



Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1071 - Denver

Location: Elks Lodge, 1455 Nelson St. Lakewood Co

Date: Saturday: February 15th, 2025

Scheduled Time: 10:00 AM MDT

CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

Meeting called to order by President Stan Paprocki

- **Opening Prayer: Otto Smolik**
- **Pledge of Allegiance Stan Paprocki**
- **Posting of POW/MIA Colors– Jose Gonzales / Otto Smolik**
- **Moment of Silence for POW/MIA'S- Stan Paprocki**
- **Roll Call: President Stan Paprocki, VP Trini Rael, Secretary Marty Chavez, Treasurer Doug Nunes, Sgt. at Arms Jose Gonzales.**
- **VVA Members present: (54)**

Steve Newton, Vern Moore, Lynn Herbert, Jim Topkoff, Jose Gonzales, Stan Paprocki, Bill Bridges, Wally Struble, Dave Caldwell, Stan Panfil, Joe Romero, Marty Chavez, Lou Jones, Joe Dural, Trini Rael, Martin Hixson, Jim Higgins, Vicente Roldan, Otto Smolik, Doug Nunez, Gerald Unrein, Darrell Chapman, Jeff Fossum, Nelson Hendrickson, Dick Bares, Tim Burgess, Phil Waters, Roddy Godown, Owen Oliver, Mike McDonnell, Alan C Jones, George Zervos, Bob Eikermann, Dan Semborski, Clayton Sandt, Mike Markham, Ron Parr, Doug Scherer, Frank Adams, Will Webb, David Nila, Alan Fear, Luke Lemke, Bill Robbins, Don Bates, Don Baldwin, Rod Keiscome, Robert Doriss, David Hennig, Gary Sandquist, Joe Trujillo, Jerry Vargo, Larry Carroll, James M. Farrell

- AVVA Members Present: (4), Renee Ambrose, Mary Ann Rhode, Jerry Ford , Carol Cordova,
 - Guests: (14) Susan Bates, Claudia Hennig, Jacqueline Bissett, Joyce I. Saitta, Mike Patterson, Bill Patterson, Linda Patterson, Buzz Cleveland, Carol Papper, Jose F.E. Duran, John Fielding, Jose Leydon, Ron Williams, Wally Stromberg
 - Welcomed New Members: Stan.
 - Welcomed Guests: Stan;
 - Members' Birthdays or Anniversaries: Stan:
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- General Meeting Guest Speaker: (Jim Higgins); Member Rick Claggett talked and showed slides about War Dogs and his partner "Big Boy" during his time in Vietnam. Rick gave a brief history of service / war dogs: There is only one slide I could find of a dog in the Civil War. But we know that they were used in the Civil War because we read manuals and letters soldiers had written. There was no recruitment by the Confederate or the Union army. These were just dogs that followed their master into the war and they used them to carry messages. The armies of France, Germany and England had upwards of 20,000 dogs in their service. We had zero. We had no issues with dogs in World War 1. The first US dog in World War 1, he was not recruited, but he was picked up by men with that were training up in Massachusetts and they were going on a troop ship over to York and they thought it'd be neat to have this dog that hung around. Little did they know that he would be involved in seventeen major battles of World War One. Here is General John Pershing awarding the contributions of Subby. That was his name from World War One. And so, the when the war ended, somebody brought him back to the United States and lived the rest of his life here. His remains today are in the Smithsonian Institute. By the time World War 2 came around, the US did indeed recognize the value of dogs in combat, and they had some 40,000 dogs in the various theaters of World War 2. They used many different breeds. It was whatever people donated to the military.
- In Vietnam we had dogs for century scout dogs, water patrol dogs, mine and tunnel dogs, Drug Enforcement dogs, I was assigned to the 196th Infantry Brigade 48 Scout Dog and I was given Big Boy, which was a real break because Big Boy had been there for years. The dogs' job is to lead patrols and smell out ambushes and booby traps.
- Rick gave a great presentation on his tour in Vietnam. You can go on YouTube; [vvachapter1071-dtiwf](#) to view the Rick Claggett complete presentation.

- **Officer Reports:**

- **President Stan Paprocki; VVA 1071 Certificate of appreciation were presented to members Phil Waters and Jeff Folsom, which read; February 15th. 2025 In recognition of your exceptional support to the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1071, Denver, Co. We express our sincere gratitude for your commitment in support of our mission. "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another".**

2. Another portion of my report for this meeting is we as a board are taking care of Vietnam vets who suffered from the California fires, and we'll send off the donation along with other Chapters across the nation. We think it is a good donation to be had and there are 3400 reported Vietnam veterans impacted by this fire. I talked to the California State president. Recently he said there are a lot more than 3400. We are doing a good thing and that is what we do as a chapter. We take care of our veterans.

