

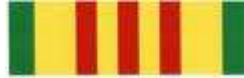


Nam Express

The Official Newsletter
VIETNAM VETERANS of AMERICA CHAPTER 377
Chapter Established November 2, 1987
2272 Dryden Road, Dryden, New York 13053



*"Here's to us who fought for it, the sheltered shall never know the price, or glory, of freedom."
by an anonymous Vietnam soldier.*



February 2021



Your Help is Needed

We need updated phone numbers for the following chapter members. If you see your name or or anyone else that has a good number for these members, please submit them to Gerri Smith at gsmith1607@comcast.net or 717-698-1343.

Richard Beardsley
David Putnam

Edward Collins
Michael Thuesen

John Gillis
Ed Freeman

Wilson Kone
Sidney Melton

David Larose



33 YEARS AND COUNTING Some History of Chapter 377 By **Harvey E. Baker**

For thirty-three years Chapter #377 has been formed. The first recorded meeting for the Chapter was on September 28, 1987 at Tompkins-Cortland Community College. It was a general membership meeting with Danny Baker at the helm as president. At the time of that meeting there was no records kept of the number of people who were there, but it was well over seventy veterans that were present. Business that day was a motion to charge twenty dollars for yearly dues. The motion was voted upon and accepted. Out of the twenty dollars, nine stays with the chapter, two dollars goes to the VVA, NY State Council and nine dollars goes to the VVA National...

At a meeting on November 2, 1987, a chapter name was put forth in a motion and voted upon and accepted by members who were present, and the Finger Lakes Chapter, Vietnam Veterans of America was born...

In May 1989 the chapter was finally chartered by VVA National and made a 501C corporation and given the number 377 as the official chapter number.

The first event for the chapter was a Christmas party at the North Forty Bar on December 11, 1987. It was open to all Vietnam era veterans and hundreds attended. There was a lot of food, some drinking, music, smiling faces and even dancing. Any of you remember that...?

In February 1988, President Danny Baker stepped down due to some personal reasons, and a motion to make him "President for Life" was put forth to those who were present, it was voted upon and accepted. Another vote was held, and Harvey Baker became the first elected chapter president.

On April 29, 1988, the chapter along with TC-3 sponsored "The Vietnam Experience", a one-day symposium to help people in our community and veterans as well to better understand the Vietnam experience.

The program was a huge success, with well over a thousand people attending. Twenty-five veterans from four branches of the service were presented with the New York Conspicuous Service Cross Medal by NY State Senator James Seward. Also, there were movies, an art show, discussions on Agent Orange, the POW/MIA issue, PTSD and a whole lot more.

There have been a number of presidents over the thirty-three years; hopefully I can remember all of them. Danny Baker, Harvey Baker, Dick Crozier, Dan Rose, Ed Tenorio, Rene Sylvester, Donald Grier, Fran Moore, Anthony Evangelista, and Gary Napieracz. Longest serving president is Anthony Evangelista who to-date, served the longest at that position. There have been many different vice presidents and other officers of the Board of Directors, but there are too many to mention in this article.

There have been so many events that we as a chapter have participated in, and many of them were not recorded with any dates, but I will try to name a few that might jar some memories.

The first of many chapter picnics was on August 6, 1988 at Meyers Point Park in Lansing. Nearly a thousand showed up for that pig-roast picnic; so many that the park asked us not to have another picnic there because we took up all of the parking spaces. We have had other picnics, and parties since then but nothing as big as that one....

In 1990, the Veterans' Club Scholarship was started by the chapter, for veterans and descendants of Vietnam veterans. The scholarship ran for many years at TC-3, until 2018.

Cops, Kids, and Veterans program was started in the late 80's and ran for a number of years. It was a program to take kids to Darien Lake for a day of fun, and it put cops, kids and veterans together for a better understanding of the community. It was a great success with thousands of kids being taken to Darien Lake over the years.

One of the issues that is near and dear too many in the chapter is the POW/MIA issue. The chapter has done many things to highlight that issue. The first big event was a balloon release that was held at TC-3 on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, in September 1989. Over 2,500 balloons were released that day (bio-degradable of course) with a big ceremony, and with three helicopters doing a fly-over. Since then our chapter has put in a great deal of effort doing a POW/MIA Watch Fire which we do at Meyers Point Park. We have done 29 Watch Fires to-date and the Watch Fire continues to remain one of our biggest events.

In 1990 our chapter started the Patriotism Award for cadets at Cornell's ROTC program, who show patriotism and natural leadership ability and that is also an event that continues to this day.

Also, in 1990, the chapter started a TV program on Cable Channel 13, called "A Veterans Affair". The show lasted for six years and 300 programs.

