

InService



HELPING VETERANS, COMMUNITIES, AND THOSE SERVING IN HARM'S WAY

This issue features
GREAT STUFF
we missed from
2014!



VVA Chapter 668's float



GUAM

VVA Chapter 668 in Hagatna, Guam, took part in the Guam Liberation Day Festival on July 21, 2014. The festivities, including a well-attended parade, celebrated the 70th anniversary of Guam's independence from Japan, which was granted on July 21, 1944. The VVA chapter took first place for the best parade float by a non-profit group.

In June of 2002, Guam's Vietnam veterans were honored by the official designation of Route 10 in Barrigada, Mangilao and Chalan Pago, as "The Vietnam Veterans Highway." Currently VVA Chapter 668 meets every second Friday of the month at the Mangilao headquarters, and the chapter's AVVA counterpart meets every second Monday. ■

Above: Chapter 668 AVVA and VVA members
Below: Region 9 Director Dick Southern with Chapter 668 member.



>> More chapter news inside.

PENNSYLVANIA

Since 2000, the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh has collected more than 30,000 sweaters to share with families in need in its annual Mister Rogers' Sweater Drive. Last December, VVA and AVVA members of **Beaver County Chapter 862 in Southwestern Pennsylvania**, distributed more than 290 sweaters and bought gifts for another 30 veterans as part of the museum's annual sweater drive.

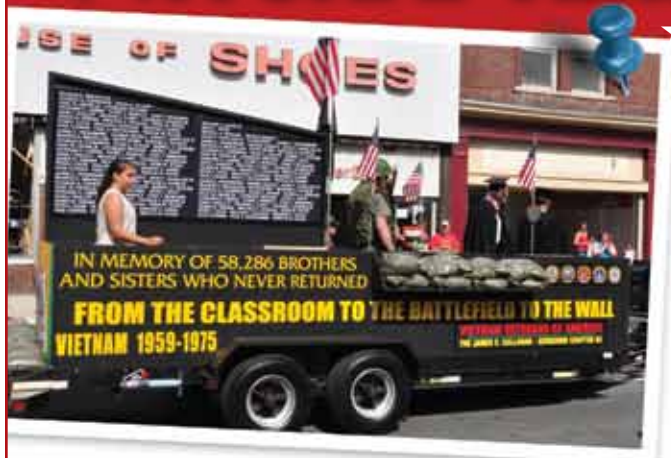
VVA and AVVA volunteers picked up sweaters at the Children's Museum in Pittsburgh and delivered them, between December 17 and 20, to Veterans Place and the Homeless Veterans Program run by the VA, as well as to the Beaver County Women's Center and several nursing homes. Beneficiaries of the VVA's work and clothing donations included veterans at Beaver Valley Nursing Home, Blair Nursing Home, Elmcroft Nursing Home, Rochester Manor, Franciscan Manor, Butler Domiciliary, Providence Health Care, and Friendship Ridge Women's Center. AVVA 862 Chapter President Bobbie Morris acknowledged the AVVA associates' dedication and hard work, saying that the chapter looks forward to continuing its outreach and support to veterans and their families in 2015. ■



Chapter 862 AVVA and VVA members visited Beaver Valley Nursing Center and distributed sweaters to veterans.



VVA CHAPTERS ACROSS AMERICA



Chapter 65's float at the local Fourth of July parade. The float had all the 27 names of the Berkshire County Veterans who were killed in Vietnam. The theme was growing up going to school, then to Vietnam.

MASSACHUSETTS

In keeping with the Vietnam Veterans of America principles, each chapter of VVA helps returning servicemen and women adjust to civilian life after combat by offering support and ensuring that they receive the financial and mental health assistance they need. To further this effort, some members of VVA **Chapter 65 of Pittsfield, Massachusetts**, have also become involved in the Here at Home Committee, an organization that welcomes returning military personnel home.

Chapter 65 has grown from 35 members in 1985 to more than 80 in 2014, in part because many Vietnam veterans are now retired and have more time to help the community. They help young veterans of recent wars, many of whom have served on multiple combat tours in Iraq or Afghanistan and, like their older counterparts, suffer post-traumatic stress disorder.

"They are kind of like us when they come home," said Chapter President Francis Tremblay. "They stay in the weeds a little bit. It took us 10 to 15 years before we started talking about what we did or where we were."

