

The WARRIOR

VVA San Jacinto Chapter 343 Newsletter

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ARMY

NAVY

MARINES

AIR FORCE

COAST GUARD

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Battleship Texas Centennial Celebration



Credit: Courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife

by KHOU.com staff

HOUSTON – The Battleship Texas will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its commissioning in March with a reunion of its final crew and a public festival at the San Jacinto Battleground State Historical Site. The Battleship Texas Foundation, working in

partnership with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, is organizing the two events with the reunion being held on March 12 and the festival on March 15. Both events are meant honor the Battleship Texas, her history and pay tribute to the surviving crew members, who proudly served on the ship during World War II.

Commissioned on March 12, 1914, the Battleship Texas served in both world wars and is the last remaining dreadnought, or big-gun battleship. In 1948, the Battleship Texas became the first battleship memorial museum in the United States. The Battleship Texas was part of many firsts including the first U.S. battleship to launch an airplane and

to house anti-aircraft guns. The battleship was awarded five Battle Stars during World War II. On March 12, a private Centennial Ceremony honoring the returning World War II crew members will be held on the decks of the Battleship Texas at 10:30 a.m. followed by a reunion luncheon. Commemorating the actual 100th anniversary of the ship's commissioning on March 12, 1914, the ceremony will recognize the crew members with a special tribute and medal presentation, military fanfare and a keynote speaker.

The festivities will continue on March 15 with a public, family-friendly festival featuring Robert Earl Keen's "A Texas Uprising" at the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site adjacent to the ship. "The Battleship Texas is an enduring symbol of strength and we want to celebrate her service and honor the men who served and risked their lives for our freedom," said Bruce Bramlett, executive director of the Battleship Texas Foundation. "Throwing the Texas a 100th commissioning celebration is the least we can do and we know it will be an incredible and memorable day for former crew members, our local community and for our state. The community has been very supportive of the celebrations and we have received generous sponsorships from multiple corporations including HEB, Exxon, Centerpoint, Patriot Bank, Vopak and many local municipalities." The Centennial Celebration will take place regardless of weather conditions. Pre-sale tickets are available now for \$14 at battleshiptexas.org through the day of the festival or at the gate for \$20. Children 12 and under are free. Discounted prices are available for veterans, \$8 pre-sale and \$15 at the gate. VIP ship event tickets are also available for purchase. All proceeds raised from the Centennial Celebration will go toward preserving the ship for future generations.



Texas Frog Fest.....

March 8-9, 2014 at Crystal Beach, TX:

The Texas Frog Fest is a joint effort between Brint Construction, Nutty Jerry's, and the local Bolivar Peninsula community to provide a weekend long entertainment venue showcasing local and national artists for the benefit of the Lone Survivor Foundation's Crystal Beach

retreat facility. The goal is for the Texas Frog Fest to become an annual event through which funds can be raised to maintain the Lone Survivor Retreat and help offset the costs of conducting the retreats that will be held there. Through the generosity of our volunteers and sponsors, the first annual Texas Frog Fest is shaping up to be an event to remember. This two day venue will have great musical entertainment, food and drink on site and booths set up to learn more about the Lone Survivor Foundation and the Crystal Beach Facility. There are one day and two day general admission tickets available for purchase now at a discounted rate at <http://www.nuttyjerrys.com/>. Tickets can also be purchased at the gate the day of the event for full price. There are also a limited number of VIP tickets, small tents, and VIP tents available for rent by the day. VIP tickets and tents can be reserved ahead of time by calling Denise Lange at 409-791-4131. Patrons of the festival will have the opportunity to purchase Texas Frog Fest and Lone Survivor Foundation items on site as well as participate in a live raffle and silent auction. All of the proceeds from this event go directly to the Lone Survivor Foundation for the purposes of constructing the Crystal Beach retreat. Through your attendance at the Texas Frog Fest you will be supporting our soldiers, and their families, as they learn to cope with effects that combat has had on their minds and bodies.



