



The California Zephyr

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

It is that time of year again. VVA's National Convention will be taking place July 15-20, 2019 in Spokane Washington. Now is the time to start raising funds so you can send as many of your delegates as possible. If you don't attend or at least send someone from your chapter, then you can't complain about the outcome of the elections or the way the amendments are voted on. So please try to attend, we need your voice to be heard.

Preceding the convention there will be the Region 8/9 Conference. The conference will be held on June 1, 2019 in Sparks, NV at the Nugget Resort and Casino. If your chapter can afford to send someone to this conference you will be able to get advanced notice of the constitution amendments that will be heard and voted on at the National Convention in July.

Dr. Tom Hall, the National PTSD committee chair, has put together a Vet Center survey that he would like everyone who uses a Vet Center to fill out. If you use a Vet Center Dr. Hall would appreciate it if you would fill out the survey. It is only two pages and doesn't take that long to fill out. The survey is not to condemn the centers. It is to help VVA, at the National level, put together a platform to take to the legislators to make sure we are getting what we need from the Vet Centers. So if you are using a Vet Center and you would like to fill out a survey email me at nebuskfan@aol and I will send you the survey. After you complete the survey you can email it back to me and I will get them to Dr. Hall.

I want to thank all California chapters for what you are doing throughout the state. I listen to the chapter reports at our Sunday morning state council meetings and I am amazed at what you are doing in your local areas. Keep up the great work.

Steve

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE'S REPORT

By Seth Reeb - Legislative Advocate

The 2019-20 California legislative session is now under way. Legislators and advocacy groups are putting together their legislation for this legislative year. The deadline to introduce bills is February 22. Only a few military and veteran bills have been introduced so far and we are studying those bills to gauge their relevance.

The Senate President pro-Tem and the Assembly Speaker have named the members of the Senate and Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs. These committees provide oversight and hear legislation relating to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Guard/Military Department, the, and benefits and programs which help California's veterans, and their dependents. The Senate committee has 4 veterans and the Assembly committee has 3 veterans.

All legislator's bios and contact information can be found at:

California State Senate: <https://www.senate.ca.gov/senators>

California State Assembly: <https://www.assembly.ca.gov/assemblymembers>

SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

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Melissa Hurtado (D)
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Jim Frazier (D)
Todd Gloria (D)
Devon Mathis (R) *US Army National Guard Veteran
Al Muratsuchi (D)
Cottie Petrie-Norris (D)
Rudy Salas (D)

CSC ANNOUNCES LEGISLATORS OF YEAR

SENATOR JANET NGUYEN AND ASSEMBLYMAN RANDY VOEPEL AS 2017

LEGISLATORS OF THE YEAR

The Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council (VVA-CSC) has named Senator Janet Nguyen (R-Garden Grove) and Assemblyman Randy Voepel (R-Santee) as their Legislators of the Year for 2017. The VVA-CSC Legislators of the Year award is bestowed upon legislators who have supported California's veterans and their families during their service as California legislators.

SENATOR JOSH NEWMAN (R-FULLERTON)

Senator Janet Nguyen is a Vietnamese-American whose family fled South Vietnam after the Vietnam War. Prior to the California State Senate, Nguyen was a member of the Orange County Board of Supervisors from 2007 to 2014. She also previously served on the Garden Grove City Council. In addition, she is the former Vice-President of Government and Public Affairs for the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce and is a small business owner. Senator Nguyen is a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

In her first three years, she has authored eleven bills concerning veterans and the Republic of Vietnam.

According to the VVA-CSC's Veterans Advocate, Pete Conaty, "Senator Nguyen's commitment to veterans and the military is obvious from her efforts in the Legislature and her insight and support on the Senate Veterans Committee. She was born in Saigon and emigrated with her parents to the United States in search of freedom and liberty. These ideals are what the Vietnam Veterans fought for and we are proud to see that she is now fighting for us."

ASSEMBLYMEMBER SABRINA CERVANTES (D-RIVERSIDE)

Randy Voepel was elected to represent California's 71st Assembly District in 2016. Before joining the Assembly, Voepel served as on the Santee City Council between 1996 and 2000, and then served as Mayor between 2000-2016. He is a Vietnam veteran, having served two tours in the conflict with the US Navy. After leaving the service, he worked nearly forty years in the insurance industry. He serves as the Vice Chair of the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs. He is the only Vietnam veteran currently serving in the California Legislature.

In his first year in office, he has authored four bills concerning veterans and the State Military Department.

"Assemblyman Voepel is one of us; a Vietnam veteran, and he understands our issues and the importance of helping not just our generation of veterans, but the men and women who are currently returning home from deployments in the Middle East," said Dean Gotham, Chairman, VVA-CSC Government Affairs Committee.



SAVE THE DATE

**12TH ANNUAL CAPITOL VETERANS
RECOGNITION LUNCHEON**

June 26, 2019
Sheraton Grand Hotel
Downtown Sacramento

You are invited to participate in the 12th Annual Veterans Recognition Luncheon on Wednesday, June 26, 2019 in Sacramento. This year's event will be held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel.

Last year over 350 people attended this event and it continues to increase in scope and attendance each year.

Further details regarding the Veterans Recognition Luncheon will be sent to you in the next few weeks. Thank you for your anticipated participation. If you have any questions please contact:

Pete Conaty
Pete Conaty and Associates
pconaty@sbeglobal.net
(916) 768-8940

Dana Nichol
Reeb Government Relations
dana.nichol@sbeglobal.net
(916) 558-1926




Senator Nguyen and Assemblyman Voepel will be presented their awards at the VVA-CSC's Annual Capitol Legislative Day in the Spring of 2018. This is a day when VVA-CSC leaders and members alike travel to the State Capitol to advocate on issues of importance to veterans and to educate legislators, consultants, and staff.

EOC

As chair of the Economic Opportunities Committee for VVA National, I may live in Huntington Beach but our committee impacts veterans throughout the United States.

State Council Officers	Address	Phone/Cell	E-mail
President - Steve Mackey	7407 Candlelight Dr. Riverside, CA 92509	951-681-9531 951-231-7268	nebhuskfan@aol.com
1st Vice President - Dean Gotham	15879 32nd Ave Clearlake, CA 95422-9353	707-459-8601	deang1968@gmail.com vp1@vvacalsc.com
2nd Vice President - Dick Southern	PO Box 68 Tuolumne, CA 95379	209-928-3848	dick.southern@gmail.com vp2@vvacalsc.com
Secretary - Bill Hodges	2224 Rosedale Av. Oakland, CA 94601-4326	510-918-4429	fdrdocent@comcast.net, secretary@vvacalsc.com
Treasurer - Barry Schloffel	1244 Shaws Flat Rd. Sonora, CA 95370-5433	209-532-6119	bshowful@att.net
District Directors	Address	Phone	E-mail
North District - Butch Frederickson	661 Dogwood Ln Paradise, CA 95969-3828	530-877-1340	ccfuvnalum@comcast.net north_district@vvacalsc.com
Central District - Al Sickle	PO Box 1424 Murphys, CA 95247-1424	209-728-2138	leanin.al391@yahoo.com central_district@vvacalsc.com
South District - Jerry Orlemann	5237 Wiseburn Ave Hawthorne, CA 90250	310-490-5396 310-725-0019	jerry@orlemann.net south_district@vvacalsc.com
At Large - Alan Cook			alancook53@aol.com director@vvacalsc.com
Committees	Chair	Co-Chair	E-mail
Membership	Jerry Orlemann		jerry@orlemann.net membership@vvacalsc.com
Public Affairs	Ponce Gonzalez		ponce408@yahoo.com public_affairs@vvacalsc.com
Government Affairs	Dean Gotham		deang1968@gmail.com government@vvacalsc.com
Legislative Lobbyist	Seth Reeb		sethreeb@comcast.net legslative@vvacalsc.com
Constitution	Mike Kennedy		mike3sps@verizon.net constitution@vvacalsc.com
Resolutions	Deek Segovia		rsegov11b@gmail.com resolutions@vvacalsc.com
Women Veterans	Kate O'Hare Palmer		koharepalmer@gmail.com women_veterans@vvacalsc.com
Meeting Planner	Dick Southern		dick.southern@gmail.com
POW/MIA	Bob Chaney		bkrbob@charter.net powmia@vvacalsc.com
Zephyr	Tom Hohmann		tomh47@aol.com zephyr@vvacalsc.com
PTSD	Doug Mitten		mittendouglas@yahoo.com ptsd@vvacalsc.com
Veterans Incarcerated	John Mendiola		yardsbyjohn@yahoo.com incarcerated@vvacalsc.com
CA AVVA President AVVA Region 9 Director	Elayne Mackey		mmm4evr1@aol.com avva_liaison@vvacalsc.com
Agent Orange	Ken Holybee		holybee@comcast.net agent_orange@vvacalsc.com
Veteran Benefits	John Weaver		j.weaver@cox.net veteran_benefits@vvacalsc.com
Convention Planning	Dick Southern		dick.southern@gmail.com convention@vvacalsc.com
Finance	Bill Hodges		fdrdocent@comcast.net finance@vvacalsc.com