Additionally, the chapter created the Veterans Coalition, which brings other veterans groups in the area together for meetings and other events. ■

Chapter 65's memorial at Park Square in Pittsfield, has the 27 names of the Berkshire County veterans killed in Vietnam.

Chapter's color guard.



OREGON

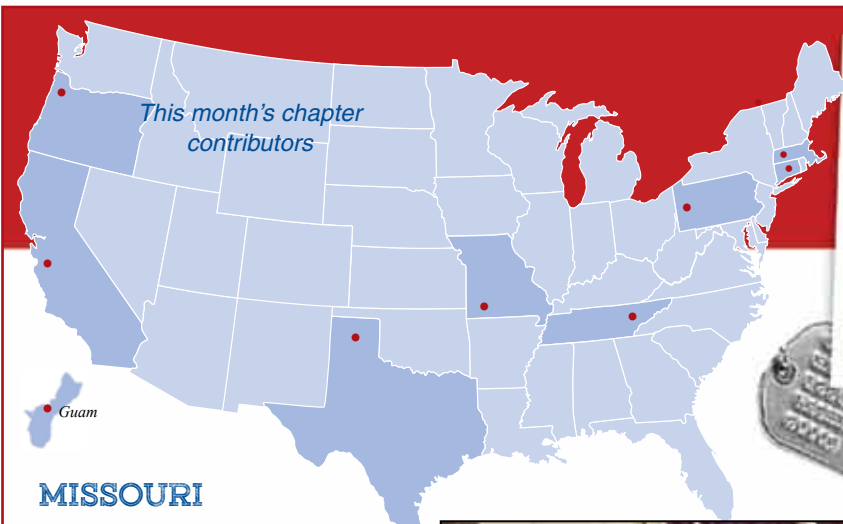
Chapter 271 of Salem, Oregon, donated more than 200 trees, including Japanese maples and ginkgos, to enhance the landscaping at the Edward C. Allworth Veterans Home in June 2014. The veterans home, named after World War I veteran Edward Christopher Allworth, opened in October.

In preparation for the landscaping project, Chapter 271 members had begun working about a year earlier with the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and contractor Lease Crutcher Lewis. "When we learned about this project, we contacted project manager John Osborn and offered to provide trees," said Ron Morgan, President of the VVA Oregon State Council. "One of our members, who owns a nursery and likes to remain anonymous, came up with the idea and offered to spearhead the project," he added.

Morgan told the *Albany Democrat-Herald* in June that this was the third such project that the area VVA had completed for veterans' homes or therapy clinics, including two in California. The trees, donated by 11 growers in Oregon and Washington, were selected from "species that require minimal spraying of pesticides and other toxic chemicals," said Morgan, since "Vietnam veterans have certainly had their fill of Agent Orange." ■

Below: Mike McCormick (left), John F. Wadeon (right), February 1968 during the Battle for Hue City, Vietnam. Hotel Co. USMC 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines. McCormick was awarded the Silver Star for Operation Hue City.





MISSOURI

VVA Chapter 913 in Branson, Missouri, donated 100 new stuffed animals, some to the Children's Ward at Cox Hospital Branson and others to the Branson Police Department, in September 2014. VVA representatives who worked on the project, in coordination with the area's Junior League, included chapter president Ron Simmons and PR chair Bob Sarver.

"This is something we hold very dear to our hearts," said Sarver, "for the toys go to the Children's Ward at Cox Hospital Branson and some to the Branson Police Department. Anything we can do to assist a sick child or help them through a traumatic situation is well worth the effort." This drive was the second of the year, Sarver added. ■

Below: Gary Zietlow, 12th Marines 3rd Mar Division 1968-1969 Dong Ha



Left: Conrad Rapp — Bringing some hope and joy to orphans at the Catholic orphanage in Vung Tau 1966.



CALIFORNIA

VVA Central Coast Chapter 982 of Guadalupe, California, recently improved the home of blind Vietnam veteran Ernest "Ernie" Serrano.

More than a year ago, when Chapter Vice President John Archuleta had sought a grant to provide some \$7,000 in improvements to the home Serrano shares with Josephine, his wife of 42 years. An employee-led volunteer program from Home Depot — "Team Depot" — eventually worked with Chapter 982 to carry out the planned improvements, which included installing accessible bathroom fixtures, replacing rain gutters, pouring a concrete path, removing dry rot, and repairing windows, roof, and deck.

