

AVEL VIETNAM

Newsletter - May/June 2022

2022 All Avel, All Veteran Reunion

The Reunion is on with a few changes. Originally we wanted to have it in Washington DC and have a ceremony at the Wall. Unfortunately that couldn't happen.

Try as hard as humanly possible we could not find a hotel that would work with us. It seems everyone is traveling now so the hotels don't need a small group like ours to fill the hotel.

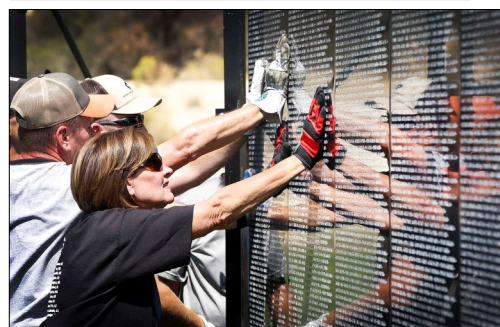
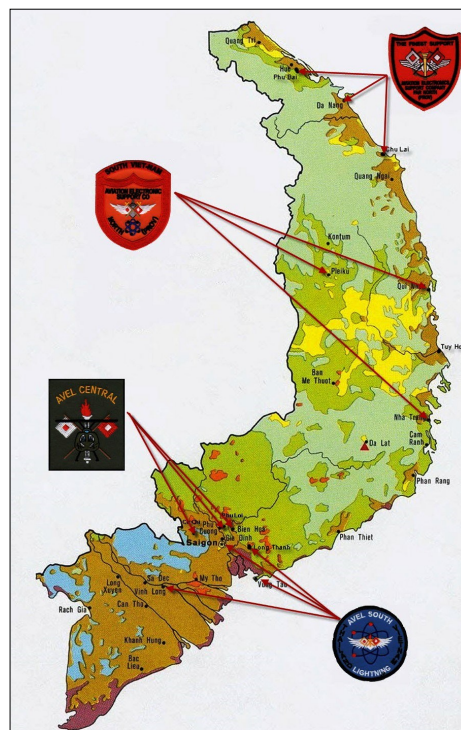
Russ Mason must have made a million calls without success. Many hotels didn't even give him a call back. Fortunately Pete Poirier came across information on the Traveling Wall coming to Charlotte area in October. It was being hosted by Duke Energy and the Vietnam Veteran Memorial Fund. We had a video conference call with them and they have agreed to let us present a wreath and give a short talk. We will have a local color guard, taps will be played and we will fold our flag.

This will probably be the last formal reunion so I hope we have a good turnout.

You are encouraged to invite fellow veterans and friends. The cost of their attendance will depend on the activities they wish to be part of. But PLEASE register on the website and email me information on the guests you will bring. Not your normal guests but others who may want to join us.

Grace Galloway (Doc Gracie) has agreed to be our guest speaker. She is the wife (widow) of renowned author/correspondent Joe Galloway who passed away in 2021. I was at his memorial service where Grace spoke and it was very moving.

Please go to the website and register. www.avelvietnam.com



PTSD

by Robert Vaughan

We didn't have PTSD when we came back from Vietnam. Well, that's not entirely true, we did have it, we just didn't know what to call it. Part of it was the way we came home. Most of us flew home, and that was great . . . it would get us back with our loved ones in less than two days. That was also bad.

The soldiers coming home from WWII and Korea, came by ship . . . and that gave them time for decompression, so the immediacy of the war was put behind them. Not so with the soldiers from Vietnam, we were home before we even changed clothes.

To be honest, it wasn't all that bad for those of us who were career soldiers. We came back to a CONUS base where nearly everyone we met had been there, or were going, which meant we had shared experiences. But let us consider the plight of the part-time soldiers; draftees, or those who enlisted for one tour then left the army.

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Don't forget to join us on Facebook. Search for the group: AVEL Vietnam.



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On Friday, such a soldier might be on ambush patrol outside the fence at Cu Chi, Di An, or Phu Loi. When he comes back in that afternoon, he has his travel orders, and the next day he boards a Pan Am flight for San Francisco. By Monday afternoon he is sitting in the Bulldog Drive-in in Sikeston, Missouri, the Purity Café in Greenville, Illinois, or some such place back in the U.S.

