

The VVA

Veteran

MARCH/APRIL 2006



THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

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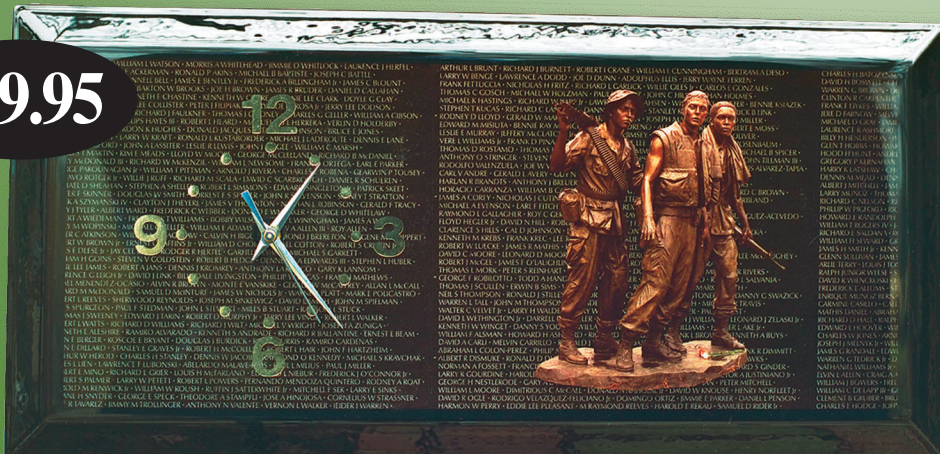
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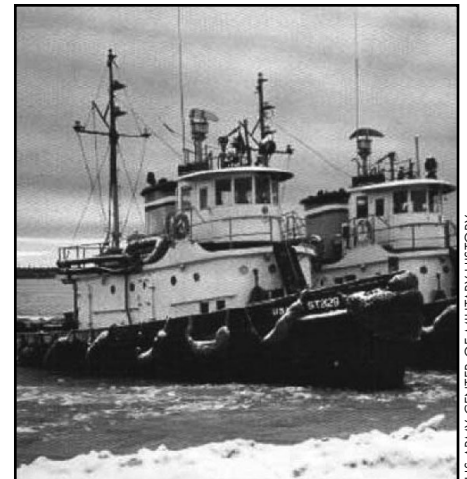
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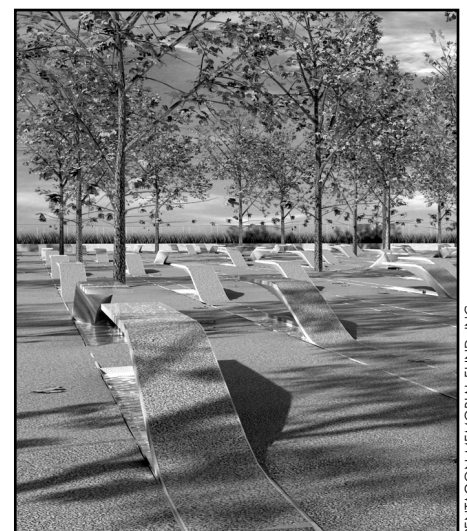
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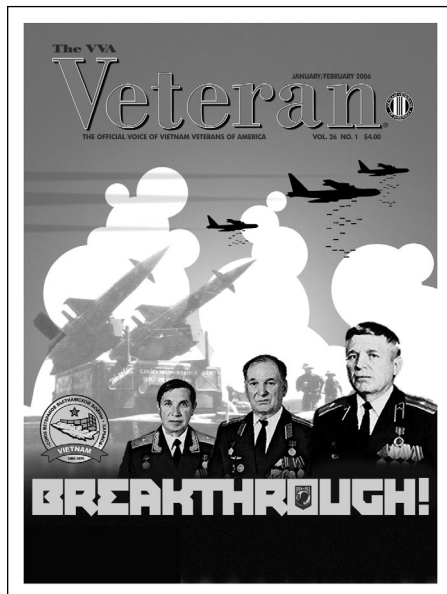


Vanishing Point

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ON THE COVER: Schoolchildren participate in a chemical warfare drill, 1942.
(Library of Congress Photo)

LETTERS



FORTUNATE BROTHER

I am writing in response to George Claxton's column in the January/February issue. I agree that further in-depth study is necessary for the full effects of Agents Orange and Blue to be known and accepted by the VA. However, like you, I recognize that the VA is in no hurry to face the results of such studies. As you say, the cost could be astronomical.

My brother, Sgt. Francis J. Wieme, served in Vietnam in 1967-68. He died last November 11 from a malignant brain tumor, which was diagnosed in June 2005. His oncologist suggested that Agent Orange could be a definite factor in his illness. He filed a disability claim with the VA, but no decision has yet been reached on this claim. I have learned that the VA does not recognize brain tumors as resulting from exposure to Agent Orange. By the way, my brother was also diagnosed with diabetes during his hospitalization.

I would suggest that VVA, with its large information database, analyze its membership for premature death among those who served in Vietnam. Your analysis could break down results by age at death and the year of the veteran's tour. Those results could be submitted to a major university as a stimulus to conduct further research.

Like my brother, I am a veteran, serving stateside during the Vietnam War. Considering the potential impact of Agent Orange among anyone who served in Vietnam, I am fortunate.

Thomas Wieme
Via e-mail

REMEMBERING GEORGE AND NIKKI

Somehow in the midst of moving I didn't learn of the passing of George Duggins until late in December. We both served on the National Board of Directors. Although we were both people of color,

we didn't always see eye to eye. Our political views were different, but our goals were the same: to make VVA the best and to help our fellow veterans. George was a man of integrity and commitment.

As I stepped away from VVA national, George carried on, becoming Vice President and President for two terms. George was someone I respected and admired. This world has been made a better place for his being in it.

I also learned that Cheryl "Nikki" Nicol passed on. Nikki was my roommate while I was on the Board. Many times we burned the midnight oil trying to get committee work done, sometimes tearing our hair out or screaming in frustration. But most of all, there were the shared moments at *The Wall*, at the Conventions, in the quiet hours of the morning. I miss you, Crazy Lady. God bless 'cause I know you're in heaven.

Lee Ann Combs Michaelsen
Wadena, Minnesota

KICKED ASIDE

I am Gunnery Sergeant Matt Hevezi's mother, and I have just read the article you published about my son in the November/December issue. While all of what was written is true, how is it that it is being accepted and ignored? How is it that my son, and many other service personnel, have been kicked aside by DoD and denied their rights as loyal military? How can a country be strong if it discounts its backbone as ineffective and disposable?

The public needs to be made aware of the gamble our service personnel take, not only in combat, but in other areas of compliance to their superiors. And, once compliant, how are they to function without the support of the military machine that groomed them and promised them a support system?

I am appalled at the treatment given to my son, a loyal and true United States Marine, who never once, in 18 years, said "no" to the Corps. The DoD needs to make good on its promises to the recruits they accept and train. This kind of abandonment is deplorable.

Jacqueline Skarr
Via e-mail

CAUSE AND EFFECT?

I just read the Veterans Benefits column in the November/December issue. I recently received the second denial on my PTSD claim from the Winston Salem regional VA office. I have been disappointed and frustrated with the process, people, and government. It's like beating

continued on page 42

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Funding, Accountability, Outreach

BY JOHN ROWAN

In the last issue of *The VVA Veteran*, we published VVA's 2006 *Legislative Agenda & Policy Initiatives*. Using this booklet, Rick Weidman, Bernie Edelman, Sharon Hodge, from our Government Relations staff; Carl Tuvlin and Jim Kuhn, our legislative consultants; and I spent several days in recent weeks visiting our Senators and Representatives in their offices on Capitol Hill.

For a few days, John Miterko, our Government Affairs Committee chair, and Al Gibson, a member of our Board of Directors and ETaBO Committee chair, joined us. Between us we visited over forty offices.

While we met mainly with senior staffers, we also spoke to more than two dozen Senators and Representatives face to face. As often happens in these kinds of exercises, we also were able to chat with many other Senators and Representatives we met as we walked through the halls of Congress.

In all of these encounters, we pointed out the areas that are critical for the effective and efficient delivery of health care services and service-connected disability benefits earned by veterans—especially funding, accountability, and outreach.

In each of these meetings, we pointed out that we believed these items were important because Vietnam veterans are suffering from Agent Orange-related illnesses and will require more health care than any previous generation of veterans. While our numbers may be smaller than our predecessors, our health care needs for service-connected illnesses are greater.

I also had the privilege of testifying on your behalf before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. While we cannot take complete credit, I am glad to report that a few days after our testimony, Rep. Steve Buyer (R-Ind.), chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, announced a proposal to add \$1.9 billion to the administration's VA budget proposal, earmarking specific items for increased staff in the Veterans Benefits Administration to help with the backlog on claims, one of our main concerns.

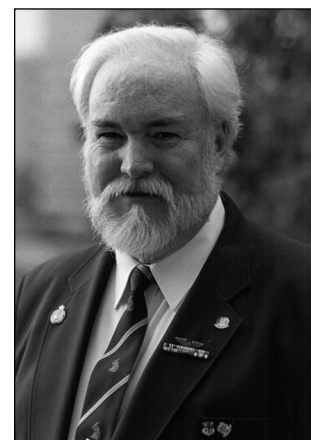
This effort was a good start, but it must be followed up by your efforts in the field. Take the *Legislative Agenda* to your local elected officials. Get them to draw up resolutions supporting our positions. Go to the local office of the Representatives and Senators in your state, and ask them how they feel about these issues. Most of the people we spoke to were sympathetic, although some were concerned about costs. We reminded them that veterans' benefits are the long-term costs of war that must be met.

One way of getting out the word is a town hall meeting. Elsewhere in this edition is a "how-to" on these programs developed by our colleagues in Florida. Consider putting on such a program in your area. You might also consider inviting your Member of Congress to a chapter or state council meeting like Chapter 77 in Buffalo, N.Y., did. This way they can get to know their local veterans, as well as our needs.

During our travels on Capitol Hill we became aware of two issues of interest to retirees: proposed increased fees in the Tricare health care program, and the so-called "widows tax." The first issue speaks for itself. The second issue is more complicated. Military personnel can avail themselves of a Special Benefits Plan, which allows their spouse to receive a portion of their pensions upon their death. However, if the retiree dies of a service-connected illness or in any other way enables the spouse to be entitled to Dependent Indemnity Compensation (DIC), the pension is reduced, dollar for dollar, by the amount of DIC received. This is unconscionable.

Look for the articles in this edition that provide more detail on these issues. They would like to separate the retirees from the veterans community, but we are all veterans.

As I noted last time, if you need any assistance, please contact our Government Relations team in the national office. Remember, together we are unbeatable. ■



MICHAEL KEATING

POLICY FOR LETTERS We welcome letters to the editor for publication in *The VVA Veteran*. We are interested in your criticism as well as your praise. Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity or space. Regrettably, because of the volume of mail we receive, we are unable to acknowledge or return unpublished material.

Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund Report

BY RANDY BARNES, PRESIDENT, VIETNAM VETERANS ASSISTANCE FUND



Community Learning International Launching Lao Literacy

A grant from VVAF was important in meeting the ongoing need for additional books for the Lao Children's Library Boat (LCLB) project. The grant funds were spent purchasing Lao language children's books for use by the Lao Children's Library Boat project. The cost per book was about two dollars. A total of 1,983 books was purchased.

Books purchased with VVAF funds were used in two ways. Some were added to the permanent collection of books carried aboard the boat, which visits rural villages along the Mekong River. Others were allocated to the Micro Mobile Libraries, the boat that distributes to village schools. These 100-books-in-a-canvas-display-carrier "book bags" are now in more than fifty village schools, and they are rotated between schools three times each school year so that students have triple the number of titles to read during the year.

The LCLB project continues to be a great success. The challenge is to expand the project to meet a larger portion of the demand every year, as more villages become aware of the project and ask to be included. Without the project, these villages have no books available in schools, homes, or anywhere in the community for children to read. In Laos, books are available only in the three largest towns. Besides, they are too expensive for poor villagers to buy.

Community Learning International is very grateful for the assistance provided by the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund. That support has been directly translated into greater opportunities for village children in poor, remote communities in Laos to learn to read.



Check 2115



Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund (VVAF) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded by Vietnam Veterans of America in 1991. VVAF is organized and operated exclusively for scientific, charitable, and educational purposes. The major objectives are to assist disabled and needy veterans and the widows and orphans of veterans. VVAF is funded primarily by contributions from federal employees and members of the uniformed services who choose to support the organization through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the federal government's workplace fundraising drive.

Federal employees may support the work of VVAF by designating **2115** on their CFC pledge forms. All donations are tax-deductible to the donor.



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Despite the Spin The VA Budget Is Short Again

A GOVERNMENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT

"Veterans have long memories," VVA National President John Rowan said in presenting the organization's legislative agenda before Chairman Steve Buyer (R-Ind.) and the other members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on February 16. "We remember why we served, what we saw, what we did when we donned the uniform to answer our country's call. We remember our comrades, those who died and most of the rest who were forever changed by their service."

We also remember last July, Rowan said, when Congress and the administration "were embarrassed by the revelation that the Department of Veterans Affairs was \$800 million in the hole to meet its health care obligations. After a flurry of meetings and a spate of publicity, Congress moved quickly, if belatedly, to do the right thing for veterans, even as this shortfall grew by several hundred million dollars as the VA suddenly 'discovered' it was treat-



House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chair Steve Buyer (R-Ind.) talked with VVA President John Rowan at the conclusion of VSO testimony before the committee.

ing 103,000 OEF and OIF veterans rather than 26,000."

Rowan noted that Congress closed this budget gap by adding \$1.5 billion to the VA's FY'05 operating budget and an additional \$1.2 billion in emergency funds for

the current fiscal year. This, even with a reported \$1.1 billion carryover in the VA's budget, "will still not be enough for the VA to maintain its current level of care," he said.

Despite the seeming increase in VA health care funding as proposed by the

THIS MONTH:

Adjudication Backlog

National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study

New Health Screening Program For Returning Soldiers

administration, Rowan said, "Again this year we believe the administration's budget request, despite the spin, is short by at least \$4.2 billion, which would open enrollment into the VA's health care system to Priority 8 veterans who were 'temporarily' restricted from enrolling in January 2003. If the ban on statutorily eligible Priority 8s continues, VVA believes the budget for health care is still short by some \$2.3 billion.

"We've said this before, and we'll say this again," Rowan continued. "Had the VA's health care budget not been flat-lined for four years just as eligibility reform was opening the system to hundreds of thousands of deserving veterans, we would be discussing a budget \$8- to \$10-billion greater than has been proposed for FY 2007."

The reality is that the proposed budget just simply is not enough money, even to take care of those already in the system. Along with the other veterans' service organizations, VVA will expend countless hours and energy fighting for funding that

continued on next page

Disability Benefits Commission: Town Hall Meeting After-Action Report

BY JERRY KLEIN

The Veterans Disability Commission met in St. Petersburg, Florida, in a Town Hall format to listen to the concerns of the veterans' community. The meeting was conducted over two days. The entire 15-member commission was present. The first session began with the chair making brief remarks explaining the mission and purpose of the commission. The executive director then explained the process the commission would undertake to complete its mission.

The main focus of the commission was to listen to the public. The public-comment session lasted ninety minutes. The hearing room was packed because the word had reached the veterans' community in the St. Petersburg-Tampa area. Veterans from across the state also were in attendance.

In advance of the meeting, Craig Tonjes, the Florida State Council president, sent a letter to all veterans' organizations, apprising them of the importance of showing up at the commission sessions. I also contacted the local VVA chapters to insure that VVA and interested veterans were in attendance. The early warning worked.

The Town Hall process doesn't leave individuals much time to state a point of concern. Most presenters didn't have a clear understanding of the purpose for which the commission was formed and presented remarks that were not germane. Many of the presenters expressed a feeling that the commission was created

for the purpose of finding ways to reduce or eliminate benefits.

The chair addressed that perception when he stated that it was not the intention of the commission to reduce or eliminate benefits. However, I am not sure the statement convinced anyone in the meeting room.

The statement prepared by David Houppert, VVA's director of Veterans Benefits, was entered into the record. Craig Tonjes and Tom Hall, the Florida State Council treasurer, also addressed the commission.

Fewer veterans attended the second session. Yet, some veterans who had just heard about the commission through the local media showed up. The structure for the second day was even more restrictive. After opening remarks, the executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, Col. Rocky McPherson, spoke. He mentioned the concern that the Veterans Benefits Administration in Bay Pines showed a reduction of staff in the Regional Office, but he could not provide an explanation. The new regional office director did not have an explanation, either.

The chief of the Tampa VA Hospital Poly Trauma Rehabilitation Center, Steven G. Scott, described the workings of the Trauma Center. He went into great detail about how they care for seriously injured service members. The process of analysis and evaluation of injuries covering all aspects from initial diagnosis to secondary and tertiary issues, including the issue

of pain, was explored. Commission members asked about the relationship between pain and rating for disability purposes.

Donald Ivers, the former Regional Office Director in St. Petersburg, explained the theory used by the VA to incorporate the issue of pain into current ratings. The issue of PTSD versus blast syndrome was discussed since many of the symptoms are similar for each and could be misdiagnosed.

The public comment period was even shorter than it was the previous evening. It was during that session that I presented a brief version of my prepared testimony. Also in attendance at the morning session was the former Director of the St. Petersburg VA Regional Office, Donald Ivers, and the former Under Secretary for Veterans Benefits, John Vogel.

The commission will visit seven additional areas of the country. Preparation prior to appearing before the commission is very important. Since each individual only has five minutes to speak, targeted brief remarks are needed.

Issues should be broken up into individual, short presentations so more territory can be covered. This will require more VVA members to attend these meetings. Turnout is important.

During the evening session, I had a chance meeting with one of the commission staff members, a friend of

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

continued from page 5

is sufficient to meet the needs of America's veterans. More than 260,000 veterans who applied to receive health care at VA facilities in fiscal year 2005 were turned away because of the administration's cost-cutting decision to limit veterans' access to VA hospitals, clinics, and medications, Rep. Evans noted.

Since January 17, 2003, the administration has barred access to VA care to new Priority 8 veterans—those who do not receive monetary compensation from VA for service-connected disabilities and whose incomes are above a national and geographic income threshold. In 2005, the national income means threshold for a single veteran was \$25,842.

"This is one battle we should not have to wage," Rowan said. "Instead, we should be working together to fashion a formula to fund the VA's health care operations. We challenge Congress here and now: Form a bipartisan group to meet, study the issues and options, hold hearings, and recommend legislation that would fundamentally change the way in which veterans health care is funded.

"VVA believes, in concert with The Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform, that a fair funding formula can be arrived at," Rowan continued, "one that won't bust the budget, one that recognizes our nation's obligations to veterans and is indexed to medical inflation and the per capita use of the VA health care system."

Some legislators, from the GOP as well as the minority, are hearing the arguments and endorsing them.

South Dakota Republican Sen. John Thune and his Democratic colleague, Tim Johnson, have asked the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to look at new ways of paying for veterans' health care, including providing guaranteed funding similar to how the government pays for Medicare, according to the *Navy Times*. In a joint letter to the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Johnson and Thune asked the committee to examine "how we can ensure" the VA has enough money.

"As you know, the discretionary funding has become a cause for concern among many of our nation's veterans," the letter says. "This concern is due to the uncertainty that arises each year as to whether funding will be adequate to serve the health care needs of our veterans, and has been aggravated by the unexpected budget shortfall in VA funding last year.

"While we understand mandatory funding may be controversial as a solution, we believe it deserves equal consideration along with any other proposals that may have merit. It is becoming abundantly clear that there is a growing consensus that the current funding model for veterans' health care is inadequate and a permanent solution needs to be found."

ADJUDICATION BACKLOG

What sometimes gets lost in the debate over sufficient funding for veterans health care is the continuing backlog in the adjudication of claims at the Veterans Benefits Administration.

"More than 525,000 cases have been in various stages of adjudication for far too long now," Rowan told the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. "The VA projects this situation will get worse, yet requests fund-

ing for only 130 new employees for all of the VBA for FY 2007. Congress needs to insure that the new platoon of adjudicators is properly trained, supervised, and—along with their supervisors and managers—held accountable for their work.

"Congress must demand an explanation from the VA as to why it takes upwards of two and a half years to adjudicate cases. Congress must demand that the VA not only develop but put into practice a real strategy for unclogging the system." Rowan suggested that the VA triage cases—akin to what military medical personnel do as casualties are brought in from the field of battle.

"There's no reason why a veteran who has all of his paperwork in order in making a claim for, say, tinnitus must wait a year or more," he said. "There should be no reason why his claim can't be adjudicated in sixty to ninety days."

GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY & OUTREACH

Reforming how the VA health care budget is funded is only a means to an end. This "must be accomplished hand-in-hand with real changes in how VA senior managers and middle managers perform," Rowan said. "Give 'attaboys' and bonuses to those who have earned them; give warnings and sanctions to those who have not done their jobs well."

Noting that only one-fifth of all veterans have any interaction with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Rowan said that although many, particularly in-country Vietnam veterans, are eligible for compensation for several maladies incurred during their military service, far too many remain unaware of the benefits to which their service entitles them.

Administration Proposes Hike in Tricare Fees

VVA strongly objects to increased healthcare fees for some 3.1 million retirees and their families proposed in the administration's FY 2007 defense budget. These increases are needed, the administration argues, to offset the military's ballooning bill for medical care. DoD analysts estimate that without higher fees, Tricare's expenses will reach \$64 billion, 12 percent of the projected defense budget, by 2015.

Under the proposed hikes, the fees would rise to \$325 for a junior enlisted retiree or \$650 per family; \$475 for a senior enlisted retiree or \$950 per family; and \$700 for a retired officer or \$1,400 per family. This would double the current rate for enlisted people, and triple the current rates for officers.

William Winkenwerder, Jr., assistant secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, explains his rationale for the fee increase this way: "The alternatives ... would be a reduction in benefits, having to eliminate programs, or having insufficient funds to build and maintain world-class hospitals and clinic facilities. Money is needed for all of those things going into the future."

Are the analysts correct? Is Winkenwerder playing the alarmist spin? VVA looks forward to congressional hearings on this aspect of the very fat defense budget. ■

SBP vs. DIC:

Benefits Conflict For Survivors Of Deceased Veterans

Several programs exist to aid the survivors of deceased veterans. In certain situations, these programs may interact with each other, preventing a full and appropriate financial recovery by the survivors. An example of this type of interaction is the application and administration of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

The SBP was established by Congress and became effective September 21, 1972. SBP is a Department of Defense program that, under certain circumstances, provides for a monthly income to survivors of retired military personnel upon the death of a service member whose retired pay ceases the date of death. Survivors of members who die while on active duty and survivors of those recalled to active duty from retirement who die while on active duty also may be protected by the SBP.

Initially, a service member had to have served at least 20 years' active duty for his or her survivors to be eligible. After 9/11, Congress extended SBP eligibility to survivors of all service members who die in the line of duty.

SBP coverage is automatic for all active-duty members, including Reservists and National Guardsmen serving on active duty who have eligible beneficiaries. This is a gratuitous benefit: It does not cost the active-duty member anything. For the SBP to become effective, the service member's death must have taken place in the line of duty for an annuity to be payable if the member is not yet eligible for retirement at the time of death.

DIC is a separate program administered by the VA. DIC provides a monthly payment to eligible survivors of a deceased veteran whose death resulted from a service-related

illness or injury. If the veteran's death was not service-related, eligibility may exist if one of two conditions existed at the time of death: First, if the veteran was receiving VA disability compensation for a total disability for the 10 years prior to his or her death; second, if the veteran was receiving VA disability since release from active duty and for at least five years.

These two programs collide when a surviving spouse is eligible to receive both SBP and DIC. In such an instance, the spouse's SBP annuity payment is reduced by the amount of the DIC award. This offset prevents the survivor from fully realizing the benefit of the two programs.

This is what VVA finds objectionable: Giving with one hand while ripping badly needed income from the hands of widows with the other. VVA remembers the VA's motto—"To care for him who hath borne the battle, and his widow and orphans"—even if others need to be reminded that this is the essence of our collective mission.

Like the "Disabled Veterans Tax"—more commonly known as concurrent receipt—the offset is unfair to survivors, who are penalized because the death of a spouse has made them eligible to receive both benefits.

"The fair thing to do—the right thing to do—is to repeal the law that deducts DIC payments from SBP annuities," said VVA National President John Rowan.

But in a Congress faced with the imperative to reduce discretionary spending to help control the burgeoning national deficit, this is unlikely to happen any time soon. ■

"These are not just veterans who have been having difficulties coping with life. In speaking with one Navy veteran, we learned that he had served in Vietnam. When he mentioned that he had suffered from prostate cancer, we asked if he knew that this was service-connected compensable, presumptive to exposure to Agent Orange. This was news to him. And he is a lawyer with the IRS here in Washington, D.C.

"VVA believes that the VA has an obligation to reach out to all veterans to insure to the maximum extent possible that they know what benefits they have earned, and they know how to access these benefits," Rowan added. "This is starting to happen as VA personnel are assigned to the bases where active-duty personnel transition to civilian life. This, however, is hardly enough."

He cited S. 1342, introduced by Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wisc.), which would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a separate account for the funding of the outreach activities of the department and a sub-account for the funding of the outreach activities of each element within the department. This legislation would help states carry out programs that offer a high probability of improving outreach and assistance to veterans and to their spouses, children, and parents who may be eligible to receive veterans' benefits.

continued on page 42

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ETABO COMMITTEE REPORT

Training Seminars For Representatives

BY AL GIBSON, CHAIR

In case you are not on the net, here is the after-action report on the February 12-18 trip to Capitol Hill. At all the House and Senate offices visited, we let our representatives know VVA's position on assured funding for the VA and the legislative agenda of the ETaBO Committee.



We started the week's meetings on the Hill with a visit to Rep. Kenny Hulshof (R-Mo.), where we spoke with Aaron Smith, his legislative assistant, and Mary Stundebek, his staff assistant. They said that something different needs to be done with the way VA reports its needs and the way Congress appropriates funding. They also said that support for veterans, particularly returning soldiers with service-connected injuries, should include training in order to become self-sufficient.

We had similar discussions with Andrea Martin, legislative director for Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-Mo.); John Slotman, the legislative director for Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-Mo.); John Cox, the veterans adviser, and Lindsey Neas, the legislative assistant to Sen. James Talent (R-Mo.); Seth Appleton, legislative assistant to Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.); Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-Mo.) and Adam Riedel, his legislative correspondent.

On ETaBO issues, we visited Richard J. Suzor, a research analyst; Max Kidalov, counsel to Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-Me.), chair of the Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee; James Ludes, a legislative assistant; Nigel Stephens, the Democratic professional staff member; and Catherine Scott, the legislative aide to Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

We discussed support for the small business training that is available for veterans in conjunction with their education benefits in programs administered by The Veterans Corp. and SBDC, aside from college and university degree programs. I recommended that this also be available for programs that Pat Heavey has developed if they can be approved by the state approving agency.

However, Nelson Crouther, counsel to Rep. Don Manzullo (R-Ill.), chair of the House Committee on Small Business, feels that only The Corp. and SBDC should be used. When asked by VVA's Rick Weidman, "What happened to private enterprise in America?" there was no answer. Seems that in the five-plus years of existence, The Veterans Corp. has yet to establish programs set forth in PL 106-50.

It must be remembered that this is an election year. In running for re-election, everyone wants to give lip service to veterans' issues. Only by keeping their feet to the fire and watching the voting can we discover if they execute what they promise.

