



GrahamVets Newsletter

Quarterly Issue May 2015

A Brief History of GrahamVets



On the first Saturday of December in 1990 GrahamVets held its first official meeting. This meeting was also a special occasion in that it was a Veteran's Day celebration. Several members of the local VFW post also attended as guest speakers; however, Graham Correctional Center has a history of Veterans programs.

In 1981 under Chaplin Horn and supported by the "National Council of The Church of Christ"; Incarcerated Veterans Project, a Veterans self help group began. This group was the first of its kind in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Unfortunately little is known about this group beyond its inception.

The GrahamVets Organization operated as a typical inmate organization until mid 1993. It was at this time that founding coordinator Lt. Mel Durbin (ret.) filed paperwork for a Not-For-Profit state charter. On March 08, 1994 the charter was issued and GrahamVets became an official Not-For-Profit organization, the only one of its kind in the State of Illinois Department of Corrections.

The GrahamVets organization has, over numerous years established rich traditions within its own ranks and within the local community. Every Memorial and Veterans Day, the group conducts a ceremony that contains a Color Guard, a fellowship meal and readings.

On this Memorial Day the group is endeavoring to establish a new tradition by carrying out a flag folding and dedication ceremony in honor of a deceased veteran. During which an American flag in a display case

will be presented to the next of kin of the honored veteran. This year the veteran being honored is Mr. Eddie Price, a U.S. Navy Petty Officer who served on a river patrol boat in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. His daughter, Aisha Price will be receiving the presented flag.



Lt. Mel Durbin Ret.

Over the years GrahamVets has established deep roots within the local community by collecting donations from within its own ranks, as well as from the general population and staff of G.C.C. These funds, collected twice a year are then donated to the local Salvation Army Food Pantry at the Hillsboro IGA. To date, these donations have totaled over \$10,000.

The members of the GrahamVets organization are proud American Veterans seeking to better themselves through brotherhood and a willingness to give back to society in the hopes of not just bettering themselves, but to better the Nation that they served as a whole.

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Assistant Warden Patrick Ross- Programs- Graham CC.

X

Sr. Chpl. Daniel Shreve- Hope Chapel

X

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Food Pantry Donation 11/26/03... From Left to Right: Warden Steven Bryant, C/O Altenberger, Kathy Gonet, and C/O England

GrahamVets Facts

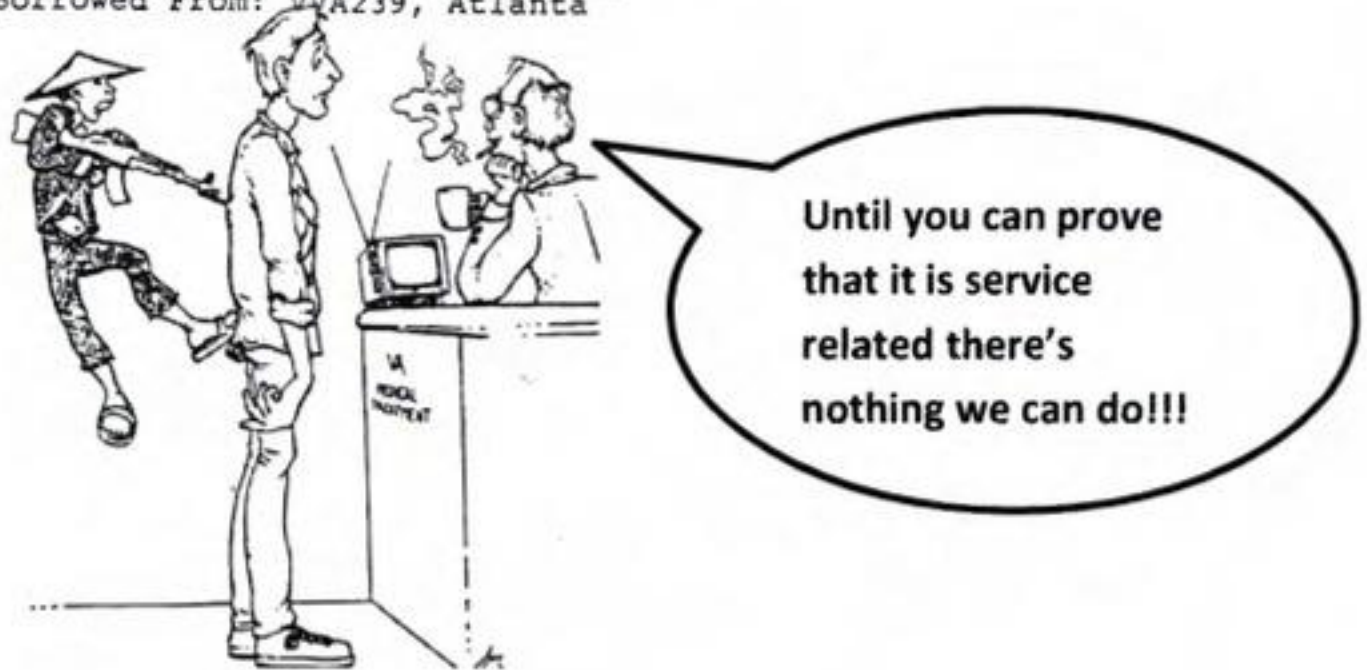
- ❖ From 1997 to present, member participation in food pantry donations has led to over \$10,000 and 2,500 lbs. of non-perishable food items to the Hillsboro Salvation Army Food Pantry.
- ❖ From 1994 to 2001, members participated in aluminum can recycling that netted \$5,615 for inmate trust fund.
- ❖ In 2000, members collected 44,000 potato chip "Ploids" (redeemable coupons) which were donated to Hillsboro's Beckemeyer and Coffeen grade schools that were eventually used to acquire prizes which in-turn were awarded to children who excelled in their respective school's reading program.
- ❖ In 2000, members collected 45 bags of soda can tabs which were donated to the Ronald McDonald House for their fund raising operations
- ❖ In 2005, members donated \$601 to the Red Cross' Katrina relief effort.
- ❖ In 2011, members and staff donated \$431 to St. Jude Children's Hospital, \$257 to the 5th St. Renaissance Homeless Veterans Project in Springfield IL.
- ❖ March 2012, members and staff donated \$398 to the American Red Cross for the tornado disaster relief assistance in Harrisburg IL.

