

The Listening Post

"NEVER AGAIN WILL ONE GENERATION OF VETERANS ABANDON ANOTHER"



Sponsors Bill For Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway

Former Army Lieutenant During Vietnam War Is Ohio State Rep For District 46, Toledo - Oregon

COLUMBUS— State Rep. Michael Sheehy (D-Oregon) is proud to announce the signing into law of Senate Bill 182, legislation to designate memorial highways statewide. The omnibus legislation included two memorial highways sponsored by Rep. Sheehy to honor late Northwest Ohio leaders.

SB 182 creates a memorial highway on State Route 2 in Oregon, Ohio and in Jerusalem Township to honor soldiers and an airman from the community that did not return home from the Vietnam War. The new signage for the roadway will read "Vietnam Veterans: SP4 Arthur J. Heringhausen Jr., SP4 Ervin E. Harris, CPL Gerald E. Corlett, PFC Joseph G. Gill, PFC Esiquio A. Cantu, 2LT John W. Vaughan, PFC Scott D. Corrello, and A1C John M. Thayer Memorial Highway."

"In designating these memorial highways I hope to honor these brave men who served in our armed forces and gave the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedoms," said Sheehy. "I am inspired by their heroic service, and I hope that these memorial signs will inspire others as well."

Mike Sheehy and his brothers Charlie and Jim all served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, with Jim Sheehy becoming decorated in combat.



Chapter 35 life member Mike Sheehy graduated from the ROTC program at the U. of Toledo, earning his bachelor's degree in 1971. The planning for a dedication ceremony, in Oregon, with the unveiling of the signs, is underway, Mike said.

MORE PHOTOS OF MILITARY VEHICLES ARE ON PAGE 2

- 2016-2017 Officers
- Dick Nolte/ President
 - Bob Stewart/ Vice President
 - George Hart / 2nd V.P
 - Clyde Appleby/Secretary
 - Gene Shurtz/Treasurer
 - Board Members
 - Tom Loomis/till 2017
 - John Slaughterbeck/ till 2018
 - Al Meadows/ till 2019
 - Ron Sherman/till 2019
 - AVVA/Jan Baker
-
- Office (419)-242-4293

Chapter Has Opportunity To Purchase Military Jeep Or Military Truck For Parades And PR

AVVA member Jerry Eversman has learned that the great-grandparent of his boys is looking to sell one or more of his military collector vehicles.

There is a 1950's Jeep, a deuce and half truck, and/ a pick up truck from the 1960's, that the owner would sell to Chapter 35, if the group would be interested. They are stored in the LaSalle Township, Michigan area.

A recon trip for a committee who might consider a purchase can be arranged, Eversman noted.

At left is the 2 1/2 ton truck available to the chapter for purchase. It can transport people seated in the rear bed of the truck in parades.



NEXT MEETING

Sunday July 10, 2016 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."

M-37 Truck And Jeep Are For Sale To Our VVA Chapter



A historical military vehicle could be used for public relations purposes.

Looking Back At The Year 1987 From Old Copies Of The Listening Post Newsletter

The year started out rocking with a music jam and fundraiser at Brenda's Show Bar, 2114 W. Alexis Road, on February 8, 1987. A second jam was scheduled for March 15, at the Glass City Boardwalk in Moline, OH.



President Mike Flowers reported in April of 1987, the chapter would be five years old. Veterans housing was an important issue then, as it remains today.

In April elections were held and Flowers was re-elected as president as was Dennis for vice-president. John Eckhart was elected 2nd vice-president. George Billmaier was elected as treasurer and Steve White was chosen as secretary. Board members elected were Bruce Knerr, Joe Shinaver and Jack Wilkins. Bill Beard will join White and Flowers as state delegates.

Chapter dues were \$16.00 each year.

Job fairs remained important to the chapter. On June 5, the fifth annual Job fair was scheduled.

The treasurer's report in the April 1987 newsletter reported the chapter had income of \$46,035.96 from March of 1986 to February 1987. They spent \$9,894.11, and carried forward a \$6,288.13 balance.

VVA's third national convention was set for July 29-August 2, in Washington D.C. Toledo's sesquicentennial parade for July 4th would include the chapter's color guard, as it participated in the Memorial Day parade too.

President Mike Flowers wrote a letter to the editor of the *The Blade* and reprinted it in the June 1987 newsletter. Flower's letter addressed a trial in Lucas County Common Pleas Court where two brothers, Robert and Frederick LaPierre stood trial for selling cocaine, marijuana, and assorted other illicit drugs. Robert LaPierre was a Vietnam War veteran.