The EOC Priorities are designed for veterans to achieve economic empowerment through education, employment and entrepreneurship. Our priorities are:

1. To identify, develop, promote and advocate for more contracting opportunities for Veteran and Service Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses with Federal and State agencies; and large Corporate Primes; and for an increase in the mandatory requirement for federal agencies and large primes to procure a minimum of 3% of all of their goods and services from service disabled veteran owned businesses to 5%.

2. Advocate for more federal, state, and local assistance for Veterans interested in starting or expanding their own small business; and for new or stronger legislation that will create more education, training, and employment opportunities for veterans.

Our committee has built strong relationships with the

Department of Labor, the Small Business Administration, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our committee members include those veterans who own small businesses and two members who own service-disabled veteran businesses. This gives our committee the insight of what it takes to run a business but more importantly the experience to be able to speak directly to the government agencies on what veterans need to succeed in business.

We will continue to advocate for economic opportunities for all veterans.

Respectfully submitted by Frank Barry, EOC Chair.

...LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY
By Jim Doyle

On February 13, 1995 I was honored to be part of the

first non-governmental group, US, or Vietnamese, to participate in the Repatriation of American remains, in a ceremony at Noi Bai Airport in Hanoi. I was among a group of 26 American Vietnam Veterans representing Vietnam Veterans of America. We had been asked the night before by Vietnamese and US officials to participate. This was five months prior to the restoration of diplomatic relations in

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Steve Mackey.
EDITOR
Tom Hohmann

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Contact us at:
VVA CSC
PO Box 4277
Riverside, CA 92514
http://www.vvacalsc.com

The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of VVA, the State Council or its members.

Who Are The Vietnam Veterans Of America?
Founded in 1978, Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. is the only national Vietnam veterans organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA is organized as a not-for-profit corporation and is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

VVA'S FOUNDING PRINCIPLE
"Never again shall one generation of veterans abandon another."

PURPOSE
The purpose of Vietnam Veterans of America's national organization, the state councils, and chapters is:

To help foster, encourage, and promote the improvement of the condition of the Vietnam veteran.

To promote physical and cultural improvement, growth and development, self-respect, self-confidence, and usefulness of Vietnam-era veterans and others.

To eliminate discrimination suffered by Vietnam veterans and to develop channels of communications which will assist Vietnam veterans to maximize self-realization and enrichment of their lives and enhance life-fulfillment.

To study, on a non-partisan basis, proposed legislation, rules, or regulations introduced in any federal, state, or local legislative or administrative body which may affect the social, economic, educational, or physical welfare of the Vietnam-era veteran or others; and to develop public-policy proposals designed to improve the quality of life of the Vietnam-era veteran and others especially in the areas of employment, education, training, and health.

To conduct and publish research, on a non-partisan basis, pertaining to the relationship between Vietnam-era veterans and the American society, the Vietnam War experience, the role of the United States in securing peaceful co-existence for the world community, and other matters which affect the social, economic, educational, or physical welfare of the Vietnam-era veteran or others.

To assist disabled and needy war veterans including, but not limited to, Vietnam veterans and their dependents, and the widows and orphans of deceased veterans.

FUNDING
Vietnam Veterans of America relies totally on private contributions for its revenue. VVA does not receive any funding from federal, state, or local governments.



July 1995.

We greeted the sunrise, such as it was through the morning haze, a mixture of smoke from cooking fires and air flushed with humidity, and participated in a Yakima Indian Healing ceremony in the fore court of our guest house conducted by one of our members.

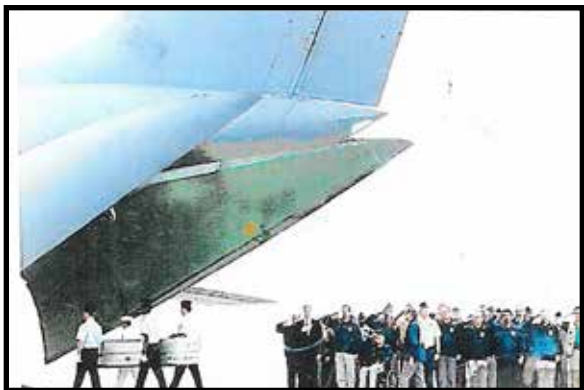
After a 40-minute bus ride to Noi Bai Airport we gathered on the tarmac and were briefed by a US Air Force Major who was a member of Detachment 2, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, based in Hanoi. He served in the Brown-water navy during Vietnam, and transferred to the Air Force before the 1st Gulf War where he flew F-15 Strike Eagles. The protocol we had to abide was formal and clearly defined. Nothing like this had ever been done. We were watching history unfold in front of us, and in a short while, we would be part of that history.

He explained the remains were in six wooden boxes, recovered at or near known crash or battle sites by JTF-FA teams, but they had not been identified. They would not be transferred from Vietnamese to US custody until an



Anthropologist from the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii certified the remains as human, at which point he nailed each box shut.

A Joint Services Honor Guard then placed each red wooden box in an aluminum transfer case. When the lid had been fastened, a folded American Flag was placed on the top of each. The flags could only be unfurled when the



cases had been secured in the belly of the C-141 Starlifter, sovereign US territory.

Six of our group were chosen to join the Military Honor Guard as they escorted each transfer case aboard the plane, the first step on their journey home. I was assigned to assist my good friend, Tom Corey who was wounded the first morning of the 1968 Tet Offensive and had been confined to a wheel chair since, escort case number two aboard the Starlifter.

We had to stop at the base of the ramp because it was not wide enough to safely push the chair, but waited at attention as the case was secured, and the flag was unfurled. There are few moments in my life that stand out more than that day.

Nine months later I received a phone call from a member of the group who had not escorted any of the cases, but had just returned from a visit to the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii. While there he was given a complete briefing on the lab's practices and procedures for identification of remains, some going back to World War II, and earlier.

At the conclusion of his tour he was told that at least one of the cases transferred on February 13 had been positively identified and the id had been accepted by the family. It turns out transfer case #2, the case Tom and I escorted contained the remains of Ivan Dale Appleby, of Fresno, California. At the end of my 16-day journey to the past, and the future, I returned home, to Fresno, California.