Outside the Hill, I had an opportunity to visit with Bill Elmore, associate director for Veterans Business Development at the Small Business Administration. We discussed the good, bad, and ugly sections of the RAND Report, "Activation and the Earnings of Reservists," and the DoD report to the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, "Effects of Activation in Support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm on Members of the National Guard and Reserve Who Were Self Employed or Owners of Small Business."

A follow-up visit has been recommended by the VVA Government Affairs Committee chair and the Government Relations Department for the last week of March to coincide with VVA President John Rowan's Senate testimony.

Please check out the ETaBO site at www.vva.org Let us know what you would like to see. We have to work together to make the site a viable tool for all veterans. ■

FROM THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

Taps



BY REV. PHIL SALOIS, M.S.

Frank Dale Barker died August 15, 2005, in Spring City, Pennsylvania. The cause of death was cancer. He was born in West Virginia on September 13, 1944. Barker served in the U.S. Marine Corps in the Vietnam War and was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Pottstown Chapter 565.

Charles R. "Shorty" Barr died August 31, 2005, at the Kansas Soldiers Home in Fort Dodge, Kansas, at the age of 75. He served in the U.S. Air Force from October 1946 to October 1967, attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant (E-6). Barr was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Hays Chapter 939.

Steven Robert Barry, 57, died August 30, 2005, in Wichita, Kansas. He served in the U.S. Navy from May 1967 to March 1970 in the Vietnam War. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Ponca City Chapter 750.

Thomas Eugene Bratten, Jr., 61, died June 22, 2005, in Friendsville, Maryland. He joined the Maryland Army National Guard in 1963 and deployed to Vietnam at the rank of Captain in 1970. He was wounded on May 28, losing an arm, leg, and finger, and he suffered head wounds. He retired from the Army at the rank of Captain with 100 percent disability. Bratten was awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with "V" device, the Air Medal, the Purple Heart, and other awards. He served as Commissioner of the Maryland Veterans Commission, representing the Eighth Congressional District from 1987-93. He was Director of the Maryland Veterans Commission from August 1993 to September 1999 and was appointed Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in 1999. Bratten was a life member and Past President of Vietnam Veterans of America-Cumberland Chapter 172.

Standing Bear, 58, died in 2005 in Front Royal, Virginia. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Rixeyville Chapter 752.

Ronald L. Benfield, 62, died October 14, 2005, in Princeton, West Virginia, from Agent Orange-related cancer. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Benfield was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Princeton Chapter 628.

Lloyd Ivan Bennett, 56, died December 10, 2005, in Vermont, Illinois. The cause of death was swelling of the brain. Bennett served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam from July 1967 to January 1968. He was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Fort Madison Chapter 947.

James Robert Boyd died in 2005 in Tonawanda, New York, at the age of 58. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War. Boyd was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Tonawanda Chapter 77.

Warren E. Camden, 64, died December 15, 2005, in Xenia, Ohio, from lung disease. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1967-68 in Vietnam. Camden was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Xenia Chapter 930.

Normand A. Caron died August 12, 2005, in Fall River, Massachusetts. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from May 1962 to June 1969, with service in Vietnam from December 1966 to February 1968 with the First Marine Division as a rifleman. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Westport Chapter 207.

Clifford Carter died in 2005 at the Oxford Nursing Home in Oxford, New York. He was a permanently hospitalized veteran. Carter was a veteran of the Vietnam War and a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Owego Chapter 480.

Patrick M. Colosimo, 54, died October 6, 2005, in Lavale, Maryland. He served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. Colosimo was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Cumberland Chapter 172.

Mickey R. Conroy died of a heart attack September 20, 2005, in Santa Ana, California, at the age of 77. He served in three wars. He lied about his age and joined the Merchant Marines at the age of 17 during World War II. He served in the U.S. Navy in the Korean War, and he served two tours of duty in Vietnam. A champion for veteran's causes, Conroy was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Irvine Chapter 785.

Edwin Kaye Crawley died in 2005 in Chattanooga at the age of 71. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War in 1963. Crawley was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Chattanooga Chapter 203.

Gary W. Davis died in Madisonville, Texas, at the age of 62. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Davis was an at-large life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Texas.

continued on page 41

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Aging is Natural. Giving Up on Your Sexual Health Isn't!

**Bring Back the Best Years of Your Life!
Here's how one man did it!**

Dear Readers:

Although this would otherwise be an embarrassing subject – I feel strongly about sharing a recent experience with others my age.

Simply put ... **I'm 57 years old and even though I'm in overall good health, my body just doesn't respond sexually like it used to.**

Recently, I found myself struggling to "perform". I began losing my confidence and my sex drive with it. I was feeling a great deal of pressure and embarrassment and my wife was beginning to think it was something she did or didn't do – it wasn't.

I wasn't comfortable discussing my situation with anyone – not even my doctor – so in a desperate attempt to find some help, I privately did some research on the web.

First, I found that many HEALTHY men experience a decrease in stamina and performance with age. **I wasn't alone!** Good blood circulation is key to maintaining a strong erection and apparently there are a number of factors that can weaken it.

Armed with this new information, I began to search through the many "male enhancement" and potency products on the net. I found a pill for everything and anything but among the various pills and patches – **one product stood out – Maxoderm! Not a pill or a patch, this surprisingly effective topical formula is delivered directly to the "source", where I need it most.** I don't need to swallow a pill, prescription drug or not, or wear some kind of patch on my shoulder.

After trying Maxoderm just once, I could actually feel it working immediately! And it felt incredible! What a difference! I couldn't believe it – virility and stamina like I haven't felt in years! My driver's license says I'm 57 but thanks to Maxoderm, my wife says I'm 18 again! It felt great! I now know it's normal to experience some problems with sexual performance at our age but Maxoderm let me deal with it naturally. No pills – no patches – and even better – no embarrassing appointment with the doctor.

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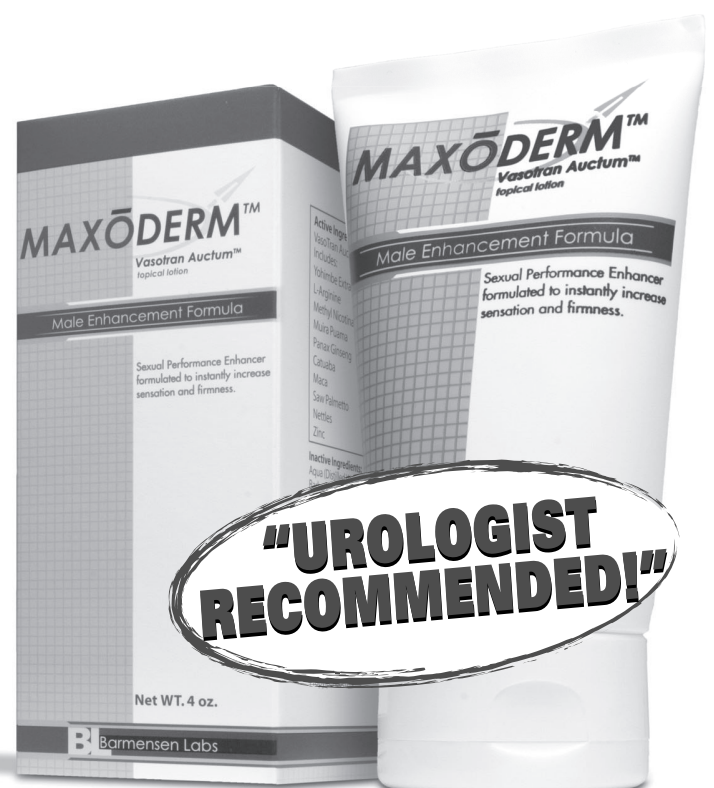
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**“ My driver's
license says
I'm 57, but my
wife says I'm
18 again! ”**



MINORITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT

Work In Progress

BY JERRY YAMAMOTO, CHAIR

The Minority Affairs Committee now consists of the following members: Connie Steers, Gumersindo Gomez, Tom Meinhardt, Jorge Pedroza, Virgie Hibbler, Marshall Mudge, Larry Frazee, Joe Jennings, Special AVVA Adviser Anne Pancrazio, VVA Special Adviser Francisco Ivarra, Staff Adviser Joe Wynn, and myself.



The members have been working really hard on several projects. One is the Minority Affairs Committee National Diversity Award. This award will be presented at the Tucson Leadership Conference. The award recognizes outstanding achievement by an individual, business, or organization in the promotion of diversity within the veterans' community. Award criteria and the nominations process are described below. The deadline for submitting nominations is June 1. Please submit early.

Another project is the committee's Leadership Conference seminar, "Minority Veteran Leadership In Action." Committee members will be the presenters.

A third project is the Asian-American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Roundtable in Los Angeles held on March 17 and sponsored by VVA. It focused on providing information about VA services to all AAPI veterans who served in the U.S. armed forces. It is the first time that a national veterans service organization has done outreach to the entire AAPI population in Los Angeles. The committee worked in support of the VA Center for Minority Veterans on the roundtable.

The Minority Affairs Information and Membership Brochure is being revised and will be available to you shortly. You also soon will be able to access a Minority Affairs Committee link at www.vva.org

The committee congratulates the family of PFC Ralph H. Johnson, in whose honor a road recently was dedicated in Charleston, S.C. Johnson was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for action with the 1st Recon Bn. of the 1st Mar. Div. on March 5, 1968.

PFC John J. Chubb was buried in Inglewood, Calif., on February 18. His remains had been returned a few days earlier from Honolulu's JPAC under Army escort where they had been identified last June. Chubb and his Huey crew mates were killed on March 20, 1971, while transporting troops in Savannakhet Province, Laos. He was with B Co., 101st Avn./101st Airborne Div. ■

CONFERENCE OF STATE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

North To Alaska

BY CHARLIE MONTGOMERY, CHAIR

Not below-freezing cold, snow, or a volcano blowing its top could have stopped the Conference of State Council Presidents from having its annual winter meeting in Anchorage, Alaska. It was a learning experience for all.

We started the meeting on Friday the thirteenth. We had two distinguished guest speakers: Sen. Charles Huggins (R-Alaska), who is a member of Chapter 904, and Tony Knowles, the former Governor of Alaska and past Mayor of Anchorage, also a member of Chapter 891.



Thirty-two of the 46 State Council Presidents were present for the meeting. Five presentations were presented by the core group. We also conducted CSCP business at the two-day event. We covered issues such as the responsibilities of the State President, how to work with the outside sector to raise membership, how to communicate with the national office and chapters, and how to be effective leaders.



At its Alaska meeting on January 13, VVA's Conference of State Council Presidents (above) heard from former Gov. Tony Knowles (left) and Sen. Charles Huggins (below).



During our Round Table discussion, we talked about the Leadership Conference and the proposed seminars. We discussed issues such as DD Forms 214, communications, assured funding, and the role the states and chapters need to play in this.

We had a busy and productive meeting. On Saturday after we adjourned, we loaded into a bus to visit the Wasilla chapter. Chapter 891 hosted an Alaskan cook-out, and we all got our fill of food.

I would like to thank the Alaska State Council and the Alaska chapters for their great hospitality. They made us feel like we were home and not from the Lower Forty-eight. ■

MINORITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE DIVERSITY AWARD: NOMINATIONS, APPLICATIONS, CRITERIA

Diversity is an integral part of our society and military experience. VVA's Minority Veterans Committee encourages the entire veterans' community to appreciate and experience diversity within Vietnam Veterans of America. In support of the overall VVA diversity initiative, the Committee has established an annual Diversity Award given at the National Conventions and the Leadership Conferences.

VVA's Minority Affairs Committee Diversity Award recognizes outstanding achievements by an individual, business, or organization in the promotion of diversity within the veterans' community. The award represents efforts and achievements that develop a culture and environment in which diversity is valued.

All nominees must have made a significant contribution to the advancement of diversity and to VVA's mission statement. Contributions may include, but are not limited to, initiatives and programs that advance harmony and respect, and improve social justice, human rights, and cultural awareness.

NOMINATION INFORMATION

1. Nomination statements should not exceed two typed pages.
2. All team, group, or organization's nominations should include a list of all members.
3. Individual nominations should include a current vitae or resume that outlines minority veteran involvement, participation, and accomplishments related to diversity.
4. All nominations should be submitted to the Chair of the Minority Affairs Diversity Award Committee by June 1.
5. Incomplete submissions will not be reviewed.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Attach no more than two doubled-spaced typed pages explaining the efforts you have made to promote diversity in the veterans' community in accordance with the award committee's criteria.
2. Submit the typed information and a photo (individual or group) by June 1. Include no more than three supporting documents such as media clippings, testimonies, and excerpts from printed materials.
3. Submit applications to: Francisco F. Ivarra, 109 N. 122nd St., Seattle, WA 98133. The VVA Minority Affairs Award Committee reserves the right to verify any information submitted.

AWARD CRITERIA

Submitted documentation will be assessed by the following standards:

1. Cultivating relationships with veterans of different racial, ethnic, religious, gender, cultural, and socio-economic status.
2. Self-examination of institutional philosophies and initiatives or individual attitudes and behaviors to become more aligned with principles of diversity and inclusion.
3. Taking a positive stand for equality and empowerment within the veterans' community; initiating corrective action to eliminate discriminatory policies and practices; and evidence of support for efforts to encourage inclusion and promote diversity.
4. Learning about the importance of diversity and inclusion and teaching about educational programs that promote inclusion and appreciation of diversity.
5. Actively promoting diversity and improving cultural competency within VVA, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the political and media arenas.



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ASK THE PARLIAMENTARIAN

VVA Rules

BY MIKE SWIFT

Got a question about rules? Ask Mike Swift. He's VVA's parliamentarian. Answers are based on VVA's parliamentary authority, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, 10th edition.



Q: Should we count abstentions when taking a vote?

A: The chair should not call for abstentions in taking a vote, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless. To "abstain" means not to vote at all, and a member who makes no response if "abstentions" are called for abstains just as much as one who responds to that effect. *Robert's*, page 42, line 25.

Since we do business by majority vote, consider this. If 15 members vote yes, 9 members vote no, and 5 members abstain, the motion is adopted. If 15 members vote yes, 9 members vote no, and 17 members abstain, the motion is still adopted. The number of votes cast is 24 and a majority—more than half—of 24 is 13 or more.

Q: Why do some members say an amendment must be read three times before it can be adopted?

A: Those members didn't read that in *Robert's. Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure*, pages 503-507, sections 731-736, addresses the issue and the requirements of three readings used by various legislature's assemblies. Legislative assemblies and deliberative assemblies use different types of rules. Legislative assemblies use *Mason's*, *Cushing's*, and *Jefferson's* manuals, while deliberative assemblies use *Robert's*, *Demeter's*, and *Sturgis'* manuals.

Q: Certain members frequently move to table motions. When should we table a motion?

A: The motion to Table enables us to lay the main motion aside temporarily when something else of immediate urgency arises. Table is commonly misused in place of the motion to Postpone Indefinitely, or to Postpone to a Certain Time. It is out of order to Table a motion if there is no matter urgently requiring immediate attention. Table is incorrectly used and wrongly admitted with the intention of either killing a motion without a direct vote or of suppressing a motion without debate. This is in violation of a basic principle of general parliamentary law that only a two-thirds vote can rightfully suppress a main motion without debate. *Robert's*, page 201, line 29, and page 207, line 15.

I have attended VVA meetings at all levels and have yet to witness another matter urgently requiring immediate attention. Usually the member moving to table is not aware of the characteristics of the motion and the restriction it places on the members. Table is only one of seven subsidiary motions that we can use to process a main motion.

Q: A member at last month's meeting tried to yield his speaking time to another member. The chair would not allow it, and we had a lot of contentious discussion over it. Can one member yield his or her speaking time to another member?

A: Unless the organization has a special rule on the subject, a member cannot yield any unexpired portion of time to another member. If a member yields the floor before speaking the full ten minutes, he or she waives the right to the remaining time. If a speaker yields to another member for a question, the time consumed by the question is charged to the speaker. *Robert's*, page 376, line 4.

If you have a question on parliamentary procedure, send it to Mike at parliamentarian@vva.org ■

AVVA CHAPEL OF FOUR CHAPLAINS

2006 Nomination Process

The ninth annual Chapel of Four Chaplains ceremony sponsored by Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America will be held September 10 at the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center in Cape May, N.J. Nominations for the Legion of Honor, the Humanitarian Award, and the Bronze Medallion of the Chapel of Four Chaplains must be received by June 17.

Chapter representatives, state representatives, or members of the AVVA National Board of Directors may nominate two individuals. VVA chapter or state council presidents or members of the VVA National Board of Directors also may nominate two individuals for induction. Previous recipients of this award also may make nominations.

LEGION OF HONOR NOMINATIONS

In no more than two paragraphs, describe the nominee's selfless service, which may include service to the community, religious, civic, fraternal, or veterans' organizations. The Chapel Awards Committee must approve all nominations.

HUMANITARIAN AWARD NOMINATIONS

Only the National AVVA President, members of the National Board of Directors, or state AVVA representatives; or the National VVA President, members of the National Board of Directors, or VVA state council presidents may nominate individuals for the Humanitarian Award.

In no more than four paragraphs, describe the nominee's selfless, sacrificial service. In all cases, the service must go far above and beyond that which is normally required.

Supplementary documentation (news articles, letters of endorsement, etc.) is required. All nominations must be approved by the Chapel Awards Committee, which rigorously reviews all nominations.

BRONZE MEDALLION NOMINATIONS

Only AVVA and VVA National Presidents and members of the AVVA and VVA National Boards of Directors may nominate individuals for the Bronze Medallion.

In no more than one page, describe the nominee's contributions to world peace, the well-being of mankind, or to interfaith and interethnic tolerance. Supplementary documentation (news articles, letters of endorsement, etc.) and substantiation of other awards received is required. Support for the submission must be compelling and stress the nominee's worthiness for this honor.

All nominations must be approved by the Chapel Awards Committee, which limits the award of the Bronze Medallion to one member of any organization per year.

SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS

Please be as specific as possible, and include the nominee's full name, chapter affiliation (if applicable), address, and telephone number. E-mail submissions are preferred. If a nominator does not have access to e-mail, submissions via letter or fax are acceptable. The June 17 deadline is firm; nominations received afterward will not be considered.

All nominations should be sent to:

AVVA Chapel of Four Chaplains Awards Program
8605 Cameron Street
Suite 400
Silver Spring, MD 20910

E-mail submissions should be sent to mmiller@avva.org

Anyone wishing to withdraw a nomination must do so by June 17. Nomination withdrawals must be submitted in writing to the above address; no phone calls or e-mails will be accepted. The Chapel Awards Committee will be the final authority concerning all awards.

All nominations must be received by June 17. ■

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- 199th Light Infantry Brigade In Vietnam 1967-1970, 60 minutes
- 1st Infantry Division: Vietnam & The 1960s-70s, 102 minutes
- 1st Marine Division: Hill 510 In Vietnam, 15 minutes
- 430th Tactical Fighter Squadron "Invades" Takhli, RTAFB, 50 minutes
- 4th Infantry & 25th Infantry Divisions In Vietnam, 90 minutes
- 600th Photo Squadron In Vietnam & Gun Camera film, 80 minutes
- 6th Psychological Printing Operations Btn, Saigon, 1967, 8 minutes
- 9th Infantry Division In Vietnam, 60 minutes
- A Day in Vietnam, 50 minutes
- A-1 Skyraider / Flying Hobos Pleiku, 1st Air Commando 1966, 75 min.
- A-6E Intruder, EA-6 Prowler And A-7 Corsair, 75 minutes
- AC-119 Gunships: AC-119G & 17th SOS/AC-119K & 18th SOS, 100 min.
- Air Cavalry: Vietnam (featuring 1st Air Cavalry), 105 minutes
- Air Evacuation Nurse in Vietnam, 35 minutes
- Air Force Close Air Support & Forward Air Control Bien Hoa, 100 min.
- Dogs of the Vietnam War: Scout, Sentry, Patrol (USAF/USA), 100 min.
- Amphibious Assault: Surface & Helicopter Borne, 55 minutes
- An Khe (Camp Radcliff) Hong Kong Mountain, 75 minutes
- Anderson Platoon (1st Cavalry), Vietnam, 60 minutes
- Anti-Submarine Warfare 1960s & 1970s, 85 minutes
- Armed Forces Radio, Television & Newspaper, 55 minutes
- Armored Cavalry 1960s: Germany & Vietnam, 60 minutes
- Armored Commando Car (V-100) & Jeep (M-151) & MP Saigon, 30 min.
- Army Artillerymen in Vietnam & Fire Support Bases, 80 minutes
- Army Drill Sergeants 1960s, 30 minutes
- Army in Vietnam 1964, 1965 & 1966, 90 minutes
- Army Training 1960s: Basic School at Fort Ord, California; with Advanced and Physical Training, 90 minutes
- Attack On Tan Son Nhut Air Base, 1/31/1968-02/24/1968, 60 minutes
- B-52 Stratofortress, 60 minutes
- Bac Si OK!: Navy Doctors, Nurses, Corpsmen, 15 minutes
- Band's All Here (USMC, Music and History), 90 minutes
- Basic School & Mountain Warfare Training Center (USMC), 45 minutes
- Battle For Hue, 45 minutes
- Battle For Military Region I, 30 minutes
- Bien Hoa Air Base: 1964-1969, 80 minutes
- Black Man: Racism In The Air Force In The 1970s, 40 minutes
- C-123 Provider & Operation Ranch Hand 1964-1966, 90 minutes
- C-124 Operations in the 1960s, 100 minutes
- C-130 Hercules 1950s and 1960s Overview, 120 minutes
- C-130 Hercules Operations in Vietnam, 81 minutes
- C-47 Skytrain And Lt. Col. Preston S. Flanagan, 25 minutes
- Cam Ranh Bay, Scenes From 1966-1968, 60 minutes
- Camp Eagle Vietnam 1971, 30 minutes
- Camp Enari: 4th Inf. Div. (Dragon Mountain, Pleiku) 1967-69, 50 min.
- Camp J.J. Carroll, Rock Pile & FSB Charlie One, 1967-1970, 30 minutes
- Carrier Pilot Training 1970s: Pensacola, Florida, 60 minutes
- Chu Lai Air Base 1965-1968: Marines, Seabees, Army, 75 minutes
- Coast Guard Combat Veterans Reunion 1990s, 120 minutes
- Coast Guard in Vietnam, 60 minutes
- Combat Infantry Soldier In Vietnam: Life In The Field, 60 minutes
- Crossing The Line: King Neptune Ceremony Over Time, 50 minutes
- Cu Chi, Home Of The 25th Division In Vietnam 1967-1970, 60 minutes
- Da Nang Air Base: Scenes From 1965-1970, 100 minutes
- Disaster At Bien Hoa Air Base, 1965, 60 minutes
- Dong Tam Base Camp & Shipyard 1967-1969, 45 minutes
- Electronic Tactical Air War Over Vietnam, 30 minutes
- F-105 Thunderchief: From Production to Vietnam, 100 minutes
- F-111 Weapons System & Crew Module System, 42 minutes
- F-4 Phantom Overview, 110 minutes
- Face of War: 97 Days With a Marine Company in Vietnam, 75 minutes
- Farewell Ceremony Gen. Westmoreland, June 1968, 18 minutes
- Flamethrowers: Portable And Mechanized, 30 minutes
- Fleet Ocean Tugs Featuring USS Papago ATF-160, 40 minutes

- For Drill Instructors Only!, USMC 55 minutes
- Guided Missile Cruisers 1960-1970s, 110 minutes
- Guided Missile Frigates & Destroyers 1960s, 85 minutes
- Heavy Cruisers: 1930s-1960s, 90 minutes
- Hook, Line & Helo, 30 minutes
- Hospital Ship: USS Repose & Corpsmen, 50 minutes
- Huey Helicopter: Training to Vietnam, 115 minutes
- Improvised Emergency Signals And The Intruders, 35 minutes
- Infantry Rifle Training: Fort Benning Georgia, 1965, 50 minutes
- Iowa Class Battleships: USS Iowa, USS New Jersey, USS Missouri and USS Wisconsin, 120 minutes
- Jolly Green Giants: Recovery & Rescue Service In Vietnam, 70 minutes
- KC-135 Stratotanker Air Refueling, 50 minutes
- Korat RTAB and Camp Friendship 1965-1970, 70 minutes
- Long Binh: 1967-1972, 60 minutes
- LST Operations In Vietnam, 30 minutes
- M-14 & M-16: This Is My Rifle, 75 minutes
- Marine Aviation In Vietnam: 1st MAW, 90 minutes
- Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego 1969 & 1973, 45 minutes
- Marines 1965 & Ops. Starlite, Piranha & Harvest Moon, 90 minutes
- Marines 1966 With Operations Hastings & Prairie, 70 minutes
- Marines 1967 & Operations Buffalo and Independence, 65 minutes
- Marines 1968 Ops Baxter Gardens & Mameluke Thrust, 80 minutes
- Military Police Story: WWI To Vietnam, 30 minutes
- Minesweeping World War II, Korea & Vietnam, 92 minutes
- Missile Navy, 30 minutes
- Naval Training Center, San Diego (Disestablishment), 60 minutes
- Navy Advisor in Vietnam, 35 minutes
- Navy Frogmen, Underwater Demolition Teams & SEALs, 105 minutes
- New Soldier In Vietnam, 70 minutes
- Nha Trang 1965-1972, 60 minutes
- Night Vision Techniques For Vietnam, 30 minutes
- NOT S.O.P. Unusual Films Made By The Military, 120 minutes
- Observation Aircraft 1960s, 70 minutes
- Ong Bien: Navy Seabee Teams In Vietnam, 18 minutes
- Operation Blue Light: 61st Air Wing/ 3rd Inf. Brigade, 50 minutes
- Operation Delaware 1968 and Camp Evans, 60 minutes
- PACAF (Air Force) Jungle Survival School, Clark AB., 21 min.
- Parachute Rigger 1960s, 30 minutes
- Phan Rang Air Base, 1965-1970, 60 minutes
- Phu Bai Combat Base: Scenes From 1968 Through 1971, 50 minutes
- Phu Cat Air Base, 1966-1968, 70 minutes
- Pltn. 145 (USMC): Vietnam Platoon Returns to Boot Camp, 60 minutes
- President Johnson in Vietnam and "Why Vietnam", 70 minutes
- Railroad Logistical Support Vietnam: 506th Field Depot, 1967, 45 min.
- Ranger & Recondo Training: Vietnam Era, 60 minutes
- Red Cross 1940s-1960s, 70 minutes
- Saigon Street Scenes, 30 minutes
- Save A Soldier & Dustoffs, 80 minutes
- Scenes From China Beach: In-country R&R, 35 minutes
- Scenes From Dong Ha Air Base In Vietnam, 20 minutes
- Seabees WWII-Vietnam, 50 min.
- Seabees/Marine Engineers Vietnam, 45 minutes
- Seapower On The Move: 1960s Overview Of USN Fleet, 60 minutes
- Siege at Khe Sanh and Air Power at Khe Sanh with Contact, 45 min.
- Small Boat Warfare in Vietnam, 90 minutes
- Smoking Holes: Aircraft Accidents Of The 20th Century, 60 minutes
- Special Forces In Vietnam, 100 minutes
- Submarine Training In The 1960s & Pride Runs Deep, 60 minutes
- Submariners 1960s & The Growler Story WWII, 50 minutes
- Tactical Air Reconnaissance Over Vietnam: Alone, Unarmed and Unafraid, 90 minutes
- Tailhook Association Convention Las Vegas 1968, 30 minutes
- Tan Son Nhut Airbase, Vietnam 1965-1968, 60 minutes
- Thailand: Where Men Are Free & Soldier in Thailand 1960s, 55 minutes
- Tug And Harbor Masters In Vietnam: 1966-1970, 60 minutes
- Tunnel Destruction In Vietnam, 30 minutes
- Tuy Hoa Air Force Base, Vietnam, 40 minutes

- U.S. Navy Band: Traditions In Music, 60 minutes
- Ubon And Udorn Airbases, Thailand with F-4C MiG Killers: 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 90 minutes
- Underway Replenishment 1940s, 1950s & 1960s, 100 minutes
- USNS Corpus Christi Bay, 30 minutes
- USS America (CVA-66) 1965-1968, 60 minutes
- USS Bon Homme Richard (CVA-31) 1950s-1960s, 45 minutes
- USS Constellation (CVA-64) 1962-1970, 45 minutes
- USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) 1965-1970, 50 minutes
- USS Enterprise (CVAN-65) 1960-1970s, 90 minutes
- USS Enterprise 1969 Fire, 45 minutes
- USS Forrestal 1967 Fire, 72 minutes
- USS Forrestal: Plat Camera Footage Of 1967 Fire, 60 minutes
- USS Hancock CV-19: WWII, Korea, Vietnam, 60 minutes
- USS Independence CVA-62, 90 minutes
- USS Kitty Hawk, CV-63, 1961-1979, 75 minutes
- USS Midway, CV-41/CVB-41/CVA-41, 1945-1970, 60 minutes
- USS Oriskany (CVA-34) Off The Coast Of Vietnam, 40 minutes
- USS Oriskany 1966 Fire, 60 minutes
- USS Randolph 1945-1967 (CV-15, CVA-15, CVS-15), 50 minutes
- USS Ranger CVA/CV-61, 1953-1986, 70 minutes
- USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14) Off The Coast Of Vietnam, 30 minutes
- USS Valley Forge CV-45, LPH-8, 1949-1966, 60 minutes
- U-Tapao (Utapao) Air Base Thailand, 1967-1972, 60 minutes
- Viet Cong at War & VC Mines & Traps, 100 minutes
- Vietnam Crucible: Army 1967-68, 30 minutes
- Vietnam From The Air, 70 minutes
- Vietnam War: Universal Newsreels Of 1967, 76 minutes
- Vung Tau, Vietnam, 60 minutes
- Weapons Of The Artillerymen 1960s And 1970s, 70 minutes
- West Point Academy In The 1960s, 60 minutes
- When The Enemy Is My Prisoner, 30 minutes
- Why Vietnam And A Nation Builds Under Fire, 62 minutes
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WOMEN VETERANS COMMITTEE REPORT

Legislative Priorities

BY MARSHA FOUR, CHAIR

It is the hope of the committee that this year we will see legislation addressing care of newborns delivered to women veterans whose delivery is covered by the VA. The two legislative versions we have seen are HR 4046 and S 1182. Each takes a different approach in addressing this need.



