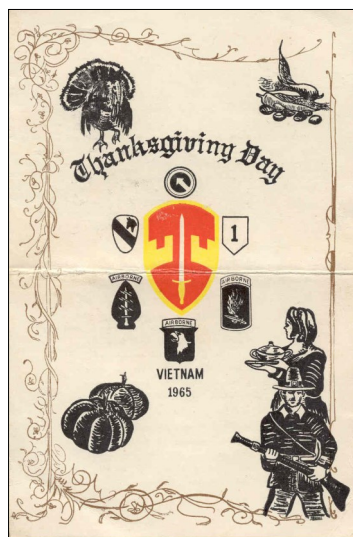
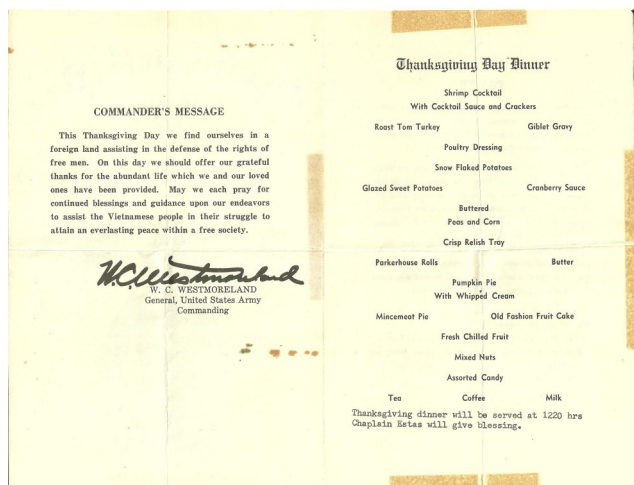
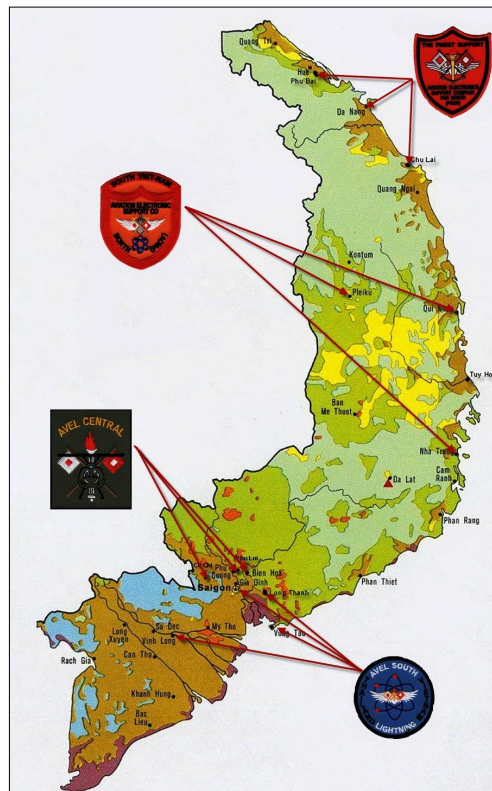
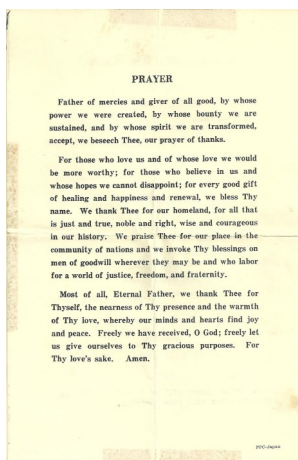
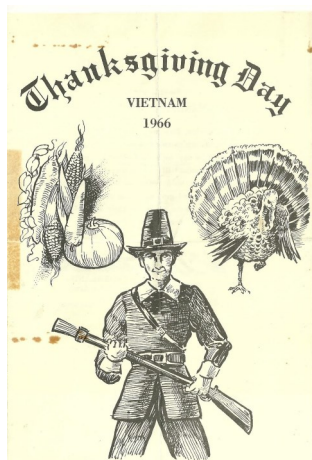


# AVEL VIETNAM

Newsletter - November 2021

## HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

I want to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving! I hope you can enjoy this holiday with family and friends, surrounded by warmth, friendship and love. We all remember spending Thanksgivings far from home in Vietnam. It was a time filled with thoughts of home and reflection. Now, give thanks that we are all here but remember those we have lost over the years.