EOC

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economic empowerment through education, employment and entrepreneurship. Our priorities are:

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Respectfully submitted by Frank Barry, EOC Chair

AGENT ORANGE

I have not been putting out any information from national because I have not received much. I am planning to attend the April State Council meeting and holding a tier to discuss what we have and to help with chapters that wish to put on town hall meetings.

We have waited for a report from the Institute of Health to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I have heard, but I have not seen the report, that the Intitute is saying that more research is needed for the children of veterans with health issues and birth defects. I will be attending the national committee meeting in April so I should have an update on this. The other part of this law is to look into the health issues of the children of all veterans. The issue of the exposure of the current veterans, gulf veterans and their children are just as important to us as it is to them. We have fought hard to make sure the Post-Vietnam veterans are properly taken care of.

The recent decision of the US Court of Appeals is good news for the Blue Water Navy veterans. this may be appealed by the VA and then it would go the Supreme Court for decision. This would be a tactic, in my opinion, to stall until more veterans die. Spending months in a wait and see to get answers is very difficult and can get people looking at things improperly.

I have not been totally sitting idle at home. I have been involved with two other committees at the national level that in the beginning took a fair amount of my energy. We are just in the convention preparation point at this time. Let me know if you have any special concerns for the committee meeting and I will try to have the answers before I arrive.

Ken Holybee, Chairman CSC AO Committee

AGENT ORANGE'S REACH BEYOND THE VIETNAM WAR

By Steve Vogel

Nearly three dozen rugged C-123 transport planes formed the backbone of the U.S. military's campaign to spray Agent Orange over jungles hiding enemy soldiers during the Vietnam War. And many of the troops who served in the conflict have been compensated for diseases associated with their exposure to the toxic defoliant.

But after the war, some of the planes were used on cargo missions in the United States. Now a bitter fight has sprung up over whether those in the military who worked, ate and slept in the planes after the war should also be compensated. Two U.S. senators are now questioning the Department of Veterans Affairs' assertions that any postwar contamination on the planes was not high enough to be linked to disease.

Complicating the debate is that few of the planes remain to be tested. In 2010, the Air Force destroyed 18 of the Vietnam-era aircraft in part because of concerns about potential liability for Agent Orange, according to Air Force memos documenting the destruction.

Citing tests done on some of the aircraft in the 1990s, North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr, the ranking Republican on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, and Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), have asked the VA's Office of Inspector General to review whether the department

is "inappropriately" denying disability compensation to veterans who claim they were sickened by postwar contamination.

"It appears that [the VA] does, in fact, plan to deny any C-123 claims regardless of the evidence submitted in a particular case," the senators wrote. The letter notes that a group of outside experts have called the VA's scientific conclusions "seriously flawed."

The Air Force says the planes' destruction was handled properly.

"Because of the potential stigma associated with these aircraft, the Air Force ensured that the recycling of the aircraft was accomplished completely and that the metal was not stored improperly or abandoned prior to being smelted," an Air Force statement said.

The C-123s were used to spray Agent Orange from 1962 to 1971 as part of Operation Ranch Hand. After the war, about 1,500 Air National Guard and Reserve crew members flew the planes on cargo missions in the United States until the last aircraft were retired in 1982.

The Air Force aborted plans to sell some of the planes in 1996, after evidence surfaced that 18 of them might still be contaminated with TCDD dioxin, a carcinogen associated with Agent Orange, according to Air Force documents and papers filed with the General Services Administration's Board of Contract Appeals. The planes were quarantined instead in Arizona at a storage facility at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, nicknamed "the Boneyard."

The Air Force did not notify the post-Vietnam crews or Boneyard employees of the potential risk, according to Air Force documents.

When tests on four of the quarantined planes in 2009 showed little or no remaining dioxin, the Air Force decided it was safe to destroy the aircraft.

Officials at Hill Air Force Base in Utah, which oversaw the planes, approved a consultant's recommendation in 2009 to "dispose of/recycle the 18 UC-123K 'Agent Orange' aircraft as soon as possible to avoid further risk from media publicity, litigation, and liability for presumptive compensation," according to a base memo in August 2009.

"The longer this issue remains unresolved, the greater the likelihood of outside press reporting on yet another 'Agent Orange Controversy,'" consultant Alvin Young wrote in a report.

Base officials recommended that the aircraft be "shredded into cell phone-size pieces" and melted. "Smelting is necessary for these 18 aircraft so the Air Force will no longer be liable for 'presumptive compensation' claims to anyone who ever works around this 'Agent Orange' metal," an Air Force memo said in September 2009.

In 2010, the aircraft were torn apart by heavy machinery, melted and poured into blocks.

"The toxic aircraft had to be eliminated," said Wes Carter, a retired Air Force major who served aboard C-123s as a medical service officer in the United States for a decade. "The right thing to do would have included telling the veterans of the exposures so that health and well-being as well as rights to seek veterans benefits would all be protected."

An Air Force review last year concluded that "given the absence of a clear finding of potential harm," it was not necessary to notify the crews.

Carter, 66, had potentially lethal prostate cancer diagnosed in 2011. His doctor, Mark Garzotto, director of urologic oncology at the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center, wrote in February that the cancer is "likely related to your exposure [to] Agent Orange."

But the VA has rejected compensation claims filed by Carter and other veterans who served on the aircraft after the war, saying their exposure to Agent Orange was too limited to connect to the diseases.

The VA is committed to reviewing claims on "a case-by-case basis," the department said in a statement. "VA does not have a 'blanket policy' for denying claims" filed by postwar C-123 veterans, VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki wrote Burr, the senator, in June.

'VA is very concerned'

Under federal law since 1991, the VA has granted the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange to any member of the military who served in Vietnam during the war. Some 260,000 cases have been filed since 2010, helping to fuel the backlog of disability claims facing the VA.

By 2009, the VA had agreed to compensate veterans who could show they were exposed to the defoliant during wartime testing in the United States.

The C-123 aircraft cases might open up claims for postwar service, as well, according to Young, the Agent Orange consultant who advised the Air Force.

"What this means is that a whole new class of veterans

may claim that their exposure was due to the fact they were members of aircrews or mechanics associated with the contaminated aircraft that returned from Vietnam,” Young wrote in a June 2009 memo to Hill AFB.

A retired Air Force colonel and former professor of environmental toxicology at Oklahoma State, Young frequently serves as a consultant on Agent Orange for the Defense Department. The 2009 memos list him as a consultant on Agent Orange to the Office of Secretary of Defense; Young said he was advising Hill AFB in an “unofficial capacity.” Both Young and the Pentagon say the consultant was not under contract with the Defense Department at the time.

Young said in an interview that the decision to destroy the planes “had nothing to do with claims. There was never any destruction of evidence.”

Carter, an Oregon resident, and his comrades in the C-123 Veterans Association say postwar crews should be eligible for the same compensation for Agent Orange provided to those who served in Vietnam. He has filed complaints with the Air Force and VA, and collected many documents via Freedom of Information requests, which he provided to The Washington Post and posted online.

A 2011 Air Force epidemiological study of the crews that sprayed Agent Orange — “the most heavily exposed veterans of the Vietnam War,” according to the report — found no link between Agent Orange exposure and their diseases.

Last year, the VA hired Young to investigate the postwar C-123 claims, and his report in November concluded that “ample evidence” disproves the veterans’ claims.

“The VA is very concerned, because it amounts to a lot of money to be paid for the rest of their lives when there isn’t the science to back it up,” Young said.

