

VVA Chapter 1106

News and Announcements

Serving Veterans in South Metro Denver Area

May-June 2025 Issue



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When and Where we Meet

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



Chapter 1106 members visited Dragonman's Military Museum in Colorado Springs on June 18. See details and more photos from the museum visit on pages 15 and 16.

Notes from the President

As we approach summer, our chapter has planned fun activities for members and family. We started in June with a bus trip to the Dragoman's Military Museum in Colorado Springs. It was a chance for members, spouses and friends to be together and enjoy a day at the museum. A charter bus picked us up at the Safeway in Castle Rock. Breakfast burritos for the bus ride were provided. It was a great outing.

Our summer family picnic is scheduled for Saturday, August 16, 2025, at Falcon Park in Highlands Ranch. The chapter will provide hamburgers, brats, and hot dogs with all the fixings. Members bring a dish to share. This year's theme is "Honoring the Military."

We are participating in the community Fourth of July parade in Highlands Ranch July 4. Our Color Guard will lead us. The Central Colorado Corvette Club will follow us in their cars with their "Vettes for Vets" program. They will provide a ride in one of their beautiful cars to any member who prefers not to walk in the parade. I encourage you to come and participate in the parade. The community needs to see us!

I want to highlight the article in this newsletter titled "What it Takes to Run a Meeting." There are many members who take the time and effort to plan, prepare, set-up and run each monthly membership meeting. Thank you to all who volunteer their time and talents to make our meetings meaningful and run smoothly.

To everyone, thank you for being part of this great organization. Please continue to stay in touch with each other. And I am always open to your suggestions and ideas for the chapter.

Dave Lyons, President



The future home of Heroes Hall

There's no greater gift we can give to our Veterans than to provide a place for fellowship, community and connection. Commissioner George Teal and members of the Heroes Hall Foundation joined recently to unveil signage at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Castle Rock, where the facility will soon take shape.

Heroes Hall will be funded primarily through private donations. Visit the Heroes Hall Foundation webpage to learn how you can help our nation's heroes. Wayne Buser, our VVA 1106 member, is very active with the Heroes Hall memorial to Veterans. He is pictured at right front.

Vets enjoy monthly social at Alpha Charlie's Tavern



Lee White continues his successful monthly luncheons. Even with a few last-minute cancellations, on Wednesday, May 18, we met at Alpha Charlie's **Tavern** in Centennial, and had a lively group of 18. We were greeted and escorted to our reserved large table. The service was perfect and the constant chatter by 18 seasoned Nam Vets made the time even more memorable. Oh, the stories that were told! When each individual bill arrived, John and Brenda House, owners, were extremely generous with their deep military discounts. ***Looking forward to Lee's next luncheon site.***



Corvette show features hot BBQ, cool cars, Jr. ROTC

On a beautiful Colorado spring day, the South Metro Fire and Rescue HQ parking lot was again filled with Corvettes from the Central Colorado Corvette Club.

In addition to looking at these wonderful cars, members were invited for a ride.

We again had the 2SaltySearges' food truck that provided great foods from the grill.

Members of the local Jr. ROTC were special guests at the event.



Our guest speakers at the May meeting were Keith Bennett and Eric Pack from the Central Colorado Corvette Club. They gave us an update on their club's activities, future shows and partnering opportunities with our chapter for fundraising.

Vietnam Veterans remembered at 50th anniversary event



Dignitaries at the Vietnam Wall in Washington DC.

The Vietnam Veterans of America conducted a Vietnam War Remembrance and Honor Event at the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall) on April 26, 2025, in Washington DC. **Chapter President Dave Lyons was in attendance** as well as VVA National officials, State Council officers and Region Directors. The event commemorated the 50th year anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. See more on the event, next page.



The Armed Forces Color Guard presented the colors. Wreaths honored those from every state and Puerto Rico who perished in service to their country.



President Dave visits with Medal of Honor Awardee

While Chapter 1106 President Dave Lyons was at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Remembrance and Honor Event in Washington DC, he was fortunate to meet Medal of Honor recipient Paris Davis. Davis, born May 13, 1939, is a retired United States Army officer who received the Medal of Honor on March 3, 2023, for his actions on June 18, 1965 during the Vietnam War. He was twice previously nominated for the Medal of Honor, but both times the paperwork relating to his nomination “disappeared.” Davis, then a captain with the 5th Special Forces Group, was instead awarded the Silver Star. It has been suggested that racism was a factor, given that Davis is African-American. In November 2022 the nomination was finally approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Chairman Mark Milley and the Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin. President Joe Biden presented the Medal of Honor to Davis on March 3, 2023, in a ceremony at the White House.