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## 2021 All AVEL Reunion in Virginia Beach



Despite COVID and the requirement that all attending must be fully vaccinated we had a very respectable turnout. There were 23 Avel vets and 18 guests in attendance. A great time was had by all.

Reunion photos are available on the website under Past Reunions, 2021.

The 2022 Reunion will be held in Washington DC. We will present a wreath at the Wall in honor of our fallen. This will be last Reunion/Gathering I will be involved with in planning and executing.

I hope we have a good turnout.



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## More Vietnam Music Trivia

The Doors are well known to all Vietnam veterans. Their tunes could be heard throughout the war on tapes, records and even AFVN. Some of their songs were even written with a Vietnam theme.

One example was *Love Me Two Times* which was a single from the album *Strange Days* from 1967. The band explained that it's a song about a man who is with his woman the night before his departure for Vietnam. Jim Morrison enters the guitar riff in a sensual way. He is inviting, he tells her to love him several times that night. He's going to go away and he wants it twice. Almost a challenge.

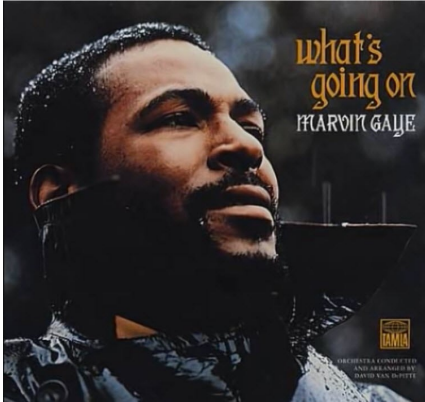


Two other songs by the Doors have been said to have military themes. These are *The Unknown Soldier* and *Five To One*. *The Unknown Soldier* has been perceived as Jim Morrison's reaction to the Vietnam War and the

*Continued on Page 3*

way that conflict was portrayed in American media at the time. Morrison was inspired to write the lyrics after visiting the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, at the Arlington National Cemetery, on November 25, 1967.

The song *Five To One* was the approximate ratio of whites to blacks, young to old, and non-pot smokers to pot smokers in the US in 1967. It was also the amount of Vietnamese to American soldiers in Vietnam, although Jim Morrison said the lyrics were not political however there are dissenting opinions on that.



*What's Going On* is a very powerful political song performed by the late American singer Marvin Gaye. The lyrics of the song are inspired by violence and police brutality against Vietnam protesters. One of the song's writers, singer and songwriter Renaldo "Obie" Benson of the Four Tops was inspired to come up with this song when he witnessed violence and police brutality while in Berkeley, California. On May 15, 1969, Benson had just arrived with the tour bus of the Four Tops in Berkeley and saw a group of anti-war activists protesting against the Vietnam War. Benson was shocked to his core to witness the sheer amount of violence and police brutality marring the protest. It became known as "Bloody Thursday."

Absolutely saddened by the shocking things he was witnessing at the protest, Benson said he asked himself a number of questions, one of which was "What's happening here?" Later, during a meeting Benson had with his songwriter friend Al Cleveland, he brought up the topic of "Bloody Thursday". Cleveland later went on to compose a song based on the concerns of Benson about "Bloody Thursday."

After the completion of the song, Benson approached the members of his group (the Four Tops) and discussed recording the song with them, but they told him they were not interested in recording it. And why? Because it was a "protest song". Benson tried defending the song by telling the other members of the group that it wasn't a protest song but rather one that was about "love and understanding" and that he wasn't trying to protest but just wanted to know "what's going on".