Another item we would like to see acted upon by legislation is the extension of the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans' Biennial Report. The legislation, requiring a report of recommendations to the Secretary and its delivery to Congress, has lapsed. The committee feels it is an important detail that needs to be renewed.

The VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans meets in Washington March 20-23 to work on its 2006 report, which will be delivered to the Secretary in June. The committee report, though, is not currently required.

Check out the committee web page for meeting minutes and other topics of interest. If you have items you feel may be appropriate for the page, please e-mail me at mfour@vva.org ■

VETERANS AGAINST DRUGS TASK FORCE REPORT

One More Core Value

BY DAVE SIMMONS, CHAIR

I am pleased, as the new VAD Task Force chair, to report that the Veterans Against Drugs Program is growing and expanding every day to different parts of the country.

The most exciting news is a plan to develop a sixth "Core Value," Patriotism. It will be presented to the VVA Board of Directors for approval as soon as an official curriculum and lesson plan are developed.



The Veterans Against Drugs Task Force is looking for VVA chapters and state councils that would like to have their "In Service to America" VAD programs featured in this column. The Task Force believes that this will be one of the best ways to let VVA members know about the many different and diversified programs that work with young people through the VAD Program. Veterans Against Drugs is the most flexible and adaptable anti-drug, anti-violence program working with American youth.

This program has been adapted to work with children as young as eight and with youthful offenders who have been sentenced to a rigorous "boot camp" environment by the courts. The Veterans Against Drugs Program and the Core Values of Honesty, Integrity, Compassion, Camaraderie, Advocacy, and Meaningful Achievement work well in small towns and big cities all across the country.

We look forward to showcasing these diversified programs. ■

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VETERANS BENEFITS UPDATE

How To Get Your Records

BY DAVID L. HOUPPERT, DIRECTOR, VETERANS BENEFITS PROGRAM

I have received several inquiries asking how to obtain military records and military decorations. Some are researching claims for veterans benefits, while others are interested in collecting historical information for their families. Some, sadly, are seeking information about relatives they never knew because they were casualties of the Vietnam War.

Military records may be obtained by mail, fax, and the Internet. You need to know the veteran's complete name used while in service; branch of service; his or her service number and Social Security number; dates of service; and date and place of birth (particularly if the service number is unknown).

Additional recommended information includes place of discharge, last unit of assignment, place of entry into service, and the purpose or reason for your request for information.

This information should be submitted on a Standard Form SF-180, which is reproduced on pages 17-18 and is available at www.archives.gov

I also have had several inquiries from veterans and their families seeking information on obtaining replacement medals and ribbons. These may be obtained from the appropriate office within each branch of service. All requests must be signed by the veteran or next of kin. The request should be sent using an SF-180. Also include a copy of the veteran's DD-214, if possible. All requests should be mailed to:

National Personnel Records Center
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

Requests for the Army and Army Air Corps should be directed to the Medals Section (NRPMA-M). Air Force requests should be sent to the Air Force Reference Branch (FRPMF). Navy requests go to the Navy Liaison Office; Marine Corps and Coast Guard requests should be addressed to the Bureau of Navy Personnel Liaison Office, Room 5409. ■



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Elections, Membership, The Web Site, And Tucson

BY MARY MILLER, AVVA NATIONAL PRESIDENT

By the end of April, AVVA members affiliated with VVA chapters that hold annual elections should have completed that process. Remember that the process is not completed until the post-election report has been submitted to your State Representative/President. This is essential in permitting the flow of communication of affiliated-member activities by the Affiliated Chapter Representative to the State Representative/President, and then on to your Regional Director and National.

The Michigan State Association has been holding an AVVA membership drive. The membership drive has been running from January 1 to March 31. The member who brings in the most AVVA members will be awarded \$100. Good luck with your membership drive.

Bob Thomson, AVVA's Executive Director, and Sonja Holybee, AVVA's Web Coordinator, have devoted many long hours to improving AVVA's website. It will be up and running by the time this issue comes out. Fabulous work, Bob and Sonja.

Don't forget that our Project Friendship for the Tucson Biennial Meeting will be the National United Spinal Association. At the local level, it will be the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network. Those who attend the Biennial Meeting will be able to share their fund-raising ideas and learn new ones during the seminar on Friday afternoon.

Together Always. ■



2006 Fellowship Awards

BY JUDY BOLIO

It's time to make nominations for the Fellowship Award to be presented at the AVVA Biennial Meeting in Tucson. Past recipients were recognized for their work for veterans and their country. We in AVVA want the Fellowship Award to remain a prestigious honor.

The requirements for nominations are:

1. Applicant must be a current member in good standing of AVVA with no pending disciplinary actions.
2. Applications must be postmarked no later than May 12.
3. Include a report, no less than one page but no more than two pages, describing the individual's attributes and accomplishments.
4. Include documents or articles to reinforce the submission.
5. Submissions should be sent to: Judy Bolio, Awards Committee Chair, 326-16th Avenue, Silvis, IL 61282-1809; or e-mail fnjbolio@aol.com

The Awards Committee is responsible for the awards selections. The award will be presented during the AVVA Luncheon on Thursday, July 13. All submissions will remain the sole property of the Awards Committee. ■



Project Friendship and Pennsylvania's Homeless Women Veterans: Linda Haberkorn, AVVA Region 2 Director and President of AVVA's Pennsylvania Association, presented Marsha Four, the Director of Homeless Veterans Services of the Philadelphia Veterans Multi-service and Education Center, gift certificates from the Pennsylvania AVVA Project Friendship. AVVA and VVA members in Pennsylvania collected more than \$2,000 worth of items and gift cards for the residents of the Mary E. Walker House, a 30-bed transitional residence for homeless women veterans located at the Coatesville VA Medical Center in Coatesville, Pa.

Election Report

BY KATHY ANDRAS

By now everyone should have received elections packets. If you have not, please contact me, and one will be mailed to you. Elections for National and Regional Directors will be held during the VVA Leadership Conference in Tucson, July 11-16.

It is the duty of the State Representative or State President to communicate with all Chapter representatives about the candidates who will be running for Regional Director in their areas as well as the declared candidates for AVVA National Officers.

To all candidates: The deadline for Form 012 is June 11. A letter of intent should be submitted at this time. Submit your letter of intent as early as possible so that the State representatives will have time to review the information with their membership. There are no provisions in AVVA's Policy & Procedures for any unannounced candidates to run off the floor for any elected office at any level.

Delegates: Your deadline for Form 021 is June 11. You will receive a verification letter from the Election Committee once your membership has been verified. There will be no delegate registration at the National AVVA Convention by the Election Committee.

If your AVVA Chapter is having an election for Chapter Representative it must be held between January and April. Within 45 days of the election, you must notify the State Representative or State President with the name of the person who has been elected as your Chapter Representative.

This will be a very busy and active year for AVVA. Remember the deadline for the Candidate and Delegate forms is June 11. There will be no exceptions to this rule. Mark your calendars for the Biennial Meeting in Tucson. Your participation in our organization is essential. ■

Better Chance Scholarship

BY JUDY VARGO

In 1998, AVVA established the Better Chance Scholarship Fund as a way to improve the lives of veterans and their families through education. The program targets students who want to go to college but cannot afford the escalating costs. Typically, one \$1,000 and two \$500 scholarships are awarded.

A candidate either must be an AVVA or VVA member, or the spouse, child, or grandchild of a KIA or MIA Vietnam veteran. Interested? Visit the AVVA website, www.avva.org for details. ■



AVVA PA Friendship

AVVA/VVA has designated the **United Spinal Association** its charity for 2006. You may visit the group's web site, www.unitedspinal.org to see what amazing work this organization does for veterans, for children, and for all people with spinal injuries.

In addition, we have selected the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN), a non-profit group that works with people with AIDS, as our local charity to work with. Many veterans have contracted AIDS; some, unfortunately, have passed the virus to family members. TIHAN's wish list includes: personal-care products, paper products, socks, greeting cards, gift cards, candles, and cash.

Please be generous. ■

REQUEST PERTAINING TO MILITARY RECORDS

To ensure the best possible service, please thoroughly review the accompanying instructions before filling out this form. Please print clearly or type. If you need more space, use plain paper.

SECTION I - INFORMATION NEEDED TO LOCATE RECORDS (Furnish as much as possible.)

1. NAME USED DURING SERVICE (last, first, and middle)		2. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.	3. DATE OF BIRTH	4. PLACE OF BIRTH	
5. SERVICE, PAST AND PRESENT (For an effective records search, it is important that all service be shown below.)					
	BRANCH OF SERVICE	DATES OF SERVICE		CHECK ONE	
		DATE ENTERED	DATE RELEASED	OFFICER	ENLISTED
					SERVICE NUMBER DURING THIS PERIOD (If unknown, write ?unknown?)
a. ACTIVE SERVICE					
b. RESERVE SERVICE					
c. NATIONAL GUARD					
6. IS THIS PERSON DECEASED? If ?YES? enter the date of death.			7. IS (WAS) THIS PERSON RETIRED FROM MILITARY SERVICE?		
NO YES _____			NO YES		

SECTION II INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

1. REPORT OF SEPARATION (DD Form 214 or equivalent). This contains information normally needed to verify military service. A copy may be sent to the veteran, the deceased veteran's next of kin, or other persons or organizations if authorized in Section III, below. NOTE: If more than one period of service was performed, even in the same branch, there may be more than one Report of Separation. Be sure to show EACH year that a Report of Separation was issued, for which you need a copy.

An **UNDELETED** Report of Separation is requested for the year(s) _____

This normally will be a copy of the full separation document including such sensitive items as the character of separation, authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and dates of time lost. An undeleted version is ordinarily required to determine eligibility for benefits.

A **DELETED** Report of Separation is requested for the year(s) _____

The following information will be deleted from the copy sent: authority for separation, reason for separation, reenlistment eligibility code, separation (SPD/SPN) code, and for separations after June 30, 1979, character of separation and dates of time lost.

2. OTHER INFORMATION AND/OR DOCUMENTS REQUESTED _____

3. PURPOSE (Optional ? An explanation of the purpose of the request is strictly voluntary. Such information may help the agency answering this request to provide the best possible response and will in no way be used to make a decision to deny the request.) _____

SECTION III - RETURN ADDRESS AND SIGNATURE

1. REQUESTER IS:

Military service member or veteran identified in Section I, above
 Next of kin of deceased veteran _____ (relation)

Legal guardian (must submit copy of court appointment)
 Other (specify) _____

2. SEND INFORMATION/DOCUMENTS TO:
 (Please print or type. See item 3 on accompanying instructions.)

3. AUTHORIZATION SIGNATURE REQUIRED (See item 2 on accompanying instructions.) I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the information in this Section III is true and correct.

Name _____
 Street _____ Apt. _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Signature (Please do not print.) _____
 Date of this request _____ Daytime phone _____
 Email address _____

** This form is available at <http://www.archives.gov/research/order/standard-form-180.pdf> on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) web site.**

LOCATION OF MILITARY RECORDS

The various categories of military service records are described in the chart below. For each category there is a code number which indicates the address at the bottom of the page to which this request should be sent. Please refer to the Instruction and Information Sheet accompanying this form as needed.

BRANCH	CURRENT STATUS OF SERVICE MEMBER	ADDRESS CODE	
		Personnel Record	Health Record
AIR FORCE	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 5/1/1994	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1994 – 9/30/2004	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 10/1/2004	1	11
	Active (including National Guard on active duty in the Air Force), TDRL, or general officers retired with pay	1	
	Reserve, retired reserve in nonpay status, current National Guard officers not on active duty in the Air Force, or National Guard released from active duty in the Air Force	2	
	Current National Guard enlisted not on active duty in the Air Force	13	
COAST GUARD	Discharge, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1898	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1898 – 3/31/1998	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 4/1/1998	14	11
	Active, reserve, or TDRL	3	
MARINE CORPS	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1905	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1905 – 4/30/1994	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 5/1/1994 – 12/31/1998	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/1999	4	11
	Individual Ready Reserve or Fleet Marine Corps Reserve	5	
	Active, Selected Marine Corps Reserve, TDRL	4	
ARMY	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 11/1/1912 (enlisted) or before 7/1/1917 (officer)	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 11/1/1912 – 10/15/1992 (enlisted) or 7/1/1917 – 10/15/1992 (officer)	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 10/16/1992 – 9/30/2002	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 10/1/2002	7	11
	Reserve; or active duty records of current National Guard members who performed service in the U.S. Army before 7/1/1972	7	
	Active enlisted (including National Guard on active duty in the U.S. Army) or TDRL enlisted	9	
	Active officers (including National Guard on active duty in the U.S. Army) or TDRL officers	8	
	Current National Guard enlisted not on active duty in Army (including records of Army active duty performed after 6/30/1972)	13	
	Current National Guard officers not on active duty in Army (including records of Army active duty performed after 6/30/1972)	12	
NAVY	Discharged, deceased, or retired before 1/1/1886 (enlisted) or before 1/1/1903 (officer)	6	
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/1/1886 – 1/30/1994 (enlisted) or 1/1/1903 – 1/30/1994 (officer)	14	14
	Discharged, deceased, or retired 1/31/1994 – 12/31/1994	14	11
	Discharged, deceased, or retired on or after 1/1/1995	10	11
	Active, reserve, or TDRL	10	
PHS	Public Health Service - Commissioned Corps officers only	15	

ADDRESS LIST OF CUSTODIANS (BY CODE NUMBERS SHOWN ABOVE) – Where to write/send this form

1	Air Force Personnel Center HQ AFPC/DPSRP 550 C Street West, Suite 19 Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4721	6	National Archives & Records Administration Old Military and Civil Records (NWCTB-Military) Textual Services Division 700 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20408-0001	11	Department of Veterans Affairs Records Management Center P.O. Box 5020 St. Louis, MO 63115-5020
2	Air Reserve Personnel Center /DSMR HQ ARPC/DPSSA/B 6760 E. Irvington Place, Suite 4600 Denver, CO 80280-4600	7	U.S. Army Human Resources Command ATTN: AHRC-PAV-V 1 Reserve Way St. Louis, MO 63132-5200	12	Army National Guard Readiness Center NGB-ARP 111 S. George Mason Dr. Arlington, VA 22204-1382
3	Commander, CGPC-adm-3 USCG Personnel Command 4200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1100 Arlington, VA 22203-1804	8	U.S. Army Human Resources Command ATTN: AHRC-MSR 200 Stovall Street Alexandria, VA 22332-0444	13	The Adjutant General (of the appropriate state, DC, or Puerto Rico)
4	Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps Personnel Management Support Branch (MMSB-10) 2008 Elliot Road Quantico, VA 22134-5030	9	Commander USAEREC ATTN: PCRE-F 8899 E. 56th St. Indianapolis, IN 46249-5301	14	National Personnel Records Center (Military Personnel Records) 9700 Page Ave. St. Louis, MO 63132-5100
5	Marine Corps Reserve Support Command (Code MMI) 15303 Andrews Road Kansas City, MO 64147-1207	10	Navy Personnel Command (PERS-313C1) 5720 Integrity Drive Millington, TN 38055-3130	15	Division of Commissioned Corps Officer Support ATTN: Records Officer 1101 Wootton Parkway, Plaza Level, Suite 100 Rockville, MD 20852

PTSD/SUBSTANCE ABUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

First Shots Fired In The Claims War

BY TOM BERGER, CHAIR

On February 13, VVA presented testimony before the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine Gulf War and Health Subcommittee. This is the subcommittee that is looking at the PTSD clinical and diagnostic procedures used in the VA disability claims process.

The subcommittee consists of a group of mental-health professionals not in the employ of the VA, and none of whom are veterans. It also includes the American Enterprise Institute's Sally Satel—the so-called expert who claims that there's a "secret underground network which advises veterans where to go for the best chance of being declared disabled." She could not answer any questions about the science behind PTSD diagnoses, and when questioned in detail about her allegations, kept making outrageous statements that had nothing to do with the day's proceedings. She left the room after her presentation and did not return.

Seven speakers addressed the subcommittee during the public comment period at the end of the day: VVA's PTSD/SA Chair and the Director of Government Relations; one of Rep. Lane Evans's (D-Ill.) staff; a former Veterans Benefits Administration official; and three people from the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, two Iraq vets and Bobby Muller. VVA's written testimony was accepted for the official record.

One of the main points in VVA's testimony was that by 2002 the Department of Veterans Affairs had prepared a "Best Practices Manual for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Compensation and Pension Examinations," containing scientifically validated assessment instruments for the diagnostic evaluation of PTSD and guidelines for the determination of a service-connected disability for PTSD using criteria from the DSM-IV. Several of the VA scientists who wrote this "Best Practices Manual" were present at the subcommittee meeting.

You might be amazed to discover that as of February 2006, the VA had issued no directives to its clinicians and adjudicators to use the Manual, nor had it provided any training on this guide. Copies are not available to staff throughout the VA, nor to anyone else. VVA has good reason to believe there are thousands of copies of the "Best Practices Manual" sitting in a warehouse somewhere—printed with tax dollars—that the VA refuses to make available.

Is there any wonder that there is so much variation among states' veterans disability compensation payments?

The message that we must continue to press on this issue is: The VA must distribute and train its mental health clinicians and staff in the use of its "Best Practices Manual" for the clinical assessment and diagnoses of PTSD in the disability claims process. We can accept nothing less.

FAMILY MATTERS

For almost 2,300 American families who have lost loved ones since the invasion of Iraq, the visit announcing that death has become a reality. More than 16,000 troops also have been seriously wounded, warranting similar visits or phone calls. According to the Institute for Policy Studies, since 2001 more than one million families have had to learn to adjust to a life without a loved one near—and the constant worry and fear. How do they cope?

Some try to outrun their fears by becoming workaholics. But according to the National Mental Health Association, finding support is imperative in handling stress, although the organization also suggests trying to maintain control over what you can. This can mean sticking to a daily routine, such as having the phone nearby, and having calls forwarded to your cell phone each morning before work.

"It's support that seems essential to the well-being of families," says Mark Smaller, director of the Neuro-Psychoanalysis Foundation in Chicago. "The first step in managing these stressful feelings is to acknowledge them and talk of them when they emerge. Just talking to another about these feelings can diffuse intensity, but certainly not make them go away." Many spouses and parents should acknowledge the importance of connecting, especially with those in similar situations.

Clearly, spouses and parents of those deployed suffer terrible mental anguish. But they are not alone. Children suffer as well. "Children need to feel not alone or isolated with their feelings," Smaller says. "The more available parents or caretakers are to the child's fears, anxiety, sadness, and anger, the better the child can integrate these feelings and not feel alone. Kids should be encouraged to talk about their feelings, ideas, thoughts, and fears about a parent leaving or one who



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Returning to Viet Nam?

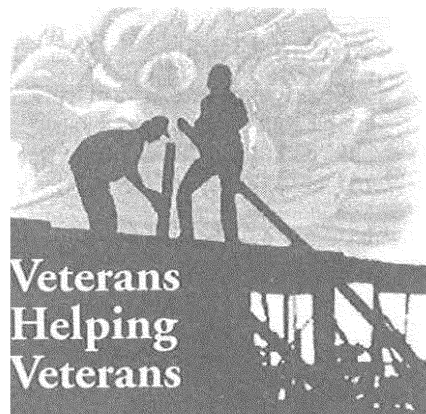
Return with us. Be a member of team made up of your fellow veterans. Spend a month helping build clinics, housing or schools and traveling to places where you served. See Viet Nam as a country, not a war.

The Veterans Viet Nam Restoration Project (VVRP) has helped over 100 veterans return to Viet Nam. Consider joining Team 22 which will depart in the Spring of 2007.

The cost: \$3,000.

For more information contact:

Scott Rutherford
(906) 483-3183
email: scottru@chartermi.net
Visit the VVRP Website:
www.vvrp.org



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continued on page 42

Veterans Rally In Annapolis



Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich, Jr., spoke to several hundred veterans who rallied in support of veterans issues in front of the Maryland State House in Annapolis. He was one of several speakers, including Maryland Lt. Gov. Michael Steele (far left) and Maryland Secy. of Veterans Affairs George Owings III (far right).

Bills currently before the legislature include one that would exempt military retirement income from state taxation. Another bill aims to alleviate problems faced by those currently serving in Afghanistan and Iraq by offering special scholarships, by establishing an advocacy and outreach center to help dependents access benefits, and by providing special death benefits to Maryland residents.

The February 6 rally was organized by a coalition of veterans groups. Prominent among the planners was Tom Insley of Baltimore VVA Chapter 451 (center of photograph, with beret). Insley's work in organizing the Maryland Legislative Veterans Caucus was highlighted in the May/June 2004 issue of *The VVA Veteran*. ■

MICHAEL KEATING

SPORTS TECH NEWS — 2006

New lure's catch rate may be too high for some tournaments.

Out-fishes other bait 19 to 4 in one contest.

Uses aerospace technology to mimic a real fish.

ORLANDO, FL— A small company in Connecticut has developed a new lure that mimics the motion of a real fish so realistically eight professionals couldn't tell the difference between it and a live shad when it "swam" toward them on retrieval. The design eliminates wobbling, angled swimming and other unnatural motions that problem other hard bait lures. It swims upright and appears to propel itself with its tail.

Curiously, the company may have designed it too well. Tournament fishermen who have used it said it's possible officials will not allow it in contests where live bait is prohibited. They claim it swims more realistically than anything they have ever seen. If so, that would hurt the company's promotional efforts. Winning tournaments is an important part of marketing a new lure.

Fish would probably prefer to see it restricted. I watched eight veteran fishermen test the new lure

(called The KickTail®) on a lake outside Orlando FL for about four hours. Four used the KickTail and four used a combination of their favorite lures and shiners (live bait). The four using the KickTail caught 41 fish versus 14 for the other four. In one boat the KickTail won 19 to 4. The KickTail also caught bigger fish, which suggests it triggers larger, less aggressive fish to strike. You can see why the company needs to get it into tournaments. An almost 3 to 1 advantage can mean thousands of dollars to a fisherman, and hundreds of thousands in sales to the company.

The KickTail's magic comes from a patented technology that breaks the tail into five segments. As water rushes by on retrieval, a little-known principle called aeronautical flutter causes the tail to wag left and right, as if the lure were propelling itself with its tail. Unlike other hard baits, the head remains stationary—only the tail wags. A company spokesman told me this.

"Fish attack live things, and they determine if something is alive by

watching its movements. Marine biologists will tell you that the more a lure swims like a real fish, the more fish it will catch. Well, the only live thing the KickTail doesn't do is breathe. It's better than live bait! It lasts longer and it never hangs half-dead from a hook. It's always swimming wild and free. Fish can't stand it. We've seen fish that have just eaten go for the KickTail. It's like having another potato chip.

"To make the KickTail even more lifelike, we gave it a natural shad color and shaped it like the most prevalent bait fish of all, the threadfin. Game fish gobble up more threadfin shad than any other baitfish.

"We knew the KickTail would out-fish other lures. It had to. Other lures wobble their heads and swim on an angle. But 41 fish to 14? That's huge! I tell you, in ten seconds anyone who has fished a day in his life knows this little swimmer's a home run. Fishermen reserved thousands of KickTails before we produced it! Here, reel it in and watch it swim toward you. Can you tell the difference between it and a live fish? (I said no.) Neither can the fish.

"The flutter technology also allows the KickTail to swim at the water's surface. Other top water lures must be worked to have any live action, or have a bill that makes them dive on retrieval. Our diver version is the only deep crank bait that let's you do tricks like 'walk



Swims with its tail.

New lure swims like a real fish--nearly triples catch in Florida contest.

the dog.' Twitch it at deep levels and it gives an irresistible, lifelike action. Other lures 'dig.' And there's no need for rattles. The five tail segments click together as you pull it through the water, calling fish from a distance."

Whether you fish for fun or profit, if you want a near 3 to 1 advantage, I would order now before the KickTail becomes known. The company even guarantees a refund, if you don't catch more fish and return the lures within 30 days. The lures come in sets of two, a floater and a diver. You can choose natural shad or chocolate shad (great for

overcast days). One set costs \$19.90; both cost \$39.80. There is also a Super-10-Pack of five floaters and five divers that includes these colors and three others for only \$79.95. You save \$19.55! S/h is only \$6.00 no matter how many you order.

To order call **1-800-873-4415** or click **www.ngcsports.com** anytime or day or send a check or M.O. (or cc number and exp. date) to NGC Sports (Dept. KX-52), 60 Church Street, Yalesville, CT 06492. CT add sales tax. The KickTail is four inches long and works in salt and fresh water.

KX-1

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by Charlie Allen



Inventor Scott Wilson lands a 10-pounder.