Medal of Honor recipient Paris Davis and Chapter President Dave Lyons.



High school students pledge allegiance to the flag at the 50th anniversary memorial event.

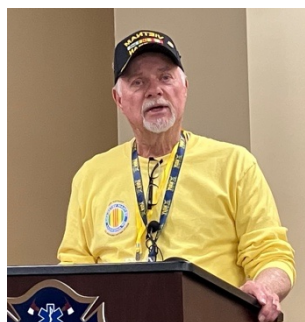
Members bios

Nickerson: from battalion clerk to Veterans advocate

Our monthly member bio speaker for May was Tony Nickerson, who served in the US Army in Vietnam. After joining the Army and attending basic training at Ft. Bliss TX, he became company clerk and then battalion clerk. He said he cut his own orders and sent himself to Germany, but he ended up being sent to Vietnam, where he had on-the-job training in the jungles. After being smacked with mortar and sent to the MASH unit and then to Okinawa for surgery, he went to Ft. Lewis, WA. There he interviewed soldiers for Stars and Stripes Radio and sent 5-minute tapes to their hometowns.

After his military service, he worked on classified programs for Martin Marietta before becoming a police officer in Cherry Hills Village, where he developed the K-9 program and enrolled in the two-man pistol team. He was later selected by Denver for their four-man pistol team. "I was beating half their members," he said. He trained police dogs in Dillon and Silverthorn and in the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Department dog program.

After membership in the DAV and VFW, including as commander, he talked to Lee White about the VVA and became an advocate for Vietnam Veterans. He was a good friend of the late chapter member Patti Ehline. He is past president of the Colorado VVA State Council and was instrumental in starting VVA Chapter 1153 in Alamosa.



Rhodus: From Marine sergeant to railroad cop, still cruising along

Dave Rhodus, Vietnam era Marine sergeant, shared his varied career at June's chapter meeting. After boot camp at Camp Pendleton, California, Dave was assigned to NAS Twin Cities in Minneapolis. There he met Linda, his wife of 59 years. After two years, he was sent to work on F4 Phantoms in Chu Lai, Vietnam. After making sergeant and mustering out at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro in California, he entered the construction field, building homes and apartments. After two and half years, he became a police officer in Ohio, where he served for 10 years. One of the highlights of his time as an officer was when he delivered a baby while on duty. He responded to a maternity call that came over the police radio early one morning. "Twenty to 30 minutes later I delivered a baby," he said. He took his wife to the hospital to see the baby and meet the mother, with whom he had gone to school. After hearing the birth story, Dave's 7-year-old son Scott asked if the baby was a boy or girl. When told it was a boy, he said. "Aw, I wanted a sister."

Last year Dave faced the loss of his beloved son Scott, who was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident. "I miss him every minute of every day," he said.

In Colorado, Dave has worked as a railroad special agent and engineer and as a stockbroker. Since retiring from the railroad, he and Linda have enjoyed 10 cruises.

Memorial Day 2025

A group of Chapter 1106 members honored our fallen military heroes by attending the Highlands Ranch Memorial Day service on May 26. The event was led by Andy Jones, retired US Navy Veteran. It was a well-attended event and concluded before the rain started.



Happy Birthday Army, Navy and Marine Corps

This year the US Army, Navy and Marine Corps are celebrating their 250th birthdays.

The United States Army, the oldest service branch in the U.S. military, originated from the Continental

Army established on June 14, 1775. This occurred more than a year before the Declaration of Independence, during the American Revolutionary War.

The United States Navy officially began on October 13, 1775, when the Continental Congress authorized the purchase of two vessels to be armed and deployed against British supply ships. This decision is considered the founding moment of the Continental Navy, which later evolved into the U.S. Navy.