After the Four Tops refused recording the song, Benson gave it to singer Marvin Gaye, who went to modify the song in the following two major ways: Add some new lyrics to the song and write an entirely new melody.

Since the song was untitled when it was given to Gaye, he also gave it the title, "What's Going On". While Gaye was working on the song, he was inspired by the numerous social problems that were then going on in the United States. One such social ill was the Watts riots of 1965, which took place in Los Angeles and left as many as 34 people dead and 1,032 others injured. In addition to that, Gaye was inspired to write the lyrics of the song by conversations he had with his brother Frankie Gaye regarding Frankie's tenure in the Vietnam War as well as the tragic death of his cousin in that same war.

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## The Orange Heart

By Pete Poirier

His name is Ken Gamble. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy when he was seventeen and was trained as an electrician but he ended up on an LST which is a beach landing craft. When he got to Vietnam his job was to deliver supplies up and down the coast. He literally served from one end of South Vietnam to the other. He married his high school sweet heart. Everything seemed fine for years until, like so many other Vietnam veterans, he was diagnosed with cancer. Latent TCDD exposure had come to claim yet another victim.

Ken was sure that he would survive and he got help from the VA. While he was lying in bed in the VA hospital he kept hearing loud groans coming from a man on the other side of the curtain that separated their beds.



Continued on Page 4

The patient in the next bed was asking for water over and over again in between gasps of pain and no one would answer, no one would come. Finally, Ken pulled back the curtain and pushed his tray with its water jug over to the other man. “Thanks” the guy said “but they have to give it to me.” So Ken leaned back in his bed forced to listen to the terrible sounds coming from the next bed until a doctor arrived. Ken told the doctor that he couldn’t take any more of his roommate’s distress. “You have to get me out of here Doc” Ken said with exasperation in his own voice. The doctor sympathized and told Ken that he would arrange a release from the hospital. That was the beginning of Ken Gamble’s Agent Orange story.

Something in that pained fellow veteran’s voice triggered a response unlike any other. Roughly 3,000,000 military served in Vietnam all of whom are presumed to have been exposed to TCDD the most dangerous dioxin ever developed. Some 361,000 Purple Hearts were awarded to Vietnam veterans including multiple awards to the same person. More than 58,000 died serving in Vietnam. But here is the stunner - about 300,000 Vietnam veterans have died of known complications from Agent Orange and they received no award of any kind. That just didn’t make sense to Ken Gamble. Especially after his experience in the VA hospital listening to the pain of a time-served brother. In his mind the country needed to recognize the unique circumstances that led to so many veterans becoming sick or even dying from a war that they had survived years earlier.. Sure, medical care was available and disability payments were welcome but where was the recognition for these service-related disabilities? Ken’s first reaction was to start a letter writing campaign to 100 Senators proposing a new medal called the Orange Heart. He designed the heraldry and had a prototype made but he received only two responses. Both said basically the same thing “Good luck with that.” By then Ken was a veteran with a cause; he was not about to take no for an answer. Not for what he considered to be a just cause. He became more determined than ever to find a path that would lead to the award of an Orange Heart to every veteran who had a documented medical condition that the VA attributed to his or her service in Vietnam. So, in 2018 Ken founded a 501 (c) (3) organization named The Orange Heart Medal Foundation.



Then, with a purpose in mind and an organization behind him, Ken went to his local Tennessee State Representative and together they crafted draft legislation that would legitimize the creation and awarding of an Orange Heart medal. The measure passed the House unanimously and then passed the Senate also without a single nay vote. Shortly after that, Tennessee Governor Lee signed the Bill into law.. One Foundation stipulation is that the medals are provided to eligible veterans at no cost to the veteran who has earned it. The Foundation ultimately received a grant of \$25,000 which was used as seed money to manufacture and distribute over 6,000 of the medals to date. Now there is simply no way that 6,000 medals can be made and distributed for \$25,000 (you do the math).

