



FRIENDLY FIRE

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 311

Sept/Oct
2015 EDITION

Chapter 311, Vietnam Veterans of America was formed in late 1986. Our purpose in forming this organization was to provide the camaraderie that we felt in the Chicago parade to local Vietnam veterans and to become part of a national organization whose goals meet our special needs.

Chapter 311 continues to meet the needs and wants of our veterans and have continued to keep the family spirit we all experience with our "brothers and sisters" in Vietnam. Today we work together to provide help for veterans, our communities and our families. We provide services to the community, and help for all veterans and many family social events.

President's Message

Since my last president's message, we have had several fundraisers totaling over \$1500. Allan and I went down to the village of Willow Springs and received a donation in the amount of \$1500 from the profits of their car show. On these fundraisers, I am asking that you consider donating your time and participate so more than the same few don't have to be doing everything over and over again.

Now that the National Convention is behind us, we should direct our attention to The Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015 (HR1769). This bill would look after our children and their children. I will have a hand-out on this at the next meeting.

Don't forget to bring a can of non-perishable food for the city food pantry. RLTW

Bill Christiansen

She Entertained The Troops In Vietnam!

Do you remember Doreen on the Mickey Mouse Club? She entertained the troops in Vietnam. My friend Pat O'Connor took this photo of her singing and dancing in Vietnam!

The Mickey Mouse Club aired intermittently from 1955 to 1996. The cast changed as stars grew older or were replaced. Doreen toured Vietnam in the late sixties. Did you see her? She sure grew up!



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Friendly Fire

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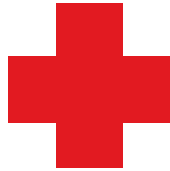
Brickyard Seniors Club

VVA 311 Color Guard was invited by the Brickyard Seniors Club of Chicago to present a patriotic program to its members in July. Dick Klopp and John Swiderski did an outstanding job representing the VVA 311 Color Guard. Dale Tippett spoke about Independence Day and Miss Kristina Sison sang the National Anthem and other patriotic songs to an enthusiastic audience. The seniors are always gracious hosts. They truly appreciate the chapters efforts when we bring these programs to them instead of asking them to travel to outside venues. Kristina Sison is a high school student and sometimes helps her parents, Jerry and Joyce, with their home health care business: Better Choice Home Health, Inc. Pictured are Dick Klopp, Dale Tippett, Kristina Sison, John Swiderski, Jerry and Joyce Sison and co-worker Rain



Donut Dollies Veterans All

By Jack McCabe



Donut Dollies - do you remember them? I recall seeing them twice. Once when I arrived in-country (can't remember if it was the first time or second). They were handing out COLD soft drinks and cigarettes. The second time was at Phu Loi but I can't remember the year.

Donut Dollies were amazing women who volunteered for the American Red Cross to go to Vietnam and bring a Touch of Home to the troops. They didn't have to be there. They risked everything including their life. Still they came at a time when public opinion was against the war and the warriors. They received no rewards, no accolades, no medals and no benefits for their service.

Donut Dollies were civilians working for the Red Cross but they faced the danger and uncertainties of everyday life in a combat zone just like every GI, Marine, Sailor and Airman in Vietnam. They all did it willingly and without complaint. They were exposed to rocket & mortar attacks and small arms fire. They were exposed to Agent Orange and the daily risks of flying in Vietnam. They don't get any help from the VA like we do.

I have found three Dollies that lost their life in Vietnam. I also found one who was wounded and one who died during Operation Babylift..

Hannah Elizabeth Crews

Hannah was born in Lenoir, North Carolina on 12 May 1946. She joined the Red Cross and was sent to Vietnam where she was assigned to Bien Hoa.

On October 1st, 1969 she was killed in a jeep accident. She was 23 years old. She is buried in Thomasville, North Carolina.

Virginia E. "Ginny" Kirsch

Ginny was born on 2 December 1948 in Erie, Pennsylvania. She joined the American Red Cross in July 1970. She attended Red Cross training in Washington DC and was sent to Vietnam approximately 2 weeks later.