But a number of outside medical experts have concluded the veterans were likely exposed to dangerous levels of dioxins. In November, 14 prominent toxicologists sent the VA a letter saying the department’s scientific conclusions are based on “erroneous assumptions.”

“It’s not right,” said retired Air Force Lt. Col. Paul Bailey, a New Hampshire resident who served with Carter aboard C-123s and is gravely ill with cancer. “We were exposed, we can prove we were exposed, but they’re saying it doesn’t matter.”

Although the VA says there is no policy against postwar C-123 claims, Bailey was told that “VA regulations do not allow us to concede exposure to herbicides for Veterans who claim they were exposed to herbicides after the Vietnam war while flying in aircraft used to spray these chemicals,” the VA regional office in New Hampshire wrote in February, denying his claim.

The Board of Veterans’ Appeals, an administrative tribunal, has overturned VA denials several times, ruling in one case that the veteran who scrubbed planes saturated with Agent Orange after the war was exposed to the herbicide and entitled to compensation for his diabetes. But such appeals typically take years, time Bailey said he no longer has.

Disposing of aircraft

Bailey and Carter flew on one of the most famous of the C-123s for more than a decade, often eating and sleeping on the plane. Known as “Patches” for the holes left by enemy fire, it was sent to a museum in 1980.

Based on testing by Air Force toxicologists in 1994 that found Patches “heavily contaminated,” the plane’s postwar crews were exposed to dioxin “at a level greatly exceeding” the Defense Department screening levels, according to Thomas Sinks, deputy director of the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

Many of the retired C-123s ended up in the Boneyard, and in 1996 the government arranged to sell them.

But when employees at Davis-Monthan prepared the planes for buyers, they smelled chemical vapors and experienced burning sensations on their hands and arms, according to papers in a case later heard by the General Services Administration’s Board of Contract Appeals.

Subsequent testing of 17 aircraft in August 1996 detected “strong potential of low level concentrations of dioxin,” according to Air Force documents.

In December 1996, the Air Force requested the government terminate the sales, warning that “the potential for harm to individuals from dioxin contamination is great.”

Employees at Davis-Monthan were not informed of the potential contamination until two years later, according to Air Force documents.

In 1998, the aircraft were fenced off in a restricted area and were largely untouched for another decade, before Air Force officials tried again to resolve the dilemma.

They had concerns that the Environmental Protection Agency or Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

could request access and levy fines, which a base official calculated could reach \$3.2 billion.

“We are still at significant risk publicity wise and with AZ environmental law for these aircraft,” an Air Force officer at Hill wrote in May 2009.

The tests by an Air Force environmental office on four planes that month indicated they could be destroyed without risk to workers. Years in the Arizona sun had “likely volatilized any remaining Agent Orange,” reported Young.

“I join with Dr. Young in saying let’s get on with it,” Wayne Downs, hazardous-waste-program manager at Hill AFB, wrote Oct. 29, 2009. “Ben and Jerry’s ice cream has more dioxin than these aircraft.”

Some Air Force officials were uneasy about the failure to test all the planes. “This lack of information is causing us, and has the potential to cause us, a lot more trouble than it would have been to just sample the aircraft,” Karl Nieman, an Air Force contractor at Hill, wrote in December 2009.

Normally, aircraft at Davis-Monthan slated for disposal are turned over to a defense agency, which would have the planes cut apart by a local metal recycler. But the agency balked, maintaining that the planes should be handled by a licensed hazardous-waste-disposal firm, a process that would require “worldwide” public notification, according to an Air Force memo.

Air Force officials instead contracted with a Navy aircraft disposal office in California, which used the same local metal recycler without the notification.

“If the Air Force wants quick and quiet disposal, the Navy option is preferable,” stated an Air Force memo in September 2009.

The destruction was approved by Hill AFB in 2010. No notification of the EPA or Arizona environmental officials was required, according to the Air Force, which noted in its statement that the collaboration with the Navy included obtaining the required demilitarization and destruction certification.

On June 8, 2010, as two Air Force officials watched, the last truckload carrying 35,000 pounds of shredded aluminum metal from the Boneyard arrived at a furnace in Belleville, Mich.

The furnace was heated to nearly 1,400 degrees, hot enough to destroy any traces of dioxins. Workers dumped in the metal. By 11 a.m. the last of the C-123 remains were being poured into 2,000-pound blocks.

The blocks, the Air Force officials were told, would be sold to the automotive industry.

‘BLUE WATER’ NAVY VETERANS FROM VIETNAM-ERA WIN AGENT ORANGE BENEFITS CASE



Mike Yates, left, is one of the “blue water” Navy veterans who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam but did not qualify for the same disability benefits as other veterans. (Bill O’Leary/The Washington Post)

By Ann E. Marimow

A federal appeals court in Washington sided Tuesday with thousands of Vietnam War veterans who were stationed offshore during the war and developed health problems linked to exposure to the toxic herbicide Agent Orange.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled overwhelmingly for these sailors, finding they are eligible for the same disability benefits as those who put boots on the ground or patrolled Vietnam’s inland rivers.

The 9-to-2 decision reverses a decade-old ruling by the court and applies to an estimated 52,000 veterans nationwide. A court majority said Congress clearly intended to extend benefits to sailors who were stationed in the territorial seas and are known as “blue water” Navy veterans.

“We find no merit in the government’s arguments to the contrary,” Judge Kimberly A. Moore wrote for the

majority.

The two dissenting judges warned against overturning the court’s previous decision and said such policy decisions should be reserved for lawmakers.

Similar efforts in Congress to broaden benefits have stalled in recent years. Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie and four former secretaries opposed the legislation, citing cost and the need for further study.

“Recent debates in Congress, which required consideration of the significant cost of the proposed addition of Blue Water Navy veterans underscores why Congress, rather than the courts, should be the one to revisit our interpretation,” wrote Judge Raymond T. Chen, who was joined by Judge Timothy B. Dyk.

[The ‘blue water’ Navy veterans of the Vietnam War battle Agent Orange]

The appeal was brought by Alfred Procopio Jr., who served on the USS Intrepid, an aircraft carrier deployed off the coast of Vietnam. Procopio, 73, was denied benefits for claims related to his diabetes and prostate cancer. Both are ailments the U.S. government has linked to exposure to the infamous herbicide the U.S. military sprayed to destroy crops and reduce cover for enemy forces.

An administrative board found him ineligible because he was not “present on the landmass or the inland waters of Vietnam.”

The ruling Tuesday means Procopio and any other veteran who served within Vietnam’s territorial sea will now be presumed eligible for disability benefits if they have one of the diseases that is linked to the herbicide.

Procopio’s attorney Mel Bostwick called the decision “crucial and long overdue.”

“These Vietnam veterans sacrificed their own health and well-being for the good of the country, and the benefits that Congress provided — and which the court’s decision now secures — are part of the debt of gratitude we owe them for their service,” she said in a statement following the ruling.

“For years, Navy veterans have suffered with the effects of Agent Orange exposure while the VA remained recalcitrant,” attorney John B. Wells, a retired Navy commander, who has led lobbying efforts in Congress, said in a statement Tuesday.

The Department of Veterans Affairs will have to assess Procopio’s disabilities before calculating his benefits and evaluate other veterans like him with pending cases.

The government can seek review by the Supreme Court. A VA spokesman, Curt Cashour, said the department is “reviewing this decision and will determine an appropriate response.”

During the war, those patrolling Vietnam’s coastline like Procopio were referred to as the “blue water” Navy in contrast to the “brown water” sailors who operated on inland waterways.