In 1993 the chapter started donating bronze grave flag holders with a flag to any grave of a deceased Chapter member.

When over 1800 Vietnam Veteran coal miners went on strike in West Virginia, our chapter started an effort to raise funds for clothing, canned foods, dry goods, and even toys for the coal miner's children. In the end we sent a full tractor trailer load of goods and some money to the families of striking coal miners in West Virginia.

Also, chapter members did canoe trips down a few of the rivers around here, for several years, and even a fly-in fishing trip to Lowes Lake in the Adirondack.

The chapter for a number of years was involved with the American Cancer Society Relay for Life event. A lot of us walked, and we raised the flag at the opening ceremonies. Also, chapter members rode together to Rolling Thunder in Washington DC six different times for the POW/MIA Rolling Thunder Motorcycle Ride.

During the Persian Gulf War, our chapter launched, "Operation Desert Santa" a program to send care packages to our troops involved in that war, and when the Persian Gulf War came to a close, the chapter organized and participated in a "Welcome Home" ceremony for returning veterans, that took place in Ithaca; so that no generation of veterans would ever forget another generation of veterans.

Also, in 2003 "Operation We Care" was started, which was a program to send care packages to our troops who were serving our Country in foreign lands. Pat and Holly Hollingsworth can give you the total number of packages that have been mailed off to our troops.

Plane hijackings, World Trade Towers, the Pentagon, War in Afghanistan, and War in Iraq, we all know about that. But the chapter kept on going.

The chapter has organized the “Annual Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor Tribute Ride” (twelve rides so far); a motorcycle ride on Route 38, from Owego to Hannibal, New York. The ride is to honor all Vietnam veterans from NY State.

The chapter raised money and bought, 27 “Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor” signs and installed them alongside the 98 miles of Route 38, now dedicated and named as “Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway of Valor”

As you can see, we have done a lot over the years. We have done many fund raisers, community events, many, many parades. If three people showed up, we marched with just the three people. If eighty people showed up, we marched with two platoons. We have done many Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies. We have helped clean DeWitt Memorial Park in Ithaca on weekly basis and we also do a major clean up in the fall and in the spring and we helped raise money to spruce up the park, and painted the benches as well. We helped organize and participated in the ceremony when the park was rededicated too.

When the “Vietnam Wall” came to our area on three different occasions, we participated in the ceremonies and helped provide labor and security for the “Traveling Wall” in Ithaca, Cortland, and Marathon.

One of the latest events the chapter has taken on, is the purchasing, installation and dedication of polished granite benches that have words engraved on the back that read, “Donated by Finger Lakes Chapter #377, Vietnam Veterans of America.” then on another line, “FREEDOM ISN’T FREE” One of the benches is at Meyers Park in Lansing, where we do the Watch Fire. Another bench is at the Veterans Memorial Park in Cortland by the courthouse, and another is at the Sampson Veteran Memorial Cemetery in Romulus.

In thirty-three years there has been a lot of work put in to keeping this chapter alive; those that have been there eight o’clock on a Sunday morning picking up nails know all about that, but it has been little things and big things and also many forgotten things that we as a chapter have done. But it has been for a purpose, and that purpose is to organize and portray the Vietnam Veteran in a positive way in our community and in history. But it is also to say that we are here, and we will not be forgotten....

Chapter 377 Takes the Initiative Again!

By: Gary Napieracz



This year Wreaths Across America was on December 19, 2020. Chapter 377 would normally be at Sampson's Veterans Cemetery in Romulus, New York. Because of the coronavirus, organizations were not invited to participate in this event. So some of us at Chapter 377 decided we needed to do something, and on Saturday morning with freezing temperatures in the single digits, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 377, from Dryden, New York, placed a wreath on the Vietnam monument at Cortland Memorial Park.

Photo Credits: Barnes



Gene Barnes, Dale VanBenschoten, Jim Evener, Ron Dexter, Mike Portzline, and Gary Napieracz ^

Gene Barnes, Dale VanBenschoten, Jim Evener, Ron Dexter, Mike Portzline, Lisa Ladue and Gary Napieracz ↓



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Wreaths Across America



As you know many events this year has been canceled because of the coronavirus. Chapter 377 Vietnam Veterans of America, from Dryden, New York, normally would be able to participate at Sampson Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Romulus, New York. I would like to thank chapter member James Jones, and his wife Patty who is a member of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America for their dedication, and for all the help at Wreaths Across America at Sampson's Cemetery on December 19, 2020.



James and Patty Jones and other Volunteers

Charlie the Shutterbug

Charles C. Harrington, US Navy, 1963-1967.