Therefore, the Foundation seeks donations, holds fund raisers, and sells Orange Heart merchandise but that is hardly a breakeven enterprise. That doesn’t seem to matter one bit to Ken. He is passionate about his mission. That mission includes spreading the foundation’s work to every State, State by State, until the entire country supports recognizing American service men and women for the injuries they suffered in service to their country. Currently, the Foundation is working the Carolinas and has plans for Virginia.

What I love about Ken’s story is that it exemplifies the notion of service that is so common among veterans. And, in Ken’s case, it is about one man who returned from Vietnam suffering from PTSD, who never got a decent welcome home, and who later was hospitalized and treated with chemotherapy and radiation for an Agent Orange related cancer. He became distraught while listening to the suffering of a fellow Vietnam veteran who had experienced the same kind of exposure. Ken Gamble is not a complex man. He is old school in the best sense of the word, still married to his high school sweet heart, still proud to be a veteran, still dedicated to the idea of military brotherhood. This is someone who took what could have been a huge negative in his life and turned it into something so good that it is hard to describe. Many a person would have just become depressed or felt victimized. Some would have felt that the world owed them, some would have been continuously angry. I suspect that Ken felt all of those things at one time or another. However, instead of griping about how badly Vietnam Veterans were treated and talking about how they should be respected and recognized for the honor they brought to the task they faced, Ken Gamble decided to act.

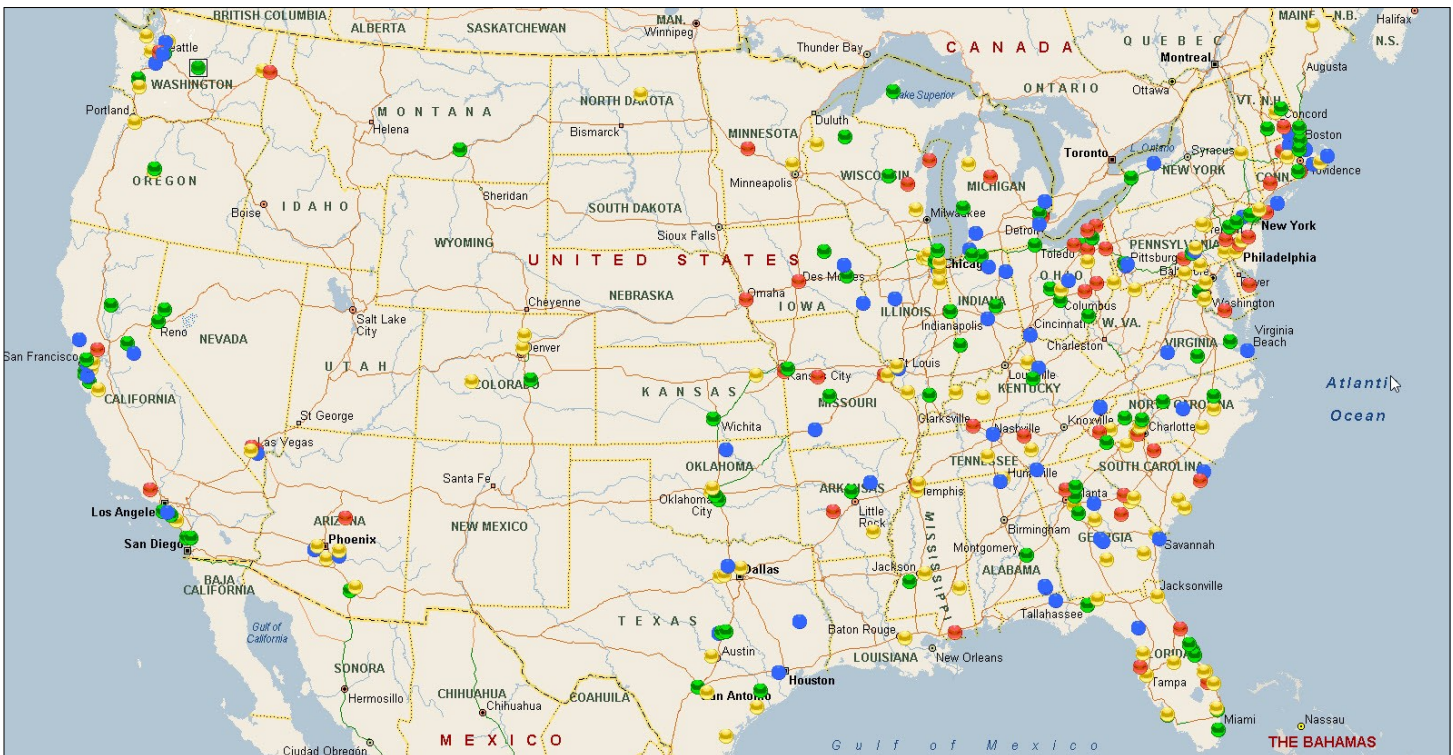
What he proposed was bold; create a military award in the tradition of the Purple Heart, which is perhaps the most respected medal other than the MOH which usually is preceded by one or more Purple Hearts. He envisioned a medal that would recognize service related injuries stemming from chemical exposure in a war time environment. He worked hard to make that happen. He is still working hard to spread that particular bit of recognition. It is spreading one medal at a time, one State Legislature at a time and it occupies all of his time perhaps because he knows that his cohort has so little time left to accomplish something as significant as universal recognition of the terrible sacrifice so many who served in Vietnam have made.

