



VVA Chapter 528

Plymouth-Canton, MI

1426 Mill St. Plymouth, MI 48170



President John Spencer and Zoltan Nagy waiting to visit veterans/patients at Ann Arbor VA Hospital.

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Homefront Staff

Tom Brown - Editor, Columnist & Calendar
 Don Dignan - Assistant Editor & Columnist
 John Spencer- President & Columnist
 Bob Lamoureux - Events & Columnist
 Rich Whipple - Chaplain & Columnist
 Gary Estermyer - Columnist
 John Fleming - Columnist & Photographer
 Gary "Bear" Kubik - Columnist
 Dennis Bielskis - Photographer
 Dean Bell - Photographer
 Doug Fox - Photographer

Distribution Staff

Jim Hodgson - Chief
 Ron King
 Dale Luebke

Welcome Home!

"Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another"



Happy New Year

President's Corner

Happy New Year! 2015 was a great year for Chapter 528 due to the efforts of many members. Our Sportsmen's raffle raised funds to help fellow veterans in need. Let's make 2016 another great year for the Chapter.



John Spencer, President
 U S Army 1965-67
 123rd Transportation
 Company (Longshoremen)
 Cam Ranh Bay, RVN
 1966 (01/05/66-01/05/67)





Digger's Desk

EUCHRE

Another social event taking place in the VFW lounge is Euchre. Every Wednesday at 7:00PM, the dealing starts. The cost is \$10 per person.

CHRISTMAS TREES

All the trees were sold by around December 15 in what has become an annual special event at the Post. Thanks around to all who unloaded and set up and hung the trees on the day before Thanksgiving and especially those who sold and delivered trees on a daily basis.

PEARL HARBOR DAY

The ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park on December 7 was the recipient of great weather and crowd as well. We did honor to those who went before us in WWII. Everyone was invited back to the Post afterward for some SOS.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Saturday December 12 saw the Post invaded by a throng of little people whose beliefs were reinforced when the Big Man in Red showed up to shower Christmas spirit on one and all. Thanks to Parry Bielskis and her elves for pulling this together once again.

MICHIGAN VETERANS FOUNDATION

The Chapter visited the MVF on Monday December 14 following our annual shopping trip to Kohl's where VVA spent \$2000 and multiplied that with all the discounts involved. The clothing donation box at the Post and clothing collection from a Garden City church were all delivered to an enthusiastic crowd of veterans at the MVF....a feel good moment for all involved.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Saturday December 19, the potluck Christmas party at the Post was great with a huge variety of dishes and desserts. Don Nippa won the Ugly Sweater contest hands down.

UPCOMING

There are a few events right around the corner in the New Year, e.g., Soup 'N Salad, Chili Cookoff and the Lenten fish fries. See you there.

CHRISTMAS

Celebrate the birth of Our Savior by spending quality time with family and friends. Don't forget to pray for those who even now guard the gates of freedom away from home during this holiday season.

I'll see you at the January meeting. It's a great time to be a Veteran.



Don Dignan
D/2/16 "Rangers"
1st Inf. Div.
1967-1968



Members helping at Sam's Club on Ford Road in Canton, MI for our Salvation Army Bell Ringing.
Photo courtesy of Doug Fox.



Odds & Ends

Membership

It is with sadness we report the death of member Ken Winkler. Ken was very well liked and he really enjoyed the year he was able to play in our Monday golf league. He will be missed. Our thoughts and prayers go to Ken's family. We had 1 individual and 1 associate applications for membership this past month. Richard Blandina, Army, has joined the chapter and Debra Schnettler has joined our associates. Debra's husband Don joined the associates last month. Welcome Rich and Debra to Chapter 528. Our current membership stands at 268 individual and 76 associate members. Of these we have 197 life VVA and 35 life AVVA members.

Lapsed Members: As of December 22, 2015 the following individuals have not renewed their membership:

VVA: Richard Dunn, Ed Hopkins, Dan Stengle, Chris Timco

AVVA: Barbara Arnett, Tom Arnett, Betty Burkacki, Joanne Cook, Ron Cook, Tom Guditis, Paul Tripp

Dropped from Roster: Cornell Osier

January VVA Renewals: Danny Cook, Victor Mamayek, Jerry Pazdan, Dave Stenrose, Robert Taylor

January AVVA Renewals: John Buford, Barbara Roberts, Jeff Rousseau

If you have already renewed thank you. If you have not, please do so before the end of the month to keep your membership current.