He is listening to the juke box and visiting with people he has known his entire life. Physically he is home, but mentally, and emotionally, he is still back in-country! He remembers that Creech owes him \$5. McKay has his sunglasses. He wonders if anyone will find the three cans of fruit from the Cs that he hid behind the 500KW generator. Will the rod-end bearings that are on ADP orders come in tomorrow? What about the tire for the three-quarter ton truck? He looks around at the others . . . they are laughing, teasing, talking about things that were once so important to him, the football game with Poplar Bluff was two weeks ago, and putting the dates together, he knows that was the day Lambdin was killed. He realizes that, though he had grown up with these people, they were not there for a very important part of his life. None of them have any idea...nor do they care...where he has been, what he has done, or seen.

Where is Schuler? Where is Kirby? Chambers? Lindell? They're still back in country. Winston is still there as well, but like Bostic, Lambdin, Morris, Wyatt, and Karnes, he and they will be there forever. Oh, their bodies are back, but they didn't come back. Bivins is back though . . . somewhere in Ohio. Is he going through the same thing?

The one-tour draftee, out now, stares at Lucy, a girl he had dated a few times, and she is smiling at him, but her smile is replaced with a sudden flash of fear, and, quickly, he glances away. He realizes that he has given her the thousand-yard stare, and he should apologize to her, but he can't. She would never understand, and he's not sure that he does.

It's been over half a century . . . but even now, a song, a smell, a sight, will bring it all back. . . tone and tint. And if we see someone wearing a Vietnam Vet's cap we'll nod, and say something like "Welcome home, brother." Others seeing us will see two old men . . . but they don't see what we see. We are greeting a young man in jungle fatigues, maybe standing on the service deck of a Huey with the engine cowl removed, or wearing a flak jacket and carrying an M-16, or leaning against a jeep with his arms folded, or sitting on a sandbag reinforced Conex container, writing, or reading a letter.

I often wear my Vietnam Veteran cap as I walk Charley, and from time to time someone will "thank me for my service." I appreciate that, and I accept the thanks on behalf all who served in Vietnam, 2/3rd of whom are now gone. The Vietnam War was such a divisive part of our history that many of the 1.6 million Vietnam Veterans who have since died, over 200,000 from Agent Orange, were never thanked, and rarely even had their service acknowledged.



Google Names Da Nang as 2020's Top Trending Travel Destination

This is now a couple years old but I thought you Da Nang/Red Beach guys might get a kick out of it.

The central coastal city experienced the biggest increase in travel searches, according to Google analytics.



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The top 10 list was released in 2020 as part of a newly expanded Google travel service that helps people find hotels and the best times to fly. It was compiled by comparing Google searches for travel destinations for 2020 compared with last year. Because it looks at rising interest, perennial vacation spots like Paris and New York did not make the list.

Vietnam's Da Nang came out on top as the travel destination tourists are interested in the most in 2020. The rest of the top 10, in order, were: São Paulo, Seoul, Tokyo, Tel Aviv, Marseille, Vienna, Bangkok, Dubai and Perth.

This is not the first time Da Nang has received international acclaim for its tourism potential. The New York Times named it as one of "52 places to go in 2019," and Australia's Finder search engine noted it was one of the top cities to travel to in 2019.

This picture is Da Nang today.

TAY NINH, VIETNAM- "BLACK VIRGIN MOUNTAIN" (Núi Bà Đen)

"The Mekong Delta is generally a flat region with the exception of the Black Virgin Mountain. The mountain commands everything in its sight and was therefore a strategic location for both sides during the war. In May 1964 the mountain top was assaulted by the Special Forces 3rd MIKE Force and the peak was held by American forces with the 121st Signal Battalion establishing a radio relay station, call sign Granite Romeo Tango, there in February 1966. Supplied by helicopter for much of the war the Americans controlled the top and the Vietcong controlled the bottom and surrounding foothills "

"The base was occupied by over 140 Americans when on the night of 13 May 1968 the base was attacked and overrun by the Vietcong. By 02:30 on 14 May the Vietcong had been driven off by gunship and artillery fire. The results of the attack were 24 U.S. killed, 2 U.S. MIA and 25 Vietcong killed."

There is now a modern cable car that takes you two-thirds the way up the mountain to a Pagoda/temple complex. This photo was taken near the Pagoda. The 121st Signal Battalion outpost was located on the top of the mountain. There is nothing left of the outpost. (Some of the area is still off limits) To give perspective, from the Pagoda it is another 1 ½ to 2 hour hike to the top. The present cable car does not go to the top but there are plans to build one.