Advocates for the blue water sailors point to studies that show exposure to Agent Orange occurred through contaminated water funneled into ships’ distillation systems and used for drinking, laundry and cleaning. Much of the spraying was on low-lying swamps of the Mekong River Delta that flows into the South China Sea, where they were stationed.

A three-judge panel of the court previously heard Procopio’s case but did not issue a decision. Instead, the court took the unusual step of rehearing the case as a full panel in December.

The question before the full court was whether Congress intended to give the blue water sailors the benefit of the doubt when it comes to showing their medical conditions are connected to toxic exposure.

One disputed line in the statute that was persuasive to the majority says the presumption, entitling veterans to disability benefits, applies to any “veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served in the Republic of Vietnam.”

In her 19-page opinion, Moore wrote that the inclusion of that language reinforces “our conclusion that Congress was expressly extending the presumption to naval personnel who served in the territorial sea.”

TREASURER REPORT

Since the October CSC I have:

- Paid all bills on time
- Submitted payroll information to payroll company every two weeks.
- Submitted all required End of Year payroll forms to State and IRS.
- Mailed W-4 forms to employees.
- Processed over 120 financial transactions since last CSC, including various deposits, board reimbursement as well as quarterly

and monthly HGDP payments.

- Reviewed State Comptroller Website for unclaimed funds belonging to

California VVA Chapters. Determined that the State Comptroller's office was holding funds ranging from \$9 to \$200 belong to 6 chapters. Advised effected chapters for follow up.

- Prepared and distributed budget to actual reports and balance sheets for the board.
- Involved in many Chapter 391 Activities.

CHAPTER NOTES

Chapter 218

218 has decidedly moved forward, with sending four of its finest to the "Multi-Cultural Fest" in Westminster (Little Saigon).

This marks the first time many of our Members have spoken to a Vietnamese in fifty years! The feeling of this group was that we should let no good deed go unpunished, and are striving to repay the warm and genuine hospitality.

The Chapter Board Of Directors has had a few changes. As SGT Tom Elliot will be gone for a few months, CPT Rick Pierson will be filling in as Secretary. And as our Treasurer Chris Gailbraith is likewise going to be absent, LTC Pat Rumpza has kindly taken over that position. The capable talent in 218 is truly rising to the occasion!

The Veterans History project is starting to gel, and Rik Pierson and myself will be partnering with a PhD candidate from UCSB to interview Veterans. This partnership may glean some rewards in future, as Academia is NOTORIOUS for plagerizing references to the Viet Nam War that are at best inaccurate, and usually gathered from non-participants of the war. We hope to remedy some of this widespread nonsense in Academia by providing interviews from actual participants.

Respectfully,
Hap DeSimone
Assistant Night Janitor, Chapter 218

Chapter 201

Holiday Luncheon

Darwin J. Thomas Memorial Chapter 201 closed out 2018 with its annual Holiday luncheon at Harry's Hof Brau in San Jose, California on December 16th. Over 80 VVA and AVVA members and guests were honored with a presentation by Chapter 201 Member MG Kent Hillhouse (USA, Ret), President of The Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation of Los Gatos. MG Hillhouse discussed his experience in as a young officer in Vietnam and the current efforts of the Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to honoring and supporting both veterans and the men and women of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard currently serving around the world.

President Warren Finch presented MG Hillhouse with a Certificate of Appreciation for his enlightening presentation to the gathering during the annual Holiday luncheon.

President Warren Finch presented Stephen Thompson



with a certificate of appreciation for his assistance in organizing the annual Veterans Day Parade. A certificate

was also presented to Rose Herrera for her timely assistance in working with the City of San Jose in the



celebration of the annual POW/MIA Day. Last, but not least, a certificate in absentia was presented to Randy Richmond, who is recuperating at the Palo Alto VA hospital from his third back surgery, for his persistence in



organizing the annual POW/MIA Day.

VVA-201 Associates President Cang Kim Dong



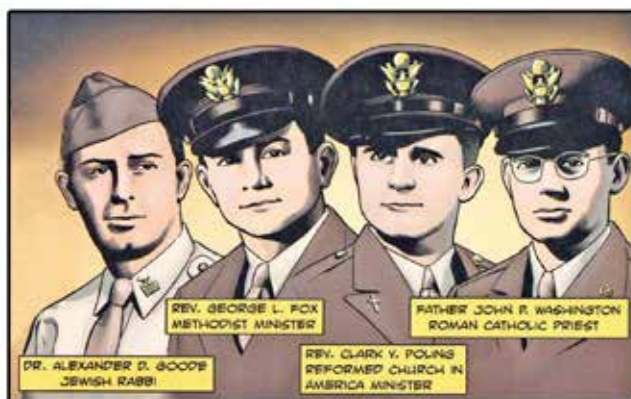
thanked all of the VVA members for their support during the Vietnam War and working with the South Vietnamese forces to try and stem the tide of communism. Cang presented MG Hillhouse with a holiday gift for his support.

Again this year, members of VVA-201 Associates provided cake deserts to the VVA members, AVVA members and guests assembled during this end of the year Holiday Luncheon.

Four Chaplains Service

On February 3, 1943, as the U.S Army troopship, USTS Dorchester, passed through "torpedo alley" some 100 miles of the coast of Greenland, it was struck by a torpedo fired from German submarine U-233. Three torpedoes were fired at the Dorchester at 2:00 AM and the ship sunk within a very short period of time beneath the icy waters along with the majority of those aboard. Many of those who survived attributed their survival directly to the assistance and acts of compassion of the four chaplains aboard that night.

The four chaplains, of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths aboard the troopship Dorchester in the North Atlantic, were among the first on deck calming the men and handing out life jackets. When the life preservers ran



out, they took off their own and placed them on waiting soldiers without regard to faith or ethnic background and understanding the consequences of their decision.

Chapter 201 Members Fran McVey, Walter Carroll, Jack Wells, and John Hassenplug (Sergeant at Arms) participated in the American Legion District 13 Four Chaplains ceremony in San Jose on February 2nd on the



occasion of the 76th anniversary of the sinking of troop ship USAT Dorchester sank during World War II after being torpedoed by a German submarine.

Chapter 982

We been missing for awhile but back in the swing of things.

The Chapter finished up last year with a great Chapter Christmas party and we had special guests from Welcome Home Military Hero's. A great party with Santa and a great white elephant event.

We've been busy getting geared up for upcoming elections in April.

So far this year we have one big event. Chapter 982 is a proud sponsor for Wreaths Across America. We will be selling wreaths to placed on Veterans graves at Arroyo Grande Cemetery. We have right at 2000 Veterans buried here. It's a great program and a good fund raiser. That's all for now. Hope all is well and you have a good year.

Our scholarship committee is hard at work getting schools lined up. We are giving out 5 - \$1000 scholarships this year.