The Cold War Chemical Arms Race

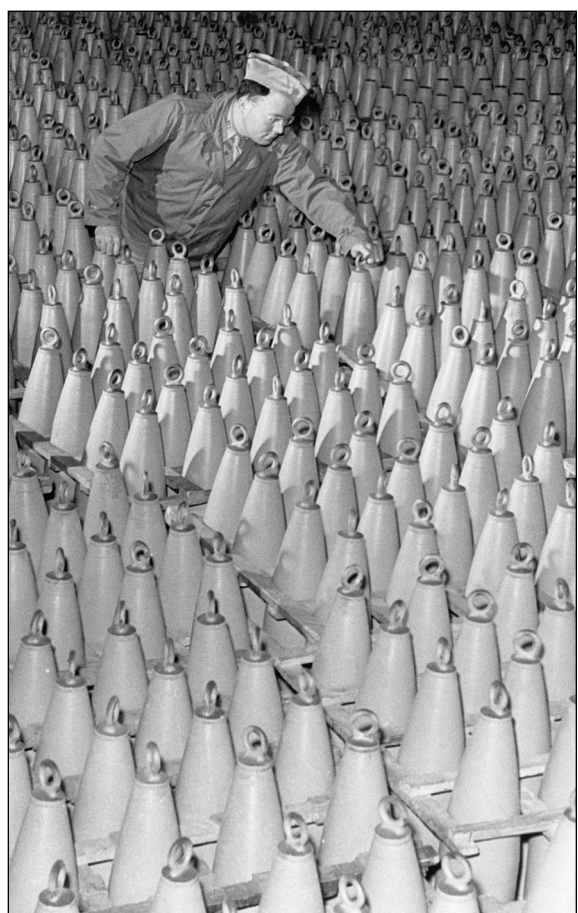
BY JOHN PRADOS

Chemistry for progress, chemistry for the future, biochemistry even better, insist the advocates of science and industry. But chemical progress also has brought much greater danger to society, in the form of toxic chemicals and biologicals, as Vietnam veterans know well. Governments are simultaneously anxious to enjoy the benefits of chemical progress and sensitive to the potentials of these products as weapons.

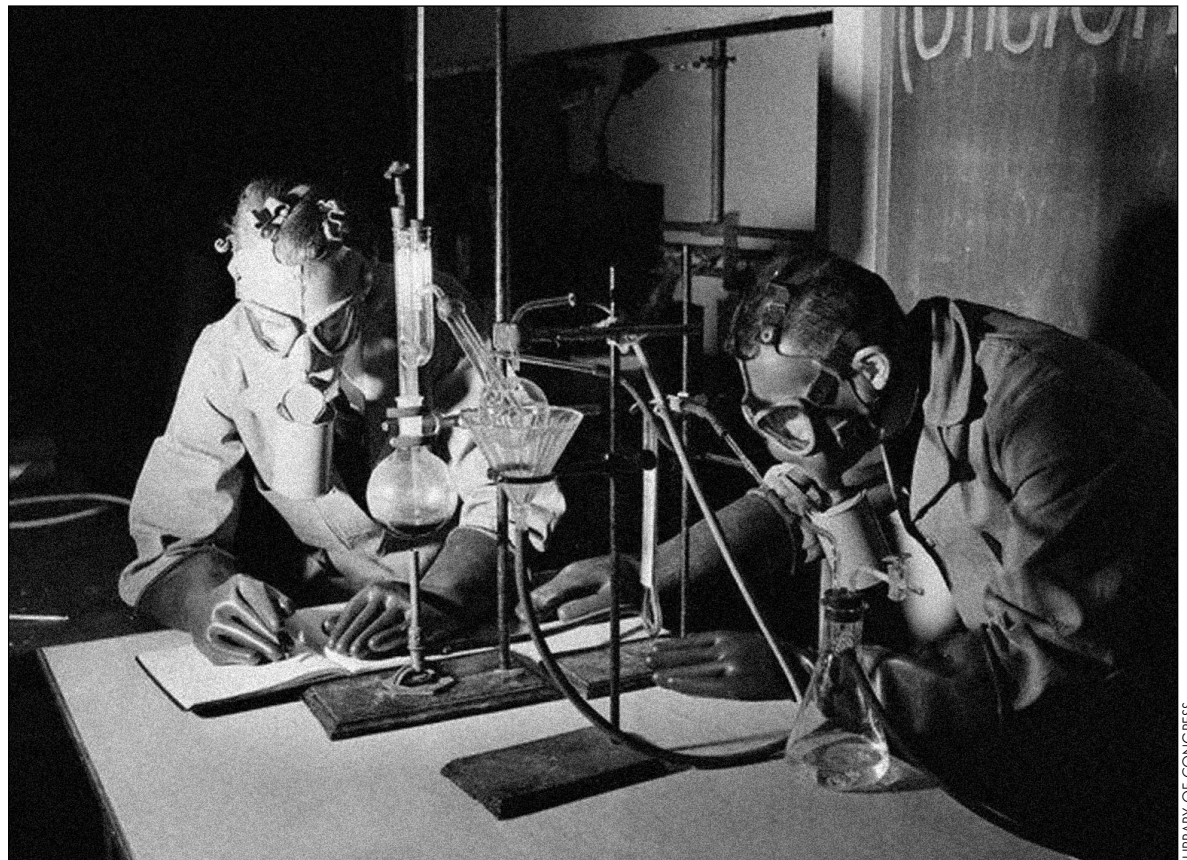
It is not surprising, therefore, that during the Cold War scientists perfected new and deadly chemical and biological weapons. This goes far beyond Pentagon efforts to craft chemical defenses or Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) experiments with mind-altering drugs. In fact, a chemical arms race took place during the Cold War that rivals the one that occurred with nuclear weapons and ballistic missile delivery systems. That arms race proved as dangerous as any of the others.

Chemicals first appeared in modern warfare during World War I in the 1915 battle of Ypres. However, there are accounts that the Greeks used sulphur fumes against their enemies as early as the 4th century, B.C.E. Chemical developments and the potential for use of chemicals as weapons were well-enough known that the 1907 Hague Convention took steps to outlaw them.

Despite prohibitions, chemical weapons proved a scourge in the war, killing an estimated 100,000 and wounding an additional 900,000 persons. The Washington Arms Conference in 1922 prohibited the use of poisonous gases. The Geneva Protocols in 1925 outlawed chemical and bacteriological warfare. This did not prevent Britain or Italy from using chemicals in colonial wars, or Japan using chemicals and biologicals in China. In World War II, the Germans used chemical and nerve agents in the Holocaust but almost never on the battlefield.



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The United States pledged no first use and the British followed suit, but they too possessed these weapons. In a notorious incident at Bari on December 2, 1943, German bombers sank an Allied cargo ship packed with 2,000 mustard gas shells, some of which exploded or leaked. The gas killed almost 100 and injured over 600. But the weapons were not introduced into warfare.

The start of the Cold War brought into play all forms of military technology. Scientific research establishments on both sides of the Iron Curtain were pressed into service, researching defenses and new forms of weaponry. The United States had formed a Chemical Warfare Service in the U.S. Army to fight World War II and demobilized it afterwards, but in August 1946 transformed the moribund unit into the Army Chemical Corps.

The United States signed the Geneva Protocol but never ratified it, and in 1947 President Harry S. Truman withdrew the international agreement from Senate consideration. That year the Chemical Corps issued a detection kit and a newly devised gas mask. The Corps was classified a combat arm because it controlled all American 4.2-inch chemical mortars, weapons specially designed to lob gas-filled shells. Jurisdiction later was transferred to Army Ordnance, leaving the Corps a combat support organization. A laboratory center at Fort Detrick, Maryland, developed new materials, especially biological weapons, and tests were carried out at Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah and at lab sites.

In 1950, the Corps began construction of a production facility for sarin nerve gas at Edgewater Arsenal, Maryland. Plants for other steps in the process were constructed at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, and Rocky Mountains Arsenal in Colorado. Sarin was

produced from 1954-57, when stockpile levels were reached and the production line put into mothballs. A 1956 Army field manual stated that the United States was not a party to any existing prohibitions, making chemical and biological warfare permissible under international law.

Meanwhile, the British discovered the essential compounds for the V-series nerve agents, which are 1,000 times more toxic on the skin than sarin, and several times more if inhaled. A pilot plant was planned in 1957, though legal disputes delayed contracting until 1960. Munitions for sarin delivery were standardized from 1954-59, and ones for VX gas were studied but not finalized. Fort Detrick also experimented with anthrax and yellow fever viruses.

In 1955, the Chemical Corps established its own counterpart to the CIA drug experiments, for "psychochemical agents" (K-agents) to incapacitate rather than kill. Estimates of the size of the American stockpile at its peak are as high as 150,000 tons.

Much of this effort was impelled by fears of the Soviet Union's work in the same fields. As early as May 1949, intelligence reports indicated that the Russians were making extensive preparations for conduct of chemical warfare. Soviet activity was first cited as a justification for budget requests in 1956. In 1951, a former German prisoner used by the Soviets as a scientist, Dr. Walter Hirsch, defected and furnished the United States an extensive account of Soviet activity, including details of labs, agents, and the news that the Russians used prisoners to conduct experiments on weapons effects.

In 1956, Russian Marshal Georgi Zhukov addressed a congress of the Soviet Communist Party, predicting that future war would include the use of massed air-

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The Cold War Chemical Arms Race

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power and rockets, along with chemical and biological weapons. That year a CIA National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) carried descriptions of Soviet chemical plants and predictions of stockpiles, but admitted to relatively little knowledge of Russian biological weapons. Even into the 1960s speculation remained rife.

For example, the 1962 edition of the standard U.S. Army field manual on the Soviet Army discussed Russian chemical troops, their organization, and their equipment, but contained almost nothing about actual weaponry. The NIEs of the 1960s made predictions based on very thin data. Much more is known today than at that time, and the CIA was just beginning to develop sources to penetrate Soviet secrecy. Then it was a matter of a couple of spies, Popov and Oleg Penkovsky, who supplied scraps of information, mainly about Soviet military organization for chemicals, the U-2 aircraft, reading Soviet scientific journals, and the occasional contact with a Russian scientist at such international forums as the Pugwash conferences. Declassified portions of the 1964 NIE on Soviet exotic weapons confirm that the state of American intelligence had not advanced much in the intervening decade.

We now know that as early as 1923 a Russian chemical laboratory in Moscow began work on weapons applications. A year later, the Soviets began

setting up a secret facility codenamed "Tomko" that did private work and some under German-Soviet secret agreements (Germany was prohibited from chemical weapons research by the Versailles treaty that ended World War I). The facility became active in 1926. It is believed that several kinds of blistering agents were in production during that decade and that new types of gas were introduced in the '30s.

The Third Main Administration of the USSR Ministry of Health performed defensive and offensive chemical warfare research. By the late '30s, the Sixth Administration of the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry held responsibility for "special chemistry," including chemical weapons. With successive name changes and relocations within the Soviet hierarchy, this entity emerged during Cold War years as the First Main Administration of the State Committee on Chemistry and, after 1963, of the Soyuzorgsintez All-Union Association.

In August 1944, Russian armies advancing toward Germany captured a chemical warfare plant before it could be demolished. At Dyenfurth, the plant yielded stocks of nerve agents, including tabun and soman, and research data. The plant was dismantled and moved to Russia. German scientists were captured and sent with it. Reports following their return brought the West its first concrete information on Soviet programs.

The Soviets began producing sarin gas in 1958-59, soman in 1967, and VX gas in 1972. There is strong evidence that Egypt used Soviet-supplied chemicals in a counterinsurgency war in Yemen during 1967. The United States used several kinds of incapacitating and defoliant agents in the Vietnam War.

To some extent Soviet efforts were spurred by American espionage ploys. Starting in 1959, Joseph Cassidy, a U.S. Army sergeant run by the FBI, fed Soviet military intelligence with a mixture of real and phony information, including details on a made-up new American chemical weapon, "GJ" gas. The intention was to get Russia to spend money in the chemical weapons arena.

We now know that the Communist Party Central Committee issued a decree on August 17, 1967, providing for preparations for chemical-biological warfare. Soviet chemical troops were strengthened, and the inception of the Russian VX nerve agent program, as well as the beginning of soman production may trace to this decree. A third-generation nerve agent called "foliant" was, in fact, authorized by this decree, according to Soviet chemical weapons scientist Vil S. Mirzayanov's late-1991 revelations.

In the case of VX, it is relevant that a Soviet research team at Leningrad independently predicted the toxicity of the class of molecules employed in this agent about the same time it was first synthesized in the West. The "foliant" program may also be related to the so-called "novichok" ("new guy") nerve agents the Soviets apparently developed in unitary and binary configurations during this later period. At its peak, some 6,000 scientists were employed on the Soviet chemical weapons program, though the numbers of overall personnel went much higher. For example, as a "secret city," Shikhany was divided into two centers after World War II, one of them ostensibly civilian. The military side alone housed 12,000-15,000 civilians and 60,000 military personnel, most of whom



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supported the smaller cadre of scientists, technicians, and production workers engaged in military work. Soviet stockpile estimates common in the 1980s ranged in the tens of thousands of tons. In the U.S. defense debate, the threat was used to justify the development of a new generation of binary chemical weapons. The budget for chemical and biological weapons went from \$262 million in 1980, Ronald Reagan's first year in office, to \$1.4 billion in 1984. Iraq used blistering and nerve agents in its war with Iran and against the Kurds during the '80s, but there is no clear evidence about the degree to which Baghdad used Soviet expertise in creating its gas-production capability.

At the 1985 Geneva Summit, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to open negotiations on a chemical weapons treaty. Talks began in January 1986. As a goodwill gesture, in October 1987, the Russians permitted an international delegation to tour the Shikhany complex. About the same time, the Politburo ordered a demonstration for its own officials of the various types of chemical agents in its arsenal. There were a dozen.

That December, Moscow issued an official declaration specifying the size of its stockpile at less than 50,000 tons. Lending weight to the numbers used in American discussions, Soviet scientist Lev Fedorov called the statement "another lie. The figure is grossly underestimated." In 1989, there were some 50,000 personnel in the Soviet Radiation, Chemical, and Biological Protection Troops corps. A multilateral Chemical Weapons Convention was completed in September 1992, and the treaty opened for signature just as Bill Clinton took office as President of the United States in 1993.

By the time this process had reached its end, Moscow had reduced its stockpile to 40,000 tons, the same level maintained by the United States. Subsequent exchanges, technical cooperation in destroying chemical stocks, and bids for American financial assistance have confirmed the size of the stockpile, which is stored at seven sites in the former Soviet Union.

On the biological side, as early as 1928, Josef Stalin approved research intended to find out if typhus could be used as a weapon. In 1933, the Russians established a research lab at Suzdal, at the former Pokrovsky Monastery. Two years later, the lab moved to Gorodmyla Island in Lake Seliger. This laboratory was under the control of Soviet intelligence. The main military research center, set up in 1933, was the Scientific Research Institute of Microbiology at Perkhushkovo, near Moscow. A subsidiary facility at the Leningrad Military Academy followed.

The Russians experimented with primitive aerosol dispensers using powdered and liquid forms of typhus. Gulag prisoners were forced to build an experimental test site on Solovetsky Island in the White Sea. During World War II, when the Germans invaded Russia, the laboratories regrouped at Kirov as the Microbiology Research Institute.

Biological warfare research became the province of the 15th Main Directorate of the Soviet General Staff. The chief of Army medical services, Col. Gen. Yefim Smirnov, led the directorate, with major labs at Sverdlovsk, Kirov, Zagorsk, and Pokrov. A parallel civilian structure existed from the early 1960s within the Main Administration of the Microbiological Industry. Its key facility was the Institute of Immunology near Moscow. A network of "anti-plague stations" through-



out the Soviet Union, ostensibly public health research facilities, engaged in defensive preparations.

A 1967 Central Committee decree included instructions for a secret "F Program," not just the chemical agent "Foliant," but biologicals "Flute," "Fouette," "Fagot," "Flask," "Ferment," and "Factor." The Odessa institute worked on "Ferment," which suggests these were not all offensive programs. In 1969, following a disaster at an American test facility, Richard Nixon declared a moratorium on chemical weapons production and possession of biologicals. This was followed in 1972 by the international Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention, which prohibited possession of these exotic weapons. For reasons still unclear, Moscow decided, after agreeing to this ban, to continue and expand its biological warfare efforts.

In 1973, Russia created the State Concern Biopreparat which conducted this work, including the construction of new weapons labs such as Omutninsk, Obolensk, Koltsovo, and Chekhov. The civilian agency hid research efforts in this military field, among them design work on using ballistic and cruise missiles to deliver biological weapons.

Also in 1973 Israel gave the United States large amounts of Soviet chemical warfare and decontamination equipment captured in Egypt during the October War. As a result, the United States repeatedly increased the priority given to intelligence collection against the Russian exotic weapons through the rest of the 1970s.

The Reagan administration charged in 1981 that the Soviets had used biologicals in warfare in Laos, Cambodia, and Afghanistan, but the evidence for these claims did not withstand scientific verification. By 1984 the CIA reported to President Reagan that increases in the Soviet establishment had taken place under the Biopreparat. By the first Bush administration the CIA became aware of the Soviets' offensive biological warheads, courtesy of telemetry from Russian missile tests and satellite photography showing refrigerator units at missile silos that were unnecessary for nuclear warheads.

At peak size, the civilian Soviet biological weapons establishment (Biopreparat) included between twenty and thirty facilities and employed 25,000 and 32,000 people. An additional 10,000 worked for the 15th Main Directorate of the General Staff. By some estimates there were as many as 47 labs, test sites, production plants, or depots in the Soviet program.

Vladimir Pasechnik, the first scientist from Biopreparat to come to the West, provided extensive information on the establishment. A researcher at the Leningrad institute, Pasechnik indicated the Soviet effort was ten times larger than estimated by American or British intelligence. The defection of Kanatjan Alibekov (now Kenneth Alibek), a senior Biopreparat scientist, followed in 1992. Alibekov furnished even greater depth to Western knowledge of the former Soviet programs. The new knowledge led directly to joint U.S.-British demands that Russia dismantle all biological weapons programs. In February 1992, Russia announced termination of these efforts. That April the Russian government approved a decree for this purpose.

The Soviet program resulted in the most serious known incident in biological weapons production. This occurred at Sverdlovsk in March 1979. According to Alibek, the incident resulted from the failure of work crews after a shift change to notice that an exhaust filter had been removed after it clogged. As a result, machines used to dry anthrax spores continued to run for several hours, expelling toxic materials in the exhaust, until staff noticed the fault. Anthrax Disease No. 123 for Soviet biodefense researchers killed either 96 or 105 people, depending on whether you accept Soviet statements or Alibek's sources. Moscow covered up the incident, which Russian emigres first brought to light six months later.

American intelligence debated whether to accept the Soviet explanation, which was the infections had come from the sale of tainted meat. By mid-1980, the CIA and other agencies agreed on the causes of the incident. Viktor Israelyan, the senior Soviet negotiator in the chemical weapons treaty talks in the 1980s, affirms that the coverup continued through the spring of 1988. In 1992, the post-Soviet government of Boris Yeltsin admitted the truth of Sverdlovsk.

The Sverdlovsk incident calls attention to one aspect of exotic weapons programs that is different from most other military development efforts, one that makes them directly dangerous to citizens. Most weapon systems are tested as mechanical entities; planes fly, missiles are test-fired, artillery guns are sent to the firing range, tank armor is tested to see

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The Cold War Chemical Arms Race

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if guns or rockets will penetrate it. But exotic weapons exert effects directly on living beings. A certain amount of laboratory testing is possible on mice and monkeys. Live tests can be done on ranges with tethered animals, monkeys, pigs, goats, and sheep. But scientists cannot be sure of weapon effects without using human beings.

The "Atomic Soldiers" of the 1950s were not the only victims of Cold War weapons development. Chemicals and biologicals brought their own crop of victims. This is because of the necessity of establishing data in order to make a chemical or a germ into a militarily useful weapon. The speed and pattern of propagation under various weather, terrain, or atmospheric conditions, the typical behavior of a plume from an aerosol dispenser, the same data for an artillery shell or bomb. The Army fired off hundreds of shells at its Dugway test site during the 1950s for this data, which has to be collected for each type of munition and for each form of chemical or germ. Testing is necessary to examine lethality for each type of agent. Animals made up most of the test subjects, but humans also were exposed.

The Army estimates 5,500 soldiers were subjects in its tests; the Navy's exposure numbers cannot be determined with precision. The British estimate more than 3,000 servicemen were exposed to lethal substances at their exotic weapons center of Porton Down between 1939 and 1989.

But these figures do not account for inadvertent or collateral exposure. For example, the armed services had 4,300 personnel assigned to the Project SHAD, mostly Navy personnel, from 1964-69. Exposure varied a great deal. In some Fort Detrick experiments, soldiers were directly injected with doses of agents, or, having volunteered to help investigate the effectiveness of defensive equipment such as gas masks, were put into air-tight chambers into which live agents were sprayed. In some Dugway tests soldiers were placed at given distances from explosive impact points along with tethered animals for comparative purposes. The dangers were substantial.

President Eisenhower ordered that participants had to volunteer for these tests, but questions about whether prospective volunteers had sufficient information to make proper decisions persist, and the volunteer policy was not necessarily followed in Harry Truman's administration, or for that matter, those which followed Eisenhower. In the Kennedy-Johnson administrations, military personnel were simply ordered to serve in places they were exposed to toxic chemicals.

In 1977, the Army released data that showed it had carried out 239 open-air tests of agents or substances intended to simulate the behavior of the exotic weapons. British data indicate their research scientists conducted 200 of their own covert experiments. Among these were tests of simulants smuggled into the Kennedy White House in 1962, and into Congress and the Nixon White House in 1969-70. Inserted into the ventilation system, had these agents been real, everyone in the buildings could have been killed. They were carried out without the knowledge of the Secret Service or the Capitol Police.

The British pumped gas into tunnels beneath their Whitehall government center and in the Northern Line of the London Underground. In Operation "Big City" in 1956, the Army and CIA drove a car with an aerosol dispenser in its exhaust system around the streets of New York. Another simulant test took place

in the New York City subway system in 1975. In 1964-65, the Army released a simulant at National Airport in Washington, and in Greyhound bus terminals in that city, Chicago, and San Francisco.

That was the second time for San Francisco. From September 20 to 27, 1950, using a Navy vessel, similar spores were sprayed into the air of the city. Air samples were collected at dozens of points in San Francisco to measure how the simulant cloud had propagated.

The simulant used was later discovered not to be harmless after all and that is another problem: the state of technical and medical knowledge when these tests were conducted was far less advanced than today, especially with regard to chemical (or biological) toxicity. One need go no further than to look at Agent Orange or Gulf War Syndrome to understand that.

In British tests, zinc cadmium sulphide was used for fluorescent experiments and cadmium has now been established as a carcinogen. Veterans recall the same substance used on the U.S. Navy tugs involved in the SHAD experiments. In other British tests between 1961 and 1968, more than a million people were exposed to bacteria including *e. coli* and anthrax simulants.

A second problem is collateral. The tests exposed many people to potential harm, and no one had asked them to volunteer for anything. In the San Francisco case, one man died of infection linked to the tests; ten others developed infections of a similar sort.

Similarly, a test at Eglin Air Force Base in July 1951 dropped two bombs with an agent based on hog cholera to infect a test group of 115 pigs. More than 90 were infected and most died. No data is available on civilian exposure.

The experience of Cambridge, Maryland, puts the problem in high relief. A mid-size town on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Cambridge is the location of a government agricultural research station. In 1969,

the Army conducted 115 open-air tests in the Green Brier Swamp near the town. In 1984, during development of the binary nerve agent, the Army tried to do it again and the town went to court to prevent it. The Army contractor, Arthur D. Little Company, insisted that only a small amount 10 milliliters of toxic chemicals would be used in each test. That amount of some agents could kill 10,000 people. Environmental contamination problems typically went unnoticed in these tests until at least the 1970s.

In March 1969 at Dugway Proving Ground, some 6,400 sheep grazing outside the base in Skull Valley were found dead. Autopsy reports showed that they had been contaminated with VX. The incident created an uproar.

Two months later antibodies for the rare disease Venezuelan encephalitis were found in animals in the area, including buzzards, other birds, rodents, and cattle. Dugway's budget was cut by 60 percent and scientists were sent to watch for contamination. The incidents became an impetus for the Biological Weapons Convention that was concluded in 1972. Nevertheless, binary munitions were tested at Dugway in the 1980s, as were ground- and air-launched cruise missiles during the Carter administration.

The chemical Cold War inflicted casualties even though the Superpowers never directly came to blows. It also brought forth some of the most horrific weapons imaginable. Although the Cold War has ended, the genies of the exotic weapons can no more be put back in the bottle than the nuclear ones. In the new age of mass casualty terrorism, the bad guys now have available innovations born at the height of the Cold War. No one can say whether environmental contamination from the programs, or the weapons themselves, will ultimately prove more harmful to humanity. The path is strewn with the fallen victims of the drive to develop these instruments of destruction. ■



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INDEFENSIBLE HAZARDS

BY RICHARD CURREY

Articles published in *The VVA Veteran* in 2002 and 2003 introduced readers to a government research activity known as Shipboard Hazard and Defense, or SHAD.

Those articles revealed a top-secret program designed to test chemical and biological warfare (CBW) agents during the 1960s and early 1970s. That such tests took place is no surprise, but SHAD's legacy involves a darker wrinkle: the testing exposed our

AN ALTERNATIVE TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

SHAD was part of a DoD endeavor known as Project 112, which originated in the early 1960s during the Cold War era, a time of intense national paranoia about the Soviet threat. In responding to that perceived threat, Robert McNamara, then Secretary of Defense, ordered a comprehensive review of all DoD activities and readiness across 150 areas of need. These 150 study

at Fort Detrick, Maryland, along with a cadre of civilian scientists in Utah at a facility called the Desert Test Center. SHAD, alternately an acronym for "Shipboard Hazard and Defense, Decontamination, or Detection," involved naval detachments that conducted tests on the open ocean, mostly in the South Pacific. These were essentially "crop duster" activities, in which clouds of aerosolized CBW agents were sprayed from aircraft. One series of tests, code-named "Shady Grove," was conducted in the Pacific near a small atoll called Johnston Island, some 700 nautical miles southwest of Honolulu.

These tests involved a group of five light tugboats which were used as sampling stations positioned on a grid as much as 25 miles apart in a downwind line, perpendicular to the flight path of the aircraft. In some of the trials, test animals—a troop of rhesus monkeys—were caged on the decks of the tugs. A Marine A4D Skyhawk attack bomber fitted with under-wing dispersal tanks took off from Johnston Island and released its load of CBW agents along a designated trajectory. The mist drifted downwind and across the tugboat positions, sometimes taking as much as eight hours to reach the fifth tug, which were stationed as far as 100 miles from the initial release point.

Jack Alderson, the officer-in-charge of the Light Tug Division, recalled, "The tugs were sprayed with both hot agents [actual disease-causing germs] and 'simulants,' which were live biological agents that imitated the behavior of a hot agent." Said Alderson,



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own military personnel to bacterial and chemical agents.

Today, 40 years after SHAD tests exposed U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Army personnel to CBW agents, simulants, and decontamination chemicals, SHAD veterans are concerned about the long-term health effects of their exposures. Compensation claims have been consistently denied by the Department of Veterans Affairs, while the Department of Defense has followed a strategy of obfuscation and delay. And although a 1999 book, *The Biology of Doom*, documented the details of SHAD and a much larger covert CBW testing program, and despite SHAD hearings in the U.S. Senate, a General Accountability Office (GAO) investigation that faults DoD performance in responding to SHAD, a lawsuit that led to a U.S. District Court ruling that slammed DoD prevarications, and two SHAD bills introduced in Congress, the Pentagon continues to hedge, dodge, equivocate, and deny. But a growing coalition of SHAD veterans, veterans service organizations led by Vietnam Veterans of America, and members of Congress from both houses and parties, continues to press for answers about and accountability for the health effects of SHAD tests and the betrayed veterans who participated in those tests.