Ginny was assigned to Cu Chi with the 25th Infantry Division. During the 2 weeks Ginny was in-country she had been taken by helicopter to remote outposts where she provided a much-needed distraction to the men stationed there with her games and other audience participation skits and exercises designed to ease the stress levels of the men, even if only for a little while. Just her presence lifted the men's spirits as she was a reminder of what was waiting for them back home. She had only been back in the base camp at Cu Chi, home to the 25th Infantry Division, for a day or two.

On August 16, 1970 she was murdered by a 25th Division soldier. She was stabbed to death. Ginny is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Hermitage, Pennsylvania. She was 21 years old.

Lucinda J. Richter

Lucinda was born on 7 November 1948 in St. Paul, Minnesota. She joined the American Red Cross and was assigned to Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam.

She became ill with post infectious polyneuritis "Gillian-Barre Syndrome". She died in 483 USAF Hospital at Cam Ranh Bay on 9 February 1971. She was 21 years old. She is buried in St. Paul.

"Dusty" Hall

Dusty was a unit director from Little Rock, Arkansas. While flying in a Huey near Pleiku in 1967 the ship took ground fire. Dusty was hit in the leg or hip from the fire that came through the floor. She was flying with another Donut Dolly. The other girl unfastened her seat belt and went over to Dusty and held her while the Huey crashed. After the crash the crew, Dusty and the other Dolly left the proximity of the ship fearing an explosion. The other Dolly ran back to the ship for the first aid kit. They patched up Dusty as best they could until they were picked up.

Dusty was treated and sent back to the States to recover. No Purple Heart.

Sharon Wesley

Sharon was not working for The American Red Cross when she died. But, she was a Donut Dolly in 1970-1971. She then worked for the Army Special Services. After United States troops pulled out in 1973 she decided to stay and started working for the U.S. Government.

She took part in Operation Babylift in 1975. She was aboard an Air Force C5 Galaxy when it crashed on 4 April 1975. It was flying babies out of Saigon. 153 people lost their life.

Sharon is buried in Muskogee, Oklahoma..

4th of July Parade

VVA Chapter 311 was well represented at the Des Plaines 4th of July Parade! We had the honor of being at the beginning of the parade. The weather was good and there was a great turn out!



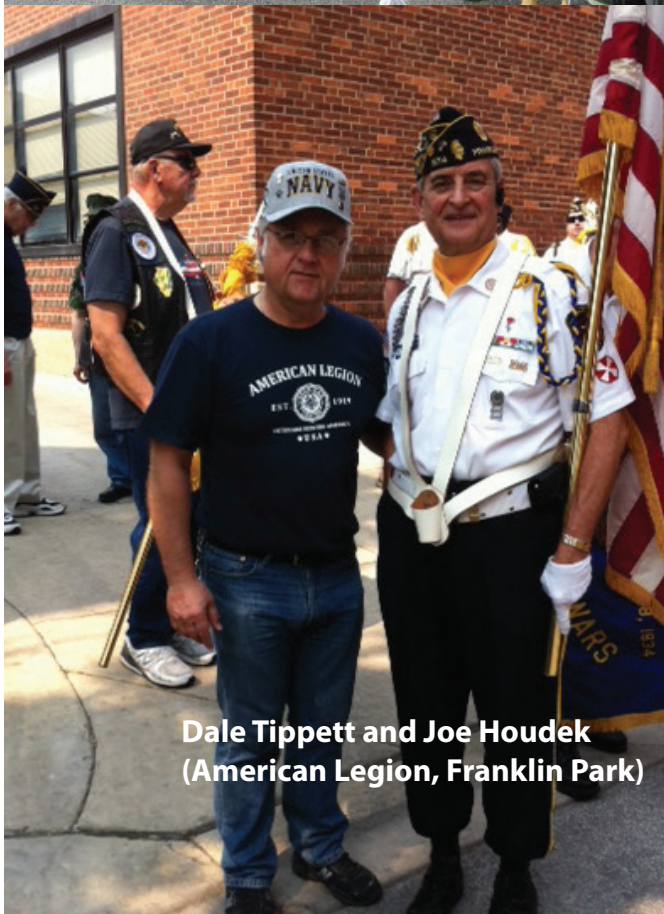
VVA members that marched



Ron White
and
Brian Mulcrone



Steve & Ann Marie Aoyagi



Dale Tippett and Joe Houdek
(American Legion, Franklin Park)