If you are a veteran who may be eligible for an official Orange Heart Medal, I urge you to apply simply by getting on line and going to Orange Heart Medal Foundation. If you are a veteran who has not yet found a way to emerge from the press of your Vietnam experience, I urge you to consider Ken Gamble's story; it uplifted me, I hope it does the same for you.

## WHERE ARE THE AVEL VETS?

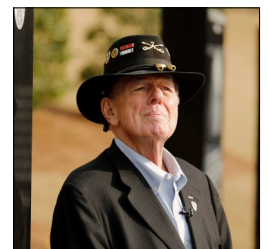
Have you ever wondered where the Avel vets live? Probably not, but I have. So I put together this map showing where our registered vets live. This map does not include vets that have died or those who use a P.O. Box as an address. In addition to those listed we one vet in New Zealand, three in Alaska and five in Hawaii.

Red = Avel South  
Yellow = Avel Central  
Green = Avel North  
Blue = Avel Far North



## The Passing of Joe Galloway

Vietnam vets lost a buddy on 18 August 2021. I am sure everyone knows about him being with Hall Moore at the battle of Ia Drang. He wrote *We Were Soldiers and Young* with Hal Moore. He was portrayed by Barry Pepper in the movie *We Were Soldiers* with Mel Gibson. Joe Galloway was the Ernie Pyle of our war. A great friend of Vietnam veterans.



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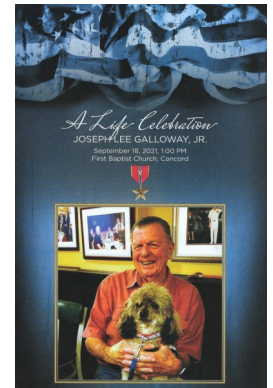
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Joe was awarded the Bronze Star with “V” for valor. A rare award to a civilian.

Joe worked for UPI and always carried a weapon when in the field, saying he felt it unlikely the enemy would check his ID before shooting. When he met the Vietnamese general Vo Nguyen Giap in Hanoi, Giap said: “Ah yes, the reporter who carried a rifle. I heard about you.”

After Vietnam, Galloway worked around the world for UPI.



He was bureau chief in Moscow when the Soviets began their invasion of Afghanistan, and he mock-congratulated his contacts in the foreign ministry for finding the “one place for you to invade ... so you could end up like we did after Vietnam”. He moved to US News, where in 1991 he won a National Magazine award for the articles about Ia Drang that eventually became his and Moore’s book. In 1992, he was one of the authors of US News’ Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of The Persian Gulf War.

Joe lived close to me, a short half hour drive and I had the honor of meeting him several times for lunch and conversation. It was always interesting and enlightening.