Life Membership

Anyone who read the latest VVA Veteran magazine saw the tremendous response to the \$100 life membership special. We had over 30 chapter members take advantage of this offer. If you didn't take advantage of it you missed a great opportunity. The offer is over now so if you want a life membership its back to the normal rates. Ages 61-65 (\$175), 66-71 (\$150), and 72 & up (\$100).

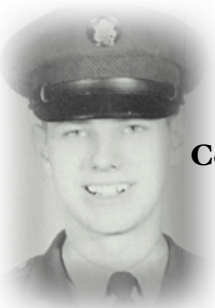
Chapter Raffle

Congratulations go to member Don McLane, the latest winner of the chapter raffle. Don will receive a lifetime VVA membership. There was an additional raffle the day after the meeting when I realized I had collected enough to purchase another \$100 life membership. The winner of this drawing, which was picked by my wife, was Don Petrere. Congratulations Don. Now that we're back to full rates there won't be another drawing until February.

Christmas Trees

VFW tree sales were a huge success again this year with another sellout well before Christmas. Thanks to all the chapter members who came out to help unload, sell and deliver trees and those who bought a tree. A special thanks to Bill Browning for chairing this event.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!



Bob Lamoureux
Co. C, 3/47, 9th Inf. Div.
"Mobile Riverines"



Dean Bell at Ann Arbor VA Hospital



Chaplain's Corner

Christmas Mystery

Bill Crowder
From *Our Daily Bread*



Rich Whipple
Chapter Chaplain
(A sinner saved by God's Grace)
Cell: 734-751-2992
rekjwhipple@yahoo.com
HHC/2/503d Infantry
173d. Airborne Brigade
1968-1969



"This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing: Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the babe, the son of Mary."

As Charles Dickens' story "*A Christmas Carol*" begins, there is mystery surrounding Ebenezer Scrooge. Why is he so mean-spirited? How did he become so selfish? Then, slowly, as the Christmas spirits marched Scrooge through his own story, things become clearer.

We see the influences that changed him from a happy youth into a selfish miser. We observe his isolation and his brokenness. As the mystery is solved, we also glimpse the path to restoration. Concern for others pulls Scrooge from his self-absorbed darkness into a new joy.

A far more important mystery, and one much harder to explain, is that which Paul spoke of in 1 Timothy 3:16: "Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory." Extraordinary! God "appeared in the flesh."

The mystery of Christmas is how God could become man while remaining fully God. It defies human explanation, but in the perfect wisdom of God, it was the plan of the ages.

"What child is this?" He is Jesus Christ – God revealed in the flesh.

Chaplain's notes: Happy New Year!! Ken Winkler finally lost his battle with brain cancer and passed away three weeks ago after a courageous fight. Prayers requested for Clyde Rains (cancer) and his wife Ann with pneumonia.



Come Join Us

Hot Soups - Cold Salads
Bread & Rolls
Coffee & Tea
Desserts for sale

**THE MAYFLOWER/LT. GAMBLE VFW
POST 6695 LADIES IS HOSTING A SOUP
AND SALAD DINNER AT:**

1426 S. MILL ST PLYMOUTH, MI

SATURDAY, JAN 16TH

5:00-7:00 p.m.

\$5 PER PERSON

CASH BAR WILL BE AVAILABLE

Contact Judy Thomason @
734-545-0184
Judythomason@gmail.com



Tom Brown surrounded by beauty! Photo taken at Ann Arbor VA Hospital. Thanks, Dean!



Michigan State Council Report

December 6, 2015

**Gary Estermyer,
Representative**

On Sunday, December 6, 2015 the State Council meeting was hosted by Washtenaw Cty. Chapter 310 at the Ann Arbor VFW post on Wagner Rd.. All the officers were present as well as 16 chapter delegates. The agenda and consent calendar was then approved.

President John Riling thanked 310 for their hospitality and reported that the Executive Board met the day before at Chapter 154's new HQ. John reported that he was very impressed with Flint Chapter 175's newsletter. John requested that all chapters mail or send him a copy of their chapter newsletter. He stated that he checks his email daily and reads all his correspondence. During discussion regarding Hep C it was mentioned that the VA will screen/test for Hep C if the veteran asks for it. John will be attending the next Commanders Group meeting on December 16 at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans. They will be talking about the A.O. legislation and the health issues of Blue Water Navy veterans. John also mentioned that he and his new bride, Debbie (Bradley) will be wintering in Vero Beach, FL from Jan. 3rd to the end of March. He will fly back to Michigan for the February 7th State Council meeting.