Over the years we've had several members who have taken candid photos of the Chapter's members and activities. However the use and number of photos changed when Charley Harrington joined the Chapter.

He came to us as a retired professional photojournalist after 25 years with the Cornell University News Service. He has photographed everything at Cornell from cows to political dignitaries, Dalai Lama to Presidential Candidates, student demonstrations & sports, Eva Gabor & Merv Griffin. He enjoyed taking pictures of sports camps and “feel good” stories of Cornell employees.

He joined the US Navy in 1963 “to see the world”. He was on the USS Newport News, the last all gun Heavy Cruiser serving in the Atlantic Fleet.

Apparently he got tired of sending postcards home from European and Atlantic ports, and so he bought a camera and loved taking photos. After getting out in 1967, he went to Photography School in Philadelphia, then to a Studio in Binghamton, and then to Cornell until 2003.

Charley knows the angles, the groupings, and the best shots to record our members and activities. He’s always somewhere saying “stand there, don’t move, if you can’t see me I can’t see you, say free beer!”.

He has developed photo groupings of events which he turns into 11x17” “Collages” that we have presented as mementos to individuals or groups that have supported our chapter. They are absolutely beautiful and much appreciated.

His photos are often in the Chapter’s Nam Express Newsletter and he took individual photos of all local members.

Charley’s efforts have greatly spread the visuals of the Chapter in the public, and helped to increase our membership. For his contributions he has received Certificates of Appreciation from both the Chapter and VVA NYS Council.





Voice of Chapter 377

There is a Light at the End of the Tunnel

You know it was pretty hard to write this months edition of “The Voice of Chapter 377”, and try to be positive and entertaining because of what is happening all around us. There has just been so much sadness because of this heartbreaking pandemic. I will have to dig down deep to try to come up with an article that will hopefully be fun, witty, and somewhat informative. If there is one thing I have learned over many years of being in the chapter, that there is always someone who is willing to share a funny story or just talk about something that happened to them that they wish to share with others. I think I’ll start off by shining a spotlight on a couple of members and telling a few tidbits of info I know about some of you. Events and proud moments in the lives of some of our fellow cohorts.

FRAN MOORE, for starters, is a man who had the pleasure of driving trucks and setting up sound and lighting for some of today's biggest country artists. The most popular one that I am sure you all have heard of is Ms. Reba McEntyre. He did this job for several years before moving on and into the Sheriff's department for about 15 years. He is a great patriot and longtime member of our chapter. He recently was presented with a very high honor. A Certificate of Appreciation from Ned D. Foote who is the NYS Counsel President of the VVA. A very well-deserved recognition indeed. Congratulations

JIM EVENER is another man, whom instead of working behind the scenes, he was up on the stage with his band and opened for such legendary bands as The Guess Who, The Beach Boys, and The Association. He started playing the bass guitar in high school and went on to play for over 50 years. He later worked at Cornell University where he met his now wife, Wahnetta. To those who are close to her she is just "WAH". We in the chapter appreciate everything the 2 of you contribute, and for being so supportive to others.

Now even though we aren't together in the same room as a chapter, we all, in our own way, find ways to help our friends and be productive in the communities we live in.

PAUL PAGLIARO had a bunch of Texas Roadhouse gift cards that he received and pasted them out during a chapter meeting. Many members don't travel to Ithaca, so with what was left, GENE BARNES took and he passed them out to the nurses at Cortland County Hospital, to show these frontline workers that we appreciate their sacrifice. Thank you, Gene, for your kindness....

VVA honored our vets on Dec. 19th by placing a wreath on the Vietnam Memorial at the Cortland Memorial Park in Cortland, NY. This is normally done in Sampson for Wreaths Across America but because of reasons beyond our control, organizations like ours were not permitted to attend. So some of the chapter members went to Cortland, stood out in the freezing cold, drank hot chocolate, and sang "Jingle Bells" and listened to Lisa LaDieu sing The National Anthem. After, they went to Frank and Marys' Diner to have a bite to eat. Now for those of you out there who haven't experienced being with Mike Portzline and Lisa LaDieu at an event, or anywhere, well its a treat. The two of them together is like watching a sitcom. Ron Dexter can vouch for that. Hey, laughter is what we need right now, keep it up you two.

DANNY and HARVEY BAKER traveled many miles on Route 38 taking down the bunting. We appreciate both of you for taking the time to keep "our highway" looking good. DALE VANBENSCHOTEN's sons girlfriend, Jennifer Wagstaff, knitted poppie pins for all the directors. We thank you!