I attended his memorial service in Concord, NC. The eulogy given by his wife Grace was amazing. You can see it on YouTube.

*Rest in Peace, Joe*

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## **NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED**

**Burton, Michael (SP/4)**  
347 Belgrove Dr. Apt.2  
Kearny, NJ 07032  
201-240-6608

*604th Trans Co, Tuy Hoa, Pleiku, Cam Ranh, Nha Trang: 9/71 to 9/72*  
[mikeb1108a@gmail.com](mailto:mikeb1108a@gmail.com)  
MOS: 35M20

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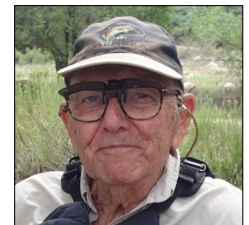
## **TAPS**

### **David Harpman**

Died on 9 November 2020 due to complications from Covid.

David was the Commanding Officer of Avel Central in 1967 and 1968.

Rest in Peace David.



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## **PHOTOS**

The photos from the 2021 All Avel Reunion have been posted on the website.  
Log on [www.avelvietnam.com](http://www.avelvietnam.com)

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## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL/PHONE**

None Reported

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## We Are Veterans

We left home as teenagers for an unknown adventure.

We loved our country enough to defend it and protect it with our own lives.

We said goodbye to friends and family and everything we knew.

We learned the basics and then we scattered in the wind to the far corners of the Earth.

We found new friends and new family.

We became brothers and sisters regardless of color, race or creed.

We had plenty of good times, and plenty of bad times.

We didn't get enough sleep.

We smoked and drank too much.

We picked up both good and bad habits.

We worked hard and played harder.

We didn't earn a great wage.

We experienced the happiness of mail call and the sadness of missing important events.

We didn't know when, or even if, we were ever going to see home again.

We grew up fast, and yet somehow, we never grew up at all.

We fought for our freedom, as well as the freedom of others.

Some of us saw actual combat, and some of us didn't.

Some of us saw the world, and some of us didn't.

Some of us dealt with physical warfare, most of us dealt with psychological warfare.

We have seen and experienced and dealt with things that we can't fully describe or explain, as not all of our sacrifices were physical.

We participated in time honored ceremonies and rituals with each other, strengthening our bonds and camaraderie.

We counted on each other to get our job done and sometimes to survive it at all.

We have dealt with victory and tragedy.

We have celebrated and mourned.

We lost a few along the way.

When our adventure was over, some of us went back home, some of us started somewhere new and some of us never came home at all.

We have told amazing and hilarious stories of our exploits and adventures.

We share an unspoken bond with each other, that most people don't experience, and few will understand.

We speak highly of our own branch of service, and poke fun at the other branches.

We know however, that, if needed, we will be there for our brothers and sisters and stand together as one, in a heartbeat.

Being a veteran is something that had to be earned, and it can never be taken away.

It has no monetary value, but at the same time it is a priceless gift.

People see a veteran and they thank them for their service.

When we see each other, we give that little upwards head nod, or a slight smile, knowing that we have shared and experienced things that most people have not.

So, from myself to the rest of the veterans out there, I commend and thank you for all that you have done and sacrificed for your country.

Try to remember the good times and grow from the bad times.

Share your stories.

But most importantly, stand tall and proud, for you have earned the right to be called a Veteran.

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## HOW MUCH DID YOU MAKE IN THE SERVICE?

**JULY 1, 1969 MILITARY PAY SCALE**

New basic pay scales for the military will go into effect on July 1. If no amount is shown, amount under preceding "years of service" applies.