- **Vice President Trini Rael; Good morning, the next VVA State Council meeting is March 8th, 2025, at Castle Pines at the Castle Pines Library. We have been doing them three times a year. I also have some very sad news. We lost one of our veterans with the State Council. Dave Ramsey passed away after a lengthy illness. Dave's services will be at Pikes Peak National Cemetery on Thursday, February 20th at 10:00 AM. David was the Treasurer of the State Council Secretary Report: Marty Chavez; Chavez reported on House goods donations by scheduling the VVA Thrift store to come to your residence and collect your donations. Go to vvapickup.org, Drop off at 2085 south Sheridan or call 303-985-1331. This is a great money maker for all VVA Chapters.**

2. Marty talked about getting veterans to sign up for the Rocky Mtn Honor Flight. Visit their site and register RMHF.org.

3. Quilts of Valor Ladies will be presenting nominated veterans with their own handmade quilts at the May 17th members' meeting.

4. Invited members to attend Coopers Troopers meeting held at the A L post 161 in Arvada every third Thursday. Everyone is welcome.

- **Financial Report: Doug Nunes; Doug gave the monthly financial report for the chapter and also reported that the chapter will be spending down some of that amount for the assistance to the LA veterans fire victims(\$2000) and for this year three \$5000 high school scholarships,(the scholarship period ends March 31).**

- **Membership Report: Ray Holtz / Stan Paprocki**

1. In January we had no new VVA members

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3. We have 245 members, and 50 AVVA members giving us a total of 295 members.

Webmaster Report: Ray Holtz

1. January website visits were 1,136.

2. Posted link to Cliff Fajfar's obituary with more photos added. Also links to Cliff's Honor Presentation, video of Cliff's arrival at Ft Logan and video of his Honors Ceremony.

3. Posted obituary of member Gary Merritt.

4. Fundraising report: Ray Holtz.

For the King Soopers Community Rewards, 2024 Fourth quarter gave us a total of \$645.22. This includes seventy-six households that participated in the program. The program started in 2019. We have received a total of \$14,381.67 since it is beginning. If you have not signed up. Please do so to help our Chapter.

- **Honors Burial Report: Bill Bridges; The eagle has landed.** We secured. Eleven of the twelve veterans about two weeks ago from this Funeral Home. Originally, we had twelve that we had identified and ran through the National Cemetery Association Saint Louis and got qualified for burial, However, one of them we found out was already buried. And that was Lieutenant Colonel Wills Brindle Lang, who was a Vietnam veteran. He served from 1947 and 1967. He was a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Class of 1946. Little snags that we ran into are interesting and a fun part of this job. If you ever volunteer to work on any of these, you will find some of this interesting, especially if you do genealogical research. We have William Irvin Jett, who was a Sergeant in the United States Army. He served in Vietnam from 1966 through 1968. We found his cremains and it was interesting because it was in a very custom-made urn. All the other cremains that we found were either in plastic boxes or cardboard boxes. He was in a custom-made Pottery urn. And his name was etched on the bottom. We also found. Through research on findagrave. that he was already buried. As you might imagine, I have his cremains in my position, but there is something on the Internet that says that he is already there. In a private cemetery, not in a National Cemetery. Very interesting.

You probably saw me setting up to do the video of Rick's presentation today. We do that for all our presenters, we put them on our YouTube page, youtube.com. Look for chapter 1071, you will find our YouTube page and right now we have thirty-four followers that have subscribed and it is a good thing if you subscribe because you need to get notifications when a new video is posted on the YouTube page. Our brother. Cliff, who passed away on the 24th of January. We did a video of his ceremony out at Fort Logan.

- **Fund raising; Steve Newton; Vietnam Veterans Day March 29th, Fund raiser, Poppies donation at several store sites. Sign up sheets are on the back table.**
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- **Merchandise: Jim Topkoff;**

- **Scholarship Program; Doug Nunes; Tony Lopez Scholarship application forms for 2025 are online under the Chapter 1071 webpage.**
- **Guest Speakers Scheduled:**
 1. **March: SSgt. Dannielle Mc Bride from Space Force, which is situated out in Buckley. They give us an overview of what the Space Force is and what its mission is.**
 - **April: Robert Doriss, one of our members, who is going to give a presentation.**
 - **Director discussion: New 1071 Director David Nila spoke on several issues regarding the way to increase our membership using VVA 1071 business cards to hand out. The three buildings that we are associated with that we manage for veterans; they have a food bank once a week for 1:00 on Wednesday afternoon. I have attended the last couple of them to see what they are all about. And speaking to the veterans and to the administration there. What they can really use right now is. Item food items that are easy to cook, such as macaroni and cheese, spaghetti noodles, that type of stuff. OK, so I am asking you for the next meeting in March. I will bring in a milk crate. I will send it right here. Like to see it filled with those types of items. Oatmeal, Mac and cheese, spaghetti, whatever. Something that is easy to cook. If we can do that for March that would be great. They need food and they need help with the veteran's center there. A lot of them cannot get around. They need help to drive through for their appointments. Please, we need some help.**
- **Discussion from the floor.**
 1. **Will Webb. I joined the Brighton Housing Authority as a commissioner, so you know, at one time my parents that were homeless and BHA put them in housing that was available within the Brighton area. We work closely with the Advanced County Food Bank. So, if you ever need any food or assistance please see me.**
 2. **Dick Bares(?), I had briefly mentioned that I was a member of the honor guard out at Fort Logan. Fort Logan has several different teams that do services out there on part of the Thursday too. But my point is. Everybody on the team is about the same age as all of us here. We are not getting the young veterans coming in. And I just wonder how long we are going to have enough people to be able to provide the services of the families. The family very, very much appreciate the service. We get nice uniforms and that is the that has been going on for about 15 years. It is extremely rewarding, a lot of times the families will come up at the end and thank us for being out there and it is a good feeling and rewarding to honor all veterans. If you are interested at all in that, see Stan or Doug for my contact number.**
 3. **Renee Ambrose AVVA, Good morning, I wanted to remind you all we're doing another 2025 VA benefits luncheon here at the Elks Club. Last time we had over one hundred veterans so if you are interested in coming, just get ahold of me and I will make sure I get you on the list. We are going to be covering new VA benefits that are available to you all. I am going to see Doctor Diana Ricci here so she can be presenting and really filling you all in on any gaps or holes. We want you to know**