National Veterans Memorial and Museum



The National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM) is the United States' national museum for veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. The museum is located in Columbus, Ohio, along the Scioto River between Franklinton and Downtown Columbus. The museum's main focus is on the personal stories of U.S. veterans, in contrast to other war museums that are dedicated to the conflicts themselves. It opened on October 27, 2018, as a reimagining of the Franklin County Veterans Memorial, a museum dedicated to veterans from the surrounding county.

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The site along the west side of the Scioto River near the Discovery Bridge on Broad Street was originally home to the Franklin County Veterans Memorial, which originally opened in 1955 and was demolished to make way for the museum in early 2015, by S.G. Loewendick & Sons. The construction of a veterans museum was envisioned by city boosters and received support from former Senator and World War II veteran John Glenn.

It was designated as the National Veterans Memorial and Museum by the United States Congress in June 2018. The museum was the 20th museum to receive national museum status from Congress.

It was dedicated on October 27, 2018, with a speech by former general Colin Powell.



WELCOME HOME

by Tucker Smallwood

I was living in Battery Park City in 1985, directly across the street from the Twin Towers, just off the Hudson River. On the morning of Tuesday May 7th, I was dressing in clothing I'd pulled out of boxes and closets the night before. I'd filled out a bit in the past 16 years but the cammy fatigues still fit pretty good, my jungle boots were appropriately scuffed and my beret felt somehow familiar.

As I was exiting the lobby, my doorman remarked on the unusual way I was dressed and I explained to Kevin that a parade had been organized for all Vietnam veterans of New York who were willing to participate. I wasn't really sure what to expect. I didn't know anyone else who planned to be there but I'd decided I wanted to be a part of it.



I'm an actor. I'm used to attracting attention and I'm accustomed to wearing costumes, but generally on a set or in a studio. This was and yet wasn't a costume. It was a return to the way I dressed for work 'back in the day', back before war drag became au courant, before sexy women posed in camouflage bikinis for fashion layouts.

I was greeted with nods and friendly smiles from commuters as I entered the WTC to take a subway to Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, where the parade would step off. We weren't so far removed from the time when the wearing of combat fatigues attracted the negative judgement of many Americans. It had always seemed to me far easier to simply fly under that radar. I was proud of my service; I never really felt the need to justify myself and my choices to anyone – who needs the aggravation? But this event seemed to signal a shift in that sentiment. America had slowly been learning not to blame the warrior for the war. Better late than never.

Our route of march would bring us across the Brooklyn Bridge and down into the canyons of lower Manhattan, ending at its southern tip in Battery Park. As I exited the subway station at Grand Army Plaza, I was somewhat stunned to discover this huge assemblage of veterans dressed in an assortment of military garb. Some were in full uniform. Others wore a portion of their old outfits, like a fatigue or dress jacket with decorations and patches. Some wore just a baseball cap or boonie hat with insignia. Marines, Navy, Air Force, Army – all branches of the service were represented and the gathering was intensely multi-cultural.

There were thousands of men (2500 marched), some with their kids or wives, and although I knew no one, I felt instantly at home and suddenly part of a majority. I wandered thru the crowds, exchanging nods and smiles, not sure what I was looking for but wanting to get a wider sense of this gathering.

I'd been an advisor for Military Assistance Corps Vietnam or MACV, which no longer existed. Long standing units like the Cav, The Big Red One, Special Forces and others held annual reunions and men found themselves reconnecting with old comrades after years of separation.

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For years I watched that scenario play out, struggling with my ambivalence. I was happy for them...and envious. (In the early '90s I discovered COUNTERPARTS, a national organization of men who'd served as advisors during that time throughout Southeast Asia. Those men understood my history... but that was years in my future.)

A former 1st Lt. from the 173rd called out to me "Airborne!" and waved me over. We exchanged introductions and then I met a few of his friends. Mike Schwartz was a former Infantry platoon leader and now a vice-president for Van Heusen shirts. They invited me to march with them and I was happy to have that decision settled. We gathered behind the banner of Manhattan Vietnam Veterans Outreach Center, a support group founded and staffed by Angel Almedina. My VVA chapter now bears his name to honor his memory.

A loudspeaker asked us to form ranks and we prepared to step off into history. This was not a youthful procession, many of us were gray and paunchy, some in wheelchairs or on canes and crutches. But we instinctively dressed and covered and as we passed across the Brooklyn Bridge, we walked a little taller, a little more erect.