1st Vice President Tim Driscoll stressed the importance of completing the 'Paper Safe' document, just in case. Tim also reported that the VVA April 2015 edition of 'Service-Connected Disability Compensation For Exposure To Agent Orange' is available from National.

2nd Vice President Tom Meinhardt reported that he continues to work on the at-large membership list in Michigan to encourage them to join their local chapters. The VVA life member special (\$100) ends 12/31/15.

Secretary Ray 'Doc' Essenmacher briefly reviewed the previous meeting minutes which were then approved.

Treasurer Dennis Cohoon then passed out copies of the finance report which were also reviewed and approved.

During the announcement period of this meeting it was suggested by VP Tim that any donation checks intended for a chapter be written expressly to the chapter, not VVA in general. Tim also reported that the AAVA Hospital Christmas visitation would take place on Dec. 15th at 5:30 PM. 310 is also sponsoring an auction fundraiser to benefit "Warriors and Caregivers United" on Wednesday, January 13th at Frenchies in Ypsilanti's Depot Town. For further info check out www.wacu.org.

At-large National Director Sandie Wilson then started speaking about the A.O. legislation, HB 1769. You can check out the VVA National website to get progress reports or go to www.capwiz.org to see which legislators have supported us and who needs to be contacted to ask for their support. Check out HEPCHOPE.COM.

We then had a very special guest speaker address the delegates, LTC Charles S. Kettles (ret) Army. On May 15, 1967 Major Kettles (*see photo on page 6*) was part of an air mission (slicks) to insert troops into an AO near Duc Pho. Later that day he returned to that same site to pick up casualties. His unit thought they had picked up everyone when they received a radio call from some troops still on the ground. Major Kettles volunteered to fly back to get the remaining troops. Under heavy ground fire he was successful in getting those remaining troops on board and out of danger. Major Kettles was awarded the DSC for his actions that day. Fast forward to the present and LTC Kettles is now in line to receive the Medal of Honor. What an honor it was to meet this man and hear his story.

Sandie Wilson and Jack Devine (former Nat. VP) then Spoke about the Grand Rapids Veterans Home. Turns out the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) is now in charge of that facility and trouble is brewing. The state political figures (anti-union) have basically hired non-union "rent a nurses" to attempt to staff the Home. They are now regularly short staffed to care for those residents. To compound this issue there is the

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

matter of reporting mandates required by Medicare and Medicaid. Due to improper staffing these reports are not being received timely thus leading to non-payment of state funds. The future of GRVH seems to be in a downward spiral.

Brian Bobek, Chapter 154 reported on some of his chapter activities; their food pantry has served 810 families (2,268 people) from Nov. 14 to Dec. 15, they helped 275 families during their Operation Christmas project, their Traveling Memorial participated in 30 events and traveled 4,600 miles, they provided honor guards in 93 funerals and they make monthly hospital visits. Sounds like chapter of the year material!

I then gave a brief constitution/bylaw/nominating committee report. I'm still waiting for National to update their State bylaw template. Proposed bylaw amendments can be made anytime and I will be opening nominations for State officers at the next Council meeting in February.

Jack Devine, Legislative Chair spoke about pending changes to the Veterans Trust Fund. The basic changes he is following regards electronic communication.

Doc Essenmacher has been visiting the veterans incarcerated in Saginaw and Phil Smith visits those in Milan. Joe Mishler reported there have now been 27,692 burials at Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly. The POW/MIA count is now 1,624.

Phil Smith, Service Director chair reviewed his report. He needs help scanning new and old files to be VA compliant. Bay City Chapter 494 has submitted a bid to host the 2016 State Council convention in Saginaw at the Four Points Sheraton, May 20-22.

Michigan State Council December Meeting



Michigan State Council Officers. Treasurer Dennis Cohoon, 1st VP Tim Driscoll, President John Riling, Secretary Ray Essenmacher and 2nd VP Tom Meinhardt. *Photos courtesy of Gary Estermyer.*



Gary Estermyer, LTC Charles S. Kettles (on track to receive the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions in Vietnam) and President John Riling.



Gary Estermyer
USARV
58th Field Depot
Qui Nhon
May 68 - May 69





The Bear's Den

Get your friends involved. If they are veterans and they won't join, at least get them to register at the VA so they count. It doesn't make any difference how much money they have to be counted as a veteran and help us all. Call or stop by. We can come up with more new stuff. Learn to play Euchre that will be held each Wednesday. We have even tried some new products. Stop by and have some apple root beer, or ginger ale with a kick. Thanks!
(734) 459-6700



Gary "Bear" Kubik

TM2 (SS)

USS Gudgeon SS567

USS Diodon SS 349

Sub Sq. 5



Happy New Year to All! Thanks for all the donations for the adopted families. They had a great Christmas and will remember us for a long time. Since all the trees were sold early, I missed seeing the members that helped out so much not here the next weekend. The smell of the wood burning brought on memories of Kokomo!

