

The Listening Post

"NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER"



Chapter 35 September/October Chaplain's Report

Following our last meeting, we were saddened to learn of the passing of our Life Member, Tom Loomis. Tom was a past Trustee and a devoted member of our Honor Guard, serving as one of our armorers. Bob Stewart and I provided abbreviated military honors, per the family's request, at his funeral.

Please keep the following in your thoughts and prayers as they anticipate upcoming medical tests or procedures: George Hart, Tom Boose, and Mike Redner. Tom Smith is also reported to be experiencing ill health at this time.

We are still coordinating monetary aide to our bothers and sisters who were affected by the recent damage resulting from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. At our last meeting we received \$271 from those in attendance.

I'm **rather disappointed** with the lack of support from the balance of our chapter members. **To-date, I have NOT received ANY checks directed to our chapter offices!** God bless you if you've given elsewhere. Many of us have also. Surely **EVERYONE** can send something to donate from our chapter. **Even \$5 checks will help** those of our own who have lost **EVERYTHING**. I suggest the following experiment to help you focus on that gravity of that fact.

Get in your vehicle and drive to the nearest store or shopping center. Then get our to vehicle and go into the building so you're out of site of that vehicle. Now think to yourself, "I have to go home." Now realize you

don't have a vehicle to take you home... nor a home to go to! All you have is the clothes on your back and what money or credit cards you have in your pocket! That, my brothers and sisters is what it's like for those of our own who have

LOST EVERYTHING to the storm.

Now that you're focused, ask "**what can I SACRIFICIALLY GIVE, then send it in!**" The chapter's address is : VVA #35, 2300 Ashland Ave, Rm 229, Toledo, Ohio 43620. Mark it: Hurricane Relief. Thank you!



**With Honor & Gratitude
We Remember**

Chapter Honor Guard Help Is Needed

The chapter is still looking for membersto help with Honor Guard.

Treasure Gene Shurtz says an offer still stands from an anonymous donor who will pay the first year's dues for up to 10 new members that will commit to becoming part of the Guard, for that year.

Associate membership is also included in this offer, if the prospect is honorably discharged.

Anyone who knows of someone interested should contact Treasurer Gene Shurtz

2017-2018 Officers

Robert Stewart / President

Phillip Hotz / V. President

Ralph Wineland / 2nd V. President

Clyde Appleby / Secretary

Gene Shurtz / Treasurer

Board Members

Edward Hart / till 2020

John Slaughterbeck / till 2018

Al Meadows / till 2019

Ron Sherman /till 2019

AVVA/Jan Baker

Office 419.242.4293

Chaplain 419.242.4293

Electronic Newsletter

Not only would you help Chapter 35 cut expenses and save money, you would get more pages with stories of Vietnam and more if you converted to paperless newsletter in your e-mail. If you would like a paper copy to save then you could just print it. You can save to your computer for future reading, forward to prospective members, your family members and friends. This newsletter has 6 pages, some have had up to 12 with chapter news and stories. If you would like to help us out and receive your newsletter electronically, please contact Al Meadows (Editor) by e-mail at alm108wal@aol.com or call at 419-666-4924

October Meeting

Sunday October 08, 2017 at 7 p.m.

LAKE TOWNSHIP BUILDING

Corner, St. Rt. 795 and Cummings Rd.

Lake Township, Wood County

"Coffee and fellowship at 6:30 p.m."

Vietnam Veterans Of America Chapter 35 Meeting Notes For Sunday September 10, 2017

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Bob Stewart, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, invocation by the Chaplin (Gene Shurtz) and a moment of silence for POW's and MIA's.

Prior to beginning the full meeting, Brian Habegger of Habegger Funeral Service gave a presentation on Habegger Funeral Services. Habegger has one of the lowest, if not the lowest, funeral costs in N.W. Ohio. Casket burial (less opening grave charges) is \$2,995.00 and cremation cost is \$695.00. Both the veteran and spouse are included in these costs. Pre-planning your funeral is highly recommended and there is no extra charge.

Guest present:

John Blalock—USAF (he joined as a life member

Roll call:

All present or accounted for.

Secretary's report:

Report was read and approved.

Treasurer's report:

Treasurer, Gene Shurtz, gave an abbreviated report.

A donation jar was passed around to help the victims of Hurricane Harvey. Hurricane Irma is right on the heels of Harvey. If you make out a check, make it payable to VVA Chapter 35 and write "hurricane relief" in the memo section (i.e. Harvey Relief).

BSC—Dick Nolte—General membership coming up on October 14th at the Holbrooke Convention Center at Wright Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio.

President, Bob Stewart, met with Marcy Kaptur and Local 12 Chairman concerning Issue #2 on the November ballot. VVA does not endorse issues—it's up to our members to decide for themselves. The Toledo Blade has an op-ed editorial on September 9th concerning the state issue.

Wade Young's funeral had a great presentation given by members of Chapter 35.