The men were acquitted at trial and Flowers letter took issue with what he claimed was the prosecutions "play upon the emotions" of Vietnam veterans, calling it a "travesty of justice". Flowers wrote that he did not condone the sale of illicit drugs by any means and the undercover officers had persuaded the defendants to obtain and sell drugs in an effort to help a hypothetical Vietnam veteran with his war-induced psychological drug dependency.



Mike Flowers was president of chapter.

The jury reported ruled the brothers innocent by the police entrapment.

The chapter held a picnic with a pig roast on August 14.

Chapter 35 held a candlelight vigil at the Toledo War Memorial on the Civic Center Mall on September 18, the day President Reagan proclaimed as a day of remembrance for MIA's.

Another jam / fundraiser was held at Glass City Boardwalk on September 27. Ten area bands participated. The August newsletter reported the chapter made \$20,000 on the March jam.

Meeting

Sunday August 14, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

LAKE TOWNSHIP BUILDING

St. Rt. 795 & Cummings Rd.

Lake Township, Wood County

Fellowship at 6:30pm

Children of the 30s & 40s... "The Last Ones: A Short Memoir"

"Born in the early 40s, some of us exist as a very special age cohort. We are the "last ones." We are the last, climbing out of the depression, who can remember the winds of war and the war itself with fathers and uncles going off. We are the last to remember ration books for everything from sugar to shoes to stoves. We saved tin foil and poured fat into tin cans. We saw cars up on blocks because tires weren't available. My mother delivered milk in a horse drawn cart.



We are the last to hear Roosevelt's radio assurances and to see gold stars in the front windows of our grieving neighbors. We can also remember the parades on August 15, 1945; VJ Day. We saw the 'boys' home from the war build their Cape Cod style houses, pouring the cellar, tar papering it over and living there until they could afford the time and money to build it out.

We are the last who spent childhood without television; instead imagining what we heard on the radio. As we all like to brag, with no TV, we spent our childhood 'playing outside until the street lights came on.' We did play outside and we did play on our own. There was no little league. The lack of television in our early years meant, for most of us, that

we had little real understanding of what the world was like. Our Saturday afternoons, if at the movies, gave us newsreels of the war and the holocaust sandwiched in between westerns and cartoons. Newspapers and magazines were written for adults. We are the last who had to find out for ourselves.

As we grew up, the country was exploding with growth. The G.I. Bill gave returning veterans the means to get an education and spurred colleges to grow. VA loans fanned a housing boom. Pent up demand coupled with new installment payment plans put factories to work. New highways would bring jobs and mobility. The veterans joined civic clubs and became active in politics. In the late 40s and early 50's the country seemed to lie in the embrace of brisk but quiet order as it gave birth to its new middle class. Our parents understandably became absorbed with their own new lives. They were free from the confines of the depression and the war. They threw themselves into exploring opportunities they had never imagined.

We weren't neglected but we weren't today's all-consuming family focus. They were glad we played by ourselves 'until the street lights came on.' They were busy discovering the post war world.

Most of us had no life plan, but with the unexpected virtue of ignorance and an economic rising tide we simply stepped into the world and went to find out. We entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity; a world where we were welcomed. Based on our naïve belief that there was more where this came from, we shaped life as we went.

We enjoyed a luxury; we felt secure in our future. Of course, just as today, not all Americans shared

in this experience. Depression poverty was deep rooted. Polio was still acrippler. The Korean War was a dark presage in the early 50s and by mid-decade school children were ducking under desks. China became Red China.



Kirinuke

Eisenhower sent the first 'advisors' to Vietnam. Castro set up camp in Cuba and Khrushchev came to power.

We are the last to experience an interlude when there were no existential threats to our homeland. We came of age in the late 40s to late 50s. The war was over and the cold war, terrorism, climate change, technological upheaval and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt life with insistent unease.

Only we can remember both a time of apocalyptic war and a time when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty. We experienced both.

We grew up at the best possible time, a time when the world was getting better not worse. We are the 'last ones.'"

-Author unknown

Stolen Valor Law Increases Fine Tenfold

(Source KSWO)



LAWTON, OK (KSWO) -The State of Oklahoma is taking a stronger stand against people who impersonate members of the armed forces, or veterans. The punishment for that crime is now set to increase tenfold.

Governor Mary Fallin signed an amendment to the state's Stolen Valor Law in April. It pertains to individuals who misrepresent themselves as a member of the armed forces by wearing any decoration or medal authorized by congress, like a purple heart or bronze star. The fine for the crime has increased from \$100 to \$1,000.

