders are committed to actively engage in community-based efforts that maximize the collective impact of local services, stakeholders, and federal/state/municipal agencies working collectively to improve Veteran outcomes where they live, work, and raise their families.

### **3rd ANNUAL "WAGONS FOR VETERANS"**

Saturday, April 18, 2020 at the Four States Fairgrounds we will host our 3rd annual "Wagons for Veterans" event. Again we will be looking for sponsors and donations to this event. We would like to extend a very sincere THANK YOU to all of our sponsors, all of our cooking teams, all of the other organizations that participated in our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Wagons for Veterans", and of course all of our VVA # 278 and Elks Lodge # 2771 members, and other volunteers, that worked on this project. We promise you that every dime raised (after expenses of the event) will go to assist disabled & needy veterans in this area. Not one penny will be used for any administrative costs! Our books are open to any & everyone who would like to see them! We cleared a little over \$23,000 & are now looking for disabled & needy veterans to assist. This is also open to spouses of deceased veterans & immediate family members of veterans. Let us know if you know of a veteran who would apply for this assistance!

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

AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR: The number still missing (POW/MIA) and otherwise unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR) from the Vietnam War is now 1,589. Of that number, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,246 (VN-452, VS-794); Laos-288; Cambodia-48; PRC territorial waters-7. The total accounted for since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is 994. A breakdown by country of these 994 Americans is: Vietnam – 671, Laos – 277, Cambodia – 42, & the PRC – 3. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 & 1975, the formal end of the Vietnam War, for a grand total of 1,057. These country-specific numbers can & do fluctuate when investigations result in changes to loss locations. Of these 1590, 15 are from AR; 24 are from LA; 30 are from OK; and 101 are from TX. US Army -512; US Navy -353; US Marine Corps – 202; US Air Force – 494; Civilians – 28. There are still 126 Americans unaccounted for from the Cold War 2 from AR; 1 from LA; 3 from OK; & 4 from TX. As of May 29, 2019 there are still 7,660 Americans unaccounted for from the Korean War: 100 from AR; 142 from LA; 143 from OK; 425 from TX; 5830 from the Army; 908 from the Air Force; 276 from the Navy; & 645 from the USMC. As of May 29, 2019, there are still 72,716 Americans unaccounted for from World War II, 849 from AR; 978 from LA; 1220 from OK; & 3632 from TX; 16,727 from the Army; 20,087 from the Army Air Corps; 31,129 from the Navy; 2855 from the USMC. There are 6 Americans unaccounted for from Iraq Theater and other conflicts in the Middle East.

### **32nd ANNUAL POW/MIA VIGIL**

On Friday & Saturday, September 20 & 21, 2019 VVA # 278 will host our 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual POW/MIA Vigil at the Korea/Vietnam Memorial at 7<sup>th</sup> Street & State Line Avenue in downtown Texarkana. At the time of this writing we will spend 27 hours and 12 minutes (1632 minutes), one minute for each American unaccounted for from

Vietnam (1589), one minute for each American who is unaccounted for from the Korean War and whose name is engraved on this Memorial (37), and one minute for each American unaccounted for from the Middle East (6). This time may change if there are any returns & identifications made of these 1632 Americans and we pray there are! Accordingly our tentative time for opening ceremonies will be 5:18 pm Friday and we will finish 27 hours and 12 minutes later, at 8:30 pm Saturday night. When we first started these Vigils there were 2555 Americans unaccounted for from the Vietnam War and we had 38 names of Korean War veterans on this Memorial who were still unaccounted for! So progress has been made but at a painfully slow pace. We would like to think that efforts like these Vigils and other events around the country has had some effect on the fact that 966 American remains have been returned to their family and friends, and for this we thank everyone who has participated over the years. THANK YOU!!!

### **TRIP TO WASHINGTON DC TO THE WALL**

We are working on a trip to Washington, DC to see the Wall (Vietnam Veterans Memorial), the Korean War Memorial, World War II Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery and maybe a few other sites. We are looking at the week of October 21 – 26, 2019. If you are interested let us know! We are looking at Amtrac and have a fantastic travel agent from Hideaway, TX working on this for us! With getting on Amtrak in Texarkana there is no "direct" route for us to go. The best time and route that we can get is 17 hours to Chicago....17 hours to DC and then same back. Therefore leaving on one day we wouldn't be getting to DC until late on the next day and then almost 2 days getting home. What we are looking at is \$213/pp though for the roundtrip. We also might look at renting a van depending on how many we have sign up.

### **The VA MISSION Act puts Veterans and their needs at the center of their care.**

#### **Through the MISSION Act, VA will:**

- Provide you with more options for health care
- Offer an improved community care process
- Provide a new urgent care option
- Help you get access to the care you need at the right place at the right time
- Offer you great service through a nationwide network of high-quality care
- Provide more Veteran-to-Veteran peer specialists
- Expand the program to support Veteran caregivers

Through the MISSION Act, VA now has additional opportunities to enhance our high-quality health care to our nation's Veterans. SHREVEPORT, LA— The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will launch its new and improved community care program June 6, 2019, implementing portions of the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (the MISSION Act), which both ends the Veterans Choice Program and establishes a new Veterans Community Care Program. The MISSION Act will strengthen the nationwide VA Health Care System by empowering Veterans to have more options in their health care decisions. Under the new & improved Veterans Community Care Program, Veterans can now work with their VA health care provider or other VA staff to see if they are eligible to receive community care. Eligibility for community care does not require a Veteran to receive that care in the community; Veterans can still choose to have VA provide their care. Veterans are eligible to choose to receive care in the community if they meet any of the following six eligibility criteria:

1. A Veteran needs a service not available at any VA medical facility.
2. A Veteran lives in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility. Specifically, this would apply to Veterans living in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

3. A Veteran qualifies under the “grandfather” provision related to distance eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program.
4. VA cannot furnish care in a manner that complies within certain designated access standards. The specific access standards are described below. (Important: Access standards will continuously be evaluated.)
  - Average drive time to a specific VA medical facility
    - 30-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health and noninstitutional extended care services.
    - 60-minute average drive time for specialty care. Note: Average drive times are calculated by VA using geo-mapping software.
  - Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility
    - Twenty days for primary care, mental health care and noninstitutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
    - Twenty-eight days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with his or her VA health care provider.
5. The Veteran and the referring clinician agree it is in the best medical interest of the Veteran to receive community care based on defined factors.
6. VA has determined that a VA medical service line is not providing care in a manner that complies with VA’s standards for quality.

