

VVA Chapter 1106

News and Announcements

Serving Veterans in South Metro Denver Area

January-February 2025 Issue



Inside this issue:

- Standing committees, p. 6
- Notes from the president
- Guest speakers, p. 9
- Membership, p. 10
- Meeting updates, pp. 2,3,9
- Special events, p. 7
- Honors and awards, pp. 3,4,6
- Letter to members, p. 7
- Member bios, p. 2,3,9,10



A great view

Mike Katich, Navy, and other chapter members enjoyed a panoramic view along with fun, fellowship and good food at Centennial Airport's Perfect Landing Restaurant on January 29. For group photo, see page 7.

When and Where we Meet

Chapter 1106 meets the first Saturday of every month at the South Metro Fire and Rescue Building, 9195 E Mineral Avenue, Centennial CO 80112, at 9:00 a.m.

The Chapter 1106 Board is responsible for the contents of this newsletter.

Newsletter Editor:

Kathy Kuss
 (706) 410-0124
 Email: kdkuss@gmail.com

Notes from the President

A warm and Happy New Year to all members and families! Welcome 2025. I am very optimistic that this will be a great year for our chapter. The chapter's board is planning meaningful membership meetings, events and outings that all can participate in and enjoy. We started the year with a well-attended January meeting. Member Cliff Lawson presented a fantastic slide show of his experiences in Viet Nam, serving as a Huey helicopter pilot. Thank you, Cliff.

Thank you to all who attend monthly meetings and to those who bring chairs to meetings. As we grow, we have run out of seating for attendees.

As mentioned in the past, the board is planning several fund raisers. Possibilities include a car show with Central Colorado Corvette Club and a charity golf tournament.

To make this chapter meaningful to all members, we need you, the individual member to step up and participate in chapter activities and functions. Participation in any small way contributes to the overall value you'll personally get out of this organization. And it helps the chapter. Included in this newsletter is a list of Standing Committees. Please review the list and see what committee you would like to participate in. We welcome all the help we can get. And, if you think there should be other committees, please let me know. Thank you.

As always, stay in touch with each other. Thank you for being part of this great organization.

Dave Lyons, President

January membership meeting highlights

Cliff Lawson details pilot experiences



Cliff Lawson with a Huey he flew in Vietnam.



Lawson telling of his service and life as a pilot.

Member Cliff Lawson spoke at the January meeting of his experiences as a Huey pilot in the First Air Cavalry in Vietnam. Lawson had an early interest in flying, soloing for the first time at age 16. Eight years later he was on a boat going to Vietnam. He entered the Army with 600 hours of flying time, which reduced his learning curve in military flight training. He told the story of his service as an officer from the formation of the 3rd and 17th Air Cavalry units from Fort Knox to his in-country missions in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968. He also emphasized the role of gunship air crews in teaching combined arms units how to use the Air Cavalry. Besides his heroic flying service, he also was a public information officer in Vietnam. His slide show featured pictures of aircraft and crews. After the military, Cliff had a 34-year career as a United Airlines pilot.

Cliff also provided a list of interesting books about Vietnam and modern warfare. They include: On Protracted War (Mao Tse Tung), Street Without Joy (Bernard Fall), A Bright Shining Lie (Neil Sheehan), Road to Disaster (Brian VanDeMark), The Best and the Brightest (David Halberstam), and Fire in the Lake (Francis Fitzgerald).



GUN PLATOON, C TROOP 3117 AIR CAVALRY
DIAN, VIETNAM OCTOBER 1968

COPYRIGHT NOTICE:

In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, any copyrighted material in this newsletter is distributed under fair use without profit or payment to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for nonprofit use and educational purposes only.