Support Our Troops - May God Bless
Jerry Kaufman

Chapter 47

Chapter 47 had another great day sharing history with local high school students. Rubidoux High School in Riverside, CA held their inaugural Military Interview Event today. They join four other high schools in Southern California's Inland Empire that invite veterans from all eras in to talk junior class students about their military service. It is a great opportunity for the students to learn about real history that they cannot get from a textbook. It would be

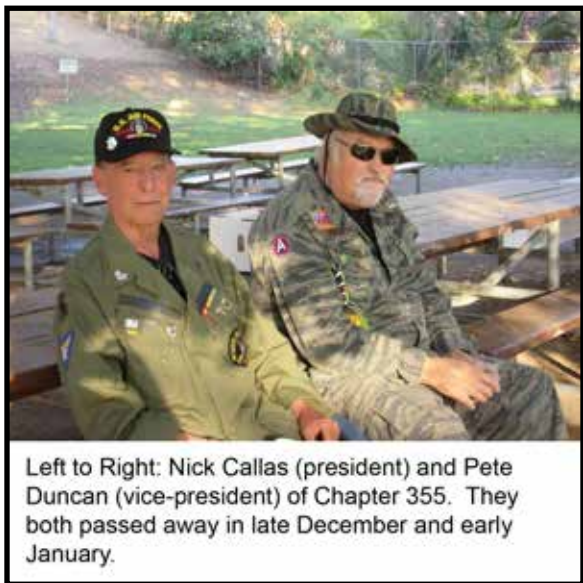


great if more schools could institute a similar program. The students were fantastic, the school band awesome and the Air Force JROTC unit was outstanding. Looking

forward to joining them again next year and beyond.

Chapter 355

The past weeks have been terribly sad and difficult for our Chapter. We could have never imagined two of our long time members leaving us 10 days apart. We sadly announce the passing of our Vice President Leonard 'Pete' Duncan and our President, Secretary, Treasurer and all around 'Lost Patrol' leader, Nick Callas. We are in shock as we took it for granted that any one of us would ever leave this world and we just assumed that things would continue on as before.



Left to Right: Nick Callas (president) and Pete Duncan (vice-president) of Chapter 355. They both passed away in late December and early January.

If you think back to all of our events in the last ten or more years, you would almost always see both Pete Duncan and Nick Callas working them and cheering us on. They were both motivators and workers. They've both had many health crises recently but popped back into their positions as quickly as possible. When we marched at our events, even the long parades, they were both out there proudly bearing our colors and keeping us moving. They carried our flags faithfully until we began complaining about the hike distance so now most of us ride on the floats when we can.

These two men have been the backbone of this chapter attending CSC and National events as our representatives. They both served many other patriotic, church and community groups as neither one of them could say no.

We held our January chapter meeting as scheduled but changed the format as a tribute to these great men. Jerry Orlemann, CSC Southern District Director, and his wife joined us at one of our largest meeting in recent years memorializing our brothers. We opened the meeting up to their friends as well and overfilled our usual banquet room into an adjacent area. Many people spoke of the both of them with smiles on their faces and tears in their hearts. Pete's wife, Loretta and his son Robert, both lifelong AVVA members were able to be with us.

Nicks' daughter Nicole, his sisters, Marge and Vicki, brothers, Forrest and Jim, his son-in-law Randy and the grandchildren he loved, Austin, Riley and J. T. were unable to be with us as they all live great distances away. We recorded all the comments and will forward the audio records to the family.

We quickly assisted the family in closing Nick's apartment and made sure that everything was donated to local charities. At their request we transferred 11 full bags of clothes to the Veterans clothing locker in Bldg. 22 at the Sepulveda VA.

The new emergency board took his records home to coordinate a smooth transition and fill all positions immediately. There is a lot of stuff and it was pretty neatly arranged but we shuffled it into our vehicles and split the responsibility of dividing it us quickly and efficiently. As the new treasurer I was shocked to learn that Nick submitted at least 20 reports to the state and national VVA and to numerous agencies, all with a varied due date. Then I skimmed his duties as secretary and quit out of sheer exhaustion after a few days to try to rest my eyes and brain. There are even more obligations in that office.

These men were also our representatives to the community, the press and the world as positive examples of being proud veterans. Nick had been interviewed by the local radio stations, newspapers, politicians and the entire Santa Clarita Valley government. Just never ask him to discuss Jane Fonda. He didn't have anything nice to say about her so he rarely mentioned her.

Pete and Nick devoted a lot of time and effort to this group. They wanted it to continue and grow. With your support and dedication we will keep their dreams alive.

We feel that they would be honored if you were to donate new packages of men's and women's under, socks, etc. to either the Sepulveda VA clothing locker or to a

good local charity to help veterans in need.

Harold "Doc" Schrage, DT2/USN
2nd VP and Treasurer, Events Coordinator and Webmaster

Chapter 785

President Lou "Pit Bull" Correa given the VIP treatment/tour after donating \$500 to La Habra High School Navy Junior ROTC Program. Pictured with him is Commander Ballister who heads the program along with 1SG Schumpert. Pit Bull is a '67 alumni of La Habra High and enjoyed the tour! Help, Aid, Assist is the theme of Chapter 785-doing what we do best!



Chapter 357

This is a big deal for Chapter 357 under collaboration and outreach

It started with our VVA chapter 357 photographer Steve DuBois took a picture of his dog Bodie at the Wreaths Across America event.

Samantha from Wreaths Across America Headquarters in Maine saw the picture of Bodie at the Cemetery and contacted Steve.

Steve contacted me, I contacted Samantha about RED Shirt Friday. Samantha ordered 5 RED shirts from



Maine, I shipped the RED Shirts and.... Whalaa! We have supporters in Maine! Talking bout Outreach RED Shirt

Friday! Remember Everyone Deployed! It's a Big Deal
Shasta County Community members enjoys the spirit of giving at one of the many Christmas dinner parties.

Carr Fire survivors and Western Service Workers Association Members enjoyed a spaghetti dinner with gifts and clothing. Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 357 hosted the event for the Western Service Workers Association. President Eddie McAllister of VVA 357 was excited to see that 150-200 people were in the spirit of giving, serving and receiving.

The Western Service Workers Association (WSWA) is a free, voluntary, independent, and private membership program for low-paid workers. And the Carr Fire left a big hole in our Shasta County community. WSWA members help community members by providing a wide range of services. There is no government involvement with this program. All activity is entirely through community support. Voluntary assistance means no ulterior motive is served. The organization also fights to change the economic policies that contribute to the problems of low income. The Western Service Workers Association's most recent major accomplishment was getting Redding Electric Utilities to eliminate reconnecting the electric utility fees.

Chapter 357's goal at the Christmas Party was to 'Remember Everyone Deployed'. As we are HERE celebrating our Holidays, Men and Women deployed are THERE standing guard for our Holidays.

Chapter 933

These photos show the chapter's continuing efforts to support the Heart of the Horse Therapy Ranch in Clovis, California. The ranch provides therapy services for "medically fragile" children and for veterans. Chapter members will help out once again with the nonprofit ranch's annual Cowboy Concert, March 28 at People's Church, 7172 N. Cedar Ave. in Fresno. The concert will feature testimony from clients and volunteers at the ranch and headliner music by Jack Hannah & Friends, Sonny Coelho, Bill Thornbury, and Dave Stamey. Tickets will be sold at the door or may be purchased online at heartofthehorse.org. For videos of our work at the ranch simply Google Heart of the Horse Therapy Ranch.

Photo number one shows premiere cowboy music star Dave Stamey. Photo number two shows an earlier presentation of a donation check from Chapter 933 to ranch director Guy Adams. LtoR: Chapter 933 Member Steve Hayhurst, Ranch Director Guy Adams, Chapter



Member Paul Kaser.

