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Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1071 - Denver

Location: Elks Lodge, 1455 Nelson St. Lakewood Co

Date: Saturday: August 17th, 2024

Scheduled Time: 10:00 AM MDT

CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

Meeting called to order by Stan.

- **Opening Prayer: Otto Smolik**
- **Pledge of Allegiance: / All**
- **Posting of POW/MIA Colors— Jose Gonzales, Otto Smolik**
- **Moment of Silence for POW/MIA'S- Stan**
- **Roll Call: President Stan Paprocki, VP Trini Rael, Secretary Marty Chavez, Treasurer Doug Nunes, Sgt. at Arms Jose Gonzales.**
- **VVA Members present: (45) Steve Newton. Wally Struble. Vern Moore. Lynn Herbert. José Gonzáles. Otto Smolik. Doug Nunes. David Nila, Trini Rael, Marty Chavez. Jim Topkoff. Erv Krueger. Martin Hixson. Cliff Fejfar, Nelson Hendrickson. Jim Higgins. Bill Bridges. Ron Parr, Alan Fear. Jeff Fossum. Dan Semborski. Rod keiscome. John Currie. Doug Scherer. Phil Waters. George Zervos. Mike McDonnell. Bobby Campoy, Don Baldwin. Joe Trujillo. Robert Doriss. Mike Markham. Don Bates. Joe Dural. Darrell Chapman. Steve Randolph. Glenn Fishel. Owen Oliver. David Henning. *. Jerry Vargo. Chuck Chavez. Bill Robbins. Jim Miles. Bob Lopez. Rick Winfrey.**

AVVA Members Present: (3) Mary Ann Rhode, Carol Cordova. Renee Ambrose.

Guests: (14) Tom Hoffman. Alfred Arellano, Josie Arellano, Gary Wallen. Giselle Hinojosa. Steve Watson, Susan Bates Linda Fishel. Claudia Henning. Eugene Earickson. Lucas Stewart. Ron Williams. Kathy Williams, Catherine Williams.

• Opening comments:

- **Welcomed New Members: Trini**
- **Members Birthdays or Anniversaries: Trini**
- **Welcomed Guests: Trini**
- **Tony Lopez / Ch.1071 Scholarship Program, Jerry Zimmer;**
- **Guest Speaker: Guest Speaker: VVA member Robert Doriss, US Army, Vietnam, Infantry, Central Highlands, II Corps.**
- **Officer Reports: Trini:**
- **President's Report: Not Available (Surgery)**

- Vice-President's Report, Trini Rael; Sept members meeting will be held at CITC Building, 9901 west 50th Ave, Wheatridge Colo, 80033. Parking will be on south side of building across 50th Ave. Do Not Park in Church Parking Lot. Handicap Parking will be allowed at CITC lot. The Chapter 1071 news letter has the information you will need for next months meeting. No Breakfast however coffee and pastries will be available.
- Secretary Report: Marty Chavez; Quilts of Valor will be at the November meeting.
- Financial Report: Treasurer Doug Nunes presented the monthly Treasurer's report for the month.
- Floor Announcements:
- Membership Report: Ray Holtz /
Membership Report: Ray Holtz

1. In July we had 2 new VVA members, Jerry Fenimore and Darrell Stenzel.

2. In July we had 1 new AVVA member, Jerry Ford.

3. We have 244 members, and 51 AVVA members giving us a total of 295 members.

Webmaster Report: Ray Holtz

1. August website visits were 1,098.

2. Posted notice of change of chapter meeting for September along with a location map

3. Posted West Metro Fair poster for October 3 at Elks Lodge.

- Honors Burial: Bill Bridges
SUBJECT: Update on Honors Burial to the BOD
August 17, 2024
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All 18 names from the Rundus Funeral Home have been submitted to the VA Eligibility Process. There have been a few bumps in the road using this new process and returned information is somewhat unreliable at this point.

I have information that two (2) names are already buried at Fort Logan. I have also received information on four (4) others that they are denied burial. I am working to find the specific cause for their denial. I expect to have all necessary information for planning our next ceremony by mid August.

I would suggest that we might target a ceremony for the Fall of 2024.

Respectfully submitted.