**OFFICERS**

Years of service	Pay Grades									
	0-10	0-9	0-8	0-7	0-6	0-5	0-4	0-3	0-2	0-1
Under 2	1310.20	1604.40	1453.20	1207.20	894.60	715.50	603.60	561.90	449.70	386.40
Over 2	1374.10	1646.40	1496.70	1289.70	983.40	817.90	734.40	627.00	534.00	427.80
Over 3	1374.10	1681.80	1532.40	1289.70	1047.60	898.20	783.90	669.60	641.40	534.00
Over 4	1374.10	1681.80	1532.40	1289.70	1047.60	898.20	783.90	741.60	662.70	534.00
Over 6	1374.10	1681.60	1532.40	1347.00	1047.60	898.20	798.00	776.60	676.50	534.00
Over 8	1945.80	1724.10	1646.40	1347.00	1047.60	898.20	833.70	804.90	676.50	534.00
Over 10	1945.80	1724.10	1646.40	1425.30	1047.60	926.10	890.40	848.10	676.50	534.00
Over 12	2094.90	1795.80	1724.10	1425.30	1047.60	975.60	940.50	890.40	676.50	534.00
Over 14	2094.90	1795.60	1724.10	1495.70	1053.30	1040.70	983.40	912.00	676.50	534.00
Over 16	2244.90	1945.80	1795.80	1646.40	1254.30	1118.70	1026.30	912.00	676.50	534.00
Over 18	2244.90	1945.60	1874.10	1759.80	1318.50	1182.90	1054.80	912.00	676.50	534.00
Over 20	2394.60	2094.90	1945.80	1759.80	1347.00	1218.30	1054.80	912.00	676.50	534.00
Over 22	2394.60	2094.90	2024.10	1759.80	1425.30	1261.20	1054.80	912.00	676.50	534.00
Over 26	2544.30	2244.90	2024.10	1759.80	1546.20	1261.20	1054.80	912.00	676.50	534.00

**OFFICERS WITH OVER FOUR YEARS ENLISTED SERVICE**

Over 4	741.60	662.70	534.00
Over 6	776.70	676.50	570.30
Over 8	804.90	698.10	591.60
Over 10	848.10	734.40	612.90
Over 12	890.40	762.90	634.20
Over 14	926.10	783.90	662.70
Over 16	926.10	783.90	662.70
Over 18	926.10	783.90	662.70
Over 20	926.10	783.90	662.70
Over 22	926.10	783.90	662.70
Over 26	926.10	783.90	662.70

**WARRANT OFFICERS**

	W-4	W-3	W-2	W-1
Under 2	571.20	519.30	454.80	378.90
Over 2	612.90	563.40	491.70	434.70
Over 3	612.90	563.40	491.70	434.70
Over 4	627.00	570.30	506.10	470.70
Over 6	655.20	577.20	534.00	491.70
Over 8	684.00	619.50	563.40	513.00
Over 10	712.50	655.20	584.70	534.00
Over 12	762.90	676.50	605.70	555.90
Over 14	798.00	698.10	627.00	577.20
Over 16	826.50	719.10	648.60	598.50
Over 18	848.10	741.60	669.60	619.50
Over 20	876.30	769.80	690.90	641.40
Over 22	905.40	798.00	719.10	641.40
Over 26	975.60	826.50	719.10	641.40

**ENLISTED**

	E-9	E-8	E-7	E-6	E-5	E-4	E-3	E-2	E-1
Under 2			342.20	294.90	254.70	214.20	155.10	127.60	123.30
Over 2			410.10	358.20	313.80	268.50	216.30	179.10	163.80
Over 3			425.40	372.90	328.80	283.50	231.30	179.10	163.80
Over 4			440.40	388.20	343.20	305.70	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 6			455.60	403.20	365.70	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 8			469.80	417.90	380.70	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 10	648.90	559.60	484.80	433.20	395.70	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 12	663.90	574.50	500.40	455.40	410.10	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 14	679.20	589.80	522.60	469.80	417.90	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 16	694.20	604.80	537.30	484.80	417.90	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 18	709.50	619.29	552.30	492.60	417.90	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 20	723.60	634.50	559.80	492.60	417.90	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 22	761.70	672.00	597.30	492.60	417.90	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80
Over 26	835.80	746.40	672.00	492.60	417.90	321.00	246.30	179.10	163.80

E-1 under 2 years service, \$115.20



# AVEL VIETNAM



## November 2021 Newsletter