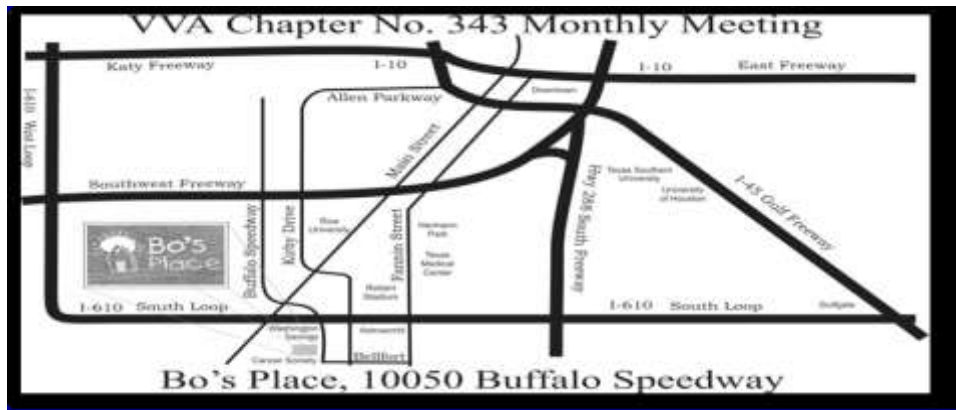
The WARRIOR is published monthly by Vietnam Veterans of America San Jacinto Chapter No. 343, Inc. The content of this newsletter is solely the responsibility of the Editor. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Chapter, its Officers, Directors, Membership or Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. Address correspondence and changes of address to: VVA Chapter No. 343, C/O Editor Bill Meeks, Jr., P.O. Box 310306, Houston, Texas 77231.

Chapter Annual Meeting 2nd Notice



Well it's almost that time again, the "**Chapter Elections**" are just around the corner, everyone should be ready to mark your ballots and elect our chapter leadership for the next year. The membership of VVA Chapter # 343 will hold their "**Annual Meeting**" at Bo's Place at 7:30 PM on **April 11, 2014** and pizza/soft drinks will be provided at the meeting. If you are interested in running for one of these positions of leadership for the chapter or you wish to be a VVA State Council delegate, please contact Chan Sharpe (713) 723-0231 or Bill Meeks, Jr. (281) 353-6420 for further information. *Chapter Election Committee*

**Get Involved Today...By Attending the VVA Chapter No. 343's March 14th Meeting on Friday Night
7:30 PM at Bo's Place.....**



Good Members of VVA Chapter 343:

Our standing with the Randall's Good Neighbor Program has been reinstated, making us available as a charity to receive cash rewards. That is some really good news and hopefully will have a positive effect on our chapter's bank account. Remember that these cash rewards are based on shoppers spending money at Randalls and having our chapter pre-establish to be a recipient of them.

To do that, what we need from each of our members is to do the following:

1. check your personal Randalls account and ensure that 1610 (Chapter 343's GNP #) is setup.
2. in 1610 is not setup as a charity on your Randalls card, fill out the attached form and take to your nearest Randalls store and turn in at the Services desk. **Stephen Brady**



VVA Texas State Council Meeting - April 4 – 6, 2014

Shilo Inn Suites Hotel - 3701 South W.S. Young Drive

Killeen, Texas 76542 - Phone (254) 699-0999 - www.shiloinns.com

Host VVA Fort Hood Area Chapter 1000

Here is an update on those who have, as of this mailing filed letters of intent to run for positions in the VVA Texas State Council (TSC):

Texas State Council Candidates For Office:

President: Luther Newberry

Vice President: Robert Rangel; Buddy Farina; and Kerwin Stone

Secretary: Stephen Brady

Treasurer: Jim Boyd; and Arturo Gonzales

Remember, there is PLENTY of time left in which to submit letters of intent (or to withdraw them) to Greg Beck or to me (any that I receive will be forwarded on to Greg Beck, the Elections Chair). However, there is a DEADLINE of WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26 for submissions, IF YOU WANT YOUR NAME ON THE PREPRINTED BALLOTS.

