

The Listening Post

AUGUST 2011



President, Vice-President, and Regional Director of Ch. 35 to Attend National V.V.A. Convention To Convene Aug. 17

Chapter 35 will be represented, as part of the Ohio delegation, at the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., 15th National Convention, August 17-20, in Reno, Nevada, by Butch Stewart, Chapter President, Don Measel, vice-president, and by Bob Stewart, District 2 Director for Ohio V.V.A.

Their attendance is part of a concerted effort by Ohio V.V.A. to make sure a large voting block is present in hopes of electing Tom Burke, Ohio V.V.A., the National Secretary; Larry Frazee, Ohio V.V.A., the National Treasurer; and Ohio V.V.A. Executive Director Joe Jennings is a candidate for National Board of Directors, At-Large.



See the VVA's web site for the complete national convention information: www.vva.org

U.S. Senator Patty Murray Helps Defeat Ammendment

Press Release (Washington, D.C.)
From National V.V.A. Office

Senator Murray Helps Defeat Amendment that Would Have Blocked Compensation for Agent Orange Exposure

Murray: Amendment would have reversed decades of policy on how we treat veterans suffering from diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure.

7/20/11 U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, helped defeat an amendment that would have created a nearly impossible standard that must be met before VA can establish a presumption of service connection based on exposure to Agent Orange. In a speech before the vote, Senator Murray described the amendment as another hurdle Vietnam veterans would have to overcome in their 40 year struggle for compensation. The amendment, which Murray led the fight against on the floor of the U.S. Senate, ultimately failed to be included in the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill



U.S. Senator Patty Murray

when Murray successfully asked that the amendment be tabled and prevailed by a vote of 69-30.

Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown (D) voted with Senator Murray while Ohio's other Senator in Washington, Rob Portman (R) voted to block compensation for Agent Orange exposure.

"These veterans have been waiting, and getting sicker,

2011-12 Officers

Butch Stewart / Pres.
Don Measel / V. Pres.
Ed Willmarth / 2nd V.P.
Dave Meyer / Secretary
Gene Shurtz / Treasurer

Board Members

Larry King / till 2012
Roy Hernandez / till 2013
Steve Benner / till 2013
Ron Distel / till 2014

A Former Board Member Passes Away

Larry E. Roehl, 62, of Sylvania Twp., died June 17, 2011, at Toledo Hospital. He served in the 82nd Airborne Division, of the U.S. Army in Vietnam. His obituary noted Larry enjoyed spending time with friends and riding his Harley.

and dying for 40 years or more. How much longer do we think they should wait? The time for waiting is over," said Senator Murray on the Senate Floor before the vote. "Vietnam veterans have paid enough for that war. They should not end up paying for our debt. It is us who owe them a debt."

Next Meeting !

Sun. Aug. 14, at 7 p.m.

Petro Stopping Ctr.

I-280 & Exit 1-B

Lake Township

September Meeting

9/11/2011 @ 7 p.m.

(See back page for more...)

Complete Text of Speech Sen. Murray Gave In Support of Vietnam Vets

"Mr. President, I rise to oppose the amendment that has been offered by the Senator from Oklahoma that would undo decades of policy on how we treat veterans suffering from diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure.

"And that violates the promise we have made to a generation of veterans.

"Mr. President, the legacy of Agent Orange exposure among Vietnam veterans is one of tragedy, roadblocks, neglect, pain, and then more roadblocks.

"It's the legacy of our military spraying millions of gallons of poisonous herbicide indiscriminately, without thought of consequences, and without any repercussions.

"At the time of the Vietnam War – and for far too long after it - the U.S. government neglected to track Agent Orange exposures.

"Then in the decades following the war – our government stonewalled veterans who developed horrible ailments of all kinds from those exposures.

"And to further compound the problem, for decades our government also failed to fund any research on Agent Orange and other toxins that Vietnam veterans were exposed to.

"These mistakes, these decades of neglect, have a cost.

"It's a cost to veterans and their loved ones, a cost to the government that sent them to war, and a cost to all of us as Americans.

"And it's a cost that, even in difficult budget times, even with our back against the wall, we can't walk away from.

"Now Mr. President, I'm not here to question any Senator's commitment to our veterans.

"But what I am here to question is the standard by which this amendment says they should be treated.

"This amendment says we should change the standard by which we have judged Agent Orange cases for two decades.

"Currently – Vietnam veterans are presumed to be service-connected when the VA Secretary determines that a positive association exists between exposure to Agent Orange and a certain disease.

"One of the reasons that Congress chose this mechanism is because it was impossible for these veterans to prove that their exposure to Agent Orange caused their cancers or other diseases.

"These veterans were exposed decades ago.

"They do not know where they were exposed, or how much they inhaled.

"However, under the Senator from Oklahoma's amendment, Vietnam veterans would be asked to prove the impossible.

"They'd be asked to prove that they would never have gotten cancer, or heart disease, or any other disease or condition, if not for Agent Orange.

"Vietnam veterans who have diabetes, prostate cancer, lung cancer, and blood borne diseases would be denied care and benefits under this amendment.

"And not only would this be a new hurdle Vietnam veterans could never overcome - It would change the rules midstream.

"It would treat Vietnam veterans whose diseases have already been presumptively service-connected different than those whose diseases have not yet been positively associated with Agent Orange exposure.

"Now Mr. President, I won't deny that compensation for exposures is a difficult issue and one that we continually have to look at.

"We've grappled with this issue in relation to Vietnam veterans and exposure to Agent Orange.

"And today we continue to deal with this issue as Iraq and Afghanistan veterans come home with illnesses potentially associated with their exposure to toxins released from burn pits and other environmental exposures.

"But ultimately, you have to look at the facts with reason and compassion, and weigh the years of our military's failure to track exposures, the inevitable existence of uncertainty, and the word of our veterans.

"And that is exactly what we have to do here.

"On the one hand, we have thousands of veterans who have come forward and believe their cancers and ailments were caused by an exposure to a known killer.

"You have studies that show veterans exposed to Agent Orange are more likely to have heart disease, cancer, and other conditions

"You have the Institute of Medicine that has recommended giving veterans the benefit of the doubt.

"And you have the Secretary of Veterans Affairs who has decided that we must move forward to provide compensation to presumptively service-connected veterans exposed to Agent Orange for cancer and heart disease.

"On the other hand - you may have a compelling fiscal case....

"But the Senator from Oklahoma hasn't presented one shred of evidence that Agent Orange does not cause heart disease, cancer, or any condition.

"What has been presented is an amendment that asks veterans to wait until there is more scientific evidence.

"Well, Mr. President, these veterans have been waiting for 40 years or more.

"How much longer should they wait?

"The Secretary of Veterans Affairs decided that the time for waiting was over.

"I ask that we respect and support this decision.

"And that we also remember that - even in the midst of this whirlwind debt and deficit debate - we have made a promise to our veterans.

"One that doesn't go away.

"Mr. President, Vietnam veterans have paid enough for that war.

"They should not end up paying for our debt.

"It is us who owe them a debt.

"Thank you."

Officials Learn Of Life Member's Death

Martin E. Fewlas, 74, died August 28, 2010, in Toledo, Ohio. He was a life member of VVA Chapter 35. Chapter officers learned Mr. Fewlas had passed when recent newsletters sent to his last known address began being returned, with "no forwarding information". A check at the Lucas County Coroner's Office found Mr. Fewlas died as a result of injuries sustained from a fall. His death was ruled to be accidental. An obituary could not be located in The Blade or from any other source.