The U.S. Marine Corps began as the Continental Marines during the American Revolutionary War. On November 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress resolved to raise two battalions of Marines for service as landing forces for the Continental Navy. This date is now celebrated as the U.S. Marine Corps' birthday. **You can purchase USPS Forever stamps to celebrate.**

25 Cherry Creek graduate inductees honored

About a dozen members of VVA Chapter 1106 attended the recent induction ceremony for 25 graduating seniors at the Cherry Creek Innovations Campus. Brig. General Jeremiah Tucker of the US Space Command spoke, challenging the inductees to be honorable, humble, teachable, and confident. General Tucker also administered the Oath of Serving to the inductees.

Our VVA 1106 Color Guard presented and posted the colors at the opening of the ceremony. At least three of the inductees have already been accepted at one of our Service Academies.

Veterans and those active in service were recognized and honored during the moving ceremony.



Chapter membership as of June 16, 2025

New members:

Charles (Chuck) E. Ellis NAVY
Steve Holt NAVY
Margaret (Marti) Crockett NAVY
Paul Lilja ARMY
Paul Faber ARMY
Robert Ferguson ARMY (Transfer from Chapter 49, NY)
William (Bill) Andresen ARMY
Antonio Vasquez ARMY

New AVVA member:

Sharon Wood (Wife of Lew Wood)

VVA - 243; AVVA - 42; TOTAL Chapter membership: 285

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

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Veterans receive Quilts of Valor made with love

Alycia Carmen of Quilts of Valor Colorado presented beautiful quilts to 11 members of Chapter 1106 at June's membership meeting, telling recipients the quilts are "meant to be a hug for you anytime you need it."

Outlining the process for producing the quilts, Alycia said 30 people sew once a month, including 12 machine quilters. "We all have our roles to play in bringing our love to the quilts we give to you," she said. "Our desire and mission with Quilts of Valor is to cover all Service Members and Veterans touched by war with a comforting and healing quilt."

The quilts take six months to a year to complete, including choosing fabrics, cutting and sewing to make tops, machine quilting, and binding.

Each person who works on the quilts "wants to offer you a thank you for your service, a thank you for protecting our country," Carmen said.



Receiving quilts were:
Brad Kuss, Don Furnish,
Jim Thompson, Larry
Majors, Tony Croce, Art
Schneider, Lew Wood,
Gary Weston, Gary
Nelson, Charles Daldry,
Ken Flesner, and David
Yates.



Colorado Public Radio Interviews Dave Lyons



Colorado Public Radio (CPR) recently interviewed President Dave Lyons for a broadcast story on veterans with PTSD. The story is part of “The Trip”, a CPR News series on Colorado’s new psychedelic movement (NOTE: No, President Dave does not take psychedelic drugs!).

The story also interviews Matthew Butler, a US Army veteran who was deployed six times to Iraq and Afghanistan (he is a retired Army Colonel now living in Utah). Dave and Matt were asked about their PTSD and how they cope with it. “Their two journeys illustrate why an increasing number of veterans are looking for solutions to their PTSD outside of federally legal medicines and why the VA itself is considering the possibility of psychedelics.”

The link to the story is here:

<https://www.cpr.org/2025/05/27/can-psilocybin-and-psychedelics-help-veterans-with-ptsd/>

You can also find the story at [cpr.org](https://www.cpr.org)

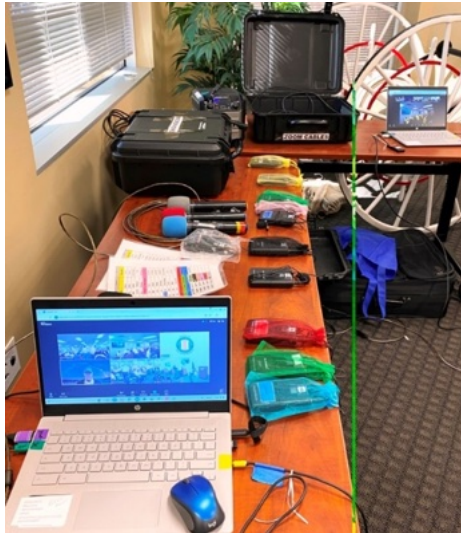
Disclaimer: VVA Chapter 1106 does not provide medical advice nor promote the use of psychedelics.

What it Takes to Run a Chapter Meeting

Many members are not aware of what it takes to prepare for and run a monthly Chapter membership meeting. There are many dedicated members who contribute their time, effort and talents to make this happen. Here are just some of the activities that must take place to have a successful and enjoyable meeting.

