

## Our Chapter ...

Over the last several years our chapter has sponsored the arrival and ceremony honoring America's Huey 091, the Vietnam era UH-1 helicopter which now resides in the Smithsonian's American History Museum in Washington D.C. A ceremony hosted by the Mayor Of Harrisburg Stephen Reed, and attended by the Governor and both Pennsylvania U.S. Senators, as well as many members of the Pennsylvania State Senate and House, greeted the arrival of the chopper.

We also hosted the Pennsylvania premier of the critically acclaimed made for TV documentary "In The Shadow Of The Blade" at the beautiful Whitaker Center in Harrisburg Pa. The event, for which a UH-1 Huey helicopter was placed on the street in front of the theater - thanks to the help of the Adjutant General of the Pennsylvania National Guard, Maj General Jessica Wright — drew hundreds that night.

It was our honor to provide the Grand Marshals for the largest Memorial Day Parade in Pennsylvania, the Annville Parade. Every year our chapter participates in this event and will continue to work with this fine group. In recent years we have created a new tradition of passing out thousands of small American flags along the way, in advance of the parade itself, something that the marchers have told us makes for a very inspiring sight as they pass by.

We are proud to host at least two luncheon parties for the patients at the Lebanon Pennsylvania Veterans Hospital. With the help of Kathleen Torchia and her Capital Opera Harrisburg singing company our own vocal group "Remember When," and other volunteer performers, we are able to provide entertainment to our inpatient veterans. We provide gifts to all the patients. We also provide free tickets to veterans and their children for any production of Capitol Opera Harrisburg.

Several years ago VVA 542 was chosen by the former Mayor Stephen R. Reed to organize the first Active Duty and Veterans division of the Harrisburg Holiday Parade . The start of the parade was signaled by a flyover of 4 UH 60 BlackHawk helicopters. With the help of the Pennsylvania National Guard we provided 2000 Christmas / Holiday cards which were sent to Pennsylvania guardsmen serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have worked with the Mayor each year since to put together the veterans division.

VVA 542 is the chapter which initiated the now nationwide movement to have the United States Army finally recognize the heroism of the brave men and women who fly medical evacuation helicopters in combat known as "Dustoff" by creating the new "Combat Aeromedic Badge". Due to our efforts legislation requiring this award has been included in the Defense Authorizaation Bill in the House, only to be stripped in conference. However, we keep fighting the noble fight, "because they earned it." On May 3rd 2005 we held a ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Wall in Washington D.C. where we placed the "Combat Aeromedic Badge", a badge designed by a Vietnam medic and funded by our chapter, at the base of each panel containing a name of a fallen member of Dustoff. We will continue this fight until our mission is complete. We invite you to visit our link to Dustoff Heroes to learn more on this effort.

We host dinners and nights out on the town for US Marine and PA Army National Guard units getting ready to deploy.

We are also proud of our vibrant and growing Associates Of The Vietnam Veterans Of America headed by Cathy Keister. The associates include the late Lt. Governor of Pennsylvania, the former Mayor of Harrisburg, members of the media, show business, and others from all walks of life who work with us in staging events for the Central Pennsylvania region, for the sole purpose of honoring veterans and bettering the community.

We especially invite the American Vietnamese community who were our gallant allies to join both our organizations! We were proud to fight by your side for a noble cause. You better than any have earned the right to be called Veterans Of The Vietnam War.

Every person can be a member of either our VVA or our Associates. We hope you will consider not only membership, but becoming active with us. We promise you will find it most rewarding.

***VVA Chapter 542 is an IRS recognized 501(c)(19) Organization.***