In order for your name to appear on the preprinted ballot as a candidate for a position as an officer on the Texas State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America at the biannual elections at our April 5, 2014 meeting in Killeen, you must send in advance a Letter of Intent (or email) plus a signed SF-180 form to Greg. You do NOT have to be a member of a chapter in order to run for an office. Current TSC Vice President Don Kennedy has indicated that he will NOT be running for re-election, and TSC Treasurer Jim Boyd announced at the TSC meeting in San Antonio in October that he WILL be running for re-election.

For your information, the TSC Bylaws state that all candidates seeking office MUST be in attendance at the TSC meeting at the time of the election. Candidates from the floor will be accepted, provided that PRIOR to the elections, the candidate submits a signed SF-180 and a copy of his/her DD214. Any new officers assume those roles at the close of the meeting at which they were elected.

In addition, certain parts of the VVA National Constitution dealing with State Council elections, and with duties of State Council officers, should be reviewed by anyone thinking about running for office. Go to the VVA National web site at www.vva.org and (1) click on the tab for Home, and then click on Strategic Documents, and then click on VVA National Constitution, and review Article II, and (2) click on the tab for Forms, and you'll find the SF-180 form, which you can print out.

Kerwin Stone

Secretary

VVA Texas State Council

For some young recruits, the US military is the family business

By Matthew Hay Brown
The Baltimore Sun
Published: February 28, 2014



In this file photo from July 2009, Army Staff Sgt. Larry Kazmierzak, 49, of Greenwood, Ind., assigned to F Company Aviation 3-338th Aviation National Guard Unit out of Camp Atterbury, Ind., is accompanied by his twin daughters, Ashley and Kari Kazmierzak, 22, at Forward Operating Base Diamond Back, Mosul, Iraq. Carmichael Yepez/DVIDS



Pfc. Maeyamonique P. Barnes, a military police officer with the 425th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, and her dad, Staff Sgt. Albert Barnes, a unit supply sergeant with the 1st Squadron (Airborne), 40th Cavalry, 4-25 ABCT, enjoy a moment together during their 2011-2012 deployment in Afghanistan.

JEFFREY SMITH/U.S. ARMY

Growing up, when Alex Pownall watched his father, he saw a man who loved his job. John Pownall has served 20 years in the military, the past 12 as a recruiter for the Maryland National Guard. He was sent to defend Andrews Air Force Base after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and advised the Afghan National Army in 2011 and 2012. "He looked forward to drill, and he came home happy," Alex Pownall said. So when Alex turned 17 last year, he needed no convincing. He joined the Maryland National Guard in October and is waiting to finish high school so he can go to boot camp. Pownall is one of several sons and daughters who have enlisted in the Maryland Guard in recent years to serve alongside their parents. The Guard has about 6,000 members; the influx of offspring has brought the number of children serving with their parents to about two dozen.

Increasingly, war is a family business. Military veterans are more likely than the general population to be related to other servicemembers, and older Americans are twice as likely as younger Americans to have an immediate family member who served, the Pew Research Center reported in 2011. The Maryland recruits speak of being inspired by their parents' service, of being eager to have some of the same experiences, and of hoping to be able to serve alongside them. They join the military with an intimate understanding of the commitment they're making: They've grown up seeing mothers and fathers go off to war.

Although the United States has withdrawn its forces from Iraq and plans to pull out of Afghanistan by the end of the year, the Maryland guard continues to deploy around the world: Members now are serving in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Kosovo, Kuwait, the Horn of Africa, South Korea and on the U.S.-Mexican border.