We would like to thank 2 special people that have delighted us over the year. TAYLOR MILLICAN, for choosing Chapter 377 to do her research on. She is a student at Ithaca College and is writing her Senior paper on Veterans. She took the time to get to know us through interviews, pictures taking, and events. She is a lovely young lady and we wish her luck and bright future. And to JOHN MCSORLEY, the brigade commander of the Cornell ROTC, for all the work he did. Especially the Watchfire video. He is one busy young man but was gracious enough to get our thoughts out for all to hear. Thank you to the cadets who spoke our words, so beautifully, and with so much heart. Good luck to ALL of you.

PHIL and GERRI SMITH, the newsletter that you guys do for us is so needed now more than ever. Getting to read and see photos of our chapter members, since we can't be together, is filling a void that some of us have. We know you have busy lives and we want to Thank You for putting out The Nam Express.

A big shout out to the VVA and AVVA who organized the PHONE CALL CAMPAIGN with so much help from GARY NAPIERACZ. Reaching out to all members, across America, to let them know they are not forgotten and that we care. We will continue doing this for a very long time. It has meant so much to those whom we got through to. Many of the numbers, however, were not in service or disconnected. Please reach out to let us know if you have changed your number. We want to include everyone that we can. You can contact Phil and Gerri Smith at 1-717-698-1343.

Now on a lighter note here are few things I have heard about and made me laugh....

* Charlie Harrington tried to teach Mike Portzline, over the course of 5 hours, how to use a computer. Now I know we are dealing with technology here but, when you have to explain that a zero is not an O, and a dot is not always a period, and my for-goodness sake you don't have to make obnoxious noises every time you press a key. After all that time of teaching him he still can't compute!!! I think he suffers from "CRS".....don't we all.

* To those who don't know, spell check is a great tool....that way you won't send a text or Email with the wrong wordexample: Six is not Sex....Gary is not Scary....Long is not Dong....Wow!

* When wearing your mask in public and you have a beverage, remember to pull it down before taking a sip....you know who you are.

* And if you work on a school bus, please stay seated when the bus is moving.....Lisa LaDieu found out the hard way. She fell back in the aisle and landed on her back....She is fine....but the story got around that she flew through the air like Wonder Woman, backwards, over 5 seats, and landed on her head...that's a feat that even Wonder Woman couldn't have survived.

* Eddy, a member who lives in Tennessee expressed that they got a whopping 4 inches of snow and he couldn't get out his driveway....Now it's my understanding he drives a Toyota. If he owned a Chevy or a Ford, he wouldn't have had so much trouble.

* The Army/Navy game was something huh? It's my thought, maybe I'm crazy, but if the game had been played in water...then maybe Navy would have won.

* Fred Dexter dressed like Santa for the Salvation Army Kettle Drive this year. He was so totally convincing looking like Old Saint Nick with his big, real beard, that children were wondering why he wasn't at the North Pole getting ready for Christmas.

* Dale, Gary, Ron and Larry went for a ride in a C130 over Skaneateles Lake...."I think we are leaking oil", is not something I would want to hear in the air!

* and if someone out there knows a good barber, please let Jim Evener know...his facial hair is getting out of control....he is starting to look like a troll that lives under a bridge.

Please stay safe. Wear your mask, wash your hands, keep a safe distance, or just stay home. If anyone reading this needs an ear to listen to them, give us a call. We are here for you.....and let's hope that 2021 will bring us back to some normalcy. Happy New Year and God Bless.

Brain Teasers Who Uttered These Quotes?

1. "A date which will live in Infamy"!
2. "That's one small step for man... one giant leap for mankind"!
3. "Ask not what your country can do for you ... ask what you can do for your Country" !
4. "I am not a crook"!
5. "Beam me up Scotty"!
6. "Nip it"!!... "Nip it in the bud"!
7. "Festivus for the rest of us"!
8. What actor in a movie said "Shaken not stirred"!
9. Actor who said or name of the show "Hi Ho Silver away"!
10. Actor in a movie who said "I'll be back"!



11. Who announced on a TV show ...“Here's Johnny”!
12. In this TV series he often said “I see nothing, I hear nothing”!
13. “Let them eat cake”! (Answers on last page, Thank You Charlie for submitting these brain teasers)

CHAPTER INFORMATION

President	Gary Napieracz	315-730-7726
Vice-President	James Evener	315-283-3637
Treasurer	Harvey Baker	607-898-3507
Secretary	Mike Moran	607-539-7728
Directors	Dan Rose, Fran Moore, Ron Dexter, Mike Portzline, Carl Bullock, Tom Margrave, Paul Pagliaro, Dale VanBenschoten, Gene Barnes, Charles Harrington, Larry Housel, Ralph Moss	
CHAPTER CALENDAR		
March 2, 2021	1:00	Chapter Meeting
MEETINGS ARE HELD @ AMERICAN LEGION DRYDEN RD.		