Chapter 400

Back in July of last year, Roberto Angel Rocha was given the award for Chapter 400's 'LZ Friendly'. This award for Chapter Newsletter of the Year, was finally

6th ANNUAL
"WELCOME HOME
VIETNAM
VETERANS DAY"
CLASSIC CAR
SHOW

SATURDAY March 30,
2019 10AM-3PM
VETERANS MEMORIAL
SENIOR CENTER
1455 Madison Ave.
Redwood City, CA

SPONSORED BY THE
STEVE WARREN
MEMORIAL CHAPTER 464
of the VIETNAM
VETERANS OF AMERICA

-Pre-registration Fee \$20 per vehicle
-No Vehicle Pre-Registration after March 23, 2019 \$25 day of show
-1 BBQ Lunch will be provided per vehicle; additional person will be \$8
-For Additional information contact: President Gary Higgins 650-368-6713 or email je.higgins07@comcast.net

Make checks payable to:
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 464

Mail to: VVA 464
c/o 11 Camerino Ct.
American Canyon, CA 94503

Name: _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____

Email: _____

Auto _____ Year _____

Body Type/Model _____

Insurance Co. _____

LIABILITY RELEASE
The undersigned hereby releases the WHVVD, VVA 464, and the Veterans Memorial Center from any and all liability arising out of the "WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY" CLASSIC CAR SHOW.

OWNER or EXHIBITOR _____

Date _____

Welcome Home
Vietnam Veterans Day

Saturday March 30, 2019
Shasta County Veterans Hall
1605 Yuba Street - Redding, CA 96001
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

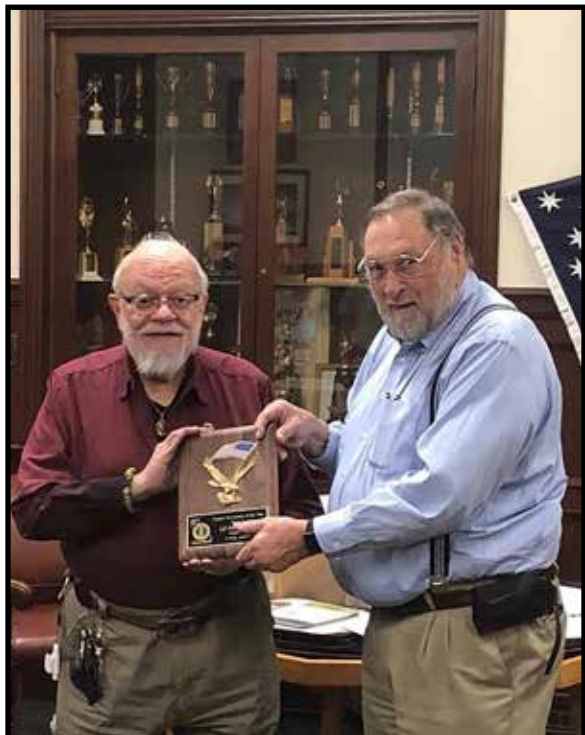
9:30– Motorcade to the
Northern California Veterans Cemetery

10:30-A unclaimed Veterans burial program at the
Northern California Veterans Cemetery Igo Ca.
by Missing In America Project

12:15P A FREE Italian lunch prepared by
Sons of Italy Lodge #2453 Redding Ca.
Sponsored by Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 357

For more information and/or to donate contact
Eddie McAllister-524-7504 –vietnamveterans357@yahoo.com
or Dennis Hipley at 530-242-1586 –dennishipley@charter.net
Or by mail to PO Box 4021, Redding, CA 96099
For history of Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day,
please go to www.whvvd.org

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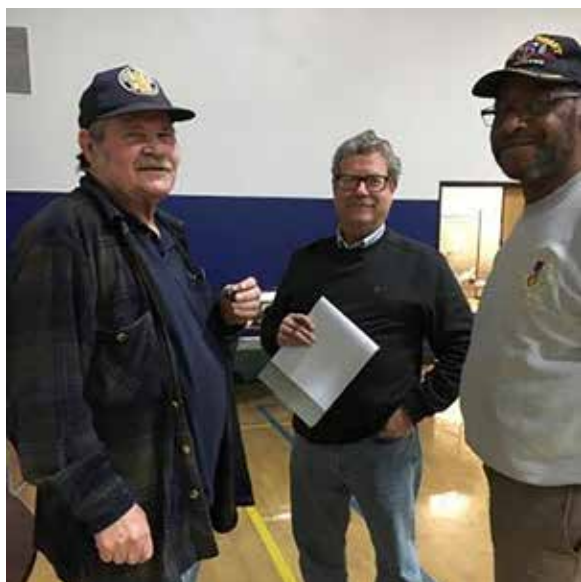
presented to Roberto in January 2019, as he has been fighting a winning battle with cancer.

Roberto, on the left, was given the award by Chapter 400 President Bill Hodges; Roberto is not only editor of LZFRIENDLY, but also Chapter VP.

Chapter 223


Healdsburg SOS(support our soldiers) packing for special forces in Afghanistan.

First Photo: Ken Holybee, Chapter 223, with reporter Chris Smith, Santa Rosa Press Democrat, and Charles




Earthman, OPH commander Santa Rosa and a 223 member.

Second Photo: AVVA members..Jeannie and Angie, and next picture is part of crowd that helped with the packing!!




WELCOME HOME





VIETNAM VETERANS

**HONORING THOSE WHO
MADE A DIFFERENCE
DISPELLING THE MYTH**



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BENEFITS FUND



Friday, March 29, 2019
6-8 PM
Four Winds Ballroom
 The Hotel at

BLACK OAK CASINO RESORT

TICKETS \$20

DOORS OPEN 5:30PM

BACK BY POPULAR
DEMAND:
COMEDIAN
STEPHEN B

Ticket Outlets:
 Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce
 Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 391

Ticket Info & Sponsorships:
 Carol Southern 928-3848 or 768-9840
 Tuolumne County Chamber 532-4212

Appetizers by Seven Sisters
 No Host Bar
 Door Prize : 55" Flat Screen TV
 Silent Auction

Chapter 500

The chapter has continued to serve the veteran community in our area. We have participated in the Volunteers of America (VoA) food drive which is available to all Veterans in the Sacramento City and County.

We have sold beer at the Harley Davidson Dealership to help with raising money for our chapter.

We were forced to cancel our January Membership Meeting due to a violent storm in Sacramento.

Our veteran emergency fund is current over \$9,000
 Submitted by Douglas Mitten

Chapter 547

For about the last year or so I have been attending a special "Vietnam Veteran's Lunch Bunch" that gets together every third Monday of the month at Sam's Restaurant in the Nave Plaza in Novato at 11:30 AM. All are invited. It's just a get-together for good company and fellowship. It's a buy-your-own lunch so it's not going to put you into poverty unless you choose. Already about six or so of your fellow chapter members are attending.

The chapter donated \$1000 (ten \$100 VISA gift cards) to the Chico VVA chapter to help support Vietnam veterans who were burned out in the CAMP fires in Paradise. There were a number of VVA members who lost everything, plus other veterans who also lived in Paradise.

The chapter also donated \$500 (ten \$50 VISA gift cards) plus about \$300 worth of dog and cat food to a special donation campaign for the local US Coast Guard and their families.

The chapter has been participating in a special "coffee table" book project about Vietnam veterans. I was contacted by Tom Sanders, a professional photographer heading up the project, looking for Vietnam veterans who would be willing to be photographed, willing to write up a narrative about their service, their feelings, their motivations, their experiences, etc., and be included in the book. Already about ten of your fellow chapter members have agreed to

participate. I have sent out numerous emails announcing this project and the dates of the photo shoot. There is still some slots left so if anyone who hasn't stepped forward but would like to, let me know and I can set it up.

JUSTICE RECALLS THE GOOD AND BAD OF HER PAST AS A NURSE IN VIETNAM

CALIFORNIA COURT OF APPEAL JUSTICE EILEEN MOORE DELIVERED A HEART-WRENCHING SPEECH AT THE VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL

"Every night in the nurses' quarters, quiet sobs could be heard," said Moore, who in 1966 served as a combat nurse for the 85th Evacuation Hospital located in Qui Nhon. "I doubt any nurse came away from that war without emotional wounds."