Daldry details his distinguished service as tech specialist



January member bio-speaker was Charles Daldry. Chuck, raised on a farm in upstate New York, entered the Air Force in 1967. After training for Air Force avionics, specifically on the F-4, he worked on AC-130 gunships. He served two tours in Thailand during the Vietnam War and was assigned to Kunsan AFB Korea. With his avionics and analysis experience, he worked on early computers. At an aircraft overhaul facility in Madrid, Spain,

he saved the military many thousands of dollars on fuel cells on F-4's. "I saved them a whole bunch of cash and they gave me a medal for it," he said. After leaving the Air Force, he returned to Denver and has been fixing clocks with a following that won't let him retire.

Keelan invites members to take Honor Flight



Also at the January meeting was Pat Keelan of the Rocky Mountain Honor Flight. Pat is a board member of that organization. Their goal is to fly every able and willing Veteran to Washington D.C. to visit the monuments and memorials dedicated to their service at no cost. If you have not been on an Honor Flight, go to their website

at <https://rockymountainhonorflight.org/> and sign up.

Memorial plaques honor deceased members



Also during the January meeting, these plaques containing names of 29 deceased chapter members were escorted by the Color Guard to a display table where members could honor those who "will never be forgotten."

Baker honored by Military Women’s Living Legends Program

The following FaceBook post describes a ceremony at St. Andrews retirement home in Aurora where chapter member USA Lt. Col. (Ret) Martha Baker was honored January 5 by Military Women's Memorial Living Legends Program. The post was made by Terri Clinton. Terri was our 2023 Holiday Lunch guest speaker.



The Living Legends program is an initiative that recognizes military women whose stories of service provide inspiration and example for all. The awardees are trailblazers who paved the way for many other women. Their service stories increase awareness of women’s contributions to America’s national defense. Since the American Revolution, three million women have served in or with the Armed Forces. For more on preserving military women’s stories, go to Military Women’s Memorial at womensmemorial.org



Besides being among the first Black women to join the Army in the early 1950s, Baker was the first Black woman to teach ROTC in Denver. She is pictured talking with MWM President Phyllis Wilson. Also honored along with Baker was USAF Col. (Ret.) Alberta Nelson.

FIREARM SAFETY

By John Vargas

We have heard it once or twice too often. A veteran, family member, friend, or someone we know committed suicide. Statistics still indicate that we are losing about 22 per day for veterans alone! My brother-in-law committed suicide a few years ago with a handgun. He was not a veteran; he was a retired NYC corrections officer with easy access to his weapon and ammo. Nearly half of all veterans own a firearm, and most veteran firearm owners go by these three words, Unloaded, Locked and Secured.

You can take simple steps to protect yourself and your family, particularly if you or others in the household are in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviors or violence. If you are worried about a friend or family member, ask them directly about suicide and encourage them to seek help. Talk about safe firearm storage and the possibility of temporarily storing firearms with a trusted friend, relative, or somewhere.

There are several effective ways to safely secure firearms, such as a Cable Lock (about \$10- \$50). A Lockbox (\$25-\$350) or a gun safe (\$200-\$2,500). **Several VA locations will be happy to give you Cable Lock for FREE. Also, check with your local Sheriff's Office for free gun locks. Visit www.nssf.org/safety.

We can all make a difference, just stay aware! The VVA/AVVA 1106 Buddy Calls are a way of staying in touch and showing concern.

Highlands Ranch Veterans Monument

(Not written but submitted by JA Vargas)

The story began in 2006 with a vision of people from the same community who were once strangers and became new friends united in a common cause (much like Lee White and Joe Plant's vision). After reading of the death of Army Staff Sergeant Christopher Falkel, the first Highlands Ranch resident killed in action, they wanted to pay tribute to Chris' sacrifice and those of fellow veterans --- as well as active military members.

Exactly one year after Chris Falkel's death, the Highlands Ranch Veterans Monument (HRVM) Committee and community leaders kicked off the HRVM fundraising program.

In 2007 the HR Metro District Board of Directors agreed to advance funding for the monument, up to \$140,000, so the monument construction could begin in Civic Green Park as the fundraising continued. The funding was repaid as the Dedication Tiles were sold and the fundraising reached its goal. On July 1, 2008, a groundbreaking event took place.