Remember that we still have flags, collect cell phones, and accept electronics here at the post. I will let all know when the pickup will be arranged. They gave us over 60 phones the last time I saw Clarence.



VVA Chapter 528 members taking our annual photo before visiting veterans at Ann Arbor VA Hospital. (left to right). Jerry Thomason, Dean Bell, Ted Enright, Zoltan Nagy, Tom Brown, Post Commander Bob Caldwell, Don Dignan, Nancy Dignan, Amy O'Neill, President John Spencer, Dale Luebke, Joe Tabor, Ellen Howington and Gary "Ouch" Boucher.



Christmas Activity Wrap-Up 2015

John Fleming

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Thank You to all of the members that came out on a great December Saturday to the Sam's Club in Canton. The results of our efforts were that we raised \$926.88 for this wonderful organization.

Winter Clothing Drive

Our 10th Annual Winter Clothing Drive has been successfully completed. All went well on Wednesday, December 16. Some of the group met at Bob Evans for Breakfast at 8:00 AM and others met us at Kohl's at 9:00 AM. Representatives from MVF were there to assist in identifying items needed. All totaled we spent \$1,859 and received about \$7,000 at retail value. We had \$2,000 allocated in our motion request. When you add to the purchased items the clothing items donated at the VFW and the First United Methodist Church of Garden City, we had seven fully loaded vehicles of donations!!!

We also collected Kohl's Cash totaling \$370 in our shopping trip. That we will be spent on underwear and various other items and donated to the patients at the VA Hospital in Ann Arbor. Thank you to all who helped in any way!!!

Through our efforts I am certain we brightened the lives of many people, thank you all!!!



Rick Balish, Larry Kijorski, Susie Wagner and Mike Dicker waiting to bring clothes for the 10th Annual Clothing Drive. *Photos courtesy of John Fleming.*



John Fleming

92nd Finance Section
Cam Ranh Bay



January 2016 - VVA Chapter 528 Plymouth-Canton, MI

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 3	28	29	30	31 	1 	2
	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 General Membership Meeting 7 pm	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 Board Meeting 7 pm	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6



Tom Brown, Editor
2nd Missile Battalion,
44th Artillery Pershing
Missile -1st Year
HDG III Corps - 2nd year
Ft. Sill, OK
Feb. 1971 - Dec. 1972



Calendar by Tom Brown

Our active online calendar @
www.vva528.org/ourevents.html

VVA 528 General Membership Meeting Monday, January 11, 2016 1426 South Mill St.
VFW Plymouth, MI Come on and join us! 7:00 p.m. (1900 hours)

VFW Calendar for January

1st - Karaoke Night - 8 pm
 5th - Women's Auxiliary - 7 pm
 12th - General Membership Mtg. 7 pm
 15th - Karaoke Night - 8 pm
 16th - Soup & Salad - 5-7 pm
 19th - Board Meeting - 7 pm
 21st - Men's Auxiliary - 6:30 pm



January Birthdays

Richard Adis, William Bailey, Ronald Bator, Charles Bilyk, Patricia Brothers, Mike Bush, Lee Camilleri, Robert Cheatham, Steven Cunningham, Patrick Doherty, Clint Dorey, Jim Dorey, Susan Dorey, Thomas Dorey, Louie Dorka, Arthur Esper, Dennis Fuelling, William Gravett, Peter Holden, Johnnie Johnson, Larry Kijorski, Don King, Ron King, Patricia Klopschinsky, Andy Lawrence, Aggie Little, Dick O'Hare, Raymond Plesiewicz, Rick Popa, Mike Potochick, Phil Pursell, Donald Rauch, Donald Shannon, Eugene Spurgess, Mike Steffes, Joseph Tebor, Susie Wagner, Dennis Waling, Walter Weber, Sue Willim, Michael Wisienksi, Dale Worcester and Jimmy Yarbrough,



Chapter Officers

President	John Spencer	734-716-0619
1st Vice President	Richard Waldecker	734-459-5345
2nd Vice President	Mike Steffes	734-421-7790
Secretary	Dennis Bielskis	248-767-1654
Treasurer	Bob Dew	734-421-1805