Veterans say it is a personal issue to everyone who has served on active duty. They say for someone to pretend to have earned awards and medals is very offensive when people have fought and died for this county.

"My belly churns up and I go to knots and sometimes I have a hard time talking about it," said William Phillips, the director of the Veterans Services Center in Lawton.

Phillips spent 21 years and 18 days in the U.S. Army, serving in both Korea and Vietnam, and even earning a Bronze Star. He says he caught a man pretending to be a Purple Heart recipient in Lawton.

"I asked him where he got his Purple Heart and he hesitated, he couldn't give me a direct answer and I just put my hand up like that and pulled it off and I said 'You better get out of my sight,'" Phillips said.

Phillips says many of his fellow veterans are content to not start a fight, but they have turned in four people at the center for breaking the law and pretending to be veterans.

"I love what they have done with the



new law. I still think it hasn't gone far enough. As a minimum, they should probably be required on top of the fine to do some civic duty. Put some hours in, bring them into a place like this and make them work for a week," Phillips said.

Phillips says a man who did break the law was assigned to complete 250 hours of community service by working at the Veterans Services Center. He says he has no doubt that if someone is not who they say they are, the military or someone in the public will figure out eventually.

"The old saying, 'sit on a bar stool in a VFW a couple of evenings. They'll know whether you did something or if you're a phony,'" Phillips said.

Since the law was originally created in 2011, misrepresenting yourself as a Medal of Honor recipient and/or falsifying documents of proof of service is a felony in Oklahoma. Those crimes carry a fine up to \$5,000 and no more than 1 year in the county jail.

A similar federal law called the "Stolen Valor Act" was signed into law in 2006 by President George W. Bush, but was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2012, saying the First Amendment's right to freedom of speech also protects the right to lie.

Story By Kelsey Powell, Reporter 2016 KSWO



Eventually The Thing Did Fly Vietnam Pilot To Receive Medal Of Honor



WASHINGTON – Charles Kettles knew the eight troops climbing aboard his helicopter would overload it, potentially grounding them amid North Vietnamese machine gun and mortar fire.

As bullets raked the UH-1D "Huey" and shrapnel blew out a section of its windshield, Kettles made a long slow takeoff, piloting the last group of men out of an ambush near Duc Pho, Vietnam in 1967.

For his combat heroism, the 86-year-old Kettles, a retired Army lieutenant colonel and former flight commander, will now receive the nation's highest military award, the Medal of Honor, during a White House ceremony scheduled for next month. The award is an upgrade from the Distinguished Service Cross as a result of support from Michigan lawmakers.

During the 1967 mission, about 80 soldiers with 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division launched an assault and were surprised by enemy forces along a ridgeline.

"They were caught in an ambush, a bad scene," said Kettles, who retired from the Army in 1978 and now lives in Michigan. "A few hours after they were inserted, they got pretty well mauled over."

Kettles, who spoke about the mission during a recent interview with Stars and Stripes, was a flight commander assigned to the 176th Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion. He was called up to lead a platoon of Hueys in support of the soldiers, who had requested additional forces. His helicopters made multiple flights to

Senators Pushing New Law For Firing VA Employees



WASHINGTON — Senators were working against the clock Tuesday on new legislation allowing the Department of Veterans Affairs to quickly fire employees for bad conduct or poor performance after a current federal law was shot down.

Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said he was meeting with the highest ranking Democrat on the committee in an effort to jump-start a bill and move it to a Senate vote before the upcoming summer recess starts in July.

The committee warned that without a new law the VA will be adrift and unable to effectively root out bad managers after Attorney General Loretta Lynch recently decided a law passed by Congress in 2014 amid a nationwide wait-time scandal is unconstitutional.

The VA said last week it will no longer use the law — much to the frustration of senators.

“Nothing is going to stop us as a committee from pursuing that [new legislation] until it happens because until we do the VA is going to be in jeopardy,” Isakson said.

The VA has struggled to punish execu-

tives accused of wrongdoing since employees covered up long waits at veteran hospitals across the country and an investigation found a corrosive management culture. The decision by Lynch came amid a lawsuit by Sharon Helman, a former Phoenix VA hospital director who was at the center of the 2014 wait-time scandal and is now challenging her firing.

Isakson and the committee have crafted the Veterans First Act, which gives VA Secretary Bob McDonald the authority to terminate employees in the federal government’s second largest bureaucracy, rather than an appeals board or judge.

But the bill has been caught up in debate over a measure separate from employee firings and has not progressed over the past month. Now, lawmakers have just two work weeks to pass a new law before leaving for a recess that will stretch into the fall and the presidential election.

