

— THE POINT —

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC.

Chapter 172

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The First VVA Chapter in the State of Maryland - The Gold Standard

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From the President.....

The Fraternal Order of Eagles held their state convention recently at Salisbury, Maryland, in which several members of our Color Guard presented colors and participated in the golf tournament events.

Fraternal Order of Eagles State President Dave Shomake presented President Bob Cook of Chapter 172, a check in the amount of \$17,642.71 to be used for Veterans Assistance. The state President of the Eagles selects his choice of charity for the year he is president. Dave selected Chapter 172, which he is also a life member of, for their outstanding work helping the American Veteran. Thank you, Dave for the very generous donation.

Chapter Hi-Lites

June 1st, the Chapter the hosted the wedding reception of our president Bobby Cook and his lovely bride Linda. Many people thought that this day would never come. To be honest there was some money lost and won on this auspicious occasion. July 4th the chapter hosted the first ever 'Frankfurter and Fireworks' event. Since this was a non-budgeted event attendees were asked to give a \$5 per person donation for the food. The reason for the event was that the City of Cumberland has changed the annual fireworks launch site from the park to Bishop Walsh HS on Haystack Mountain. So we can now view the annual display from our deck.

In case you missed the Memorial Day observance at Rocky Gap, it was without a doubt the most heavily attended observance in the 35 or so years that they have been holding it out there. The annual Chapter family picnic was held at the Ali-Ghan Shrine picnic grounds and train depot. The food was catered by club members and they did an excellent job, the food was great. I heard no complaints, okay Janet was there so you know that there was at least one complaint. The Shriners did a noteworthy job to help make the event a success, they obviously want our business, and as far as I am concerned it's a deal.

D.A.V. Service Officers at Chapter



Veterans of the United States Armed Forces may be eligible for a broad range of programs and services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). These benefits are legislated in Title 38 of the United States Code. To apply for VA Benefits veterans are required to complete certain VA Forms providing information relative to the benefit applied for, to assist in this application process;

A Disabled American Veteran (DAV) Service Officer will be at the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 172, 17 N. Liberty Street, Cumberland, MD, the Second Thursday of each month. The date for this month's visit will be July 11th, from 9:30 am until 3:00 pm. The Service Officer will be available to provide information and prepare VA claims for veterans, their spouse or family members to obtain VA benefits.

Please bring a copy of your Military Discharge, DD 214 or other service record, VA Claim Number if one was issued and any correspondence or rating decision information.

If you have questions or wish to schedule an appointment call VVA Chapter 172 (301) 777-7001 or (301) 842-2562. Appointments preferred, Walk-ins also welcomed in time available between appointments. This is a free service provided to all veterans by the DAV.

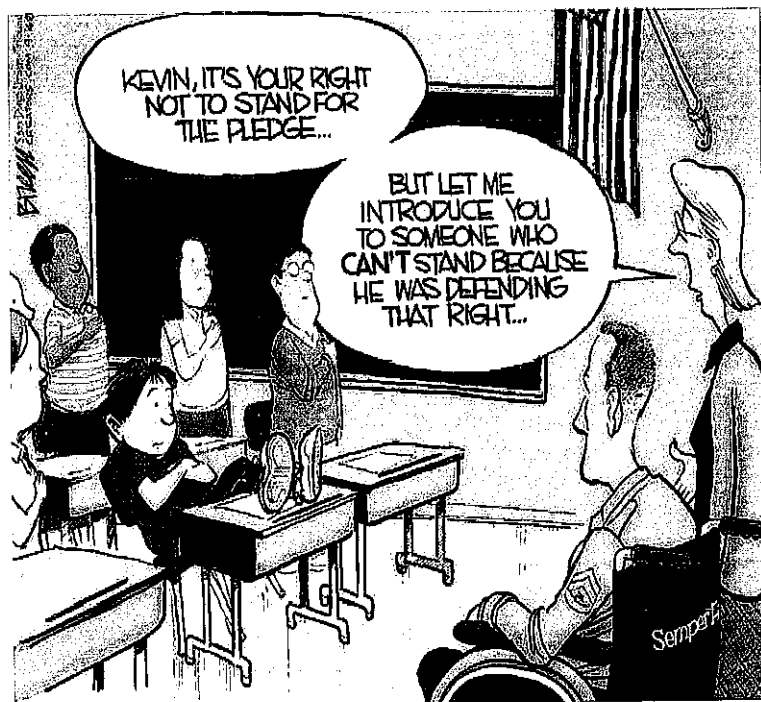
OFFICE NEWS FROM BARB AND SUE

Heritage Days was another success this year! A big thanks to all who volunteered at the booth both days. We couldn't have done it without you all.

We have some new arrivals of hats, tee shirts, and coffee mugs for the summer, so come down and check them out. We also have a fresh supply of VVA Chapter Life and Regular Member hats, which are available in navy, white, and khaki.

A new color in the Reflections tee shirt has arrived, Olive Green and it looks great. So if you purchase one the month of July, we'll give you a \$2.00 discount!