There was a pride in our steps, and while not in strict parade mode, there was a sense of order and uniformity. We could hear the sound of drums in front of and behind us, and each man that could, intuitively began marching in cadence.



When we exited the Bridge and turned south down Broadway, we discovered both sides of the streets thronged with onlookers, cheering and waving and shouting to us, "Thank you!" and "Welcome Home!" As we looked up at the skyscrapers on both sides, we could see the windows on every floor filled with office workers, they too applauding and cheering and waving. And the air was suddenly filled with streamers of ticker tape and confetti. It was an amazing, intensely emotional moment and we looked at each other, as if to share and validate this singular experience.

I knew what I'd done in the service of my country. I've never felt unrequited or in need of anyone else's approval for that time of my life. But I can say without any embarrassment that this seemed almost an outpouring of love...and coming from so many, many Americans after so long, many of us were wiping tears from our eyes. We were grateful to receive their affections and sad that so many of us had survived the war but passed on before America chose to express its gratitude.

That parade was an historic event – in New York, in America and in my life. It began a series of events throughout America to honor its Vietnam veterans, unacknowledged for so long. That day, I met men who have become lifelong friends. There was Glen, a Black mountain of Force Recon Marine, now a Michelin chef, who became like a big brother to me. Vince, another former Marine (Hoo-rah!) was now a restaurateur and we often gathered at one of his bars after an event for sandwiches and beer and fellowship. Arthur was... well Arthur, a former SF colonel, was rich. He could say what he did now, but would then have to kill you. There was Tom, a former Navy noncom, now an environmentalist, designing waterfront parks for New York and other cities. Eric, a former sniper with the 101st Abn. was now a building manager. Bob was a former grunt, and now pretty much a scam artist. Some of us became his victims but we still feel affection for him. Mark was the Eurasian son of missionaries; during the war a recon type, now a mercenary for hire in Africa and Central America, unwilling to give up his craft, unable to live without it. And so forth. We were businessmen, entrepreneurs, spooks, chefs, mercenaries, artists – some of us wildly successful, some struggling. We were Irish, Jewish, Italian, Asian, Black, Latino – all brothers in arms.

I became one of the first members of Chapter 126, the Manhattan chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America. We did and continue to do much good work on behalf of our community and veterans, those from our time and those who've earned that distinction more recently.

As Sgt. of Arms and a delegate for our chapter, I participated in several national conventions and later marched in Chicago when that great city chose to honor their veteran community. Although I had attended the dedication of The Wall in 1982, this event began my direct involvement in veterans advocacy. I've marched in parades with my brothers since then, on many a Veterans Day and Memorial Day, but you never forget your first.

THE FUNERAL

by Ed Walker



It was common to be spit on. I was at a funeral as head of the honor guard for a fallen Marine. Our contingent at Norfolk Virginia was tasked as the Marine honor guard in 1969 for a radius of about 75 miles. That is the duty I drew when I returned because I was not short enough to be discharged immediately upon return.

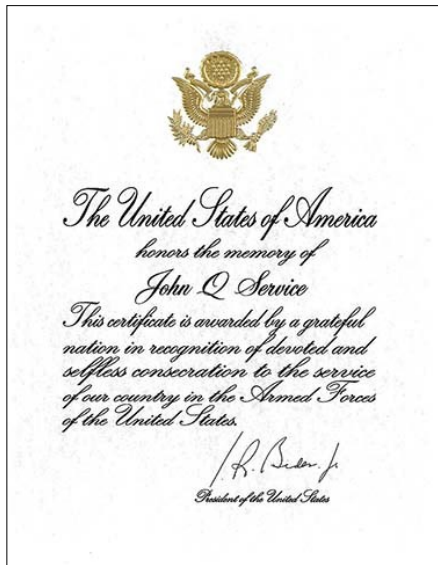
I was standing at attention, a chest full of medals on dress blues in the bright Virginia sun. Suddenly the mother of the fallen Marine began beating me with her purse because her son was dead and I wasn't.

There is nothing you can do but stand there. I felt her pain, her anger, and her sorrow. I had just returned after losing so many friends.

Finally, someone from the funeral pulled her off. We continued, folded the flag and I presented it to her. I expressed the standard apology for her loss. It was truly heartfelt on my part. The loss of any brother in war is one to many. She never apologized for her outburst of anger. I didn't expect or require one.

It was another funeral, on another day, followed by another evening of drinking to forget. I never forgot that funeral.

PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATE



Every veteran is entitled to this certificate when they die. I know I requested one for my dad.

Application is easy, you just need to fill out VA40-0247 and mail it with supporting documentation showing the individual was a veteran. When you Google this form there will be a link showing the different types of documents that are acceptable. For Vietnam era veterans and later it is the DD214.

Mailing instructions are on the form.

THE VIETNAM VET

No hero's parade or cheering crowds
He wasn't even met
He's back in the world but he's still alone
He's a Vietnam vet

They said it was over and sent him home
But sometimes he's back there yet
It's been fifty years and he's still alone
He's a Vietnam vet

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His friends and family sometimes think
He's as strange as you can get
He doesn't mean to, he's trying hard.....
He's a Vietnam vet

He turned to drugs or drink or both
But they haven't helped him yet
They couldn't stop his mind going back
He's a Vietnam vet

No man is an Island it has been said
But would like to bet?
The man who wrote that cannot say
He's a Vietnam vet

*Rick Haneline
A Vietnam Vet
1986*

NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

None Submitted

TAPS

None Submitted

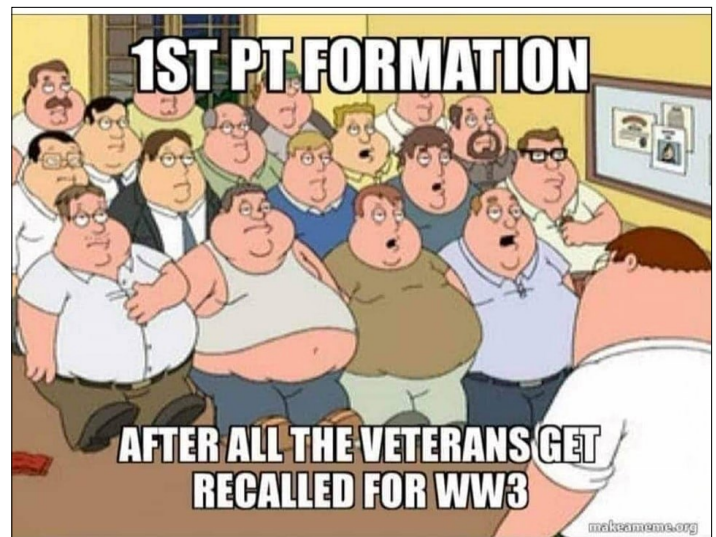
PHOTOS

None Submitted

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL/PHONE

None Submitted

Send your change of address and email to jmccabe51@gmail.com



ALL AVEL & Veteran Reunion 2022
Huntersville (Charlotte), North Carolina
October 19 - 23, 2022

CEREMONY AT THE TRAVELING WALL!

Country Inn & Suites
16617 Statesville Rd.
Huntersville, NC 28078
704-895-6565

You can also reserve your room following the link below:

<http://Avel Vietnam Veteran Reunion Booking Link>

Room Rates are \$119.00/night plus fees and taxes

This special room rate is good for three days prior and after the event

To make your reservation call the hotel at the above number and specify the Avel Vietnam Veteran Reunion.

If you have any problems email Jack at jmccabe51@gmail.com

No mask restrictions

Early Bird, Wednesday, 19 October 2022

Early birds explore the Charlotte area on your own.

BBQ at the McCabe's house.

Thursday, 20 October 2022

The Hospitality Room will be open and well stocked with snacks and adult beverages.

Possible Carpool Event: Visit the Carolinas Aviation Museum in Charlotte

Possible Carpool Event: Piccione Vineyards

Friday, 21 October 2022

The Hospitality Room will be open and well stocked with snacks and adult beverages.

There will be a ladies luncheon at Red Rocks

John Veers Martini Golf Outing at Verdict Ridge Golf Club

A carpool group dinner will held. (Location to be determined)

Saturday, 22 October 2022

Busses will transport us to Charlotte Motor Speedway. We will visit The Wall That Heals for our wreath laying and ceremony.

The Moving Wall is hosted by Duke Energy and Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF).

The final dinner will be at the hotel in the Hospitality Room.

Guest speaker: Grace Galloway, widow of renowned author Joe Galloway

The Hospitality Room will be open until 23:30

Sunday, 23 October 2022

Last goodbyes!

This will probably be our last formal reunion so please register, reserve your room and come.

All veterans and friends are invited. If you know anyone who would like to join us please ask them.



**AVEL
VIETNAM**



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