Bill
Bill Bridges, Director, Honors Burial
VVA 1071

- Fund raising; Steve Newton; Poppies donations signup sheets are on the table,
- Merchandise: Jim Topkoff;

- Speakers Bureau; Higgins / Nunes;
- Members Meeting Speakers: Higgins / Nunes;
- Director discussion:
- Door Prize Drawings: Jim Topkoff.
 1. \$25 Home Depot #104
 2. \$25 I-Hop, #080
 3. \$25 Lowes card, Nelson H.
 4. Texas Roadhouse card, # 106

**** A Big Thank You to all who donated items for today's door prizes.**

- **POW/MIA-Retiring ~ Jose Gonzales / Remembering our Veterans ~ Otto Smolik**

Today we honor and remember one of our own.

DUANE WHITNEY MARTIN, Rank/Branch: Capt. U S Air Force Date of Birth: January 2nd, 1940
Home of Record: Denver CO Date of Loss: 20 September 1965 Country of Loss: North Vietnam
Status (in 1973): Killed in Captivity
Final Mission of 1st LT Duane W. Martin

On September 20, 1965, pilot Capt. Thomas J. Curtis, co-pilot 1st LT Duane W. Martin, flight engineer SSGT William A. Robinson, and pararescue Airman Arthur N. Black comprised the crew and passengers of an HH-43B "Huskie" helicopter operating about 10 miles from the border of Laos in Ha Tinh Province, North Vietnam. The Huskie is typically a crash rescue helicopter, and although it was inadequate for Southeast Asia duty, the Air Force had no other options at the time. The increase in combat called for an ever-increasing need for rescue services. Some of the Huskies were shored up with heavy armor plate to protect the crews and outfitted with long cables to facilitate rescue in the high rain forest.

During the period Martin, Curtis, Robinson and Black were on their mission in Ha Tinh Province, most of the rescue crews were dispatched out of Nakhon Phanom, Thailand and Bien Hoa, South Vietnam.

Public records do not indicate the precise nature of the mission undertaken on September 20, 1965, but the HH-43B went down near the city of Tan An, and all four personnel aboard the aircraft were captured. It is not clear if the four were captured by North Vietnamese or Pathet Lao troops or a combination of the two. Duane W. Martin was taken to a camp controlled by Pathet Lao. Curtis, Robinson and Black were taken by the North Vietnamese, and were in the Hanoi prison system as early as 1967.

Duane Martin found himself held by the Pathet Lao with other Americans. One American prisoner who joined Martin in February 1966 was U.S. Navy pilot LT Dieter Dengler.

On June 29, 1966 Dengler (seriously ill with jaundice), and Martin (sick with malaria) decided to make their escape in a hail of gunfire in which six communist guards were killed. They made their way through the dense jungle surviving on fruits, berries, and some rice they had managed to save during their captivity. They floated down river on a raft they had constructed, eventually coming to an abandoned village where the men found some corn. After a night's rest, Dengler and Martin made their way downstream to another village. This settlement was occupied, however, and the two Americans were suddenly attacked by a villager with a machete. Dengler managed to escape back into the jungle, but Martin was fatally wounded by the assailant.

It had been 18 days since their escape. Dengler made his way alone, and on the 22 day, with his strength almost gone, he was able to form an SOS with some rocks, and waited, exhausted to be rescued or die. Luck was with him, for by late morning, an Air Force A-1E spotted the signal and directed a helicopter to pick up Dengler. He weighed 98 pounds.

He had weighed 157 pounds. when he had launched from his aircraft carrier 5 months earlier, LT Duane W. Martin's fate remains uncertain. If, as reported, he was killed during the escape attempt, no effort has been made by the Lao to return his body. Martin is one of nearly 600 Americans who remained a prisoner, was missing or otherwise unaccounted for in Laos.

Curtis, Robinson and Black were released from Hanoi on February 12, 1973, over seven years from the time of their capture.

Rest in Peace Capt. Duane W. Martin

reported no radio contact with either pilot prior to the crash, nor did they see parachutes or hear any emergency

- **Benediction; Otto Smolik**
- **Meeting adjourned: (Turn Cell Phones back on) Trini**

- ❖ **Next VVA Members meeting Sep, 2024.**
- ❖ **Marty Chavez – Secretary, VVA Chapter 1071 – Denver**

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