We also have the Reflections Print now available on canvas, which gives it a textured painted quality. Framed and unframed. Two sizes are available: Small (16 x 21) unframed, priced at \$149.99, framed, \$199.99. Large (34 x 26) unframed, priced at \$209.99, framed \$ 299.99. Stop and Buy!



This should be posted in every school in the USA

FROM THE SKY PILOT....

Today's Reading is in Hebrews (5:5, 10)

"Who needs a Priest?"

We all do. Since God is an awesome and Holy God, sinful humans cannot approach him directly. We need a mediator - a priest - to bring us to God. The writer of Hebrews presented Jesus Christ as the priest his readers needed.

These readers knew their Jewish history and religion. God had appointed Aaron as the first high priest because their ancestor could not come before a Holy God and make offerings on their own. As sinners, they benefited spiritually by having an intermediary.

Some Jews apparently had begun to feel a bit insecure about leaving this familiar system. So the writer of Hebrews sought to reassure them by explaining the work of Christ. Building on their understanding of the Old Testament priesthood, the writer asserted that they didn't need to return to the old ways since Jesus is the one true high priest.

The parallels between Christ and the Old Testament high priest are dramatic. Only the high priest could enter the most Holy Place and he could enter only once a year, on the Day of Atonement. But first he had to offer a blood sacrifice for himself and then for the people. In the same way Christ offered his own blood to make atonement for our sins. Then, on our behalf, he entered the inner sanctuary behind the curtain (6:19-20). Hebrews teaches that, through Our high priest, Jesus Christ, we have direct access to God.

God laid this on my heart!
I Love You All, Brothers & Sisters!

Chaplain
Rodger Long
Chapter 172 & MD State Council

Let's Be Serious

Editorial Opinion

I remember the day I left Vietnam. We were herded onto a TWA "freedom bird" headed for Okinawa. As we sat there like good little boys you could hear a pin drop. The plane took off and still not a sound, just that gut wrenching nervous silence. After a while we started to loosen up and talked amongst ourselves, but still no frivolity. We landed in Oki and spent three days on the rock. When it came our turn to leave we were once again herded on to a Braniff International "freedom bird." When we went wheels up and swung out over the blue Pacific things were different all hell broke loose in "de plane". We knew now that the 13 month nightmare was really over.

You see we were not totally confident that while we were in the area of operations' of Vietnam that we wouldn't be ordered to get off and re-join our units. Several of us had even nervously joked about it and the general and I believe sincere attitude was "you'd have to kill me to get me off this plane." Probably all of us had that same feeling. I am done with Vietnam and the military; I just want to get back to the block find some "Old German" and the little girl in white sox. For a long time many of us drank too much, smoked too much and drove too fast. Yeh I know there were some problems. We had all changed, war does that to people. For all too many of us fitting back in was not the easy task that we had thought it would be. A demon reared its ugly head and its name was PTSD. Most veterans were able with time and counseling to slay the beast, others were not. Drugs, alcohol and depression claimed a significant number of Vietnam veterans. But as I write this I know that I am preaching to the choir.

The Vietnam War is no longer America's longest war a dubious markl has been reached by our current involvement in the Middle East. As before PTSD has reared its ugly head. I recently heard that everyday 22 veterans of this current war take their own lives. More veterans have died by their own hands than were lost in actual combat.

When I first heard that veterans were doing five or six tours and more in the Middle East I said then this would end up bad. I heard a young Army Sergeant who had just finished a 15 month tour of duty say that he couldn't wait to go back and be with his troops. This man has a young wife and two children. But after a few days he was ready to go back. My question is has their training failed them?

Look at the people we are fighting. Peasants who have nothing and will never have anything. They have been fighting for generations that's the occupation for most of them, fighting and killing. It's a country where people are stoned to death. Fathers routinely murder their daughters and wives for some perceived wrong doing. Torture, flogging and drug production are ingrained in their society. So what are we doing with our volunteer Army? What are we breeding? Are we going to do anything to help these brave and dedicated veterans? Lives are being lost. Hearts are being broken and families destroyed.

When I go to the "Wall" what always comes to my mind is look at all that lost potential. Look at all those dreams that never came true.

Millions of dollars have and are being spent on memorials that are covered with the names of the fallen. Maybe what we need is a memorial covered with the names of war veterans who could no longer live with themselves.

Steve Parsons
July 2013.



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Disclaimer

The newsletter The Point is a monthly publication of chapter 172. The viewpoints or opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the writer and are meant only for informational and entertainment purposes. These opinions do not represent the official policy of VVA National or Chapter 172. All unsigned articles are by the editor; All other submissions will have the contributor's name as a byline.

Chapter Meetings

Chapter meetings are the first Thursday of each month at 2000 hours at the Chapter Home 17 North Liberty Street, Cumberland, Maryland. Boards of Directors meetings are the first Thursday beginning at 1900 hours. All members are encouraged to attend both the membership and Board of Directors meetings.