



Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1071 - Denver

Location: Elks Lodge, 1455 Nelson St. Lakewood Co

Date: Saturday: Feb.17th, 2024

Scheduled Time: 10:00 AM MDT

CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

Meeting called to order by Vice-President Trinidad Rael

- **Opening Prayer: Otto Smolik**
- **Pledge of Allegiance Trini**
- **Posting of POW/MIA Colors– Jose Gonzales, Otto Smolik**
- **Moment of Silence for POW/MIA'S- Trini**
- **Roll Call: VP Trini Rael, Secretary Marty Chavez, Treasurer Doug Nunes, Sgt. at Arms Jose Gonzales.**
- **VVA Members present: (44)** Wally Struble, Lynn Herbert, Phil Waters, Steve Newton, Otto Smolik, Vern Moore, Jose Gonzalez, Doug Nunez, Jim Topkoff, Trini Rael, Marty Chavez, Lou Jones, Mike Markham, Joe Romero, Erv Krueger, Jerry Zimmer, Stan Panfil, Ron Parr, Darrell Chapman, David Demars, Vicente Roldan, John Abeita, Rod Keiscome, Frank Riddle, Nelson Hendrickson, Bill Bridges, Martin Hixon, Roddy Godown, Mike McDonnell, Alan Jones, Noel Matthews, Jim Higgins, George Zervos, Don Bates, Don Baldwin, Bill Easton, Joe Trujillo, Owen Oliver, David Nila, Bill Bittman, Bill Robbins, Robert Doris, Larry Carroll, Richard Hogue

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

Guests: (34) Tom Moore, Gwen Moore, Delaine Kuehnel, Becky Amaya, Samantha Staples, Margaret Roldan, Pamela Vargo, Darlene Dutson, Linda Tastad, Cathie Burgess, Jim Burgess, Lavern Kersnick, Rick Kersnick, Cathy Suchey, Linda Spano, Mary Lewis, Joyce I. Saitta, Rita Cusack, Becky Mendicello, Sherry Coule, Susan Bates, Marilyn Hogue

(Guest cont) Mara Coleman, Lynette Guy, Monica King, Walter Kowalski, Karen Kowalski, Debbie Gordon, Tom Remy, Laurie Walker, Greg Cole, Judy McLaughlin, Albert Lewis, Maury Smith,

- **Welcomed New Members: Trini**
- **Members Birthdays or Anniversaries: Trini**

- **Welcomed Guests:**
- **President's Report: VBP Trini:** 1071 President Stan is MIA due to a scheduled 101st Airborne conference. He will be at our next meeting.
 1. Welcome Quilts of Valor Ladies and Tom Moore. (designated driver)
 2. Upcoming VVA 1071 Board of Directors / Officers elections, Maybe have Owen Oliver elaborate more on BoD elections.
 3. Certificates of Appreciation presented to Director Jose Gonzales, The significance of this appreciation: For your Support to the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1071. We express our greatest gratitude for your commitment and support of our nation. Never again with one generation of veterans abandoned another. Congratulations, Jose.
 4. Director Owen Oliver informed the membership that elections of officers and Board of Directors for Chapter 1071 will be held during the April members meeting. All the current Officers / Directors are staying on for another term. If anyone is interested in in being nominated for a position on 1071's board, please see one of the committee members, Stan Poprocki, Trini Rael or Owen Oliver. Thank you.
- **Vice-President's Report: The Colorado VVA State Council meeting will be March 9th at Castle Pines.**
- **Secretary Report: Marty Chavez;**
- **Financial Report: Treasurer Doug Nunes presented the monthly Treasurer's report for the month.**

Membership Report: Ray Holtz / Trini;

1. In December we had 3 new VVA members Robert Mitchell, Stanley Panfil and David DeMars.
2. In December we had no new AVVA members.
3. We have 229 members, and 48 AVVA members giving us a total of 277 members.

Webmaster Report: Ray Holtz

1. January website visits were 1012.
2. Posted the Scholarship Application for 2024.
3. Posted Bio and photos of Doug Nunes on the Member Bio's & Photos page.

Honors Burial Report: Bill Bridges; Feb. 17th, 2024

SUBJECT: Update on Honors Burial to the membership

I am very pleased to report progress on our Honors Burial Project for the Stork-Bullock.

On Wednesday, January 17, 2024, I submitted an article about our Honors Burial Project to the National VVA Magazine editor Sean Venables. I received confirmation that Sean received the article and plans on using it in an upcoming issue of the VVA Magazine.

We have arrangements with photojournalists Manny Sotello and Gary Shapiro of 9News to cover the making of urns by the Colorado Woodworkers Guild on Friday, February 23, 2024. We will be sitting down with them following this effort to capture the process to date. I have been in contact with Jeremy Hubbard on FOX31 concerning our work. As of today, we do not have a date or time to meet with him concerning our story.

For the VA Eligibility Office work we have submitted 35 names for consideration. Of those submitted, we have received 25 approvals for burial. I am awaiting responses on two (2) remaining candidates, one of which I am certain will be approved, the other is in doubt.

The seven (7) that have not been approved were for the following reasons: one (1) was a reservist with the only active-duty time was for training, four (4) were rejected as not veterans, and two (2) were not approved because they had previously received approval for burial at Fort Logan.

DONATIONS

I am pleased to announce that the Arvada Army Navy Surplus, a family-owned local business, was very kind to donate the dog tags that will be affixed to the handcrafted urns. If you get by the store, please stop and say hello to Chris (lead buyer for the store) who made the tags and the donation.