The Parade

Unclaimed Remains

The Glueckert Funeral Home has arranged for the interment of three veterans whose cremated remains have gone unclaimed. There are no known next of kin.

The three veterans are:

Joseph M. Nevern

Date of Death 2/21/2001

Army-Korea

George Edward Kratt

Date of Death 10/3/1983

Navy

Jerry D. Lowe

Date of Death 4/1/2007

Army

All three received a memorial service on Wednesday, June 24, 2015 at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Illinois. The three 30 minute services began at 12:30 pm. Father Matt Foley, Pastor of St James Church in Arlington Heights, officiated at each memorial

The VVA Chapter 311 color guard, in part, plus a few others were on hand to honor these veterans. The trip began at Glueckert Funeral Home. There were also some members of VVA Chapter 242 in attendance as well as other veteran organizations. The group proceeded to Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery where the ceremony took place. About 75 people were in attendance.



Penni Evans, Donut Dolly

It has been my pleasure to meet a couple Donut Dollies recently. One is Penni Evans. Penni served in Vietnam with the Red Cross Donut Dollies from March 1970 to March 1971. She served at Can Ranh Bay, II Field Force Long Binh, Cu Chi and Quang Tri.

Penni, like all Donut Dollies was exposed to repeated rocket and mortar attacks. She went out in the bush to visit with the troops and raise moral. She was exposed to Agent Orange and has several illnesses due to that exposure. Penni gets no help from the VA. She is a Vietnam veteran like all of us.

If you come across a Donut Dolly be sure to tell her **"Welcome Home!"**

Penni has written several poems about Vietnam. She has allowed me to share one here.

DD 214

She didn't have a DD 214
But she had the red mud
On her shoes
The red dust on her legs
And arms, in her hair

She rode the Huey to
War most days
Or jounced in jeeps or
Deuce and a halves on trails
That were roads

She spent time in the heat
And the monsoons
Out beyond the perimeter

Perched on a jungle mountain
Sharing C Rat tea and peaches
With a radio relay team

She smelled the shit cans burning
The smell of fuel and sweat
She saw the body bags
She rode on choppers with them

She watched as black plastic
Bags came from the OR
Hands and feet outlined in plastic
Boots on or off, didn't matter

She heard the sounds of the blades
As Dust Offs dropped from the cloudy sky
She watched the grunts come in from patrol
Sometimes even handed out clean towels
And uniforms



Or fed them under the mess tent
Grunts in shock at seeing a round eye
She heard the red alert siren
And the rockets screaming overhead
Exploding and creating a weather of shrapnel rain

She saw the tracers below
Both the red and the green
She heard the sound of flares
Parachuting down

But without that DD 214
Some don't consider her
A Vietnam Veteran

Because she wore a power blue
Red Cross uniform rather than
An OD green or cammie uniform

But many brothers have said
To Hell with that DD 214
You are our sisters
You were boots on the ground

Welcome Home Sister
Couldn't find the words then
To Thank You
But Thank You for what you did for us

For A Touch of Home
If you come across a Donut Dolly be sure to tell her
"Welcome Home!"

Vietnamese Armed Forces Day Event

The Vietnamese Veterans Association of Illinois held their annual Armed Forces Day event at the Viet Bowl Restaurant on 21 June 2015. They had a wreath laying ceremony, burned incense and prayed, discussed the Vietnam War Memorial Project and elected their new President. VVA Chapter 242 President James Mindak spoke at the event. Lunch was then served.





Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #311



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We meet on the 3rd Wednesday
of every month at 7:30 PM.

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