1st VP Report:

He explained, when pre-planning funeral, never make a check out to funeral home. Make it out to insurance company.

2nd VP Report: Nothing

Honor Guard:

A \$250.00 donation was paid to the VVA Chapter 35 by the AFL-CIO for their participation in the Labor Day parade. Our Honor Guard will support a Veteran's Day Mass on November 5th at Immaculate Conception Church, 434 Western Ave., Toledo, Ohio.

AVVA Report:

Legacy project is ongoing. The September 2017 deadline has been extended.

Old Business:

Gene Shurtz asked for a motion to expend \$200.00 for Go Daddy web site annual renewal, motion was made by John Slaughterbeck and seconded by Phil Hotz, discussed and passed.

New Business:

A motion was made by John Slaughterbeck, and seconded by Brad Hart, to reimburse the BSC Reps when traveling to meetings over 100 miles from chapter offices for: 1 night's lodging, not to exceed \$150; \$50 per diem for food; and mileage. Following discussion, motion passed.

Send everything to Al Meadows for newsletter in Word form if at all possible, not PDF.

Fund Raiser—set for Veterans Day at Bass Pro Time is 10:00 am until 4:00 pm.

Dick Nolte suggested a cost-benefit ratio look at attending both the state convention and the national convention. State convention benefit high/cost low. National convention benefit low/cost high.

Bob Stewart, Dick Nolte, and Gene Shurtz will form Ad-hoc committee to look into the future of State and National conventions and the benefit of each.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

28 members and guests.

Respectfully submitted,

Clyde W. Appleby

Secretary
CWA:caa

Membership Drive Chapter 35

Vietnam (In-country) veterans and Vietnam-era veterans are one and the same for membership, the era has been dropped, and service must have been between February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975. Vietnam veterans, who served in the U.S. military (for other than training purposes), must document service between August 5, 1964 through May 7, 1975.

Associate Membership is to anyone that is not a Veteran, or a Veteran that did not serve during the above dates.

Remember, the \$100 VVA life membership is now permanent! These applications must be processed by the Chapter. Every Veteran you meet especially Vietnam Veterans invite them to a meeting and to join our chapter. We need more members V.V.A and A.V.V.A also.

The Angry Bird



As Played In Vietnam

November Meeting
Sunday November 12, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.
LAKE TOWNSHIP BUILDING
St. Rt. 795 & Cummings Rd.
Lake Township, Wood County
Fellowship at 6:30pm

Return To Vietnam Brings Mixed Feelings For U.S. Veterans

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Tribune News Service) — The Vietnamese guide drove the sedan through the countryside, carrying the two Americans toward the village of Ban Don and taking former Army Capt. Michael Close nearer to the spot where he spent three of the most harrowing nights of his life.

Close crashed his U1 Otter airplane somewhere in the Central Highlands during the war. The other two men on the small aircraft survived and were airlifted out, but as the pilot, Close had to stay behind to protect his plane. He hunkered down in a concrete bunker with some Special Forces troops — Viet Cong tanks rumbling the ground around them — as he waited for help to come.

More than 42 years had passed since those August days in 1969, but Close was sure he could find the old airstrip if given the chance. He wanted to go back.

In 2012, as he and his wife prepared to leave on a 15-day trip through Vietnam, specifically visiting the parts of the country Close had seen while piloting missions with the Army's 5th Special Forces Group in 1969 and 1970, he wrote a single sentence on a page of the journal a friend gave him for the journey: "Is this trip a good idea or a bad idea?" He simply wasn't sure.

Difficult memories

Some 6.6 million Vietnam-era U.S. veterans are alive today, yet few among them have or will ever revisit the country where they fought. Many don't want to because they've long ago moved on. Some don't have the inclination or the means. Others think they could not bear it.

"It is difficult to get the public to understand how complex the psychological matrix is of the Vietnam veteran," said Dr. Ed Tik, an author and psychotherapist who has been working with veterans and treating post-traumatic stress disorder for more than 40 years. "As a community, as a country, as

veterans, the United States has never faced its wounds from the Vietnam War."

Tik is the co-founder of [Soldier's Heart](#), an organization that, among other things, takes veterans back to Vietnam. He will lead his 17th such trip in November. (Close and his wife, Chris, went alone on a privately arranged tour, not with Soldier's Heart.) Most veterans return to learn, to understand, to share and to heal, Tik said.

"We wanted to encounter the former enemy and turn them into our friends," Tik said. "Trauma is from frozen war consciousness. The veteran's mind is still operating in a war zone even though it is over. We need to change the imagery our veterans are carrying." He hopes that a much-needed national conversation about healing begins Sunday night with the start of the much-anticipated, 10-episode, 18-hour documentary, "The Vietnam War," by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick. It airs in the Columbus market on WOSU-TV (Channel 34) beginning at 8 p.m. and runs almost nightly through Sept. 28. It will rerun on consecutive Tuesdays starting Oct. 3.