TESTS INVOLVED A GROUP OF FIVE LIGHT TUGBOATS. A MARINE A4D SKYHAWK RELEASED ITS LOAD OF CBW AGENTS ALONG A DESIGNATED TRAJECTORY. THE MIST DRIFTED DOWNWIND AND ACROSS THE TUGBOAT POSITIONS, SOMETIMES TAKING AS MUCH AS EIGHT HOURS TO REACH THE FIFTH TUG.

areas, or "projects," included Project 112, which McNamara directed to "consider all possible applications [of chemical and biological warfare], including as an alternative to nuclear weapons." A central objective of Project 112 was to "prepare a plan for the development of...biological and chemical deterrent capability."

The Joint Chiefs of Staff created a program that involved all branches of the military headquartered

"For example, a bug called BG [*Bacillus globigii*], a simulant which has similar characteristics to the causative agent of anthrax but does not produce deadly toxins. Tracking the dispersal and concentration of BG gave us a pretty good picture of how effectively anthrax might spread under similar conditions."

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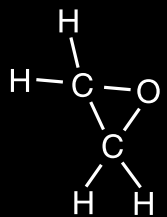
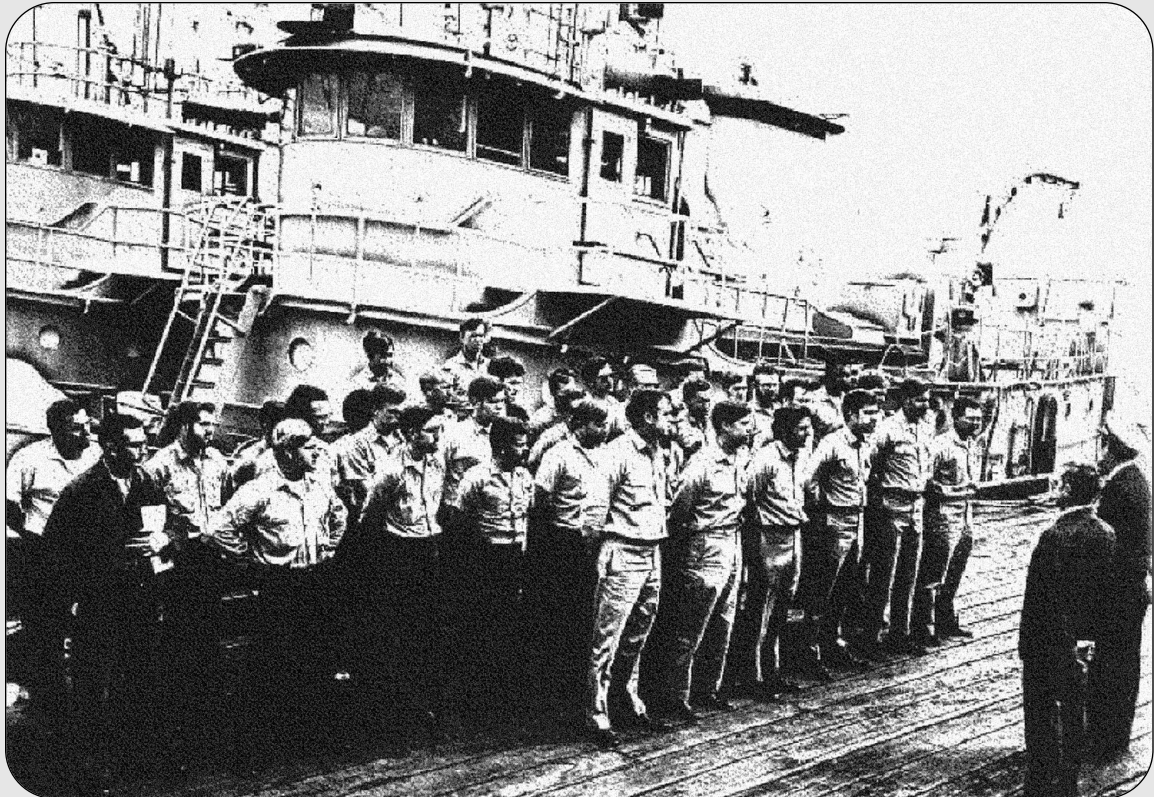
INDEFENSIBLE HAZARDS

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Which, said Cmdr. Norman La Chapelle, proved to be very effective indeed. A technical operations officer, La Chapelle recalled culture plates with colony counts recorded as "TNTC": too numerous to count. "In other words," La Chapelle said, "dispersal from a jet traveling near the speed of sound could cover a very large territory with live agents at lethal concentrations. In that regard, the SHAD tests were very successful. What was overlooked was us, the human beings who participated in the tests."

Did Naval officers like Alderson and La Chapelle know what they were doing?

"Yes, we did," Alderson said. "We understood what we were testing, and we knew there was some risk involved. But that does not relieve DoD of its consequent responsibility to SHAD veterans who might've been made sick by what they were exposed to out there. Nor does it mean that nobody should speak out on behalf of 12 shipmates who didn't know what



"THE GUYS WOULD TAKE OFF ALL THEIR CLOTHES, HOSE EACH OTHER DOWN, TAKE THEIR CLOTHES AND PUT THEM IN A GI CAN AND FIRE OFF A CYLINDER OF ETHYLENE OXIDE INSIDE THE CAN. THIS WAS TO DECONTAMINATE THE CLOTHING. THE NEXT DAY THEY WOULD TAKE THE COVERALLS OUT AND USE THEM AGAIN.... THE PROBLEM IS THAT ETHYLENE OXIDE ITSELF IS CARCINOGENIC."

was happening and more than likely don't know to this day."

The passage of time and the nature of human biology render it possible that some of those men have medical problems related to SHAD exposures. "If they're alive and need medical evaluation and treatment," La Chapelle said, "We'd like to see that they get these services."

CARCINOGENIC CLEAN-UP

Beyond the testing itself, a problem of potentially greater importance was the decontamination process employed after a test. "We used beta-propiolactone as a decontamination agent," LaChapelle said. "The sailors using this chemical wore very little in the way of protective clothing, just cotton coveralls and a gas mask. When we went below decks after a decon, the chemical was literally dripping down the bulkheads."

Beta-propiolactone has since been identified as a carcinogen that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency links to intestinal tract, liver, respiratory, and skin disorders.

After decontamination, there was the further problem of decontaminating the clothes the decon crews wore. "The guys would take off all their clothes," Jack Alderson said, "hose each other down, take their clothes and put them in a GI can, tape the can closed, and fire off a cylinder of ethylene oxide inside the can. This was to decontaminate the clothing. The clothing would have ethylene oxide contact for about eight to ten hours, until the next day when they would take the coveralls out and use them again."

But, as Norm La Chapelle explained, "The problem is that ethylene oxide itself is carcinogenic." It increases the risk of leukemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The retired Commander shook his head. "We were decontaminating with agents as dangerous or worse than what was being used in the tests. But we didn't know it at the time."

This is a critical point, according to Alderson. "It's not that the substances we were exposed to turned out to be toxic. We didn't know. Science didn't know. The point is: Now we do." With that in mind, both La Chapelle and Alderson find it both perplexing and disappointing that the Pentagon elected a policy of denial and evasion in response to legitimate queries from SHAD veterans.

"If the Pentagon had its way," La Chapelle said, "SHAD vets would shut up and go away."

Although the SHAD story broke in the media in the mid-1990s, a few years earlier Jack Alderson first suspected something had gone awry with veterans of the Pacific tests in which he participated. "We were pulling together a reunion, and it seemed that quite a few of our old shipmates were either dead or had serious health problems," he said. Alderson credits another former colleague, retired Lieutenant Commander Ray Hawley, with "putting it all together."

Alderson started writing letters, to the Department of the Navy as well as working congressional inquiries. The answers were all variations on a single theme: There were no records that SHAD had ever taken place. Alderson's queries were deflected ("I was told to seek answers from some other agency"). He also was told there was no record he had ever served in the Pacific even though he still has the orders that dispatched him to the Project SHAD technical staff.

At another point Alderson was told his service medical record had been lost. That record was eventually found but the pages from his time in SHAD had mysteriously gone missing.

Norman La Chapelle entered the picture at a subsequent reunion, and shortly after the two men joined forces with other SHAD veterans, the *Deseret Morning News* in Salt Lake City broke the story of Project 112. Other accounts followed in newspapers across the country, and by the time *The Biology of Doom* was published, "the cat," as La Chapelle said, "was out of the bag."

Jack Alderson advised his congressional representative, Rep. Mike Thompson (D-Calif.) about the long dance of redirection or flat denials. Thompson promised to look into the matter. He was dismayed by what he learned. "At first, DOD said no such tests occurred," Thompson told a reporter from the *San Francisco Daily Journal*. "Then they said there were some tests, but no live agents were used. Eventually they said there actually were some live agents used."

Thompson, a Vietnam veteran, signed on to help the SHAD veterans and led the way toward hearings and a bipartisan SHAD alliance between both houses and parties in Congress. He wrote legislation that would require a GAO investigation, exerting the pressure needed to force VA and DoD to respond.

The VA advised Thompson the agency had requested information from DoD immediately after receiving the first SHAD claim, but hit a locked door. This led to problems back at the VA, unable to deliver health care if a claim could not be substantiated through DoD records. Still, the VA established SHAD pages on its web site and has issued and updated advisories for its health care providers.

The DoD, facing congressional pressure as well as more queries from the VA, went about releasing its own "fact sheets." It took a year to get three short fact sheets out. A DoD spokesman said, "We were trying to...not say anything until we really knew for sure." Earlier denials regarding the existence of SHAD were "corrected," as, according to the spokesman, new information was verified.

As DoD dug in its heels, the media were having a field day with the revelations of a top-secret government project that conducted CBW testing on its own citizens. In May 2000, CBS News aired a two-part investigative report on SHAD, and *The Biology of Doom* appeared in a new paperback edition. Nearly a hundred SHAD-related newspaper and magazine features had appeared by 2002. Late that year, a class-action suit was filed by VVA and 21 SHAD veterans in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The suit named as defendants former Secretary of Defense McNamara, DoD Under Secretary for Health Affairs William Winkenwerder, and other top DoD and VA officials. The suit contended that the constitutional rights of the plaintiffs had been violated.

FALSE STATEMENTS

Government attorneys moved immediately to dismiss the SHAD case. But Federal District Judge Rosemary M. Collyer demurred. She would hear the case, and although she elected to dismiss charges against individuals at the VA, she asked VVA and the SHAD veterans to provide additional information to support their case against personnel at DoD.

As the VVA-SHAD case moved forward, the GAO released the results of its investigation in May 2004. The report noted that DoD failed to exhaust all possible sources of information, that many potentially exposed individuals were still unidentified, and DoD (despite years of inquiries from Congress, veterans, and the VA) had not established a point of contact—a central SHAD office to coordinate the effort, verify reports, and respond to veterans.

The legislation that mandated the GAO report also called for DoD to declassify documents that would support SHAD veterans' claims, but that mark was not satisfied either, a fact Rep. Thompson found alarming. "DoD continues to keep life-or-death information from veterans who may have been the subject of these tests," he said. "SHAD veterans have the right to know what agents they were exposed to." Thompson indicated a need for new legislation that would create an independent bipartisan "SHAD commission" to investigate, overcome the secrecy barrier, and bring all information regarding CBW testing to light.

Shortly after the GAO released its report, Judge Collyer dismissed the VVA-SHAD case—although less on the essential merits of the veterans' petition than on complex legal grounds. Judge Collyer's decision is a crystalline education on the key points of the SHAD veterans' struggle. VVA and the SHAD veterans, she wrote, "paint...an image of a widespread and systematic cover-up of Project SHAD, including calculated efforts to conceal and withhold medical

records and other information dealing with the adverse health effects of these experiments."

When government attorneys argued that DoD's SHAD fact sheets constituted sufficient public notification to address the complaints of SHAD veterans, Judge Collyer wrote that "this court disagrees... [DoD] disingenuously glosses over the [fact] that SHAD veterans and the VA have been seeking information on Project SHAD for decades." DoD had an obligation, according to Judge Collyer, to provide that information, yet DoD "admits that this information is still being withheld."

In her summation, Judge Collyer made it clear that "there is no longer any dispute: Navy and Marine personnel were used as human samplers without their knowledge during Project SHAD." The judge, in not-

"every shred of information, down to every minute detail, but rather information needed to assist and support" what may well number in excess of 10,000 veterans. At this point, DoD tactics, whether overt denial or cautious acknowledgment spiked with misdirection, only continue an abdication of responsibility to veterans who could have been injured in the line of duty, many of them unaware of the risks they were exposed to.

The SHAD story moved to a hopeful new chapter on November 8, 2005, when Rep. Mike Thompson along with Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-Mont.) introduced the Veterans Right to Know Commission Act of 2005. The bill calls for an independent bipartisan commission empowered to investigate Project SHAD fully. "Both Mr. Thompson and Mr. Rehberg and other col-

IN HER SUMMATION, JUDGE COLLYER MADE IT CLEAR THAT "THERE IS NO LONGER ANY DISPUTE: NAVY AND MARINE PERSONNEL WERE USED AS HUMAN SAMPLERS WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE DURING PROJECT SHAD."

ing DoD's feint-and-run reaction to requests for SHAD data, observed that DoD first claimed the tests were never conducted, then later acknowledged the tests were conducted, and insisted all SHAD personnel wore adequate protective clothing. At another point DoD claimed that "no records of the tests existed," and at yet another point that records exist "but no harmful substances were used" in the testing.

"These statements," Judge Collyer said, "were all false."

A NEW CHAPTER

"I'll admit the secrecy issue was a sticking point for me," Jack Alderson said. "There were sound military reasons to classify the information about SHAD. But that was then. It's not about secrecy anymore. It's about decent treatment for those of us who served."

Norm La Chapelle agreed. "We're not looking to know everything, just what's necessary to confirm that a veteran served in SHAD and can therefore receive whatever medical care is needed. But the Pentagon's approach—to reveal nothing or as close to nothing as possible—disrespects the commitment of a lot of people."

DoD's hesitancy to open the door on SHAD may be understandable. Aside from the general issue of military secrets, full disclosure of SHAD inevitably leads to greater disclosures of Project 112, a process that could unleash a storm of public recrimination and a cascade of lawsuits. It would seem that if DoD's motivations were, in the words of Judge Rosemary Collyer, "explicable, they were not laudable."

Both Norm La Chapelle and Jack Alderson reiterated that SHAD veterans are not on a crusade for

leagues from both houses of Congress believe such a commission, chartered by Congress and signed by the President, is vital for getting to the bottom of things," said Colton Campbell, a legislative assistant on Thompson's staff. "This commission is needed to preserve the rights of SHAD veterans. Ultimate objectives include notifying all SHAD vets so they can go to the VA and get any medical treatment that might be necessary, and possibly qualify for service-related disability compensation."

The Thompson-Rehberg bill, H.R. 4259, calls for a commission chair appointed by the President. The vice-chair would be appointed jointly by the leadership of the Senate and House of Representatives. Both chair and vice-chair would be veterans with top security clearances. "Classified information has been a stumbling block in this process," Campbell said. "DoD has consistently claimed they cannot release classified documents and there is no process in place to address that barrier." Along with commission leadership, at least 30 percent of commission staffers also will have security clearances. "We want to make it possible for commission members and staff to examine all records of any kind that might bear on care and compensation for SHAD veterans," Campbell said.

The Thompson-Rehberg bill calls for a three-year commission and an adequate budget to see the effort through to completion. At least two of the commission members would be SHAD veterans. "The bottom line," according to Jack Alderson, "is that this is something we've worked toward for a long time. This commission might finally make it possible to untangle all the misinformation that's been lobbed at us. Let's get the story told and help out veterans who may have had their health compromised in the line of duty." ■

CALENDAR

VVA National, Regional, and State Meetings

April 2006	May 2006	June 2006
S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S
1	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	7 8 9 10 11 12 13	4 5 6 7 8 9 10
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23 24 25 26 27 28 29	28 29 30 31	25 26 27 28 29 30
30		

EVENT	DATE	PLACE	CONTACT
Alabama State Council Meeting	April 8, 2006	Clanton, Alabama	Wayne Reynolds State Council President
Ohio State Council Meeting	April 8, 2006	Columbus, Ohio	Joe Jennings State Council President
Michigan State Council Meeting	April 9, 2006	Lansing, Michigan	Tom Meinhardt State Council President
Board of Directors and CSCP Meeting	April 20-22, 2006	Silver Spring, Maryland	VVA National Office
Ohio State Council Meeting	May 20, 2006	Columbus, Ohio	Joe Jennings State Council President
Michigan State Council Meeting	May 21, 2006	Lansing, Michigan	Tom Meinhardt State Council President
California State Council Meeting	June 2-4, 2006	Doubletree Hotel San Jose, California	Ken Holybee State Council President
Texas State Council Meeting	June 2006	Galveston, Texas	Buster Newberry State Council President
Virginia State Convention	June 9-11, 2006	Williamsburg, Virginia	Charlie Montgomery State Council President
Iowa State Council Meeting	June 11, 2006	Veterans Home Marshalltown, Iowa	Ed Gaudet State Council President
Georgia State Council Meeting	June 16-17, 2006	Macon, Georgia	James Gilmer State Council President
Michigan State Council Meeting	June 16-18, 2006	Holiday Inn Marquette, Michigan	Tom Meinhardt State Council President
New York State Council Meeting	June 16-18, 2006	Treadway Inn Owego, New York	Ned Foote State Council President
North Carolina State Council Meeting	June 17, 2006	Comfort Suite Motel Raleigh, North Carolina	Paul Crowell State Council President
Ohio State Council Meeting	June 23-24, 2006	To Be Announced	Joe Jennings State Council President
NEW DATE! LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE	JULY 11-16, 2006	Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Tucson, Arizona	VVA National Office
Virginia State Campout	August 4-6, 2006	Sherando Lake, Virginia	Charlie Montgomery State Council President
California State Council Meeting	August 11-13, 2006	Quality Inn Ashlan Fresno, California	Ken Holybee State Council President
New York State Council Meeting	September 15-17, 2006	Treadway Inn Owego, New York	Ned Foote State Council President
Virginia State Council Meeting	September 22-24, 2006	Emporia, Virginia	Charlie Montgomery State Council President
Iowa State Council Meeting	September 25, 2006	Veterans Home Marshalltown, Iowa	Ed Gaudet State Council President
Board of Directors and CSCP Meeting	October 5-7, 2006	Silver Spring, Maryland	VVA National Office
North Carolina State Council Meeting	October 21, 2006	Comfort Suite Motel Raleigh, North Carolina	Paul Crowell State Council President
California State Council Meeting	November 3-5, 2006	Quality Inn Ashlan Fresno, California	Ken Holybee State Council President
Virginia State Council Meeting	December 1-3, 2006	Virginia Beach, Virginia	Charlie Montgomery State Council President
Board of Directors Meeting	January 19-20, 2007	Silver Spring, Maryland	VVA National Office

Send additions to the calendar to: Vietnam Veterans of America, Attn: Calendar, 8605 Cameron Street, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3710

CHAPTER 25's GUIDELINES FOR PUTTING ON A SUCCESSFUL TOWN HALL

BY DENNIS P. KOEHLER AND JEROLD A. KLEIN

On July 23, 2005, Thomas H. Corey/Palm Beach, Florida, County Chapter 25 hosted a Town Hall Meeting on the subject of Assured Funding for the VA's health care programs. Then VVA National President Tom Corey attended and presented the case for congressional action. By every measure, this event was a success. We packed the meeting room, and we received positive media coverage. What follows offers practical advice to local VVA chapters and State Councils on the nuts and bolts of putting on a successful Town Hall Meeting.

This guide lists the steps that Chapter 25 took in organizing and presenting its Town Hall Meeting on VVA's top legislative priority: securing congressional enactment of an assured, or direct, method of funding the VA's health care system. The Town Hall Meeting can be an effective means of educating veterans and the public on key policy initiatives and communicating directly with elected officials whose votes are necessary to translate those policy initiatives into legislative action.

1. Identify the priority legislative issue that will be the subject of your Town Hall Meeting

As with Assured Funding, the issue may be national in scope, or it may involve a state or local VVA concern, requiring action by a state legislature or local government body. The issue will determine the focus and target of the meeting.

2. Select the coordinator

Each VVA chapter should have a legislative coordinator, ideally someone with skills, knowledge, and

contacts in the local political community. A committee including at least two chapter members should be assigned to plan and coordinate the event. From day one, these meeting coordinators should maintain a running file containing the names, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of all who are contacted.

3. Select a meeting location

The site should be easily accessible with plenty of parking and well known to the news media and the public. The meeting should be held indoors, in a public facility fully wired for sound and video. We held our Town Hall Meeting in the 150-seat chambers of the Palm Beach County Commission in the County Governmental Center in downtown West Palm Beach.

4. Select a convenient day and time

Chapter 25 chose a Saturday morning, when we knew the County Commission meeting chambers would be available. We promoted this as a two-hour event, from 10 a.m. to noon. A two-hour meeting should be enough for introductions, a detailed presentation of the issue, questions and comments from the audience, and for responses from the elected officials or their designees.

5. Obtain information and technical support from VVA national staff

The VVA Staff can be an invaluable resource in preparing the legislative issue that will be the subject of your Town Hall Meeting. Chapter 25's event, which addressed the crisis in funding for the VA health care system, came at a propitious time: The Bush administration's budgetary miscalculations for the VA for FY

2005 drew congressional outrage and national media attention. In response, the VVA national staff had prepared fact sheets, congressional testimony, and a variety of posters and banners that publicized the need for Assured Funding and stated the case for legislative reform. As a result, Chapter 25 was able to obtain and effectively utilize these resources within a very short (three-week) time period.

6. Make arrangements for audio and visual support

Ask the operator of your meeting facility for permission to use the TV and videotaping facilities, assuming they have them. They may even agree to underwrite the costs. This request should be made sufficiently in advance of the meeting, about eight to ten weeks before the event, giving the local Board ample time to act on the request and arrange for staff.

7. Hire a local public relations firm to ensure best media coverage

Your chapter is most likely involved in Veterans Day and Memorial Day activities that may be promoted by well-connected local public relations firms. These PR firms know how to promote these events in the local news media, via public service announcements, news releases, and press kits—often at a substantially discounted fee. Unless you have members who are savvy enough to handle and coordinate media coverage, use a PR firm. The PR firm also can produce professional-looking flyers and name tags for elected officials and their representatives, guests, and event coordinators.

8. Invite your Senators, Members of Congress, and other elected officials

Begin the invitation process by making telephone calls and sending e-mails, faxes, and letters to each targeted elected official. Be sure to include as much information as possible about your issue, providing the proposed Town Hall Meeting agendas, press releases, and local news articles. It is important that your target group clearly understands that their attendance is expected and that their names will be posted prominently on chairs at the meeting so that a failure to attend will be noted by all who attend, including the news media. The whole purpose for holding a Town Hall Meeting is to educate and inform those in power about the significance of your issue and the need for their support.

9. Invite representatives of major veterans' service organizations

The Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform includes nine national VSOs, united in support of assured funding. Typically, the names and addresses of local VSO commanders can be obtained from the nearest VA Medical Center, the county's Veterans Service Officer, or from a statewide veterans coalition organized to lobby your state legislature on veterans-



continued on previous page

GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL TOWN HALL

continued from page 29

related issues and bills. Every effort should be made to contact our newest veterans, those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, or elsewhere in the Global War on Terrorism. Each VSO should be urged to attend the meeting in force, and to speak in support of the issue.

10. Prepare the meeting room

Mount banners, place signs, distribute handouts and press releases at key locations throughout the public meeting room, preferably the day or evening before the scheduled meeting. Designate a chapter cleanup crew to take down banners and posters after the meeting is over. At the meeting, stock a table with VVA membership applications, copies of *The VVA Veteran*, other VVA documents, and white papers. Make them available to attendees.

11. Have guests sign an attendance sheet

Make an effort to have everyone sign an attendance sheet that includes names, addresses, and VSO affiliation. A chapter member should be assigned to handle this task.

12. Emphasize that the Town Hall Meeting is not a partisan political event

Chapter 25 promoted assured funding for Veterans Health Care as an American issue, not a Democratic or Republican cause. Given the long, unhappy history

of annual budget battles with Presidents from both parties and Congress for adequate health care funding, it was obvious to us that taking a non-partisan approach offered the only realistic chance for achieving legislative success.

13. Prepare and distribute a detailed meeting agenda

Chapter 25 prepared an agenda that included all relevant information. The meeting format itself is simple: Open with a welcome, prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance; thank all who made the meeting possible; introduce the meeting's sponsors and participants; recognize distinguished guests in the audience; distribute handouts; and present your priority issue. Then open the floor to questions and answers, giving target audiences the opportunity to respond. Insure that chapter members pose prepared questions. And offer opportunity for closing statements by target audience, event organizers. When you adjourn, offer refreshments if possible.

14. Videotape and photograph the proceeding

One or more local chapter members should be assigned to take photographs. We arranged to have our assured funding Town Hall Meeting videotaped in its entirety by our local public-access TV Channel 20,

which provided a director and used the six cameras available.

15. Conduct a post-mortem

Immediately following the meeting, assemble your VVA chapter's key leadership group and conduct a post-mortem of the Town Hall Meeting. Identify high and low points. Event coordinators should take good notes, and as soon as possible, while memories are fresh, prepare an after-action report.

16. Supply the after-action report to VVA at all levels

Encourage your VVA state council and local chapters to attend the town hall meeting and contribute their thoughts. In our case, all three levels of VVA—national, state, and local—were present and contributed.

17. Follow Up

Make follow-up phone calls, send notes, faxes, or e-mails to all elected officials and their representatives, thanking them for attending. Thank them for their support and participation, and remind them that a bipartisan solution is needed to resolve the priority legislative issue that was addressed at the event.

18. Adopt a resolution

This resolution should formally request immediate adoption of specific legislative action. Send copies of this resolution to all targeted elected officials and local news outlets.

The Town Hall Meeting can be a very effective tool for VVA activists in seeking widespread support for policy initiatives that have been designated a priority by VVA at any governmental level. ■



WOULD YOU SEARCH YOUR MEMORY FOR A WAR CASUALTY?

WOULD YOU LOOK BACK TO A TIME LONG AGO?

What is the Veterans Initiative?

A humanitarian, veteran-to-veteran effort to help gain more information about American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for by providing information about Vietnam's war casualties to the Vietnamese Veterans Association.

What kind of information is needed?

Letters, diaries, photos, other personal items taken from dead or captured Vietcong or NVA regulars, or topographic or hand-drawn maps of burial sites.

How can I help?