what is happening with the housing market. There are a lot of veterans right now that are moving out of the area. So, I can help guide you with that process as well. And then. We also have a lot of presentations that offer free services and different activities for veterans.

- Merchandise; Jim Topkoff; 1. A couple quick things. first of all, you know, we (chapter) have money, we have mentioned this for several months, but the point I want to make here is, if anybody in our room or in our group who has needs come and see one of the board members, we don't want anybody missing a house payment or car payment or just missing food. Like we've been talking about the food banks. Part of our responsibility is to you and to our fellow Members and our fellow vets.
- 2. We have these nice metal name tags; Stan would like to order them in groups of 6. They are \$11.00 apiece, but we need at least six of them to place an order. I have only got one person right now so if you are interested in one, or Business cards with your name on them, see Jim Topkoff.
- Reminder: Sign in | Raffle ticket;
- Door Price Drawings: Jim Topkoff;
 1. Granny Scott's Pie (Renee) 259
 2. \$25 for Home Depot. # 371. OK,
 3. \$25.00 to Lowe's. # 302.
 4. Nice Survival kit. Carol C.
 5. Quick got several nice challenge coins that were brought in this morning. Anybody's a collector or some beautiful challenge coins?
- POW/MIA-Retiring ~ Jose Gonzales / Remembering our Veterans ~ Otto Smolik
Today we honor and remember one of our own.

JAMES EUGENE STEADMAN, Capt. USAF

DATE OF BIRTH; February 26, 1945, DATE OF CASUALTY; November 26, 1971

HOME OF RECORD; FT COLLINS, Colo Status; MIA / KIA

On November 26, 1971, an F-4 Phantom II (tail number 66-7752, call sign "Owl 08") conducted a forward air control mission over a heavily wooded, mountainous jungle area in eastern Laos. The last radio contact* with the aircraft occurred as it was on route to the target area in Savannakhet Province in the vicinity of (GC) VD 964 056. Weather conditions were extremely poor, with rain, clouds, and low visibility. When controllers could not re-establish radio contact with the crew of the Phantom, a seven-day search and rescue effort began. Continuing bad weather and the rugged terrain hampered visual and photographic searches, and radio and electronic contact could not be established. The search was unsuccessful, and the crew were declared missing.

Capt. Steadman and 1Lt Beutel (The Weapons Systems Officer) failed to return from their sortie and were presumed to have been shot down near the Ban Karai Pass. The men were posted as missing in action for seven years until the Air Force changed their classification to killed in action. 1Lt Beutel was flying his last mission before he was due to fly to Australia for a spell of Rest and Recuperation leave. Jim Steadman, a young officer from the Air Force Academy, left behind a wife of only a short duration to wonder what happened to him.

Captain James Eugene Steadman, USAFA Class of 1967, is one of those 1,587 MIAs unaccounted for in Southeast Asia from the Vietnam War. He is also one of six graduates from the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs class of 1967 who is still MIA. There are 5 USAFA Class of 1967 MIAs

Today, Captain Steadman is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific and has a military marker in his memory at United States Air Force Academy Cemetery, Colorado Springs, CO.

****YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN NOR SHALL YOU EVER BE.
May they all Rest in Peace, Thank you for your service**

- Benediction; Otto Smolik
- Meeting adjourned: Stan (Turn Cell Phones back on)
- Up Coming Events:
 1. March 9th; Daylight Savings Time Change
 2. March 15th; VVA Members Meeting @ 10am, Elks breakfast starts a @ 8:30 am
 3. March 17th; St Patrick's Day
 4. March 20th; Spring Begins

Marty Chavez – Secretary, VVA Chapter 1071 – Denver

People inspire you, or They drain you---Pick them wisely” Hans F. Hansen

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