The Isakson bill changes tack from the firing measures passed in 2014 as part of the \$16 billion Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act. The earlier law shaved the appeals process for fired employees to just three weeks instead of many months and put a final decision in the hands of an administrative law judge.



For now, terminated VA employees are again treated the same as other federal workers and can appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board. The VA is again directing appeals back to the board because McDonald fears any future firings under the expedited law would likely be struck down in court following Lynch’s opinion that it is unconstitutional, said Christopher O’Connor, who is nominated to be assistant VA secretary for congressional and legislative affairs and testified to the committee Tuesday. Senators chafed at the move, saying McDonald should continue to enforce laws passed by Congress and come to lawmakers for any needed changes. “To just say the attorney general thinks it’s not going to hold water so we are never going to use the law. That is a very dangerous precedent,” Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, said. “That is not the discretion the secretary should have.” Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., grilled O’Connor on the VA’s reversion back to the earlier law, which appeared unable to weed out misbehaving managers during the 2014 scandal.

“If this were a corporation this would be like the sixth largest corporation in the country,” Boozman said. “At the end of the day, there’s people who don’t work out and they need to be gotten rid of in a fairly easy way.”

tritten.travis@stripes.com

Continued from page 4 col 3



U.S. Army Maj. Charles Kettles, posing in front of a 121st Aviation Company UH-1H, during his second Vietnam tour of duty, 1969.

(Photo courtesy of Retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Charles Kettles)

the battle site and ferried back wounded and dead.

“Near the end of the day, things didn’t get any better,” Kettles said.

The battalion commander called for all remaining troops to be extracted, including soldiers from Kettles’ platoon who were trapped when their helicopter had been destroyed in a landing zone.

Kettles was down to one serviceable helicopter and had to call up another unit from nearby to assist.

“I should have had eight helicopters and I ended up with a net of six, but that is all we had,” he said.

The helicopters went in to extract the last of the remaining soldiers and loaded up. As they flew away, Kettles had just one infantry soldier on his Huey. The others had been loaded up first.

“We lifted up and went out and started back toward Duc Pho at about 1,000 feet,” Kettles said. “Then we were informed that there were 8 troops who didn’t get on helicopter.”

The prospects for a rescue were grim. The support artillery had gone quiet and the fighter jets had left the scene. Kettles knew his D-model Huey

lacked the kind of lift power that could guarantee they would get back off the ground with an additional 8 soldiers on board.

Kettles took the controls of the helicopter from the copilot and turned back toward the site of the ambush. As they landed, the infantry soldiers immediately began climbing aboard — suddenly they were hit by North Vietnamese mortar fire.

“Shrapnel took out part of the left and right windshield and chin bubble where I was,” Kettles said.

“Apparently, the shrapnel went between my seat and the copilot’s seat.” Several of the soldiers were wounded. Later, the crew would find about 30 holes where enemy bullets pierced the aircraft.

“The helicopter began fishtailing violently to the left and right,” Kettles said. “One of the grunts flew out and caught a skid.”

The other soldiers pulled the hanging man back in, but the Huey was still badly overloaded and the rotor blade began to lose speed. To get the men out, Kettles would have to execute a running takeoff, flying slow and low

over a long, open space.

As enemy fire continued, Kettles lowered the Huey’s nose skid to nearly touch the ground and flew along a dry riverbed.

“Eventually the thing did fly and came out with a rather shallow departure,” he said.

Kettles, who was 37 years old at the time, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his heroism. A push from lawmakers in Kettles’ home state of Michigan sought to upgrade his award.

Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Mich., said Kettles went “above and beyond the call of duty during one of the darkest times in our nation’s history.”

Too often Vietnam servicemembers were not celebrated or treated with respect, Dingell said in a released statement.

“These individuals fought for our country and put their lives on the line and because Lt. Col. Kettles turned his helicopter around and braved enemy ammunition and shell fire, he saved the lives of 44 men,” she said.

Kettles was already considered a local hero in Michigan, where he is featured in a museum exhibit by the Ypsilanti Historical Society.

“He is a great guy, he is just marvelous,” said Alvin Rudisill, the society president.

The White House announced Tuesday that he will receive the Medal of Honor.

Kettles will be the 260th recipient from the Vietnam War, and only its 54th living recipient, according to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

The last service member to receive the award was Chief Edward C. Byers, Jr, a Navy SEAL involved in a hostage rescue in Afghanistan in 2012. He received the award in February.

Stars and Stripes reporter Alex Horton contributed to this story.

Tritten.travis@stripes.com

Twitter: [@Travis_Tritten](https://twitter.com/Travis_Tritten)