Please complete this form to the best of your ability, and send this and any other information you may have to VVA, c/o Veterans Initiative. Please provide as much detail as possible. Originals or readable copies are acceptable, as are anonymous submissions. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

If you know other Vietnam veterans who may have information, please copy this form and send it to them. Please send all Veterans Initiative information to VVA by registered mail, FedEx, or UPS.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
c/o Veterans Initiative
8605 Cameron Street, Suite 400
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3710
301-585-4000

THE VETERANS INITIATIVE NEEDS YOUR HELP

VETERANS INITIATIVE INFORMATION FORM

(please print) _____ Today's date _____

Your name _____ Phone number(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Description of item _____

Location of incident _____ Date of incident _____

Province _____ VC or NVA unit _____

District or nearest village _____ U.S. unit _____

Map coordinates _____ Military Region _____

Name(s) of VC or NVA, if known _____

If grave site, number of remains _____

Other relevant information (attach additional pages as necessary) _____

Where did you learn of the Veterans Initiative? (Check the most appropriate box)

- The VVA Veteran newspaper A VVA member A VVA chapter
 Local media Other _____

2006 VVA National Leadership Conference

Tucson

July 11-16, 2006

TUESDAY, July 11

Mike Nash Memorial Golf Tournament
 VVA National Board of Directors Meeting
 Conference of State Council Presidents Meeting
 VVA Conference & AVVA Registration

WEDNESDAY, July 12

VVA Opening Ceremonies
 VVA Presidents Luncheon
 AVVA Biennial Meeting
 9 VVA Leadership Seminars
 Welcome Reception
 Caribbean Night in the Desert
 AVVA fund raiser

THURSDAY, July 13

AVVA Biennial Meeting continues
 AVVA Luncheon
 6 VVA Leadership Seminars
 Free afternoon to explore Tucson and surrounding area

FRIDAY, July 14

AVVA BOD meeting
 VVA Awards Luncheon
 12 VVA Leadership Seminars
 AVVA Seminars
 Chuck Wagon Cookout and Entertainment

SATURDAY, July 15

3 Leadership Seminars
 Closing Ceremonies



THIS BOX FOR STAFF USE ONLY		
CHECK NUMBER	AMOUNT	FINANCE DEPT APPROVAL
OTHER NAMES		

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
National Leadership Conference
July 11-16, 2006

Hilton El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort
Tucson, Arizona

Pre-registration ends June 9, 2006. Please do not mail your registration form after this date. Registrations received after June 9 will be returned to sender. You then must register on-site at the Conference in Tucson.

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Membership # _____





Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Day phone _____ Evening phone _____

Fax number _____ E-Mail address _____

Registration and Event Fees	Before June 9, 2006	On-site registration
VVA REGISTRATION Does not include meal functions; each must be purchased separately	<input type="checkbox"/> \$85	<input type="checkbox"/> \$110
AVVA REGISTRATION Does not include meal functions, or any VVA Seminars; each must be purchased separately		<input type="checkbox"/> \$40
PRESIDENTS LUNCHEON Wednesday, July 12 (Restricted to chapter or state council presidents)		<input type="checkbox"/> \$20
AVVA LUNCHEON Thursday, July 13		<input type="checkbox"/> \$20
VVA AWARDS LUNCHEON Friday, July 14		<input type="checkbox"/> \$25
CHUCK WAGON COOKOUT Friday, July 14		<input type="checkbox"/> \$40
TOTAL:	_____	

Payment Method	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed (Payable to VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Money order enclosed
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="checkbox"/> 
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Signature _____	
<small>After June 9, 2006, no refunds will be made for cancellation of registration. Any refunds prior to June 9 will incur a \$15 service charge.</small>	

Mail this form and full payment to:
Conference Registration • Vietnam Veterans of America • P.O. Box 64619 • Baltimore, MD 21264-4306

Fill out the information below as you want your name badge to appear. ONLY ONE LETTER OR SPACE PER BOX	
Name	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
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AND THE NOMINEES ARE...

Each year, VVA presents awards to VVA members and organizations. The awards are for outstanding service and dedication to Vietnam veterans and the issues affecting them and their families. Nominations are submitted by VVA leaders or are a result of a committee recommendation. Award decisions are made by VVA's national officers, by the National Board of Directors, or by the national Awards Committee, depending on the type of award. An exception to the criteria for the nominations in the following categories may be considered only by the VVA National President.

CRITERIA FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS

VVA MEMBER OF THE YEAR, INCARCERATED MEMBER OF THE YEAR, AND AVVA MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Nominations may be submitted only by the president of the member's chapter. Nominations cannot be accepted from other members of the chapter or from a member. If the nominee is the chapter president, the state council president (in consultation with the other chapter officers) may make the nomination.

For each Member of the Year nomination, the State Council president must sign the nomination form and attach a separate letter of support. If no president exists for the state, or if the state president is the nominee, the regional director should submit and sign the form and provide the letter of support. In addition to information that supports and strengthens the nomination, the following must be included for each Member, Incarcerated Member, and AVVA Member of the Year nomination:

1. Evidence of individual's commitment to the goals and purposes of VVA.
2. Details of individual's service to VVA.
3. Average time volunteering for VVA (per week, per month, or per year).
4. Information about individual's personal goals in VVA and how they help further the organization's goals.
5. Individual's efforts and success in recruitment and retention of members.
6. Details of individual's service to his or her community.
7. Notable accomplishments.
8. Positions held in VVA.
9. Required letter(s) of support and signatures.

VVA CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AND STATE COUNCIL OF THE YEAR

Submissions for these two awards are by **self-nomination**. For VVA Chapter of the Year, the official nomination form must be submitted by the chapter president and must contain his or her signature, as well as that of the State Council president (if one exists) and the regional director. Both the state president and the regional director must attach letters of support for the nomination. For VVA State Council of the Year, the nomination form must come from the state president and must contain the signatures of, and a letter of support from, both the state president and the regional director.

What follows is the information required for nominations for these two awards: A. Details about the chapter or State Council's service and accomplishments, and B. financial information.

A. Service and Accomplishments:

1. Evidence of chapter or State Council's commitment to the goals and purposes of VVA.
2. Details of chapter or State Council's service to its members.
3. Chapter or State Council's efforts and success in recruitment and retention of members.
4. Details of chapter or State Council's service to its community.
5. Notable accomplishments.
6. If a chapter, the year it received its charter; if a State Council, the year it was founded.
7. Required signatures and letters of support.

B. Financial Requirements:

Nominees for Chapter of the Year and State Council of the Year must be in good standing with the VVA national office. This means that the fiscal year ending 2/28/06 financial statement, along with evidence of, or a waiver for, bonding must be on file with the national office. Please insure that this obligation is met prior to making a nomination. Additionally, nomination submissions must contain the following financial information:

1. How the finance committee of the chapter or State Council functions (see VVA Constitution, Article IV, Section 6, M).
2. A copy of the most recent treasurer's report (financial statement) submitted as part of the last regular meeting of the chapter or State Council.

3. A copy of the current budget of the chapter or State Council, or an explanation of why there is no budget.
4. A list of any chapter or State Council fund-raising programs that are considered restricted activities (in accordance with the VVA Constitution). If the chapter or State Council is engaging in such activity, a copy of any contracts or agreements, along with the approval form from the national office, must be included with the nomination form.

CHAPTER NEWSLETTER/STATE COUNCIL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

The submission process for Chapter Newsletter of the Year and State Council Newspaper of the Year is by **self-nomination**. For the Chapter Newsletter of the Year award, nominations should be submitted by the chapter president and contain his or her signature, as well as that of the newsletter editor and the State Council president. The state president also must attach a letter of support to the nomination form. If no state president exists, the nomination form with signature and letter of support should be submitted by the regional director.

For the State Council Newspaper of the Year award, nominations must be submitted by the state president and contain his or her signature, as well as that of the newspaper editor and the regional director. The regional director also must include a letter of support.

To be eligible for an award, a newspaper or newsletter (1) must be published by a VVA State Council that is tax-exempt under Section 501(C)(19) (war veterans organizations) of the Internal Revenue Code; (2) must have a publisher who is an officer or director of the VVA State Council; and (3) must say that it is the publication of the VVA State Council. A newspaper or newsletter that is published by an organization that is tax-exempt under Section (501)(c)(3) (religious, charitable, scientific, or educational organizations) is not eligible for an award.

A nomination for the newsletter or newspaper award must include the official nomination form along with five copies of the three most recent editions of the publication. Publications will be judged on editorial content, readability, organization and clarity of expression, layout, and graphics.

NOMINATION FORM FOR VVA NATIONAL AWARDS

CHECK ONE:

- Member of the Year
 Chapter of the Year
 Chapter Newsletter of the Year (199 members or fewer)
 Chapter Newsletter of the Year (200 members or more)
- Incarcerated Member of the Year
 State Council of the Year
 State Council Newspaper of the Year
 AVVA Member of the Year

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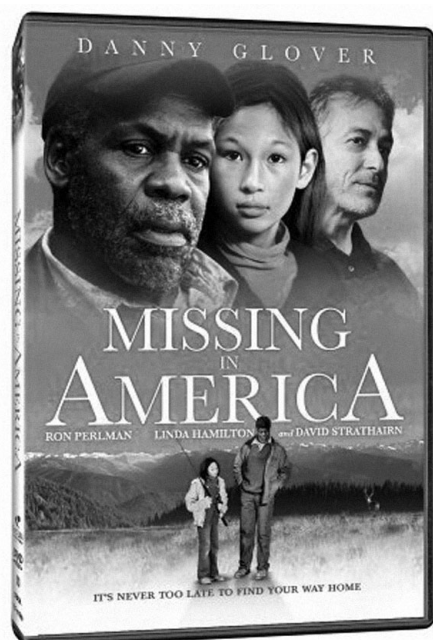
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Something's More Than Amiss In *Missing In America*



The feature film *Missing in America*, starring Danny Glover as a disaffected Vietnam veteran living a solitary life in the deep woods, never made it to the theaters. It is now available on DVD.

BY MARC LEPSON

Missing in America, an indie movie with big stars (Danny Glover, Linda Hamilton, David Strathairn, Ron Perlman), deals with homeless Vietnam veterans living in the woods in the Pacific Northwest. The comparatively low-budget feature film was in the can and ready to hit the multiplexes in 2004, but it never made it to the nation's big screens. *Missing*, instead, had its premiere at the Seattle International Film Festival in May of 2005. That's where it stood until early this year when the film was released on DVD.

Here's what you'll see on DVD in the comfort of your living room: The film opens with the curmudgeonly Glover more or less holding things together living in the woods in fairly comfortable style. He has a well-ordered house, a beat-up pick-up, food on the table, and gorgeous views of the woodsy mountains (the Pacific Northwest of Canada). Granted, he talks to his animals and has the occasional flashback (he was a Nam LT), but he is coping.

Glover's solitary life soon becomes crowded when a guy who served under him in the war (Strathairn, who went on to create the role of a lifetime as Edward R. Murrow in *Good Night and Good Luck*) shows up unannounced, says he has lung cancer, and asks Glover to take care of his young half-Vietnamese daughter while he goes off for medical care. Glover tries to refuse, but Strathairn tricks him into becoming the girl's caregiver.

Glover and the girl (whose mother has died) don't get along. She wants to interact.

He wants to be left alone. They clash. Much more serious complications arise in the form of four people-averse trip-wire vets living off the land (including a woman, a former nurse) whom Glover helps support. One of them is a disfigured, mute, violence-prone mountain man (Perlman). Dangerous, tense happenings ensue.

First-time feature-film director Gabrielle Savage Dockterman co-produced the movie and had a hand in the screenplay, along with Nancy L. Babine and Ken Miller, a former Green Beret and Vietnam War helicopter pilot. Miller came up with the plot after contemplating the Lee Teter "Reflections" painting. He originally entitled his story "The Woodcutter."

Missing in America aims high: to illuminate the ongoing emotional fallout of the Vietnam War among those who bore the brunt of the fighting. But that's an extremely difficult assignment because of the danger of treating this very real problem with a broad brush and thereby creating the impression that reclusive back-to-the-bush Vietnam veterans in the film are

typical of the 2.8 million who took part in the war.

No one's asking anyone to make a movie about the true typical Vietnam veteran: the man or woman who goes to work every day, comes home, and falls asleep in front of the TV. But to dwell exclusively on these six extremely disturbed individuals without shading in background and fleshing out their characters any more than showing a few flashbacks and having them greet each other by saying "Marines, '70," amounts to stereotyping all Vietnam veterans as, at best, maladjusted and, at worst, as Ron-Perlman-like hulking monsters.

That's what you get with *Missing in America*: a well-meaning effort with top-quality actors and gorgeous scenery that does little to illuminate the very real problems of PTSD.

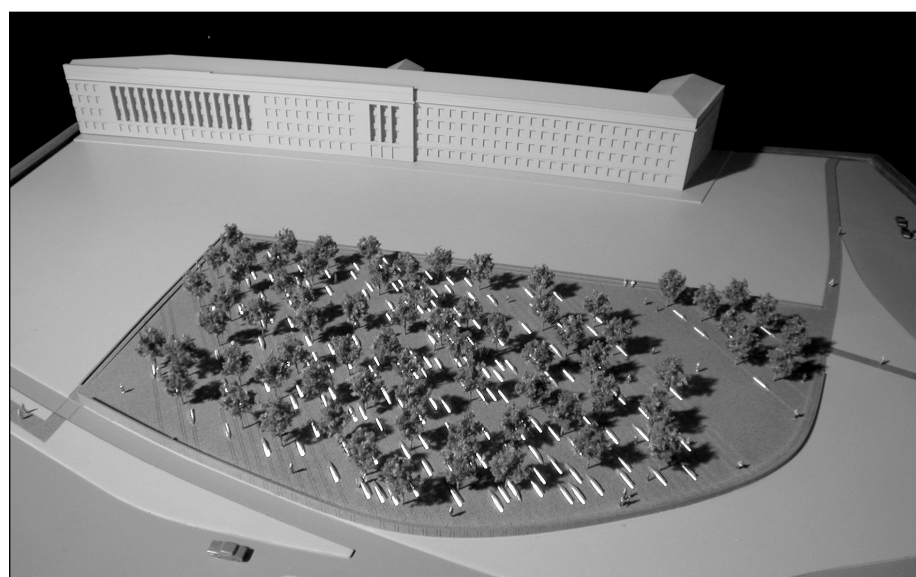
TWO DECADES

This column first appeared in this newspaper twenty years ago, in the March 1986 issue. It was something of an exper-

iment: to see if we could find enough books, movies, plays, TV shows, and other artistic endeavors dealing with the Vietnam War or its veterans to write about, to fill a page in *The VVA Veteran*. Not to worry. We have had plenty of artistic endeavors to review, so much so that in February 1994 we split off the book review segment of Arts of War into its own column.

In the last twenty years, we have examined hundreds and hundreds of books, movies, plays, TV shows, musicians, songs, art openings, and other artistic ventures dealing with the Vietnam War and Vietnam veterans. I would like to acknowledge the undiminished support I've had from all six VVA presidents (the publishers of this newspaper), countless board members and national office staffers, and especially my co-workers in the Communications and Publications Department, along with the many supportive readers who have helped shape this column. Thank-you to everyone for the help. I eagerly look forward to continuing this work.

continued on next page



Architectural renderings of the memorial at the Pentagon (above and left) that will honor the 184 people who died there on September 11, 2001.



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ARTS OF WAR

Continued from previous page

MEMORIAL NEWS

The unveiling of the long-awaited memorial that honors Hmong and Lao soldiers who fought alongside Americans in the Vietnam War took place December 21 at the Fresno County Courthouse Park in California. The memorial features a life-sized bronze sculpture of two Hmong soldiers coming to the aid of an injured American fighter pilot. Among the dignitaries at the opening ceremonies were Gen. Vang Pao, the former Hmong military leader, and Jane Hamilton-Merritt, who is perhaps the leading American expert on the so-called “secret” war in Laos.

The privately financed, non-profit, grassroots effort to build the Pentagon Memorial, which will honor the 184 federal employees, military personnel, and civilians who perished there on September 11, 2001, has one thing in common with the early 1980s campaign to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Just as Vietnam veterans took it upon themselves to build our own memorial, the Pentagon Memorial fund is being led by family members of those who were killed when terrorists crashed an American Airlines plane into the Pentagon.

The \$20 million memorial will consist of a two-acre, tree-shaded park on the Pentagon’s west lawn with 184 cantilevered benches, each dedicated to a September 11 victim. Each bench will overlook its own small, illuminated reflecting pool. The goal is to begin construction in the fall and complete it in the spring of 2008. Contributions of any amount may be made on line at www.PentagonMemorial.net, by phone at 800-929-4911, or by check made payable to Pentagon Memorial Fund, Inc., and sent to 5185 MacArthur Boulevard, Suite 115, Washington, DC 20016.

The fund’s organizers have asked us to tell VVA members to note “Vietnam Veterans of America” on their contribution checks so the nation will know of VVA members’ support of this worthy endeavor.

THE ACADEMIC ARENA

The William Joiner Center’s Annual Writers Workshop has started taking applications for its June 19-30 sessions at

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www.americawonthevietnamwar.com

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A troupe of actors from Philadelphia’s Simpatico Theatre Project emoting in a scene from *Vietnam 101: The War on Campus*, a documentary theater piece about a college community’s experiences during the Vietnam War years based on testimony from dozens of students at Oberlin College in Ohio.

its University of Massachusetts, Boston, campus. The faculty for this always-excellent program once again is filled with accomplished writers and poets who have written about the Vietnam War and Vietnam veterans. The list includes Martin Espada, Bruce Weigl, Lady Borton, Demetria Martinez, Larry Heinemann, and Fred Marchant. You can apply on-line at www.joinercenter.umb.edu where you also can find faculty bios and course descriptions.

The Department of History at Texas A&M University-Kingsville and the John B. Conner Museum will hold a symposium on the Vietnam Experience on Tuesday, April 18, at the Kingsville campus. “The symposium is intended to address and dispel misconceptions of the Vietnam experience through speakers and panel discussions,” said the event’s organizer, Pete Wyro.

The panels include topics such as the history of the United States involvement, the legacy of service of Hispanic Vietnam veterans, and the experiences of family members and survivors of Vietnam veterans. Seating is limited for this free event. For info, email kaplw00@tamuk.edu

The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University and the Center for the Study of Intelligence are co-hosting a conference October 20-21 in Lubbock, Texas, that will focus on intel in the Vietnam War. The conference will look at every aspect of intelligence activities in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and elsewhere and what impact it had on the war. “While the focus will remain on historical events, it is our distinct hope that appropriate historical lessons might be drawn of more immediate applications to current wars and conflicts,” the conference’s organizers say.

If you are interested in participating by making an individual presentation or taking part in a panel discussion, submit a single-page (or less) proposal by August 1 to Stephen Maxner, Deputy Director of the Vietnam Center, by e-mail, steve.maxner@ttu.edu or call 806-742-9010 for more info.

ON STAGE

On two weekends in late March and early April the Simpatico Theatre Project presented four performances of

Vietnam 101: The War on Campus at the Shumbin Theater in Philadelphia. *Vietnam 101*, which was written by Rich Orloff, is a documentary theater piece about a college community’s experiences during the Vietnam War years. It is based on recollections of dozens of students who attended Oberlin College from 1964-72. Director Jennifer Pratt used monologues and story theater-type scenes to recreate the stu-



A collage of things we carried in Vietnam on display in the Vietnam War exhibit at the Anoka County Historical Society in Minnesota. Members of Chapter 470 contributed heavily to the popular exhibit.

dents’ diverse feelings about the war. For info, go to www.simpaticotheatre.org

The play, *A Piece of My Heart*, by Shirley Lauro, has become the nation’s most enduring theatrical production that deals with the Vietnam War. Lauro’s play, which is based on the oral history book by Keith Walker, had its debut 20 years ago off Broadway in New York. Since then, more than 800 theater companies have performed the show that follows the true stories of six women who served in the Vietnam War. Among the latest was a production by Theatre Unbound that ran for two weeks in March at the Playwrights’ Center in Minneapolis and one at the Palmdale Playhouse in California.

ON EXHIBIT

Members of Chapter 470 in Anoka, Minnesota, have been long-time supporters of the County Historical Society, so

it’s no surprise that the society’s current exhibit on the Vietnam War had its genesis in an oral history project that the chapter sponsored. “The Vietnam War exhibit would not have happened without them,” Vicki Wendel, the society’s program manager, told us. “Chapter members were the initial core of those we interviewed for the exhibit. They helped find other veterans to interview, and they have been most supportive in providing artifacts and photographs for the exhibit and our archives. They also have provided volunteers to lead scout tours and do talks on Vietnam War history for local groups and the local community college.”

The chapter provided funds for the exhibit, which opened last May. It takes visitors through a Vietnam War journey by walking a path that includes a gear-heavy GI hootch, a grass village hut, a small jungle area, an R&R display, and a back-home living room where reels of Vietnam War news footage play on a vintage TV. The final stop is a shiny black wall that contains images of the rubbings of 31 names from Anoka County that appear on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

In addition to everything else, Wendel said, chapter members donated “some special little things” for the exhibit, includ-

ing “rubber snakes and leeches to use in the jungle scene.” Chapter 470 members, moreover, “built the exhibit’s punji pit, found the military truck tail gates and tires I needed, then got the tires cut in half to mount on the wall, which was no small feat.” To take a virtual tour, go to www.ac-hs.org/VietnamExhibit.htm

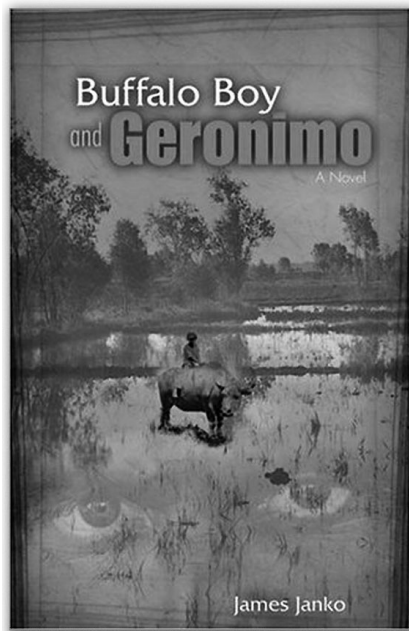
Currently on view at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.: Japanese-American painter On Kawara’s 1965 triptych entitled “Title.” In keeping with Kawara’s conceptual art vision, the triptych consists of three large canvases upon which are the capitalized words “ONE THING,” “1965,” and “VIET-NAM,” respectively.

Celebrated works of this kind always bring to mind a piece of dialogue between the artist Charles Ryder and teen-aged Cordelia Flynt in Evelyn Waugh’s classic

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In the Jungle Again: Another Top-Notch In Country War Novel



REVIEWS BY MARC LEEPSON

In last issue's column we waxed euphorically over Richard Galli's terrific new novel *Of Rice and Men*, because it was an excellent piece of fiction and because it was a very rare breed, an in-country Vietnam War novel of merit published for the first time in the early years of the 21st century. Well, that breed isn't so rare with the publication of James Janko's *Buffalo Boy and Geronimo* (Curbstone, 261 pp., \$15, paper), a beautifully crafted Vietnam War novel set entirely in the war zone.

First-time novelist Janko served as a medic with D Co., 2nd of the 27th in the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam and in Cambodia during the May 1970 incursion. He's lived the archetypal novelist's life since then, driving a cab, working as a flower vendor and a strawberry picker, and for fifteen years as a night watchman on Alcatraz Island. Janko's novel stems from his experiences in the war and from what he has learned by taking part in Maxine Hong Kingston's Vietnam Writers' Workshops.

Janko, who teaches at City College in San Francisco, has created a unique, sensual look at the Vietnam War, and he has done it by breaking one of the unwritten laws of literary fiction: constantly changing the point of view. This novel is told primarily through the thoughts and deeds of the title characters, an Army medic and a teenaged Vietnamese peasant boy. But Janko also brings in the interior monologues of other Vietnamese villagers, platoon mates of the medic, and—get this—a water buffalo, a tiger, and an elephant.

This is not easy to do. But Janko pulls it off. The result is an engaging look at the war in the jungles from the ground up. The writing evokes the smells, the feel, and the sights of living things that grow and walk in the jungle. The plot works, as well. The boy and the soldier run into each other at the start of the tale; many crucial things happen to both after that, and then they come together for more fateful events in the novel's concluding passages.

MEMOIRS, ETC., IN BRIEF

Ed Rasimus flew more than 250 combat missions in Vietnam in F-105s and F-4 Phantoms. He chronicled his first Vietnam War tour in *When Thunder Rolled: An F-105 Pilot Over North Vietnam* (2003). Rasimus did a second tour, in 1972, flying, as he did earlier, with the Air Force's 469th Tactical Fighter Squadron, the "Fighting Bulls."

During that second tour Rasimus flew out of Korat in Thailand and into the teeth of heavily defended targets in the Red River Valley in and around Hanoi. He took part in Operations Linebacker I and II, including the so-called "Christmas bombings." Rasimus brings the action alive, recounting his experiences in and out of the cockpit in his new book, *Palace Cobra: A Fighter Pilot in the Vietnam War* (St. Martin's, 320 pp., \$24.95).

Christy W. Sauro, Jr., was sworn into the U.S. Marine Corps on June 28, 1967. Nothing special about that; there was a lot of that kind of thing going on at the time. But consider this: Sauro was one of more than a hundred new Marines taking the oath that evening in, of all places, Metropolitan Stadium in Minneapolis during the pre-game ceremonies of a Minnesota Twins baseball game.

Sauro spent 15 years tracking down many of the Marines who were sworn in that night. The result is *The Twins Platoon: From the Ball Field to the Battlefield* (Zenith Press, 288 pp., \$24.95), in which Sauro tells the pre-, post-, and Vietnam War stories of a good number of those men (and four women). Like nearly all the others, Sauro did a 1968-69 tour of duty in the Vietnam War. In his case, as he relates in the third person in the book, he was assigned to Marine Helicopter Squadron 362.

Barbara Birchim chronicles her long, exhaustive effort to find out what happened to her husband, Army Special

OFF THE SHELF

Standing Among The Classics

REVIEW BY RICHARD CURREY

Brian Turner's magnificent book of poetry, *Here, Bullet* (Alice James Books, 80 pp., \$14.95), has been widely and justly praised since its publication last year. Reviewers have noted the various strengths in Turner's writing, but it's time now to take the next step in talking about this extraordinary book: It will stand among the classics of war writing.

Here, Bullet is quite clearly among the finest books of any type—fiction, nonfiction, or poetry—to come out of the Iraq war. But by the time a reader encounters the title poem just 13 pages in, it's clear that these are poems that speak with honesty and power, not only about one soldier in Iraq, but for all times and all wars.

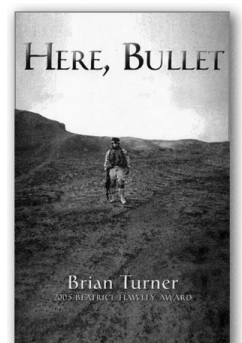
Brian Turner does what any soldier-writer who wants his or her words to stay with us must: He uses the specific, the private, and the temporary to speak about the larger truths of war and its cost. Turner's war may be Iraq, and while the details—the heat, sand, and sun—are all here, the echoes and hard-won truths of Shiloh, Corregidor, Normandy, Chosin, and Hue ring in his words.

Turner served seven years in the Army, first with the 10th Mountain Division in Bosnia-Herzegovina before deployment to Iraq with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. *Here, Bullet* chronicles his tour of duty in Iraq, opening with an invocation: "this is a language made of blood . . . To be spoken, it must be earned." A soldier's creed, from any war, simply stated, with great power.

Turner's language is plain and direct, his images clearly drawn. He wants us along on this heart-rending ride, not confused and groping for the meaning in his words. A soldier lives in a concrete world, and Turner does lyrical justice to the details: weather, road dust, elephant grass, oil, autopsies, explosions, medevacs, body bags, orange groves, moonlight, and sand. We live the days with him.

Along the way a story emerges as powerful and layered as a novel, and by the final poem (appropriately, "To Sand") Turner has carried us on a tour of duty punctuated by the suicide of a young private, reflective moments on observation posts, the loss and grievous injury of fellow soldiers, and the shattered aftermath of a suicide bomber's attack. Turner locates the emotional center in this journey. It is indeed a "language made of blood," and Brian Turner has earned it.