Serrano, who served in the U.S. Army from 1968 through 1970, was awarded three Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars for Value, and five Purple Hearts. After his return, he did agricultural work for a short time before completing a Veterans in Piping program, then worked as a welder and pipe fitter until his medical retirement in 1995.

"A lot of veterans are too proud to ask for help, but the help is here for them when they're ready," said Archuleta. "Home Depot has really come through. It's a really good program." ■



Jennifer O'Neill speaks to the attendees of the town hall meeting.

TENNESSEE

The VVA Tennessee State Council held its first PTSD & Suicide Prevention Town Hall meeting on December 2, 2014, in Knoxville.

Tennessee State Council President Barry Rice welcomed everyone, introduced the speakers, and coordinated the Q&A session. Rice later said that the meeting was a "wonderful success," with 163 veterans/active duty and family members in attendance. The program included information on the history, symptoms, and treatment options for PTSD; a testimonial from a Vietnam veteran's wife; and a presentation by actress and PTSD advocate Jennifer O'Neill, who spoke about equine therapy. Participants eagerly absorbed the information presented, had their questions answered, and made follow-up appointments for counseling, assistance in getting registered in the VA system, and meetings with Veteran Service Officers to begin the process of filing claims for VA benefits.

The State Council plans to continue holding town hall meetings across Tennessee, reaching out to veterans of all conflicts, active duty military, and veterans' family members. These have included a January 20 town meeting in Hendersonville, co-sponsored by Chapter 240, where Rice again welcomed O'Neill, as well as Lt. Gen. Hugh Smith (ret.), who presented with a summary of the long history of PTSD and its causes. Another town meeting took place February 24 in Clarksville, with more to come elsewhere in the state. ■





Above: Chapter members Luther "Buster" Newberry, Gary Heeter, VVA Chapter President, Charlie Morris, Pastor of Celebration Family Church Dwight Kirksey, and chapter member Larry Barnett.



Below: VVA Chapter 404 members and AVVA members: Pastor Jerry Don Cheshire, Sandi Cheshire, Heddi Church, Larry Church, Percilla Newberry, Virgie Morris, and (seated) Luther "Buster" Newberry

TEXAS

VVA Chapter 404 in Borger, Texas, joined forces with the Celebration Family Church to present World War II veteran Leroy George with replacement medals in July 2014. All of George's military memorability and the medals he had earned, including a Purple Heart, had been destroyed in the May 11 wildfire that devastated many residents of Fritch, TX.

"It was just an honor and a great blessing to be able to do that," said Chapter 404 member Larry Barnett. "At VVA, our motto is never to let one generation of veterans abandon another."

That's what we as Vietnam veterans represent. I used to think the medals didn't mean anything, but they mean more and more every day."

Celebration Family Church worked with Chapter 404 to feed emergency responders at a special thank-you meal and was instrumental in helping fire victims with food, water, and household goods lost in the fire. Chapter 404 presented a plaque to the Church in recognition of its service to the community. ■

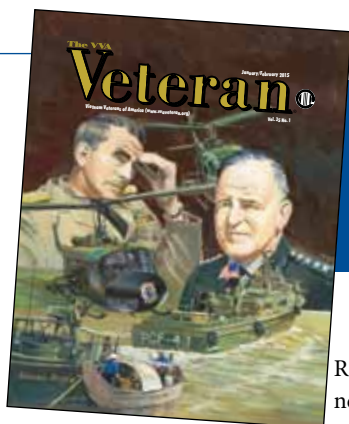
CONNECTICUT

VVA Chapter 120 of Greater Hartford, Connecticut, helped make life a little more bearable for Dom Mazzoccoli, a Vietnam veteran and the former mayor of Newington, CT, who has been living with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). Although Mazzoccoli is 95% paralyzed, his mind is unaffected and he can still communicate by blinking.

Before his ALS diagnosis in 2011, Mazzoccoli was an avid gardener and runner, but more recently he had been housebound and bedridden, requiring round-the-clock nursing care. In 2014, Chapter 120 purchased French doors that push out, allowing Mazzoccoli's family to push his hospital bed outside onto the back deck, enabling him to enjoy the fresh air and bird songs once again. ■



Veteran Dom Mazzoccoli's new doors.



Reconnect and get the latest news in *The VVA Veteran*.

Let us know what your chapter has been doing to help our veterans, your community, and those serving in harm's way. Call **301-585-4000 x145** or e-mail **InService@vva.org**

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