The VA MISSION Act:

- Strengthens VA’s ability to recruit and retain clinicians.
- Statutorily authorizes “Anywhere to Anywhere” telehealth provision across state lines.
- Empowers Veterans with increased access to community care.
- Establishes a new, urgent-care benefit that eligible Veterans can access in the community. The Shreveport VA serves approximately 38,000 Veterans every year, from parts of Louisiana, Arkansas, & Texas.

### **TEXARKANA TWINS**

The Texarkana Twins collegiate baseball team has provided VVA 278 with a fundraising/promotional event. We will be the Non-Profit for game night Sunday, July 14. They will promote our organization that night and provide us with the ability to provide tickets, of which 50% of the price will be donated back to VVA # 278. They will be playing the Cane Cutters and game time is 7:05 pm at George Dobson Field in Spring Lake Park. The Texarkana Twins are the local minor league baseball experience, with fireworks on select nights, bounce houses and other inflatables for kids to enjoy, on-field entertainment and kids running the bases after every game. We are truly blessed to be part of this. Here is our Non Profit Fundraiser Ticket Link: [groupmatics.events/VietnamVeterans7](https://groupmatics.events/VietnamVeterans7) Make sure to share it with friends, family, sponsors, and on social media. Remind everyone that 50% of sales through this link will go back towards your non profit organization. Thank you so much for your time and we look forward to having you at the ballpark. Again go to: [groupmatics.events/Vietnamveterans7](https://groupmatics.events/Vietnamveterans7) to get your tickets! Let’s go VVA # 278, let’s do this and have a fun time in the process! Go Twins!

### **SHREVEPORT VET CENTER’S 40<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE**

The Shreveport Vet Center has moved to a new location at 1255 Shreveport Barksdale Blvd. Shreveport, LA 71105. This new location offers a larger, updated space for the provision of readjustment counseling services to Veterans, active duty service members, and their families. On June 12, 2019 the Shreveport Vet Center will be celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers with an open house at the new location from 10:00 am till 2:00 pm. The formal portion of the ceremony will start promptly at 10 am with introductions, comments and presentations. Remember: Bring a “Battle Buddy”; Family are welcome too; along with Active Duty, Guard & Reserve.

### **2019 HAIL AND FAREWELL**

Defense Logistics Agency is saying Farewell to Lt. Colonel Jeffery P. Chamberlain (Outgoing) and Hail to Lt. Colonel Seth M. Olmstead (Incoming) Wednesday, June 19, 2019 at the Hilton Garden Inn – Texarkana Convention Center at 2910 Cowhorn Creek. Sponsored by the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce. Tickets are \$35 (prepaid only). Limited seating, RSVP by June 10. Dress is casual/Civilian. To register or for more information contact Natalie Haywood, email [nhaywood@texarkana.org](mailto:nhaywood@texarkana.org), or phone 903-792-7191. If you remember Lt. Colonel Chamberlain has invited VVA # 278 members out to DLA several times and has presented us with two plaques! I plan on going!

### **19<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL VVA CONVENTION**

July 15-20, 2019, Vietnam Veterans of America and Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America will hold their Biennial Convention to elect new leadership, review the organizational constitution and handle other organization business. This year, the convention will visit scenic Spokane, Wash. Located at the eastern edge of the state on the Spokane River, the area's pristine natural beauty offers visitors lots of opportunities for recreation, as well as a host of cultural events and dining options. The city is home to numerous craft breweries, art galleries and the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, which spotlights the region's history and Native American heritage. More than 1,200 visitors are expected at the VVA & AVVA 2019 National Convention, with exhibitors representing commercial firms, government agencies, VVA state councils and VVA & AVVA chapters offering goods and services of interest to member veterans. Past exhibitors have included travel agencies, veterans' publications, insurance agencies, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and numerous VVA & AVVA chapters and state councils. 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. VVA has only one category of membership: Life Membership: \$50

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2019**

June 6, TAVC meeting  
June 7, 8, & 9...Fallen Bikers Memorial Wall Rally  
June 12, Vet Center's Open House  
June 15, Elks Breakfast  
June 16, VVA # 278 meeting  
June 19, Hail & Farewell  
July 4, American Independence Day  
July 6, TAVC meeting  
July 14, Texarkana Twins VVA # 278 @ 7:05 pm at George Dobson Field  
July 15-20, VVA National Convention  
July 20, Elks Breakfast  
July 28, VVA # 278 meeting (Note: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday)  
August 1, TAVC meeting  
August 15- 17, New Boston's Pioneer Days  
August 17, Elks Breakfast  
August 18, VVA # 278 meeting  
September 5, TAVC meeting  
Sept. 15, VVA # 278 meeting  
Sept. 20 & 21, 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual POW/MIA Vigil  
Sept. 21, Elks Breakfast  
October 3, TAVC meeting  
October 5, DeKalb's Oktoberfest  
October 19, Elks Breakfast