"I pray this series will tear us open," Tik said. "I hope our country has enough wisdom and compassion to deal with the wounds it opens. We need a profound discussion about the war."

A different Vietnam

Not all who revisit Vietnam are suffering. The reasons to return, experts say, are as varied as individual experiences.

Close counts himself among the lucky ones. He went into the Army as an officer through OSU's ROTC program. As a pilot, he didn't trudge through the jungles like so many others. "My experience in Vietnam was hours and hours of boredom punctuated by moments of terror," Close said. "The grunts? They were the heroes. Not me. Never me."

He is 73 now, and, after his military service he went on to become a Frank-

lin County Common Pleas Court judge, an appellate court judge and mayor of Dublin. These days, he is managing partner at Isaac Wiles law firm Downtown.

Other than hearing loss and a sadness for fallen comrades, Close left the service with little baggage. He exercised what few ghosts he had with two cathartic moments in the 1980s: a trip to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and, a couple of years later, an all-night session with a bottle and a buddy after they had watched the iconic movie "Platoon." Nevertheless, Close acknowledges that few escape such experiences without at least one scar.

"If you see war firsthand, you know there's no glory in it," he said. "You learn to admire the courage. You learn to admire the bravery. But you don't admire the war. Frankly, I came home and moved on to a blessed life." A friend had suggested the trip back because he had his own war wounds yet to heal. When a sudden health problem prevented the friend from going, the Closes decided to press on alone.

What they found surprised them. There are scars, yes. Wounded and maimed Vietnamese soldiers. A population born with deformities from the chemicals of war. Unexploded mines left across the country that still damage and destroy. Unchecked poverty. Lacking infrastructure. Too many orphanages.

Yet many vestiges of the war are gone. Vietnam is a largely peaceful land, mostly Buddhist. Much of it is green and beautiful, recovered from the deforestation by Agent Orange.

As he traced his path through what was known during the war as II Corps — from what was then South Vietnam and Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) north toward Kon Tom — it took him through the Central Highlands and Ban Don, the area where he spent those awful nights all those decades ago.

An old mountain man directed them to

Continued from pg 3 Return

where the airstrip used to be. When Close crashed there, it was jungle. Now, it's 20,000 acres of tapioca fields. Only the shell of one bunker remained, covered in scrub. Close ran

Remaking memories

Sometimes, a trip isn't just a trip for you. Sometimes, a trip is for everyone else.

And so it was in 1998 when Dispatch columnist Mike Harden and photo-journalist Tim Revell, both former

friend and former roommate at the Naval Academy, where he had worked in the hospital before deployment, had been killed in battle.

"This was a shock for me," he wrote. "You both leave for a war. And now one is coming back. Which one could



Motorcycles and scooters are as plentiful in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) as they were when U.S. veterans served there, but helmets are now required. STEVE STROUD, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS FILE PHOTO

his hands along the concrete, remembering for a moment a different time. They paused, and Chris Close snapped a photo of her husband. He explored a bit. Unrealistic, he knew, but he had hoped maybe to come across something tactile. A piece of steel from his plane, a broken instrument, a sign that he'd been there.

So next came a trip to Dak To. "If the war ever ended for me in my mind, it ended there," he said. "The last time I saw that city, it had been bombed to the Dark Ages. Nothing left. But when we went back, it was rebuilt, vibrant. "You go to see what you remember, and it's all gone. Changed. For us, we can't go back again because Vietnam is not as we left it. That's a good thing."

Navy corpsmen in the war, returned for a 16-day trip.

"We went as journalists. I went to show people that country through a camera," said Revell, now 71 and retired from the Dispatch since 2007. Harden died in 2010. "We wanted people to understand."

Personally, though, the trip unearthed feelings he long thought buried. Revell had never made landfall in Vietnam; he served his stint in 1968 aboard the USS Annapolis, a communications ship patrolling the waters of the region. There were tense moments, certainly, and fear. But largely, from the decks of the ship, the fighting on land was a fireworks show.

Yet so many men were lost. Names he recognized, faces he knew. Revell's musty-smelling, hand-size journal chronicling his time aboard the ship carries an entry from January 1969 after he received word that a

have been the better person and the more enterprising ... and the one with the potential."

Seeing Vietnam for the first time, photographing the maimed former soldiers, the poverty, visiting the children in too many orphanages, Revell said it got to him more than he expected. It reminded him too much of old friends, of the sailors and soldiers and Marines who came back less than when they left, those who never returned home at all.

He felt like he and Harden made that trip for them. For everyone. He felt like he could maybe replace in this country's collective mind's eyes some of those old images, the horrific ones. "The guys I knew who were lost. I felt like they were looking down saying, "Take some great pictures, Tim,"" he said. "We felt that we had to cover this story, veterans knew what it was like then. We wanted them to see it now."