The sons and daughters are joining at a time when military service is the province of a shrinking minority of Americans. During World War II, most of the male population of fighting age enlisted. During the Vietnam War, a draft meant that, theoretically, any American man could be called to serve. But in the all-volunteer military, less than 1 percent of the population has fought in Iraq or Afghanistan. Lt. Col. Lance Newby finds such trends troubling not only for the military, but for society as a whole. Newby, the director of maintenance for the Maryland Guard, said joining the military 33 years ago reinforced the values of integrity, honesty and selflessness his parents taught him at home. "If you're not getting that today at home and you don't go into the military, where do you learn it?" he asked. Newby's 22-year-old daughter, Jordin, enlisted on Sept. 11, 2011 — the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks. She is serving in the Guard while studying psychology at Towson University and participating in ROTC at Loyola University Maryland. "Obviously, I've been a Guard kid my whole life," Jordin Newby said. "I mean, it's like home, almost."



Master Sgt. Juan Lopez, the operations chief for the 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment Security Detachment, stands with his son, Cpl. Jared P. Lopez, a data/wire technician with Communications Company, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward), aboard Camp Al Taqaddum, Iraq, on May 23, 2009.

M. M. BRAVO/DVIDS

For families, serving together can also mean deploying together. In 2012, Sgt. 1st Class Lester Parks Sr. and his son, 1st Lt. Lester Parks Jr., left together for Afghanistan. The Baltimore natives serve with the 115th Military Police Battalion, which spent a year in Kandahar providing security and training the Afghan National Police.

The older Parks lives in Newark, the younger in Leesburg, Va. They say they saw more of each other in Afghanistan than they do stateside. "When you deploy, you are all a family and you look after each other," said Lieutenant Parks, the battalion's military intelligence officer. "But to have your father with you just adds something a little more special.

"It's also nice just to see him every day, even if it is only for a couple minutes." Sergeant Parks, the battalion's logistics noncommissioned officer, said being on the deployment with his son meant worrying less about him.

Master Sgt. Mark Bagley has three children in the Maryland National Guard. Pfc. Lucas Bagley, 19, joined the infantry in 2012. In February, he flew to Puerto Rico to practice jumping out of airplanes. Pfc. Markee Bagley, 21, enlisted last January to become a military police officer. While her brother was away, Markee was called up during the snow emergency to help drive police and emergency responders around Hagerstown. Their stepsister, Pvt. Whitley Tobei, 17, enlisted in October. Mark Bagley joked that the family is "freakshow close" — "We don't like being apart from each other" — and his children laughed and nodded in agreement.

A recruiter, he said he meets his quotas without needing to volunteer his family — but their service does help him talk to families of prospective recruits who have reservations about the sacrifice and risks involved in military service. "I'm still a parent," he said. "I tell them, 'I understand your concern. I have kids in here.'" Sgt. 1st Class Mark Roark, also a recruiter, said he told his son what the military did for him but didn't pressure him to enlist. "He's a young man," Roark said. "The choices that he makes are going to be his choices. ... I can only lead my son so far. At some point there, he's not going to take any more direction from me." Pvt. Nick Loder, Roark's 18-year-old son, calls enlisting in

2012 "a great decision," because of the action — he jumped with Lucas Bagley at Camp Santiago in Puerto Rico — and the bonds he has formed with fellow soldiers now dispersed throughout the world.

Serving with a parent can be a mixed blessing. "I'm constantly Col. Newby's kid," Jordin Newby said. "I can't wait until he retires, so maybe that will stop some. "But it's been really great, because if I do something and I'm not sure it's really right, instead of making myself look like a fool, I can say, 'Dad, is this right? Am I doing this wrong?'"

Spc. James Nowell said there can be a different kind of pressure on the son or daughter of a soldier. "If I don't know something, then it's like, "Why don't you know that?" he said. "Well, because I was like 15 years old. Why would I know every little detail? It's not like he comes home and it's boot camp in my house." Nowell, 20, is a medic. His father, 2nd Lt. Clarence Nowell, who was commissioned an officer in January after 23 years as an enlisted soldier and noncommissioned officer, said he has used his experience to help guide his son's career. A former infantryman, Clarence steered James to a job in which he could develop a skill that would translate more easily to a civilian career. "When you're young, you want to jump out of planes, you want to be in the infantry, you want to blow things up. And that's great. We need those guys. But I also want him to have the skill," he said.