I recall a review of another war book some years ago that said "there is more truth here than can be found in a thousand pages of official records." The same can be said of Brian Turner's *Here, Bullet*. This is art built to last. ■



Forces 1st LT Jim Birchim, in *Is Anybody Listening? A True Story About the POW/MIAs in the Vietnam War* (AuthorHouse, 476 pp., \$31.50, hardcover; \$21.75, paper). Jim Birchim was listed as missing in action on November 15, 1968, and as KIA/BNR in 1971. Barbara Birchim, who had a young child and was pregnant with a second when she learned that her husband was missing, provides a detailed account of the significant obstacles she has faced trying

to determine her husband's fate. For more info, go to www.is-anybody-listening.com

Retired National Guard Gen. Ezell Ware, Jr.'s 2005 autobiography, told with journalist Joel Engel, *By Duty Bound: Survival and Redemption in a Time of War*, is now out in paper (NAL Caliber, 321 pp., \$14.95). Ware, who escaped

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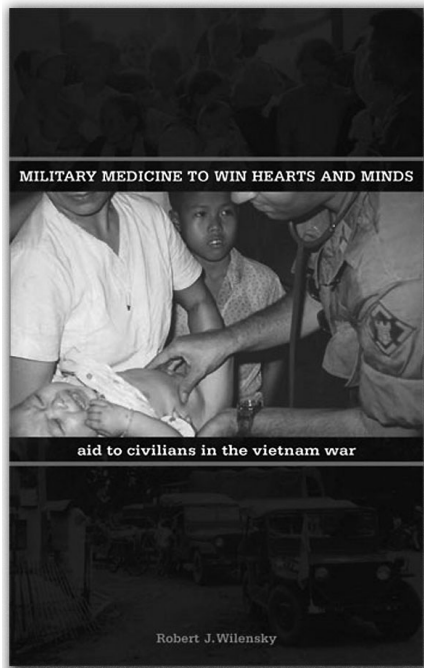
BOOKS

Continued from previous page

capture for three weeks after his helicopter crashed in the South Vietnamese jungle, was one of the few black pilots with the Army's 61st Helicopter Assault Company.

NONFICTION IN BRIEF

James H. Willbanks took part in the protracted April-May 1972 Battle of An Loc as a U.S. Army ARVN adviser. He brings a participant's eyewitness experience, along with a historian's expertise (he has taught at the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth),



to *The Battle of An Loc* (University of Indiana Press, 240 pp., \$29.95), a first-rate military analysis of that long, costly battle.

ARVN troops, aided significantly by American advisers and by USAF B-52 strikes, barely defeated the NVA at An Loc, which was part of the latter's ill-fated 1972 Easter Offensive. But, as Willbanks

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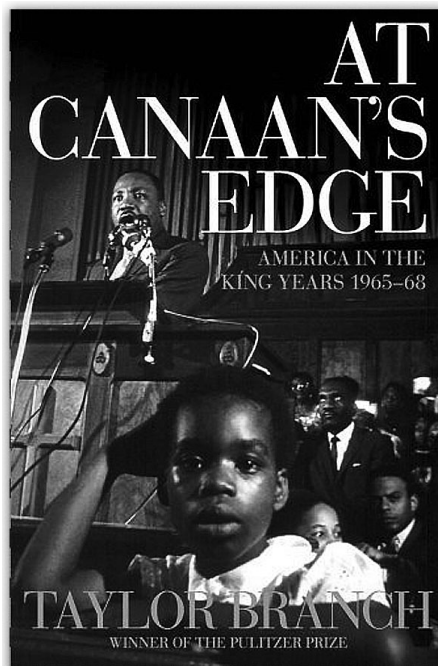
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FACING THE WALL: A MISSION

by Mary S. King
For some the war doesn't end - PTSD - the aftereffect of war. "Till war and trauma end - understanding must begin" Mary S. King. Paperback \$20.99, Hardback \$30.99, available online @ Xlibris, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Borders and your local book store.



notes, North Vietnam drew a lesson from that experience and waited three years until after the United States had all but completely withdrawn from South Vietnam to launch the military campaign that toppled the Saigon regime.

Robert J. Wilensky served as a military doctor in the Army Medical Corps based at the 588th Engineer Battalion at Tay Ninh during his 1967-68 Vietnam War tour. That experience, along with his Ph.D. in history, makes him uniquely qualified to chronicle the American civilian military effort in Vietnam, something Wilensky does exceptionally well in *Military Medicine to Win Hearts and Minds: Aid to Civilians in the Vietnam War* (Texas Tech University Press, 192 pp., \$29.95).

Wilensky shows clearly that American civilian and military leaders thought very differently about the purposes of medical civic action than did those who performed the hands-on medical work. "While command might have publicized the altruistic elements of the programs, medical benefit to the rural population was truly a secondary consideration," he notes. American doctors, nurses, and corpsmen, on the other hand, he says, "sincerely felt they were helping the people. They participated in the programs without ulterior motives or even the realization that they were part of a greater plan."

Former Marine Cal Snyder includes a chapter on the stirring Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Manhattan, along with New York City's other memorials to Vietnam veterans, in *Out of Fire and Valor: The War Memorials of New York City from the Revolution to 9-11* (Bunker Hill Publishing, 240 pp., \$25). The book contains in-depth reports on dozens of memorials, along with evocative photographs.

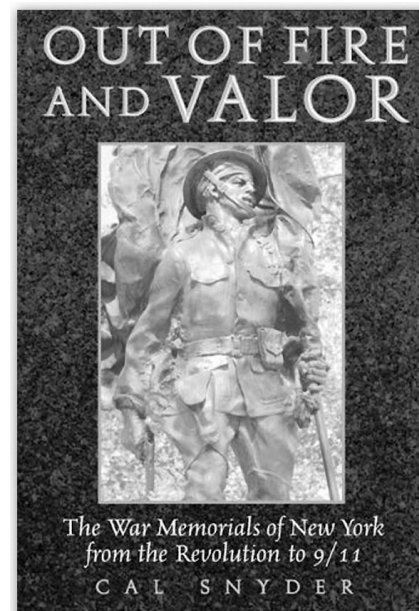
Jonathan B. Tucker offers passing mention of Agent Orange in his long, detailed look at the last hundred or so years of chemical warfare history in *War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare from World War I to Al-Qaeda* (Pantheon, 479 pp., \$30). Tucker is a chemical and biological weapons specialist at the Monterey Institute's Center for Nonproliferation Studies in California.

Part of the proceeds from *Lift Every Voice: A Celebration of Freedom* (FMR, 125 pp., \$22.90), a compilation by Dan Zadra of dozens of short, uplifting quotations, is being donated to VVA's Michigan State Council. For info, go to <http://www.hmbgroup.com/martech>

THE WAR AT HOME

One theme in *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68* (Simon & Schuster, 1,039 pp., \$35), the massive third volume of Taylor Branch's masterful examination of the life and times of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is the war in Vietnam. King began speaking out about the war on March 2, 1965, soon after President Lyndon B. Johnson launched the first bombing of North Vietnam. "I know that President Johnson has a serious problem here," King said in a speech at Howard University that day. "The war in Vietnam is accomplishing nothing."

Branch, who won the Pulitzer Prize for the first volume of the series, *Parting the Waters*, goes on in this third volume to chronicle King's evolving views on the war and his deteriorating relationship with LBJ because of those views. The book is compellingly written and deeply researched, and is propelled by the immediacy of Branch's extensive use of direct



quotations from previously undisclosed wiretaps and presidential phone calls.

At the Water's Edge: American Politics and the Vietnam War, (Ivan R. Dee, 241 pp., \$26), the latest book by Melvin Small, the Wayne State University history professor who has written widely on the Vietnam War and the antiwar movement, examines and analyzes the crucial role that domestic politics had in influencing Vietnam War policies of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon. "Domestic political considerations, including the congressional and presidential election cycles, were never far from their minds," he notes, "as they fashioned military tactics and strategies and contemplated decisions about escalation, de-escalation, and negotiation."

Near the end of this well-written book, Small singles out Vietnam Veterans of

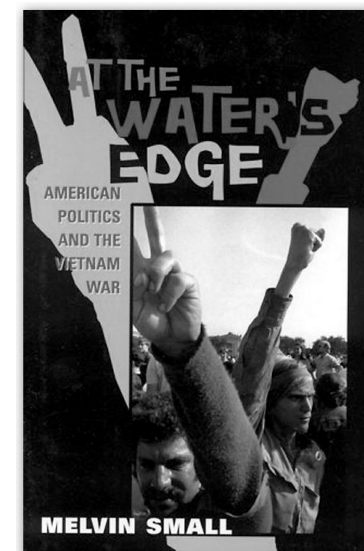
America for its early, strong commitment to securing Vietnam veterans' rightful benefits from the VA, especially in regard to the health effects of Agent Orange. VVA, he notes, "took the lead in demanding government recognition that [Vietnam veterans'] increased deaths from cancer and other diseases were related to exposure to carcinogens such as Agent Orange."

Jerry Elmer expressed his opposition to the Vietnam War by refusing to register for the draft when he turned 18 in 1969 and by going on to destroy records at more than a dozen draft boards. He calls draft-board-trashing "the most powerful, most active, most effective thing I could think of to stop the war." Elmer was subsequently arrested, tried, and convicted for those illegal actions.

He tells all in *Felon for Peace: The Memoir of a Draft Resister* (Vanderbilt University Press, 267 pp., \$54.95, hardcover; \$22.95, paper). Elmer, who graduated from Harvard Law School in 1990, made headlines late last year when his book was published in Hanoi in Vietnamese—the first time a book by an American antiwar activist was published in Vietnam.

POETRY

Chalk up another way in which the Vietnam War was different than



America's other armed conflicts: its soldier poets. Compared to their brethren in the two world wars, Vietnam War veteran poets "were open to another sense of what poetry could or should do," opines Lorrie Goldensohn in the introduction to the Nam section of her *American War Poetry: An Anthology* (Columbia University Press, 413 pp., \$27.95), a sterling collection of verse from the colonial wars to today.

The poets of the Vietnam War, Goldensohn says, "widened the subject matter of the war poem beyond the practice of either [of the world wars]. Less reluctant to use the first person singular or plural, the Vietnam War poets made unapologetic and fresh use of the stance of the witness. They used a more vernacular language, stole liberally from prose genres, and in their own terse version of modernism, emphasized techniques borrowed from cinema, adding montage and

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES



The Saline Fiddlers entertained patients at the VAMC in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with seasonal music during Chapter 310's 19th Annual VAMC Christmas Party.

IN SERVICE

Members of **Ocean County, New Jersey, Chapter 855** took part in a wide range of charitable activities during the 2005 Holiday season. The chapter distributed 30 food baskets to area families in need, more than 150 toys to needy children, and food to area animal shelters. Chapter members also sent some 250 blank holiday cards to veterans incarcerated in Trenton to mail out to family, friends, military personnel, and other veterans. The chapter threw a holiday party for students at Davies Middle School in Mays Landing and donated two cases of candy canes to the Manchester Regional Middle School.

In November and December, members of **Quad Cities Chapter 299** in **Rock Island, Illinois**, distributed 126 holiday gift baskets to needy veterans and their families. Andy Ortiz, Freda Goodwin, and Bob Brooks coordinated the program. At its December board meeting, the chapter formed a committee to review all requests for charity donations, since in recent years requests have outpaced chapter earnings, which come primarily from the Saturday Night Bingo games held at the Rock Island Lions Club.

During the holiday season, members of **Liberty Bell Chapter 266** in **Philadelphia**, along with AVVA members, collected food

for 40 needy families in the Philadelphia area. The chapter held Christmas parties for the children of the St. Francis Inn, a soup kitchen in inner city Philadelphia, and for the Catholic Workers, a local charity that sponsors after-school programs for latch-key children. Chapter members also put on their annual Christmas party at the Philadelphia VAMC; and for the third year in a row, the chapter Color Guard led the famed Philadelphia Mummers' Day Parade.

Members of **Central New Hampshire Chapter 41** participated in the annual Holiday Food Basket Project in December in Concord. For the last 14 years, the chapter has collected, organized, and distributed food to the needy through the Holiday Food Basket program, which is organized by the Capital Region Food Program. The program delivers boxes filled with non-perishables, packaged foods, and fresh produce to 1,850 needy families in the region.

Baltimore Chapter 451 played host to a holiday party at the chapter's headquarters for special-needs children from a local school in mid-December. The event featured appearances by Mrs. Claus (AVVA member Sandy Miller) and Santa himself (chapter member Bill Tucker). Each child received four gifts and a stuffed animal from Mr. and Mrs. Claus. Twelve members of the Junior ROTC program at a

local high school helped out, along with veterans from the community.

Richard Cortell, a life member of **Newburgh, New York, Chapter 537**, has set up a web site designed to help provide fresh food to patients in VA hospitals, which, he says, have stopped serving "freshly prepared food to thousands of veterans in order to save money." Every day, he says, "more and more patients' meals are prepared at remote locations, deep-chilled, shipped by truck to VA hospitals, and stored in large refrigeration units until they are ready to be served. Eventually they are re-thermalized (reheated) and served." To learn more about this effort, go to www.freshfoodforvets.us or e-mail rcortell@frontiernet.net

Through the efforts of **Tampa, Florida, Chapter 787** and **Chapter 916** in **Edgewater, Florida**, the VA recently approved the request of Chapter 916 member Michael A. Weber for an electric wheelchair and lift gate. Weber has been receiving hospice home care since March 2005 due to end-stage liver disease (hepatitis C) and had been unsuccessful in getting the VA to provide the much-needed equipment until chapter members went to bat for him.

Bergen County, New Jersey, Chapter 800 presented a \$625 donation in November to the state Department of Human Services' Division of Veterans Services' Tracers program. The donation was in the form of \$25 gift certificates to Shop-Rite supermarkets that will be distributed to homeless veterans. The Tracers program also provides bus tickets to homeless veterans for transporta-

tion to job interviews, social services agencies, and to the VA for medical care.

William C. Kelemen, a member of **New City, New York, Chapter 333**, was named Rockland County, N.Y., 2005 Veteran of the Year in November. Among other things, Kelemen is a VVA New York State delegate, a member of the chapter's Board of Directors, and co-chair of the chapter's VA hospital visitation program. He received the award at ceremonies held on the Rockland County Courthouse steps officiated by **VVA National President John Rowan**.

Chapter 205 at the **Auburn, New York, Correctional Facility** held a program in December with members of **Auburn Chapter 704** celebrating Chapter 205's Christmas Drive program in which members made hats, scarves, mittens, and lap blankets and presented them to area schoolchildren, the elderly, and families in need. This year the items went to the St. Alphonsis Food Pantry, the Booker T. Washington Center, Casey Park School, and the Genesee Street School, among other institutions.

Jimmie L. Coulthard, a member of **Chapter 320** in **St. Paul, Minnesota**, received the 2005 David W. Preus Award, which is named after the Rev. Dr. David W. Preus, Bishop Emeritus of the American Lutheran Church, and which goes to individuals who have demonstrated exemplary servant leadership in community and religious life. Coulthard is the CEO and president of the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV), the only Minnesota non-profit that exclusively supports the needs of homeless veterans. Under his leadership, MACV has helped some 3,000 men and women with employment, education, and housing opportunities.

Many members of **Bettendorf, Iowa, Gateway Chapter 776** participated in events in November and December for the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program by filling bags with toys for families registered in the program and by helping at the local distribution center. The group included Terry and Barb Berg, Mike and Sandy DeGeeter, Ed and Maggie Gaudet, Maggie's children Katie and Pete, Harold Hansen, Barb Katz, John and Martha Lavelle, Mike Melroy, Lyle and Carolyn Peterson, David and Marianne Woods, Nate and Kathy McDaniel, and Carolyn and Arlen Beck.

Members of **Western New York Chapter 77** met with Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.) in February at the Vietnam Veterans Museum in Tonawanda. The chapter presented Rep. Slaughter with a copy of VVA's Legislative Agenda for 2006, along with press kits with information about VVA and the chapter. "Rep. Slaughter was very receptive to our agenda and was also very direct in telling us that she believes there is enough support in Congress to pass Assured Funding" for the VA, said Chapter President

All submissions to "Membership Notes" are read; regrettably, not all can be included. To increase the likelihood of your news item being printed, include "after-action" reports in your newsletter, or send a letter with your project results to: Membership Notes, The VVA Veteran, Vietnam Veterans of America, 8605 Cameron Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3710

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES

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Patrick Welch. "She encouraged us to keep fighting, and she fully supports funding to care for America's veterans."

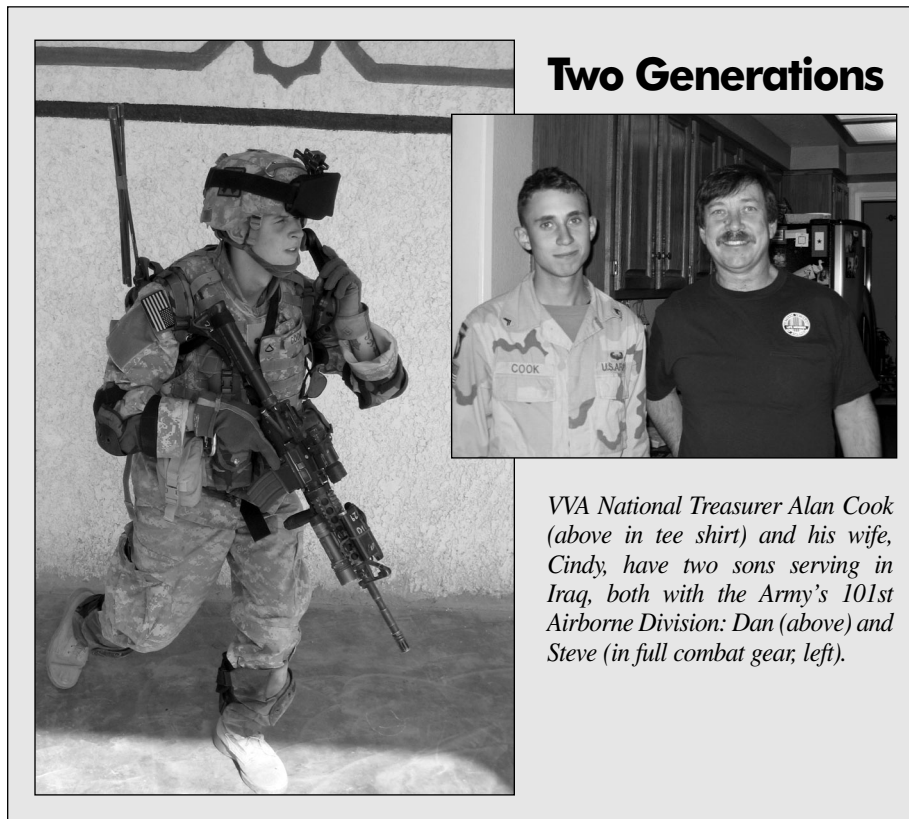
Appleton Area Chapter 351 in Wisconsin held its 18th annual wreath sale at the Northland Mall and Sam's Club during the holiday season. The chapter met its lofty sales goal of \$2,000, which goes to community organizations such as Adopt Veterans Family, Appleton Military Support, and Cub Scout Pack 3157, which the chapter sponsors.

Grand Stand, South Carolina, Area Chapter 925 held its third Welcome Home Poker Run on April 8. The event raises funds for local veterans and their families, as well as disadvantaged children. It features a motorcycle-led procession through the South Carolina Grand Stand area, which includes Myrtle Beach, with stops at eateries along the way. The chapter color guard was on hand for the post-procession awards ceremonies.

AVVA members of the **Thomas Davis, Jr., Memorial Chapter 616 at Mansfield Correctional Institute in Mansfield, Ohio**, in January displayed the first AVVA flag in the state of Ohio. On hand for the occasion were, among others, chapter Vice President Barron Gurley and AVVA Representative Brian Smith.

Warner Robins, Georgia, Chapter 902 co-sponsored a Welcome Home celebration for Vietnam-era veterans February 10 at the Robins Air Force Base Smith Community Center. Col. Andrew Busch, commander of the base's 402nd Maintenance Wing, and Col. Theresa Carter, commander of the 78th Air Base Wing, offered remarks and also individually greeted and thanked the 60 veterans who attended the event. The Keynote Speaker was Chapter 902 President Jerry Clineman.

Rochester, New York, Chapter 20 President Nelson Peck is the producer of the chapter's monthly public-access TV show, *Straight Talk for Veterans*. The shows cover topics such as VA services, PTSD, job search, and veterans' education. Once all ten shows are complete, the chapter will produce DVDs that will be loaned to interested veterans and given to commu-



Two Generations

VVA National Treasurer Alan Cook (above in tee shirt) and his wife, Cindy, have two sons serving in Iraq, both with the Army's 101st Airborne Division: Dan (above) and Steve (in full combat gear, left).

nity service agencies to help veterans in the five-county area surrounding Rochester. The chapter also provides veterans' benefits information one morning a week at the thrift store the chapter runs in Rochester.

Many VVA members are working to put on the Philadelphia Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Society's 20th annual 5K-10K Race and three-mile fun walk scheduled for May 21. The proceeds from this event go mainly to the Vietnam Veterans' Tuition Aid fund, which has helped countless sons and daughters of veterans with college expenses. Other proceeds go to St. Christopher's Children Hospital. Among the VVA members who make the race work are Tom Murtha, the President of **Philadelphia Chapter 266**, and fellow chapter members Tom Reilly, Tom Ryan, Tom Roberts, Andrew Keenan (the President of the Philadelphia Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Society), and Bill Crean, and Fred Radtke of **Chapter 430**.

SUPPORTING THE TROOPS

In December, members of **Washtenaw County Chapter 310 in Ann Arbor, Michigan**, put together 30 care packages at the home of John and Jane Kinzinger to

send to American troops in Iraq. Pitching in were Phil and Gena Hecker, Roy Hall, Ken Parks, the Kinzingers, and several friends of the chapter.

Lafayette, Louisiana, Chapter 141 member Dean Poche was a member of the Color Guard that took part in homecoming ceremonies held in January for members of Louisiana's 256th Infantry Brigade, which had recently returned from a one-year tour in Iraq. "Dean is an example of an outstanding veteran and chapter member," said chapter Secretary Karen Fontenot. "He is always ready and willing to assist in community service and is an asset to the chapter."

Cliff Hayes, a District Director for the **Buckeye State Council**, led a recent effort to support the U.S. Helicopter Marine Medium 774 Squadron in Iraq. Four Ohio chapters—**Columbiana County Chapter 40, Alliance Chapter 157, Wooster Chapter 255, and Akron Chapter 900**—contributed funds that were used to send coffee and other items, as well as gift certificates for the Marines to purchase items at their PX for their Super Bowl party. The squadron showed its gratitude by sending American flags that have been flown on combat missions to the chapters. "To me and my chapters," Hayes said, "supporting the troops means more than putting a magnetic ribbon on the back of your car or pick-up."

A Special Forces group that was based at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, and is now serving in Iraq, sent an American flag that flew over its compound at the air field in Baghdad and on a Black Hawk helicopter during a combat mission to **West Tennessee Chapter 875 in Memphis** in recognition of the chapter's support. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to each and every soldier serving our country," says Chapter Treasurer Bill Flanigan, "and we are waiting for their safe return."

SCHOLARSHIPS

Westchester County, New York, Chapter 49 has increased the amount of its annual scholarships to \$600 for 2006. The scholarships are awarded to six graduating high school students going on to

college, universities, or technical or vocational schools who are children or grandchildren of a veteran who served on active duty in any branch of the military during any war or peacetime.

Applications went out in January for the nine \$300 scholarships that will be given out this spring by **Rock River Chapter 236 in Janesville, Wisconsin**. The scholarships go to graduating high school seniors and to graduated students from prior years who had not been awarded a scholarship from the chapter. Eligible applicants are children and grandchildren of prior-service active-duty military personnel who were on active duty during the Vietnam War era.

Western New York Chapter 77 held its second annual Memorial Scholarship Spaghetti Dinner in February for the chapter's Peter P. Tycz II Memorial Scholarship program. The event brought in more than \$5,000. The proceeds go to graduating high school seniors who reside in Niagara or Erie County, have a relative who is a veteran, show a unique blend of academic achievement and community service, and anticipate enrolling in an accredited higher education program in the fall of 2006. Last year, the chapter awarded scholarships totaling \$3,000 to 12 Western New York high school seniors.

MEMORIALS

Chapter 809 in Salina, Kansas, helped sponsor a stirring ceremony last September at the St. John's Military School. The ceremony centered on the unveiling and dedication of a permanent panel of the Moving Wall containing the name of Salina native Dennis Pugh, a 1962 U.S. Air Force Academy graduate who, while serving with the 25th Tactical Fight Squadron, was listed as missing in action flying a FAC mission over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos in March of 1970.

Roger McCorrison, Don Souder, and Fred Vinyard of **South Jersey Chapter 239 in Somers Point** took part in the November dedication ceremonies of the Veterans Walk Memorial at Egg Harbor Township Middle School. Souder, one of the principal organizers of the memorial, donated a POW/MIA flag and a hand-carved statue of an eagle.

At the chapter's Veterans Day Dance and Dinner in November, **South Jersey Chapter 825 in Mays Landing** presented its Veterans Advocate Award for 2005 to New Jersey State Sen. Nicholas Asselta. Among other things, Sen. Asselta co-sponsored legislation to dedicate New Jersey Route 55 as "Veterans Memorial Highway."

Central Pennsylvania Chapter 791 in Lewistown coordinated the October 15 ceremonies for the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway on the Route 22/522 Lewistown Bypass, a new 12-mile stretch of highway that opened to the public the following month. Among the speakers at the dedication ceremonies was Chapter 791 President Dennis Drass. ■



Four Ohio chapters led a recent effort to support the U.S. Helicopter Marine Medium 774 Squadron in Iraq by contributing to the unit's Super Bowl party this year. The squadron showed its gratitude by sending American flags that have been flown on combat missions to the chapters.