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GrahamVets Facts (Cont'd)

- ❖ Promotes pride in Service to the Country
- ❖ Enhances positive self-esteem by encouraging members to assist fellow veterans to seek strength and courage through each other
- ❖ Give back to the community through involvement in various fund raising initiatives
- ❖ 70 veterans currently enrolled and actively participating
- ❖ Members represent over 415 years of service to the nation, an average of 5.5 years of service per member
- ❖ As of 2012 18.7% recidivism rate for GrahamVet members
- ❖ During 2011-2012, 56% of members had no ODRs, most going multiple years of not receiving an ODR
- ❖ The group assists Veterans in obtaining their military separation documents(DD 214s) for future benefit consideration and entitlement applications
- ❖ GrahamVet Coordinators keep members informed of the latest changes in veterans benefits and provide information on noteworthy veteran issues
- ❖ Veteran representatives from surrounding community have attended monthly meetings to explain VA changes, entitlements, and benefits to the GrahamVet members

Borrowed From: VVA239, Atlanta



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GrahamVets Bios

Member: William David Linley **Age:** 49 **Hometown:** New York, NY **Family:** Wife, 1 son, 1 daughter **Branch of Service:** U. S. Marine Corps **Times of Service:** 1982-1992, 2002-2006 **Military Occupation:** Radio Operator **Civilian Occupation:** 15 years in Telecommunication and Engineering.

Member: Brent Jacobs **Age:** 38 **Hometown:** Tuscarora Reservation, Sanborn, NY **Family:** fiancée with 2 daughters **Branch of Service:** U.S. Marine Corps **Times of Service:** 1997-1998 **Military Occupation:** Driver for Motor Transportation **Civilian Occupation:** from age 14 – 19, worked on the reservation as a service station attendant, then 6 months prior to enlisting he was a welder/frabricator for Schien Trucking in Carlinville, IL

Member: Rodolfo "Rudy" Reyes **Age:** 52 **Hometown:** Laredo, TX **Family:** single no children **Branch of Service:** U.S. Army **Times of Service:** 1980-1986 **Military Occupation:**Calvary Scout **Civilian Occupation:** Collections

Member: Kevin D. Barrington **Age:** 57 **Hometown:** Springfield, IL **Family:** 3 sons, 2 daughters, 3 grandchildren **Branch of Service:** U.S. Air Force **Times of Service:** 1975 – 1990 **Military Occupation:** Air police, Security Police, Security Forces **Civilian Occupation:** 23 years as a Springfield Police Officer, 30 years as a professional photographer, and 20 years as a consultant.

Member: Travis L. Wilks **Age:** 43 **Hometown:** Chicago, IL **Family:** 3 daughters, oldest daughter currently in USAF **Branch of Service:** U.S. Army **Times of Service:** 1989-1995 **Military Occupation:** Air Assault **Civilian Occupation:** Machinist

Member: William Lowe **Age:** 74 **Hometown:** Beecher City, IL **Family:** 3 sons, 22 grandchildren, and 4 great grandchildren. **Branch of Service:** U.S. Army **Times of Service:** 1963-1965 **Military Occupation:** Truck Driver **Civilian Occupation:** 26 years with Truck Stops of America in Effingham, IL, then 8 years Petty Printing Company.