Fate of Marines left behind in Cambodia in 1975 haunts comrades



The body of Marine Lance Cpl. Ashton Loney, seen here under a poncho during a lull in the action on Koh Tang's West beach on May 15, 1975. Loney was killed in an ambush and remains one of five servicemembers missing from the battle. *Courtesy of Fred Morris*

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command has potentially found evidence related to Americans still missing from the final battle of the Vietnam War and may head back to Koh Tang island for an excavation in the near future, officials said. A seven-member investigation team spent a week on the

island off the coast of Cambodia in September, where it investigated two sites located in areas where the heaviest fighting occurred, JPAC officials said last month.

JPAC officials declined to provide specifics on the sites, what was found or any potential correlation to a particular missing servicemember, but they said they did find enough evidence to bring one site before the administrative body that decides whether to allocate funds for a dig.

Since only concrete cases are brought before the board, the revelation has given hope to the families of the missing. "My brother was very dear to my heart," said Daphne Loney, sister of unaccounted for Marine Lance Cpl. Ashton Loney, who was killed in an ambush during the battle. "After all these years knowing the others were found, I hope it's a possibility he will finally come home. I thought no one really cared about Ashton."

While on the island, JPAC investigators inspected one site on the island's east beach and one on its west beach, according to spokesman Army Maj. Jamie Dobson. JPAC officials said they interviewed witnesses from the May 15, 1975 battle between U.S. Marines and Cambodian Khmer Rouge soldiers to help identify potential sites. The case will now go before JPAC's excavation decision board, which meets monthly to decide whether a more costly excavation is warranted at a particular site. For that to occur, there needs to be compelling evidence that American remains will be recovered. "Typically an analyst will submit a case to the excavation decision board if he or she believes there is

enough evidence to warrant a recovery operation,” Dobson said. “Some considerations include finding material evidence linking the site to an individual’s case or the corroboration of circumstantial evidence supporting the location as a potential site.

If the site is approved for excavation, it will then be added to the master excavation list. Some families of the missing have complained that correlated sites can languish on the list for years. Dobson did not say when the decision board would convene to hear the case or when it might launch an excavation. Developers have announced plans to turn the small island, less than 50 miles off the coast of Cambodia, into a resort. It’s unclear how those construction plans might affect any JPAC decision.

Loney was only 20 when he and approximately 200 other Marines, Navy corpsmen and Air Force pilots fought for their lives on Koh Tang, an isolated scrap in the Gulf of Thailand. Their mission was to rescue the hostage crew of an American merchant vessel, the SS Mayaguez. The grueling 14-hour battle, often referred to as the “Mayaguez Incident” and widely regarded as the last battle of the Vietnam War, claimed the lives of 15 servicemembers and an additional 23 Air Force personnel who died in a support force crash in Thailand. Three Marines were left behind and later reportedly killed by their captors. Loney; Air Force Staff Sgt. Elwood Rumbaugh, who was reportedly lost at sea; and the three left behind — Pfc. Gary Hall, Lance Cpl. Joseph Hargrove and Pvt. Danny Marshall — are the only ones who have yet to be recovered.

Loney, a charismatic, jovial, family man, was gunned down while walking point during a foray into the jungle during the battle, survivors said. “He was bigger than life,” said battle survivor Al Bailey, who was with him when he died. “He didn’t think he could be destroyed.” Em Son, the Khmer Rouge commander of the island during the battle, [told Stars and Stripes in 2012](#) that he found Loney’s body wrapped in a poncho on the beach after the Americans left and had him buried nearby. Since that time, however, Son had been picked up by the Cambodian tribunal looking into Khmer Rouge atrocities, leading some to question the truthfulness of his information on the missing.