On July 1, 2009, the monument was dedicated. Today the monument serves as a place people of all ages can learn about their friends' and family members' sacrifices and service to our nation with a visit to a monument dedicated to sharing that history. VVA Chapter 1106 currently has more than one dozen of our members/heroes' tiles prominently on display.

The HR Veterans Monument *hrvets.org 9292 S. Ridgeline Blvd, HR CO 80125
(Located just outside the HR Library and Civic Green Park)



***Visit hrvets.org for names, pictures, and bios or to order a tile for a loved one!**

VVA Chapter 1106 Standing Committees

Updated 02-08-2025

Committee Name	Chairperson(s)/ Leader	Purpose	When and Where Meet	Members; Back-Ups
Membership Committee	Lee White	New member recruitment, process membership applications, maintain member contact	Continually active	
Speakers Bureau	Tom Werzyn	Schedule monthly meeting speakers; educate students on the Vietnam War; school outreaches	During School Sessions	Dave Lyons
Meeting Refreshments	Walt Leuci	Provide monthly meeting refreshments (coffee, water, donuts)	At monthly meetings	Dave Lyons
Promotional Items Committee	Joe and Ita Dempsey	Purchase and manage the Chapter's promotional-items for sale at meetings	At monthly meetings	Leann Stelzer,
Event Committee	Joe Robinson	Coordinate Chapter events and trips;	Generally, as needed	As needed
Social Committee	Sally Eaves	Identify and schedule Chapter social events and activities (Picnic, Holiday Lunch)	As needed for events	Dave Lyons, John Vargas, Joe Plant, Litta Plant-Shaper
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Kuss	Publish Chapter Newsletter	Continuously active	
Web Master	VACANT	Maintain the Chapter's web site	As needed	
Veterans Emergency Assistance Program	Joe Plant	Work with HUD-VASH to identify veterans in need by providing urgently needed resources	Continuously active	Dave Lyons
Donation Approval Committee	Dave Lyons	Review all request for Chapter donations; research proposed recipient organizations	As Needed	Chapter Treasurer, Bob Brown
Grants and Fundraising	Milt Omoto	Seek external sources of funds for Chapter operations; develop FY Chapter budget	As Needed	
Scholarship Program	Lou Grounds	Establish scholarship requirements, contact schools, promote, qualify and award scholarships to recipients	Meetings announced	Wayne Buser, Spencer Mamber and Billy Pine
Memorial Committee	John Vargas	Coordinate memorial events for deceased Chapter members and their family, provide assistance to surviving spouse on veteran benefits with the VA	When required	Joe Plant, Lee White, Milt Omoto
Sergeant at Arms	Dan Green	Perform POW/MIA Chair Presentation at events	Membership Meetings	Backup as needed
Chapter Communications	Jack Hunter	Provide and manage meeting audio and on-line capability; maintain current member email	Continuously active	Jim Williams, Litta Plant-Schaper, Alex Holmes
Chapter Color Guard	Ron Smith, Dan Green, Joint Command Sergeants	Provide color guard service at events and when requested	As needed and Announced	Color Bearers: Dale Creason, Tony Nickerson, Clarence Rebolledo, David Dawson, Rockie Cuppari, Harry Montgomery, John Sheadel, Chuck Perkins, Mike Tarby, Brad Kuss

02/08/2025



Shadow Box

This issue's honored veteran's shadow box comes from member Richard Lee Lewis.

We would like to include a photo of a member's military shadow box in each issue of the newsletter. If you would like to share a photo of your shadow box, please email the photo to newsletter editor Kathy Kuss at

kdkuss@gmail.com



Spreading the good news

Chapter 1106 members Mike Kumnick, Dave Lyons and Lee White manned an information table recently at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center. The three shared information about ways the Vietnam Veterans of America can help veterans. To obtain packets to share with prospective VVA members, see Lee White, membership chairman.

January Social



Members of Chapter 1106 enjoyed fellowship and fine dining at the popular Perfect Landing Restaurant at Centennial Airport on Wednesday, January 29.