Board of Directors

Bill Browning 734-306-6034	Gene Spurgess 248-887-6212
Mike Dicker 734-425-3414	Pete Glasgow 734-454-9663
Don Dignan 734-525-0157	Joe Tebor 734-377-8329
Rich Mazurkiwicz 734-495-1954	Rich Whipple 734-751-7303

Committees

A.O./Health Care	Bob Dew	734-421-1805
Agent Orange Events	Bob Dew	734-421-1805
AVVA Representative	Bryan Bentley	734-604-6066
By-Laws	Jim Hodgson	734-416-5159
Chaplain	Rich Whipple	734-751-2992
Chapter Historian	Rich Waldecker	734-660-5582
Color/Honor Guard	Bob Lamoureux	734-397-8389
	Rick Ciaramitaro	248-345-2677
Fundraising	Bob Dew	734-421-1805
Homeless Veterans	John Fleming	734-421-0149
Membership	Bob Lamoureux	734-397-8389

Homefront Newsletter

Editor & Publisher	Tom Brown	313-336-0192
Assistant Editor	Don Dignan	734-525-0157
Distribution Chief	Jim Hodgson	734-416-5159
Assistant Chief	Ron King	734-679-6424
Assistant Chief	Dale Luebke	734-239-3463

Product Sales	Bill Browning	734-306-6034
POW/MIA	Al Kerbyson	734-467-5156

Public Affairs	Don Dignan	734-525-0157
Sergeant-at-Arms	John Fleming	734-525-0456
Service Representative	Aggie Little	734-722-9535
Sportsmen's Raffle	John Spencer	734-716-0619
State Delegate	Gary Estermyer	313-255-4891
State A. Delegate	Dennis Bielskis	248-486-0001
State VVA Product Sales	John Riling	734-776-2239
VAVS Deputy	Stew Israel	734-455-4567
Vietnam War 50th Com.	Ron King	734-454-4522
Website	Tom Brown	313-336-0192

VVA Service Officer - State of Michigan

Phillip Smith - Director 313-961-9568 313-226-4181

Veterans Crisis Centers

Veterans Center	313-381-1370
Dearborn Crisis Center	313-584-7800
VA Medical Center Detroit	313-576-1000
VA Ann Arbor Health Care System	734-769-7100

Editor's Note and Disclaimer

Articles, event dates, and photos must be submitted by the **22nd** of the month in order to be considered for publication. Send the article or photo to Tom Brown 17730 Snow Ave Dearborn, MI 48124 or email Tom at tom@vva528.org. Except as otherwise noted, all published articles become the property of VVA Chapter 528 and may not be reprinted without the Chapter's permission. Chapter 528 reserves the right to edit for space. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Chapter, the editor, or the National VVA. **Mayflower Lt. Gamble VFW Post 6695 (734-459-6700)**

Chapter 528 Website: www.vva528.org

Chapter 528 Travel Site www.travelvva528.com

Advertising Rates: 1 year \$60; 6 mos. \$45; 1 issue \$15

Service Photos Needed

VVA Chapter 528 has 130 members' service photos displayed on our website www.vva528.org/members528.html and in our display case. I'm sure most members have a photo of themselves laying around somewhere. When you find your photo you can either mail it to Tom Brown @ 17730 Snow Ave. Dearborn, MI 48124, scan it and send it to: tombrown1949@gmail.com as a jpg, bring it to our general membership meetings and give it to Tom or drop it off in "Bear's" Office. Be sure to include your name, branch of service and the year the photo was taken. **Don Petrere** will place the copied service photos in our display case.



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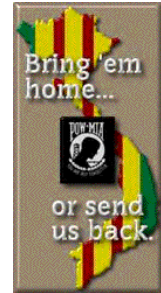


Vietnam Veterans of America

Membership in Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. is open to Vietnam Era Veterans as well as Associate Members of the Public at Large.

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 Branch of Service _____
 Date of Birth _____
 email _____
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 (Copy of your DD-214 Form or other proof of Service Enclosed)
 _____ I am not a Vietnam Era Veteran, but would like to be an Associate Member
 I want to give more. Enclosed is my check for \$20.00 _____ \$50.00 _____
 Other _____
 New Member _____ Renewal _____ Membership Card
 No. _____
 Today's Date _____

Return this form to:
Vietnam Veterans of America
Plymouth/Canton Chapter 528
P.O. Box 6319
Plymouth, MI 48170-0473



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 Plymouth-Canton Chapter 528
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 Plymouth MI 48170-0473