Lars Olsen, a spokesman for the U.N.-backed tribunal provided the following statement: “I am further limited on what I can make comments on by ECCC Internal Rule 56 which reads, ‘In order to preserve the rights and interests of the parties, judicial investigations shall not be conducted in public. All persons participating in the judicial investigation shall maintain confidentiality,’” Olsen said. U.S. Embassy officials in Cambodia declined to comment.

Many survivors of the battle and families of the missing believe Son — who told Stars and Stripes he executed Hargrove and witnessed the burials of Hargrove, Hall, Marshall and Loney — has withheld the truth about the missing, including potential burial sites, possibly in fear of prosecution by the tribunal. Son insists he has shown JPAC the correct sites, and that American remains have been found. Despite testimony of the alleged witness, attempts to locate the missing men have been hampered by poor record-keeping at JPAC labs. Documents provided to Stars and Stripes include allegations that JPAC investigators failed to fully record their work on the island during excavations, some of which potentially covered some of “the only evidence thus far related to the possible fate of one of those that was left behind.”

American remains were potentially found during an excavation on the island in 2008, according to former ambassador to Cambodia and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs Charles Ray. Ray told Stars and Stripes last month that preliminary findings from the island indicated an unearthen set of remains were “probably Caucasian.” But Dobson denied any American remains were found in the 2008 excavation. “Comments made on site are preliminary,” Ray said. “But you know [JPAC’s] backlog is such I don’t recall [a subsequent] briefing on that particular recovery.” Battle survivors and family members said they hold out hope that remains of the fallen will be found. “I want his bones to come back to American soil,” Daphne Loney said. “It was the country he fought for.”



The Editor's Flashback to 1973....

What were you doing in 1973 and do you remember these facts?

- On January 27, 1973 the United States and North Vietnam sign Paris cease-fire agreements, ending American combat role in the war and by March 29, 1973, the Last U.S. combat troops leave Vietnam.



- The U.S. military draft ends.
- Skylab, the first American space station, is launched.
- Jim Croce was killed in an airplane crash.
- Lyndon Johnson died of a heart attack suffered at his LBJ Ranch on Jan. 22, 1973.



- The soft drink 7Up is now called "The Uncola".
- Airbags were first used by the public in the Oldsmobile Toronado.
- **What was on TV:** The Waltons, M*A*S*H*, Hawaii Five-O, Kojak, The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour and All in the Family.



Movies in 1973: American Graffiti, The Exorcist, The Sting and Last Tango in Paris.

Songs We Listened to: Drift Away - Doby Gray, Crocodile Rock - Elton John, Love Me Like a Rock - Paul Simon, Bad Bad Leroy Brown - Jim Croce, Tie A Yellow Ribbon - Tony Orlando, Good Bye Yellow Brick Road - Elton John, Desperado - The Eagles and Free Bird - Lynyrd Skynyrd.

SPECIAL NOTICE: If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call this toll-free number 1-800-273-8255, available 24/7, and tell them you are a veteran. All calls are confidential.

APPLICATION FOR VVA MEMBERSHIP

(Return to: Vietnam Veterans of America San Jacinto Chapter No. 343, P.O. Box 310306, Houston, Texas 77231)

Name _____ **Sex** _____ **Date of Birth** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____ **Chapter No. 343**

Home Phone () _____ **Work Phone** () _____

E-mail _____

Type: ___ Individual member – 1 year @ \$20 ___ Individual member – 3 years @ \$50

Life member: ___ \$200 (ages 56-60) ___ \$175 (ages 61-65) ___ \$150 (ages 66-71) ___ \$100 (ages 72+)

___ Optional Life member time payment plan - \$50 down, \$25/month

___ Incarcerated Veterans (IVI) \$0: TDCJ # _____ or ___ Incarcerated Veteran Associate (IVA) \$7: TDCJ # _____

___ Associate member – 1 year @ \$20

Payment Method: ___ Check ___ Money Order ___ Credit Card (Visa, Master Card, American Express, Discover)

Credit Card Number _____ **Exp. Date** _____

Signature _____

Eligibility: Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.

New members and new life members must submit a copy of their DD-214 along with this application and dues payment.



The End!