Letter to Chapter 1106

Hello Tom (and all),

Thank you so much for having us on Saturday (Feb. 1). It was a pleasure to get to meet so many wonderful veterans and families, and it was such a kind and welcoming community!

Please feel free to reach back out to me with any questions at all, as we have a ton of resources for additional legal services as well.

Again, we greatly appreciate the opportunity, and please keep in touch!

Warmly,

Alice Linnea Hansen, J.D., Staff Attorney, Director of Outreach

Rocky Mountain Veterans Advocacy Project

T: 720-253-0963 | F: 720-874-5436

VVA Chapter 1106 Annual Calendar of Events 2025

Date of Issue: February 3, 2025

Date	Event	Location
January 2025		
January 4 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
January 25 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
February 2025		
February 1 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting (second Saturday)	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
February 22 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	Live at President Dave's House
March 2025		
March 1 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
March 8 (Saturday)	Colorado State Council Meeting	Castle Pines Library
March 22 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
March 29 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting (this is April's meeting)	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
March 29 (Saturday)	Vietnam Veterans Day (observed)	Events at Various Locations
April 2025		
NOTE	April's Membership meeting moved to March 29	
April 26 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
May 2025		
May 3 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
May 24 (Saturday)	Memorial Day weekend Poppy Drive (confirmed)	Three King Soopers Locations
May 31 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
June 2025		
June 7 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
June 14 (Saturday)	Colorado State Council Meeting	Castle Pines Library
June 28 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
July 2025		
July 4 (Thursday)	Chapter Participation in Fourth of July Parade	Highlands Ranch
July 5 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
July 26 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
August 2025		
August 2 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
August 5 to 9	VVA National 2025 Convention	New Orleans, LA 70130
August 16 (Saturday)	Chapter Family Summer Picnic	Falcon Park, Highlands Ranch
August 30 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
September 2025		
September 6 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
September 27 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
October 2025		
October 4 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
October 11 (Saturday)	Colorado State Council Meeting	Castle Pines Library
October 25 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
November 2025		
November 1 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
November 8 (Saturday)	Veterans Day weekend Poppy Drive (tentative)	TBD
November 11 (Tuesday)	Veterans Day	Events at Various Locations
November 29 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line
December 2025		
December 6 (Saturday)	Monthly Chapter Meeting	South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ
December 13 (Saturday)	Chapter Holiday Luncheon and Festivities	Maggiano's Italian Restaurant
December 27 (Saturday)	Chapter Board of Directors Meeting	On-Line

February chapter meeting highlights



Lower cost legal help available in Denver

Guest speakers at the February chapter meeting Brad Cummings and Alice Hansen spoke about the on-going programs at The Rocky Mountain Veterans Advocacy Project. The RMVAP provides legal representation for appeals to the VA Regional Office and Board of Veterans Appeals, and assistance in filing initial benefits claims.

They also provide support to veterans for a variety of VA benefits, discharge upgrades, indigenous people's issues, family law, and Trusts & Estates. The RMVAP primarily gets funded through donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations

who support their mission. Results statistics show that the Advocacy Project has better results than filing with a veterans service officer or by oneself, while costing less than regular lawyer fees, Cummings said. Some services are free.

Brad's presentation is available to chapter members. You can contact them at: (720) 253-0963 or by email at clientservices@rmvap.org. They are located at 2170 S Parker Rd Ste 450, Denver, CO

Bio Speaker

Mike Cornnick went from Air Force avionics to steam locomotives



As part of the monthly membership bio, Mike Cornnick (US Air Force) presented his experiences during his childhood in Illinois, college studies in automotive engineering, military service, and civilian life. Mike was an avionics specialist in the Air Force during his 10.5 years of active duty.

He has also been a mechanic and carpenter and has worked in oil fields and driven semi-trucks – “anything to feed the family and take care of the kids.” His children all graduated college debt-free, he said.

He is now a volunteer with an organization in Strasburg, Colorado that builds old locomotives and trains.