Set-up

The Hunters (Jack and Claudia) arrive at 6 a.m. to set up the sound system. Jack neatly organizes the



microphones, computers and video cameras. Then, he and Jim Williams (our meeting Zoom host) test everything to ensure that everyone in the room and those attending on-line can see and hear what's going on. A volunteer mans the audio console. And by the way, Claudia rearranges the chairs to ensure that those who bring their own chairs have a place to sit.

Our faithful member Walt Leuci also arrives early to set up the coffee table. He stops by Chick-fil-A and picks up the coffee on his way to the meeting. He sets everything up early, including cups, covers, napkins and cold water and even makes decaf coffee in his own pot.



Setting up the information tables.

President Dave transports the bins that contain



items for the information tables. Member Tom Werzyn always helps organize everything.

Dave also brings the donuts and cookies!

Continued, next page



What it Takes to Run a Chapter Meeting (Continued from page 11)



Promotional items

The Dempseys (Joe and Ida) purchase Chapter 1106 promotional items for sale.

Leann Stelzer is always willing to work on the promotional items table at meetings and help members purchase what they want.

Sign-in

Lee White mans the sign-in and name tag table and welcomes members and guests. (Jack keeps the sign-in sheets updated and provides them for each meeting). Ron Smith is always there to manage the 50-50 Raffle and your member money!



Setting up the Colors

At left, Dan Green arrives early to set-up the Colors.

At right, your hard-working chapter board members during the meeting.

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What it Takes to Run a Chapter Meeting (Continued from page 12)



Maintaining the picture board

Jack also maintains the member picture board.

Claudia takes members' pictures after each meeting in the hallway. (Please get yours taken if you don't see it on the board).

Clean-up

Finally, the room needs to be cleaned and all trash disposed of.

At right, chapter treasurer Bob Brown helps to clean up.



Thank you, Kingsberrys!

The Rev. Joseph Plant recently presented a Chapter 1106 Certificate of Appreciation to John and Candy Kingsberry, who collected 200 pounds of food and provided \$300 in gift cards to feed and clothe two veterans and their families. The families had just gotten off the street, thanks to donations from Chapter 1106 for rent and utilities.



Chapter Calendar of Events

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 20 (Saturday)	Chapter Participation in the Scotsman Car Show	Rampart Plaza Centennial
September 20 (Saturday)	Cherry Creek School District Veterans Celebration	Legacy Stadium, Aurora
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

Meeting Notes

Poppy Drive: A big thank you to all who participated in our successful recent poppy drive.

To donate items: If you have items you want to donate to the Vietnam Veterans, go online to **pickupplease.org** to schedule a time for your items to be picked up.

King Soopers Community Rewards helps vets: To sign up for the program that donates a portion of your purchases to Vietnam Veterans of America, sign up at <https://www.kingsoopers.com/i/community/community-rewards>

July 4 Parade: Chapter 1106 members are invited to participate in the Highlands Ranch July 4 parade from 8:45 to 10 a.m. Friday, July 4, beginning at 9285 Hepburn St. in Highlands Ranch.

Summer picnic: Helpers and sides and desserts are needed for the summer picnic on Saturday, August 16, at Falcon Park, Highlands Ranch.



Chapter 1106 members visit Dragonman's Museum

Thousands of military uniforms, weapons and flags from countries involved in U.S. wars were on display at the Dragonman's Museum in Colorado Springs, toured June 18 by about 20 members of Vietnam Veterans Chapter 1106.

The 78,000-square-foot museum houses realistic dioramas of MASH tents and other military operations. The 1,500 mannequins are outfitted in uniforms from wars dating to the Revolutionary War. Items from the Civil War and World Wars I and II were showcased as well. Also depicted were wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Dragonman, 79-year-old Mel Bernstein, said he spent \$14 million over 35 years collecting items in the museum from all over the world. "I did the whole thing by myself," he said.

In addition to the military museum. The complex contains a 1950s area featuring Elvis and memorabilia from Bernstein's youth, and an area containing 66 hot rods.

The complex includes other activities: paint ball, motocross, gun rentals and sales, and a shooting range.



Chapter 1106 members tour the Iraq War area in Dragonman's Museum. See more photos, next page.



At left, Dragonman shows a photo from the Pearl Harbor attack. At right, chapter Vice President Milt Omoto with an Army tank.



Above, a rare weaponized belt buckle worn by Nazi soldiers in WW II. At right, US flags from various eras.