RESEARCH

On Thursday, February 8, 2024 I met, with assistance from Jim Topkoff and Cliff Fejfar, Carol Helstosky, a professor of history at the University of Denver. Her students be taking information that I provided to Carol and perform research to develop biographies on some of the veterans.

STATISTICS

Here is a breakdown of the foreign war service

WWII 14 WWII-Korea 3 Korea 1 Korea-Vietnam 1
Vietnam 3 Peacetime 3 **TOTAL 25**

The following branches of service are represented

US Army 12 Army Air Corp 2 Navy 5 Navy – USNR 1 US Army/WAC 1
US Marine Corps 2 US Army – USAF 1 Air Force 2 Army Reserves 1 Total 27
TOTAL 27

Dutifully reported.

Bill Bridges

Director, Honor Burial

Tony Lopez / Ch.1071 Scholarship Program: (Doug Nunes);

Fund raising; Steve Newton; Memorial Day Poppies Fund Raiser will be held on May 25th at 5 different locations from 9 to 12. If anyone is interested in helping out please see Steve Newton for more information.

- **Merchandise: Jim Topkoff;**
- **Director discussion:**
- **Discussion from the floor. AVVA member Renee Ambrose informed the membership about the VA Benefits event which will be held on March 19th 2024 at the Lakewood Elks Club from 10am to 1pm.**

There will be a free veterans luncheon. Several topics of interest will be discussed. For more information and to RSVP please call or text Renee @ 303-704-6289. Seats are limited, don't wait.

- **Door Price Drawings: Jim Topkoff.**
- **\$25 gift card to Applebees: # 855**
- **\$25 gift card to Red Robin: # 810**
- **\$25 gift card to Olive Garden; #839**
- **Dozen Roses by Renee; # 845**

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

****Quilts of Valor Presentation: Gwen Moore;**

Gwen introduced all the ladies and men involved with the Denver chapter Quilts of Valor who attended today's presentation and thanked VVA 1071 for inviting them. Gwen also thanked 1071 for the free breakfast they received. Gwen gave a brief history of the QOV foundation. The group then presented quilts to eleven (11) VVA members and three (3) non members. Delaine Kuehnel (QOV) took pictures of the QOV presentations and will provide pictures to each veteran later in the week.

Receiving the Quilts were; **Members Robert Hogue, Vicente Roldan, Ms Roddy Gowden, Otto Smolik, David Nila, Gerald Unrein, Darrell Chapman, Bill Brittman, John Abeita, Mike Markham, and Marty Chavez.** Three (3) other members were no shows and will get their quilts at a later date.

Non-members (but soon to be) who also received quilts were **Walter Kowalski, Albert Lewis, Maury Smith.** All the veterans gave a brief history of their service & Thanked the Ladies.

- **POW/MIA-Retiring ~ Jose Gonzalers / Remembering our Veterans ~ Otto Smolik**
Today we honor and remember one of our own.

THOMAS M HANRATTY, DATE OF BIRTH: June 19th, 1946

DATE OF CASUALTY: June 11th, 1967

CASUALTY PROVINCE: QUANG TRI, South Vietnam

HOME OF RECORD: BEULAH, Colorado, Pueblo County

BRANCH OF SERVICE: MARINE CORPS

RANK: PFC

Status: MIA, Body not recovered.

CRASH OF HELICOPTER CH-46A 150270

On 11 June 1967, 1LT Curtis Bohlscheid was the pilot of a CH46A helicopter inserting a seven-man Marine Force Recon team into a predesignated area 11.5 nautical miles northwest of Dong Ha, South Vietnam -- right on the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). A total of four aircraft were involved in the mission, two CH46's and two UH1E helicopter gunships. Bohlscheid flew the lead aircraft. His crew included MAJ John S. Oldham, LCPL Jose J. Gonzales (crew chief), and PFC Thomas M. Hanratty (crew chief). 7 members of the 3rd Recon Company, 3rd Recon Battalion, 3rd Marine Division were to be inserted near the DMZ. The flight departed Dong Ha at

about 11:15 a.m. and proceeded to the insertion location. The gunships made low strafing runs over the landing zone to clear booby traps and to locate any enemy troops in the area. No enemy fire was received and no activity was observed. The lead aircraft then began its approach to the landing zone. At an estimated altitude of 400-600 feet, the helicopter was observed to climb erratically. Enemy machinegun men had been waiting for the opportune time to fire on the aircraft. Portions of the rear blades were seen to separate from the aircraft and a radio transmission was received from the aircraft indicating that it had been hit. The helicopter became inverted and continued out of control until it was seen to crash by a stream in a steep ravine. Subsequent efforts by ground units to reach the crash area failed due to a heavy bunker complex surrounding the site. The ground units inspected the site from within 500 meters through binoculars and observed no survivors. All eleven personnel aboard the helicopter were therefore classified Killed In Action, Body Not Recovered. Other USMC records indicate that the helicopter also burst into flames just prior to impacting the ground.

May they all rest in Peace. Semper Fi Marines

Benediction; Otto Smolik

- **Meeting adjourned: Trini Richard Hogan Richard Hogan (Turn Cell Phones back on)**
- **Up Coming Events:**
 1. **VVA 1071 Members Meeting, March 16th,2024**
 2. **Saimt Patricks Day March 17th. 2024**
 3. **Veterans Benefits Luncheon, March 19th, 2024**
 4. **Palm Sunday March 24th, 2024**
 5. **Easter Sunday March 31st, 2024**

Marty Chavez – Secretary, VVA Chapter 1071 – Denver

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