Dryden Veterans Memorial Home (DVMH) CALENDAR:

Next Board meeting will be February 23, 2021 @ 5:30 PM

*****a full menu is available every day (closed Mondays)*****

The director for the Home is Michelle Morse; she can be contacted at 844-9900, or shelba3@hotmail.com.

January Calendar

WRITERS' FORUM

If you've read or written

Is there something you'd like to share in the Nam Express, please send it to gsmith1264@comcast.net or to 1264 Glatco Lodge Rd., Hanover, PA 17331, or call 717-698-1343.

STORIES & NEWS

To Your Health:

Do I need to Change My Medicare Plan Every Year?

Talk about pressure and confusion; your Medicare plan if you have one. Do you have to change your plan every year, not necessarily, (despite the bombardment of unsolicited mail and phone calls), but do review your plan's offerings during open enrollment? Medicare Advantage and Part D prescriptions drug plans may change drug coverage each year, and Advantage plans may also change medical visits and hospital stay copays, coinsurance, deductibles, and doctor and hospital networks, says David Lipschutz, associate director of the nonprofit Center for Medicare Advocacy. Need help? Get unbiased assistance at the inline Medicare Plan Finder (medicare.gov) or call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (shiptcenter.org)

Vietnam Medal of Honor Recipients

One or more Vietnam Medal of Honor recipients will be memorialized each month until all recipients have been acknowledged.



John James Kedenburg, Specialist Five, United States Army

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Sp5 Kedenburg, U.S. Army, Command and Control Detachment North, Forward Operating Base 2, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), distinguished himself while serving as advisor to a long-range reconnaissance team of South Vietnamese irregular troops. The team's mission was to conduct counter-guerrilla operations deep within enemy-held territory. Prior to reaching the day's objective, the team was attacked and encircled by a battalion-size North Vietnamese Army force. Sp5 Kedenburg assumed immediate command of the team which succeeded, after a fierce fight, in breaking out of the encirclement. As the team moved through thick jungle to a position from which it could be extracted by helicopter, Sp5 Kedenburg conducted a gallant rear guard fight against the pursuing enemy and called for tactical air support and rescue helicopters. His withering fire against the enemy permitted the team to reach a preselected landing zone with the loss of only 1 man, who was unaccounted for. Once in the landing zone, Sp5 Kedenburg deployed the team into a perimeter defense against the numerically superior enemy force. When tactical air support arrived, he skillfully directed air strikes against the enemy, suppressing their fire so that helicopters could hover over the area and drop slings to be used in the extraction of the team. After half of the team was extracted by helicopter, Sp5 Kedenburg and the remaining 3 members of the team harnessed themselves to the sling on a second hovering helicopter. Just as the helicopter was to

lift them out of the area, the South Vietnamese team member who had been unaccounted for after the initial encounter with the enemy appeared in the landing zone. Sp5c. Kedenburg unhesitatingly gave up his place in the sling to the man and directed the helicopter pilot to leave the area. He then continued to engage the enemy who were swarming into the landing zone, killing 6 enemy soldiers before he was overpowered. Sp5 Kedenburg's inspiring leadership, consummate courage and willing self-sacrifice permitted his small team to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy and escape almost certain annihilation. His actions reflect great credit upon himself and the U.S. Army

February 20, Gerri Smith
February 21, Gerald Gailor
February 21, Roger Karn
February 29, Larry Adams

Happy Birthday:

February 3, Dan Rose
February 6, Pat Hollingsworth
February 14, Paul Pagliaro
February 20, Bill Mayers

Brain Teaser Answers: 1. Franklin D. Roosevelt, 2. Neil Armstrong, 3. John F. Kennedy, 4. Richard Nixon, 5. Capt. Kirk – Star Trek., 6. Barney Fife – Andy Griffith Show, 7. Jerry Stiller - George's father - “Seinfeld” show, 8. James Bond - Sean Connery, 9. The Lone Ranger – Clayton Moore, 10. Arnold Schwarzenegger, 11. Ed McMahon -Johnny Carson “Tonight show”, 12. Sgt. Schultz - “Hogan's Heroes”, 13. Marie Antoinette

Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another]



Veterans in immediate crisis may call the Veterans Crisis Line at (800-273-8255 then press I, text 838255 or chat online at veteranocrisisline.net/get-help/chat. For more information on VA's mental program, visit (www.mentalhealth.va.gov)

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