Mike said receiving his Quilt of Valor recently was the icing on the cake for his year.



Kuss brings journalism experience to newsletter

Kathy Kuss, who became editor of the chapter newsletter last August, brings more than 30 years of experience as a journalist and English teacher to the position. Here are some facts about her:

Native of: Donaldsonville, Louisiana

Graduate of: Nicholls State University in Louisiana (bachelor's in English education), North Georgia College (master's in English education) and University of Georgia (specialist degree in gifted education).

Journalism experience: 17 years as reporter and editor at daily and weekly newspapers and radio stations.

Education experience: 18 years as middle and high school English teacher.

Family: Married to chapter member Bradley Kuss, who served on USS Midway 1972-1974 in Vietnam. Four children and nine grandchildren.

Favorite activities: Book club, tennis, spoiling grandchildren, traveling in Europe, genealogy, cooking, spending time with family and friends.

Robinson reports on events planned

Events coordinator Joe Robinson said a golf tournament is being planned for September at Heather Gardens Golf Course in Aurora. Volunteers are needed to work /play at this fund-raising event.

Joe said he is also planning a visit to Dragon Man Museum.

He also said veterans' PTSD groups are planning a march around the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care Center March 29 to mark the end of the Vietnam War.

VVA Chapter 1106 Membership

Welcome New Members

VVA

Sam Fisher - Army
Kenneth Flesner - Army
Don Furnish - Navy
Juan Martinez - Army
Ronald J. Smith - Air Force
James Weasels - Army

AVVA

Laurie J. Kuntz
Teddy Kuntz
Patricia Sheadel

VVA Members	228
AVVA	44
Total:	272

Heroes Hall planned

Member Wayne Buser reported at the February meeting that Douglas County commissioners approved a \$400,000 contract to DLH Architects to design Heroes Hall in Castle Rock. The 14,000-square-foot facility will be a gathering place for veterans where they can also find support services. It will include event space, a conference center and a 7,000-square-foot basement. Private donations are being sought for the \$15 million building, which will be located on 2.5 acres at the Douglas County Fairgrounds.

More upcoming events:

Veterans panel April 17: Member Jean Jaffe announced that a panel of women veterans will speak about their military experiences in health care on April 17 at 6:30 pm at American Legion Post 1, Yale Ave. and I-25.

March social: The next social will be 11-12:30 on Wednesday, March 19, at Cheddar’s Casual Café, 15775 E Briarwood Circle (Arapahoe at Parker Rd.), Aurora. Reservations are capped at 25, so RSVP to Lee White by Friday, March 7. Email: flyboy51@q.com Cell phone: 303-519-2252.



Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 1106

Chapter Scholarships 2025

VVA Chapter 1106 has historically awarded \$2,000 scholarships to graduating seniors. The requirements include being a child or grandchild of an active military or military veteran, residing in Arapahoe, Douglas or Elbert counties and accepted into an accredited college, trade or technical school.



In addition, each applicant is required to write a 800 word typed essay about the Vietnam War. Specific requirements are on the Chapter’s website.

We plan again to provide these scholarships to deserving students as a way to continue knowledge of the Vietnam War and for the Chapter’s legacy.

We are seeking donations to support this program. Here are the donation tiers you may consider. All donors will be listed on the scholarship donor’s honor roll.

- Memorial Level:** \$2,000
A scholarship is named after the person you would like honored or memorialized
- Gold Level:** \$1,000
- Silver Level:** \$500
- Bronze Level:** Any amount up to \$499

Please consider giving. You can give or send your check to the Chapter’s Treasurer. Bob Brown (mail address: 4435 W Antelope Run Ct, Castle Rock, CO 80109-2862)

All donations are fully tax deductible to the extent of the law.

Thank you for your support!



We meet the first Saturday of every month at 9:00AM: South Metro Fire & Rescue Building, 9195 E. Mineral Ave., Centennial, CO 80112
Visit Us at: www.vva1106.org