REUNIONS

continued from previous page

Unit reunion of **Charlie Company, 2/12, 25th Infantry Division** in Gatlinburg, Tenn., June 1-4. Most of our group served together late 1969-70. Contact: Danny Breeding, 423-345-5000; danbreedi@cs.com

1st Signal Brigade will hold a reunion August 25-27, Crystal City Marriott, Arlington, Va. Contact Merv Norton, 703-569-3290, or visit www.1stSigBde.org

Vietnam Era Veterans Reunion of the **VVA Firebase 463**, Ramkota Best Western, Rapid City, S.D., May 5-7. Contact: Ron Kock at 605-484-7855 or vvafirebase463@rushmore.com or Jack Dean at 605-393-0444 or boats68@msn.com

U.S.S Nitro (AE-2/AE-23) Association Reunion June 22-25, Orleans Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas. For more information: www.ussnitro.org. Contact: James Timmons, President, USS Nitro Association, navy65-69@sbcglobal.net

Reunion of the **12th Evacuation Hospital (Army)**, Sept. 27-Oct. 1, Honolulu. Contact: Garth Holmes, Col. (ret.), 1534 Colonial Ct. SW, Olympia, WA 98512; 360-943-3843; garth.holmes@comcast.net

8th Annual Reunion of the **5th Infantry Division**, hosted by The Society of the Fifth Division, September 1-4, Columbia Marriott, Columbia, S.C. Contact: Philip A. Maniscalco, Society of the Fifth Division, 12 Rossie Street, Mystic, CT 06355; 860-536-4080; reunion@fifthinfantrydivision.com

Brotherhood of **Dak To Defenders** all **299th CBT Engr. Bn.** brothers from all time periods in Vietnam. Reunion July 27-30, Reno. Contact: Jay Gearhart, 231-922-3471; jaybird718@charter.net

U.S.S. Davison (DD618/DMS37) reunion in Long Beach, Calif., during the first two weeks of September. Contact: Earl J. Lee, Exec. Dir., USS Davison Reunion Association, reca.lee@sbcglobal.net

Reunion of crew of **U.S.S Kirk (FRF1087)** Aug. 9-13, Holiday Inn Select, Renton, Wash; 425-226-7700. Contact: Terry Schultz, 509-487-4611 (cell) or 509-990-3048; cadboss@spocadcon.com

Fourth reunion of the **585th Engineer Company Association**, Oct. 6-8, LaQuinta Inn & Suites, San Antonio, Tex. Contact: Ken Seymour, 352-527-3200; eagle585@earthlink.net

Annual reunion for crewmembers of the **U.S.S. Samuel N. Moore (DD-747)**, Holiday Inn Bayside, San Diego, Nov. 8-12. Contact: Bob Culver, 5910 Brookview Dr., Lincoln, NE 68506; 402-489-5910; Torpedoman@alltel.net

Reunion of **Army Artillery OCS (all classes)**, Ft. Sill, June 14-16. Contact: Joe Fleming, PO Box 75, Chatham, IL 62629; 217-483-6322; jfleming@springnet1.com or www.FAOCS.org

Fourth reunion of the **5th Bn., 60th Inf., 9th Inf. Div.**, June 15-18, in St. Louis. Visit www.5thbattalion.org Contact: William Metzler, 707-374-1377; Metz560@frontier.net

Sixteenth reunion, **D Co., 2/16 "Rangers," 1st Inf. Div., 1967-68**. July 28-30, Gregory, Mich. Contact: Don Dignan, 16485 Pollyanna, Livonia, MI 48154; 734-525-0157; ddignan@peoplepc.com

36th Evac Hospital reunion, Oct. 6-9, at the Amerisuites Paradise Road, Las Vegas. Hospital personnel and patients are invited. Contact: Anne Philiben, 541-318-5713; annephiliben@bendcable.com; www.36thevac.com ■

LOCATOR

continued from previous page

80 Hawkinson Ave., Galesburg, IL 61401; 309-221-4740; haage@insightbb.com

Searching for **Samuel Allen**, who served in 1968 or 1969. Contact: Priscilla Ashleigh, 910 E. Spyglass Place, Placentia, CA 92870; 714-655-5319.

Anybody serve on the **U.S.S. Horne (DLG-30)** during the 1972-73 deployment? I'm looking for you to set the record straight about the downing of a MIG, an incident since denied by DoD. The Horne's deck logs are classified.

Contact: Michael E. Lalancette, 5 Taft St., Essex Junction, VT 05452; 802-878-8892; melalancet@aol.com

Want to find **CWO Leon Muiczkowski**, USA Ret., from Trenton, N.J. Believed to have moved to Perth, Australia. Our last duty station was Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Leon was the best man at my wedding. Contact: Fred Draper, PO Box 593, Eatontown, NJ 07724; 732-681-0711 or toll-free: 800-422-6909.

Trying to find anyone I served with **233rd, 321st, 352nd, 261st Transportation**, 1969-70. Contact: Bob Romano, melinaromano@verizon.net

Searching for "**Lewis**," the **Army mess cook at Cam Ranh**. I'd love to get in touch. Contact: Yen Hoang, 3800 Herwol Ave., Waco, TX 76710; 817-514-0444.

Seeking **John Bock**, the chopper pilot who visited the Landmark Apts., 2100 W. Beach Dr., Panama City, Fla., in 1969. You were stationed in Georgia and on your way to Vietnam. Contact: Patricia Thoden, pthoden@hotmail.com

Want to connect with any of my dad's buddies from the **MCB 71**. I remember the name Arthur R. Morgan, part of the Phu Loc "Crusher Crew" with my father in 1968. Contact: Peggy Meade, 540-599-2995; pmeade.jne@adelphia.net

On the lookout for **Romelio "Mike" Valdez, 2nd Bn., 12th Cav., 1st Air Cav. Div.**, 1968. Romelio lived in Atlanta at the time he entered the Army. Contact: Gary Jerald, 8600 A Springs Ln.,

Norcross, Georgia 30092; 770-447-6596; soldier30092@yahoo.com

Seeking **Burl Bilyeu**. Last-known location in California. Contact: Kenn Smith, 740 W. 15th St., Apt. 3, Merced, CA 95340.

I'm trying to find my son, **John Michael Fallon**. He served with the **9th Marines** at Danang, 1965-66, and received a Purple Heart. Contact: James Fallon, 4902 Fair Oaks Ave., Tampa, FL 33611; 813-839-7599.

Searching for former members of **Bravo Co., 3rd of the 60th, 9th Infantry Division**. Anybody out there? Contact: A. R. "Monti" Montillo, 1007 Black Rush Circle, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466; 843-971-7647; amontillo@bellsouth.net

Looking for Marine buddies from the Siege of Khe Sanh, Jan-April 1968. We were with **HQ, 1st Provisional Howitzers, 3rd Bn., 12th Marines (3/12)**. Seeking Andrew "Stinky" Rocco from 116th St. in Harlem. You and Glenn from Detroit came to my house in the Bronx after we came home in 1968. Also love to hear from John Neves of Elizabeth, N.J. Contact: Rich Mandriota, 23 Disbrow Rd., Matawan, NJ 07747; ricardomano@aol.com

Seeking documentation of rocket/mortar hostile fire events at Phu Bai airfield flight line between June 1968-May 1969. I served with **45th MI Detachment (E Detachment), 1st MI Bn (ARS)**, billeted at Camp Hochmuth. Contact: Bill "Sleepy" Tower, 330 Sunderland Rd., Worcester, MA 01604.

My husband Ralph P. Lariviere served at Quang Tri in 1968 with **Mobile Construction Battalions 9 and 10 (MCB 9, MCB 10)**. I'm looking for his buddies Joe P. Cunningham from Philly, Steven Erickson, many others. Contact: Celine at clrlariviere@xpressamerica.net

Ex-Marine (E-5 Sgt) who served in Vietnam from (I think) March 1965 April 1966. My MOS was 1371, combat engineer. I was with the **2nd Combat Engineer Battalion**, Camp Lejeune. I can't seem to remember the exact dates we were in Nam and can't remember who we were attached to while there. Any help will be greatly appreciated. Semper Fi. Contact: Charlie Colf, charliecolf@rochester.rr.com

Trying to find **Mike Pyle** ("Gomer"), **3/9 Kilo company**, 1965-66. Contact: Doug Parker, Ddep3377@aol.com

Would like to contact anyone serving with **MAAG Vietnam** from 1962 to 1964. I was with MAAG communications at HQ in Saigon. Contact: David Keen, utgator1@aol.com

I am looking for those who served with me at Camp Eschborn, Germany in the **ADM (Atomic Demolition Munition) Platoon, 317th Engr Bn.**, Jan. 1969-May 1971. Contact: Hoot Gibson, 200 Sunset Lane, Harriman, TN 37748; JaDaGil@aol.com

Searching for my brother, **Willie W. Reese Jr.**, who served in Vietnam 1968-71. The last time I saw Willie was at our father's funeral in 1978. I am his youngest brother, and I am now in L.A. Any information to help me would be most appreciated. Contact: Charles Reese, creese63@aol.com

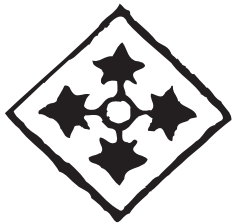
Seeking **Donnie Gault** who was stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in May 1966. He went to Vietnam shortly thereafter. He was from Maryland. Contact: Jo Anne Phillips, PO Box 831, Clyde, NC 28721; 828-452-9130; mtngal53@webtv.net

Looking for **Ed Butler**. He placed a locator notice in *The VVA Veteran* using this e-mail: reontgen@sabernet.net That address is no longer valid. Ed and I would have served together with **11th Dental, 1st Marine Air Wing**, Chu Lai. Ed, if you're reading, get in touch. Contact: Harlen Brown, harleydalebrown@sbcglobal.net

Australian seeks Viet vet to return a memento. I have a lighter with the following inscription: "**WAYNE YARBROUGH**, When I die I'll go to Heaven because I've spent my time in hell, **11th Infantry Brigade**, Vietnam 68-69." Contact: Peter Bretag, ross21@ozemail.com.au

Searching for **Samuel Thompson**, a Green Beret flight sergeant stationed in 1968 in Bad Tiltz (Germany). I believe he may have died in Vietnam in 1969-1970. Contact: Patricia Lohrey, Patricia.Lohrey@t-online.de ■

WEAR THIS PATCH?



www.4thinfantry.org
Contact

Gregory A. Rollinger
8891 Aviary Path
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55077

Locator Message

To have a message appear in the "Locator," fill out the form below: **PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

Army Navy Air Force Marines Coast Guard Miscellaneous

Message: (Limit yourself to 50 words or less) _____

Return this form to: **The VVA Veteran, c/o Locator, 8605 Cameron Street, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3710**

Date _____ Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number (Fill in only if you would like your telephone number printed) _____

ALLOW 2 TO 4 MONTHS FOR YOUR NOTICE TO APPEAR IN THE LOCATOR. YOUR NOTICE WILL APPEAR SUBJECT TO THE DISCRETION OF THE PUBLISHER AND MAY BE EDITED. THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THIS SERVICE.

TAPS

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Weymouth W. Derby died November 14, 2005, in Indianapolis at the age of 59. He served in the U.S. Army, with a tour of duty in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Division. He was awarded three Purple Hearts. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Sammy L. Davis (Indianapolis) Chapter 295.

Michael B. Dishman died in San Marcos, Texas. He was born October 2, 1939. Dishman served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-San Marcos Chapter 923.

William L. Eads, 61, died in April 2005 in Monrovia, Indiana. He served in the U.S. Navy in the Vietnam War on the U.S.S. *Falcon*. He was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Sammy L. Davis (Indianapolis) Chapter 295.

Hilbert Eppler died December 22, 2005, in Lawton, Oklahoma, at the age of 78. His death was diabetes-related. He served in the U.S. Army, with tours of duty in Germany, Korea, and Alaska, retiring in 1965 at the rank of Staff Sergeant. Eppler was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Lawton Chapter 751.

Frank J. Fanelli died recently in Dobbs Ferry, New York, at the age of 81. He served in the U.S. Navy, with a tour in Vietnam from 1968-69. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Pleasantville Chapter 49.

Garfield Valiant (Val) Feyen died December 9, 2005, in Kinsley, Kansas, at the age of 59. He died of complications from hepatitis C. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Feyen was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Hays Chapter 939.

Brian S. Frymoyer, 39, was murdered January 20 in Reading, Pennsylvania. He was a life member of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America-Reading Chapter 131.

Robert Lawrence Gaither, Jr., died from a stroke December 27, 2005, in Harrison, Tennessee, at the age of 57. He served in the U.S. Army from 1967-70 with a tour of duty in Vietnam. Gaither was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Chattanooga Chapter 203.

Robert D. Gardner, 70, died November 24, 2005, in Nevada, Missouri. The cause of death was cellular cancer. He served in the U.S. Army for 20 years. Gardner was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Nevada Chapter 918.

Henry James Gaughan, Sr., 52, died September 6, 2005, in Cumberland, Maryland. He served in the U.S. Navy and retired after a full career that included service in the Vietnam War. Gaughan was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Cumberland Chapter 172.

Patrick P. "Pappy" Graham, 58, died of cancer January 9, 2006, in Akron, Ohio. He served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam from 1966-67 and was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Akron Chapter 34.

Forrest H. Harrison, 54, died October 1, 2005, in Climax, Michigan. The cause

of death was cancer. Harrison was a veteran of the Vietnam War and a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Battle Creek Chapter 313.

Gary L. Hatswell died November 20, 2005, in Lockport, New York. He died as a result of cardiorespiratory arrest due to chronic lymphocytic leukemia. He served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division from November 1968-69. Hatswell was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Tonawanda Chapter 77.

John D. Henderson died in December 2005 in Cumberland, Maryland, at the age of 61. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Cumberland Chapter 172.

Robert P. Hungate, Jr., 50, died last year in Daggett, California. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Hungate was an at-large member of Vietnam Veterans of America-California.

Allen R. Hunt died of cancer December 21, 2005, in Hamilton, Montana, at the age of 59. He served in the U.S. Army from 1965-67, with service in the Vietnam War. Hunt was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Bitterroot Valley (Hamilton) Chapter 938.

Stephen Wayne Huston, 55, died October 7, 2005, while fly-fishing on a trout stream near Cotter, Arkansas. He served in the U.S. Navy from February 1971-75 as a cryptological technician with the U.S. Naval Security Group. Huston was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Ponca City Chapter 750.

Fred A. Johnson died December 28, 2005, in Lake Katrine, New York, at the age of 60. He served in the U.S. Army, with a tour of duty in Vietnam. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Kingston Chapter 60.

Robert Lee Kimbrel died August 15, 2005, in Tulsa at the age of 51. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1972-75, with a tour of duty in Vietnam. He also served in the National Guard and the Reserves for 23 years. Kimbrel was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Ponca City Chapter 750.

David E. Kugler died January 25 in Harrison, Ohio. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Kugler was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Cincinnati Chapter 10.

Howard Lee Lightwine, 61, died November 30, 2005, in Moundville, Missouri, from pulmonary fibrosis of the lungs. He served in the U.S. Navy from July 1974-78. He was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Nevada Chapter 918.

Michael B. Lindemuth, 27, died April 13, 2005, at Camp Hit, Al Anbar Province, Iraq, from wounds resulting from enemy mortar fire. He was born in Petoskey, Michigan, on December 17, 1977, and is survived by his mother. Lindemuth served in the U.S. Marine Corps from July 5, 2000, until his death. He was assigned to the Regimental Combat Team 2, 3/25 Marines from Akron, Ohio. He was a member of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America-Petoskey Chapter 68.

Daniel L. Linthicum died in 2005 in Yukon, Oklahoma, at the age of 66. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Rixeyville Chapter 752.

Charlie MacDonald died in 2005 in Culpepper, Virginia. He was a member of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America-Rixeyville Chapter 752.

Michael R. Martin died in Petersburg, Michigan. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Carleton Chapter 142.

Walter Martin died December 25, 2005, in Jasper, Tennessee, at the age of 73. He served in the U.S. Navy in Vietnam from 1965-1966. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Chattanooga Chapter 203.

Daniel Patrick McLain, 60, died February 6 in Baltimore. The cause of death was diabetes Type II and a blood clot to the lungs. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. McLain was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Bel Air Chapter 588.

Thomas W. Millward, Jr., died March 11, 2005, in Texarkana, Arkansas, at the age of 66. He died from colorectal cancer. He served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. Millward was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Texarkana Chapter 278.

Charles A. Morris, 63, died November 15, 2005, in Chillicothe, Ohio. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1963-69, with service in Vietnam. Morris was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Chillicothe Chapter 810.

Steven Hewitt Neal died November 20, 2005, in his home in Long Beach, California, at the age of 58. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Neal was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Long Beach Chapter 756.

David R. Nelson, 63, died January 14 in Shiocton, Wisconsin, from a stroke and a massive heart attack. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Nelson was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Shawano Chapter 206.

Donald Russell Olewine died December 4, 2005, in Slatington, Pennsylvania, at the age of 59. He died of a heart attack while shoveling snow. He served in the U.S. Army from 1965-67, attaining the rank of Sergeant E-5. Olewine served a tour of duty in Vietnam with the 9th Infantry Division. He was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Easton Chapter 415.

Paul O'Neil, Jr., died December 9, 2005, in Westernport, Maryland, at the age of 68. He served in the U.S. Army for 25 years and retired at the rank of Master Sergeant. He served a tour of duty in Vietnam. O'Neil was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Cumberland Chapter 172.

Verl Allen Perkins, 61, died October 22, 2005, in Frostburg, Maryland. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1963-69 during the Vietnam War. Perkins was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Cumberland Chapter 172.

James Alexander Petrousky died of pancreatic cancer October 19, 2005, in Port Tobacco, Maryland, at the age of 62. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from August 1964-67, with a 13-month tour of duty in Vietnam. Petrousky was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Athol Chapter 340.

Glen David Raney, 57, died June 25, 2005, in Shreveport, Louisiana, from a massive cerebral hemorrhage. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War from 1968-71. He joined the Naval Reserve Seabees and later joined the Louisiana Army National Guard 1/156th Armored Battalion. Raney was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Texarkana Chapter 278.

Fred R. Schmitt died of a heart attack March 21, 2005, in Somerset, Pennsylvania. He served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam from February 1968 to March 1969. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Somerset Chapter 587.

Roger Paul "Sparky" Schomburg, 61, died of cancer December 29, 2005, in his home in Defiance, Ohio. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1962-65, serving in Germany. Schomburg was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Defiance Chapter 954.

Albert M. Silverberg, 62, died in 2005 in Tonawanda, New York. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Silverberg was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Tonawanda Chapter 77.

Robert J. Smith died January 15 in Lawton, Oklahoma, at the age of 61. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1966-70. Smith was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Lawton Chapter 751.

Steven M. Spencer, 61, died in July 2005 in Elida, Ohio. He served in the U.S. Army from April 1967 to March 1970, with a tour of duty in Vietnam. Spencer was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Xenia Chapter 930.

John Stewart died in 2005 at the Oxford Nursing Home in Oxford, New York. He was permanently hospitalized. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Stewart was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Owego Chapter 480.

Philipa Truman Sumpter, 56, died January 10 in Georgetown, South Carolina. He served in the U.S. Army from July 1969 to August 1971, with a tour of duty in Vietnam. Sumpter was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Myrtle Beach Chapter 925.

Jack Taylor died in 2005 in Richmond, Virginia, at the age of 57. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Rixeyville Chapter 752.

Bronson H. Thomas, 82, died July 10, 2004, in Santa Clara, California. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II aboard the U.S.S. *McKinley*. He was a life member of Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America-San Jose Chapter 201.

Ralph Joseph Thomas, 57, died July 1, 2005, in Williamsburg, Virginia. The cause of death was a heart attack related to Agent Orange. He served in the U.S. Army from 1966-68, with a 1967 tour in Vietnam.

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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“We urge members of this committee to introduce and hold hearings on companion legislation,” Rowan said.

THE TIME FOR NVVLS IS NOW

VA believes that the National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study (NVVLS), a follow-up to a study done some twenty years ago, must be funded. In his testimony before the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, Rowan urged Congress to compel the VA “to immediately reinstate this statutorily mandated study and bring it to an early and proper conclusion.

“The NVVLS represents the last best chance we have of understanding the scope of the health of Vietnam veterans,” Rowan said. “Line-item funding for this study and strong, explicit report language are needed to compel the VA to fulfill its responsibility to comply with the mandate set by Congress in Public Law 106-419, The Veterans’ Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000.”

The funds for this study, Rowan said, should be a separate line item of \$25 million in Research and Development funds

SENSIBLE SOLUTION

Southern New Jersey’s 95,000 veterans will be able to get federally funded medical care at Kessler Memorial Hospital under a new partnership between the hospital and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Previously, area veterans had to travel to Philadelphia or Wilmington, Delaware, for hospital care.

Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-N.J.) announced the agreement. In 2003, together with Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.), LoBiondo sponsored legislation that required the VA to develop a plan to address veterans’ health-care needs in southern New Jersey. Washington, he said, did not see the necessity of hospital services in the southern part of the state.

LoBiondo persevered, aided by Smith, and by Reps. Jim Saxton (R-N.J.) and Rob Andrews (D-N.J.). Under the agreement, the VA will reimburse Kessler for various services the hospital will provide to veterans, including inpatient stays, emergency care and stabilization, some gastroenterology procedures, dermatology, podiatry, and physical therapy.

HEALTH ASSESSMENT FOR SOLDIERS

In January, Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker authorized a new health screening program, “Post Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA),” which is designed to address deployment-related physical and mental health needs of soldiers three to six months after returning from deployment. After nine months of pilot programs, the Army is now implementing the program, which is one component of the Defense Department’s ongoing efforts to safeguard the health of military personnel returning from deployment, including Active, Reserve, and National Guard.

Dubbing this program “unprecedented,” officials noted it will address the deployment-related physical and mental health needs of soldiers. Research has shown that deployment health concerns often evolve over time. Commanders, therefore, must facilitate and encourage returning soldiers to visit health care providers to insure that all their deployment-related health concerns are addressed as soon as possible.

Army Surgeon General, Lt. Gen. Kevin Kiley explained the health reassessment this way: “When our units return from operations around the world, their equipment is rechecked and reset. We see this health screening as an expansion of the process that looks at resetting the fighting force, and maintaining the wellness and health of soldiers.”

VVA, which criticized DoD for failing to conduct proper pre- and post-deployment physicals to troops bound for combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, applauds this initiative. ■

DISABILITY BENEFITS

continued from page 5

almost 20 years, Jackie Garrick. She is a veteran, a social worker, and previously she worked for the American Legion. Garrick mentioned that she would attend the commission hearings in Boston and Chicago.

I also had an opportunity to talk with Joe Wynn, a member of the commission. Craig Tonjes, Tom Hall, and I also spoke to Butch Joeckel, another commission member.

Many questions persist, and we still don’t know for sure what recommendations will be made to the President and Congress. The overbearing presence of VA personnel and the reliance on the IOM and the Center for Naval Analysis make me nervous. So does the number of high-ranking retired military officers. ■

BOOKS

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jump-cuts, often wryly reflecting on how pop culture, notably the macho of the Hollywood film, makes the heroic stale.”

Goldensohn offers works from the best Vietnam veteran poets and from first-tier civilian poets expressing their views (almost always of the dovish persuasion) on the war. The list of the latter includes Robert Lowell, Denise Levertov, Robert Bly, Allen Ginsberg, and W.S. Merwin. The vet-poets in the anthology include Walter McDonald, David Huddle, Horace Coleman, Basil Paquet, Dale Ritterbusch, Gerald McCarthy, Yusef Komunyakaa, David Connolly, W.D. Ehrhart, and Bruce Weigl.

Based on the poems in *Black Marble Wall* (Taylor’s Ridge, 60 pp., \$8.95, paper), William A. Campbell served a very difficult tour in the Vietnam War, was seriously wounded, and has had trouble adjusting to life back home since then. His short, accessible poems convey those facts very well. For more info, go to www.lulu.com

Several of the poems published in English and Vietnamese in Lam Thi My Da’s *Green Rice* (Curbstone, 148 pp., \$14.95, paper), translated by Martha Collins and Thuy Dinh, deal with the writer’s experiences living in the central part of Vietnam during the American War. While the war is the subject, the poems also evoke the feel of the land, as in “Garden Fragrance.” To wit: “Last night a bomb exploded on the veranda/But sounds of birds sweeten the air this morning/I sense the fragrant trees, look in the garden/Find two silent clusters of ripe guavas.”

The correct title of Carey Spearman’s newest book, which we reviewed in the January-February issue, is *36 Years and a Wake-Up: An American Returns to Vietnam* (Truman Publishing). ■

PTSD

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is gone. Anything less can leave children feeling as if they have done something wrong to make the parent leave. Any way to maintain some contact through telephone, e-mails, or letters is encouraged.”

When family members go off to war, it is important to remember that they are not the only ones suffering. That is why mental health experts say it is important to be on the lookout for signals that might indicate a military family member is experiencing too much stress: persistent fatigue; inability to concentrate; flashes of anger, lashing out at family and friends; changes in eating or sleeping habits; increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs; repeated tension headaches, lower backaches, stomach problems or other physical ailments; and prolonged feelings of depression, anxiety, or helplessness. If these occur, individuals should seek a support group, or in more serious instances, professional medical attention. ■

LETTERS

continued from page 3

your head against a brick wall, knowing that eventually the wall will win.

I filled out my request for a hearing after reviewing the Statement of the Case. I asked for no representation at my hearing. I have not received a hearing date yet. I had signed my Power of Attorney over to the DAV, but was disappointed that I never received any feedback from them on my claim, even after it was denied. I have had my congressman helping me with my claim.

I think I got someone very angry at the regional office when I asked if troops returning from Iraq were being given preferential treatment over Vietnam veterans when it comes to disability claims. It was a couple of weeks later that I got my denial.

Eddie Hammonds
Via e-mail

ONE COMPLEX WAR

Had I been at the Reno Convention, I would have spoken in favor of Jack Head’s resolution to expand eligibility for the Vietnam Service Medal. Anyone who thinks the Vietnam War was limited to “in-country” fails to understand the complexity of the war and the countries involved. In the minds of some, a clerk in Saigon was more deserving than radar crews at Lima sites in Laos or crews who loaded ordnance on F4s in Thailand. During my 42-month involvement in the war, I spent only a few days in the Republic of South Vietnam and was awarded the medal, but I also spent 15 months flying over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos in C-130s and additional time in an F4 fighter wing hitting targets in Laos and North Vietnam.

Many of the names we honor on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall or are listed as POW/MIA are people who never set foot in-country. In-country-only vets: There was a truck on the Trail carrying a bullet with your name on it. The “out-of-country” vets destroyed the truck, and you came home.

Don Northcutt
Via e-mail

NOT GUAM


Kudos to the people at the Convention who turned down the expansion of the Vietnam Service Resolution. I looked at my service medal, and it said, “for service in the Republic of Vietnam,” not Guam, the Philippines, or any other place.

There also were many people on state-side bases who supported the war. Should they receive the service medal also? I don’t think those of us who served in Vietnam think of ourselves as being favorites. Everyone who was in the military at the time received the National Defense Medal; that would be your ribbon.

Rudy Hudowalski
Bayville, New Jersey ■

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TAPS

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Thomas was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Williamsburg Chapter 957.

Howard W. Trezonaica died recently in Landers, California, at the age of 76. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1943-71, with a tour of duty in Vietnam. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Detroit Chapter 9.

Don L. Urbank died in October 2005 in Mukwonago, Wisconsin, at the age of 68. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Urbank was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Newburg Chapter 448.

Charles VanKuren died in 2005 at the Oxford Nursing Home in Oxford, New York. He was permanently hospitalized. VanKuren was a veteran of the Vietnam War and a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Owego Chapter 480.

Earl D. Young died April 29, 2005, in Milton, Wisconsin. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Young was a member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Janesville Chapter 236.

Thomas M. Youngblood, 57, died September 8, 2005, at his home in Jesup, Georgia. He served in the U.S. Army, with two tours in Vietnam from 1970-72. Youngblood was awarded the Silver Star, the Combat Aircrew Badge, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, the Air Medal, the Purple Heart, and other awards. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America-Hinesville Chapter 789. ■

ARTS

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novel *Brideshead Revisited*, which takes place just after World War II. "Modern art is all bosh, isn't it?" Cordelia, who is hoping for a positive reply, asks Charles as they stroll through a gallery exhibit. Ryder unblinkingly replies: "Great bosh."

Afterwar: *Veterans From a World in Conflict* is the name of renowned photographer Lori Grinker's recent exhibit at the Project 4 Gallery in Washington, D.C. The exhibit consisted of about two dozen of Grinker's chromogenic prints that give stark evidence of the human cost of war taken in many countries around the globe during the last two decades. It ran in February and March.

DOCUMENTARY QUERY

Flight 33 Productions, the producers of the *Shootout* series on the History Channel, is putting together an hour-long episode on the 1968 Tet Offensive for its upcoming second season. The producers are looking for Vietnam veterans with compelling Tet '68 stories to participate in the show.

If you'd like to be interviewed, contact Brittany Graham by e-mail, bg@flight33.tv or call 818-505-6640, ext. 138. And please mention that you read about it in *The VVA Veteran*. ■

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0876	POW/MIA 1" Pin	4.00
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