Nurses were trained to make people better, she continued, "but in Vietnam, they helped soldiers mend, only to send them back to combat to possibly be killed."

Moore was 20 when she entered Vietnam and, in her speech, said she recalled feeling scared most of the time.

"Sounds of mortar attacks seemed to be omnipresent," she explained.

Even though nurses had mosquito nets, Moore said she once counted 167 mosquito bites. "Sometimes I cried myself to sleep," she said on Sunday. Acknowledging "our boys in the jungle" did not enjoy the luxuries she did, Moore explained, "They faced actually being shot or bombed, not just sounds. They were bitten by a lot more than mosquitoes; I know because I gave many rabies shots."

Asked what prompted her to leave home and enter a war zone, Moore said in a Tuesday phone interview she came from modest beginnings. "I was just a young girl, and I was patriotic, and I wanted to do my bit," she said. At the time, nursing school tuition cost \$150 per year. "My



Run For The Wall May 15-25, 2019

One **Mission**
Three Routes

www.rftw.us



Mission Statement:

To promote healing among ALL veterans and their families and friends,
To call for an accounting of all Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action (POW/MIA),
To honor the memory of those Killed in Action (KIA) from all wars, and
To support our military personnel all over the world.

Philosophy:

We strive to maintain a safe, supportive and private atmosphere in which all participants can reflect and heal on their journey to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. in the hope that they can return home to a new beginning.

Goals:

1. To guide the participants across America.
2. To educate future generations as to the importance of accountability in wartime actions emphasizing that no one should be left behind.
3. To participate in Rolling Thunder in support of their demand for government accountability for POW/MIA's.

RFTW riders visit VA Medical Centers, Veterans' Memorials, Veterans' Outreach Facilities, VFW Posts, American Legion Posts, and Community Centers, as well as schools along the routes.

All Routes leave from Ontario, CA, on May 15, 2019, separate, and join back together in Arlington, VA, on May 24, 2019.



Run For The Wall is a 501(c)(3) organization and welcomes donations. Please contact your State Coordinator or the RFTW Treasurer as listed on www.rftw.us - contacts.

parents couldn't afford it,' Moore explained. "The Army paid for one of the years, and then I owed them some time after that." Noting she loved her country and initially "thought we were doing the right thing," Moore said, once she got to Vietnam, she struggled with the reality of what "all these young boys" faced. "I was just a naive kid," Moore said. "I found myself just trying to think through the moral implications. It was very difficult for me from a moral and ethical standpoint."

When she returned from Vietnam, Moore walked right into the middle of the Women's Liberation Movement, and along with thousands of other American women, she went to college. "I could hardly believe that I - a nothing, the daughter of a high school dropout, a girl - that I could actually study at a university," Moore said in her speech. After graduating from UC Irvine, she went on to Pepperdine School of Law and eventually to the University of Virginia for a master's degree. Moore was appointed to the superior court in 1989, and in 2000, she was nominated for the 4th District Court of Appeal.

Retired Los Angeles County sheriffs deputy Greg Young was a flying crew chief on an O1 Bird Dog forward air controller plane and an OV-1A Mohawk Gunship in Vietnam. Explaining he heard Moore speak at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in the 1990s, Young said, "I got chills up and down my spine." Shocked by the



possibility the two may encountered one another decades ago in the little Vietnamese town, Young introduced himself to Moore and thanked her. "She hugged me," Young said. "It was healing for me, and it was healing for her, I

think.' Because they were at the 85th Evacuation Hospital in Qui Nhon around the same time, Young believes Moore may have treated him during the war. Noting his injuries required morphine, Young admitted, "I would be hard pressed to remember the face. [But] when you got injured or hurt, ... nurses were a blessing." Describing Moore today as kind, generous and compassionate, Young said, over the years, he's followed her efforts to help battered women, disabled veterans and Vietnam veterans. "She was all in, and that meant everything," he said, noting that when Moore was sworn onto the appellate court, he and other veterans came to support her.

Moore understood her role in the court system put her in a unique position to aid veterans, and 10 years ago, she launched a statewide military and veterans committee within the courts. Noting California now has 33 Veterans Treatment Courts, Moore said she spent 9 years volunteering her time at the one in Orange County, mentoring veterans who found themselves sideways with the law. Most of them were women, and according to Moore, the majority were victims of military sexual trauma. Influenced profoundly by that experience, when Moore spoke, she decided to open up about some of the trauma she encountered in Vietnam. Recalling her first night in-country, Moore shared details of a difficult evening she and two other nurses endured in Saigon before flying to their duty stations the next day. "At first it was



by the "Camp Fire."

Since November 8, 2019 when the campfire occurred, my attention has been taken up by working with veterans affected by the Campfire and dealing with our own house burning down. Our house and my home town burned down on that day. The fire also did a lot of damage to Concow, Jarbo Gap and Cherokee in the Feather River Canyon as well as Butte Creek Canyon up to and beyond Centerville. This affected thousands of veterans. Still is!

When my wife, Kelly, the Executive Director of Atria Senior Living in Paradise, called the morning of Nov. 8 and said she was starting to evacuate Atria, I went there to help with the evacuation thinking that I would go back home after to put a few things together and decide if I wanted to evacuate. When we were done loading 80 plus people plus staff and the things needed for the residents I couldn't get back to my house. We were escorted out of town by several sheriff's deputies. We weren't able to save anything of our own that was in our home.

Since that day my chapter, VVA 582, has been non stop helping veterans. Any that we can find or we hear about that need help. Resources have been coming in from all over California and the rest of the nation. We've had trucks come in with everything from tooth brushes to generators. We have

learned to build Yurts to try to get people out of tents. These will have propane heaters and composting toilets. Trailers, motor homes and vehicles have been donated and gotten out to veterans that need them. Thousands and thousands of dollars have been coming in from chapters, state councils, individuals and VVA National. WE WILL NEED THIS KIND OF SUPPORT FOR A LONG TIME TO COME!

I want to thank all of the California State Council, officers and Board of Directors, for all of the support you've given. We could have done very little without your help and generosity. My thanks to the members of my chapter, VVA and AVVA 582, will never be enough. They have stepped up to do anything and everything under very difficult circumstances. Many having been directly affected and devastated by this fire. But I have to say THANK YOU anyway.

I am very proud to be a Vietnam Veteran and the way everyone has done what they have to help and support us only reinforces that pride.

Butch Frederickson, CSC North District Director and President VVA 582 Butte County

MEMBERSHIP

REMINDER: Now there is only ONE type of membership – LIFE. Life membership is \$50. Anyone joining VVA must provide a DD-214 and join as a life member for \$50. ALL 3-year memberships have been converted to life. When 1-year members renew, they must renew as life members for \$50 and provide a DD-214 if one is not already on file.

Initially there were some problems with data conversions of the 3-year memberships resulting in some members being listed as 'Pending' and in some cases members being dropped from the membership roster. However, this has been rectified. Any chapter still experiencing problems along these lines in the latest roster should contact Jerry Orlemann, CSC Membership Chair, Jerry@Orlemann.net.

CHAPTERS: Want more members added to your rolls? There are probably at-large members in your area. Contact them and let them know how great your chapter is and why they should join. Contact Jerry Orlemann for assistance.

AT-LARGE MEMBERS: Is it about time to join a chapter? There's probably a chapter in your area that would love to have you. If not, you might be able to start a new chapter. It's never too late. Contact Jerry Orlemann for more information.

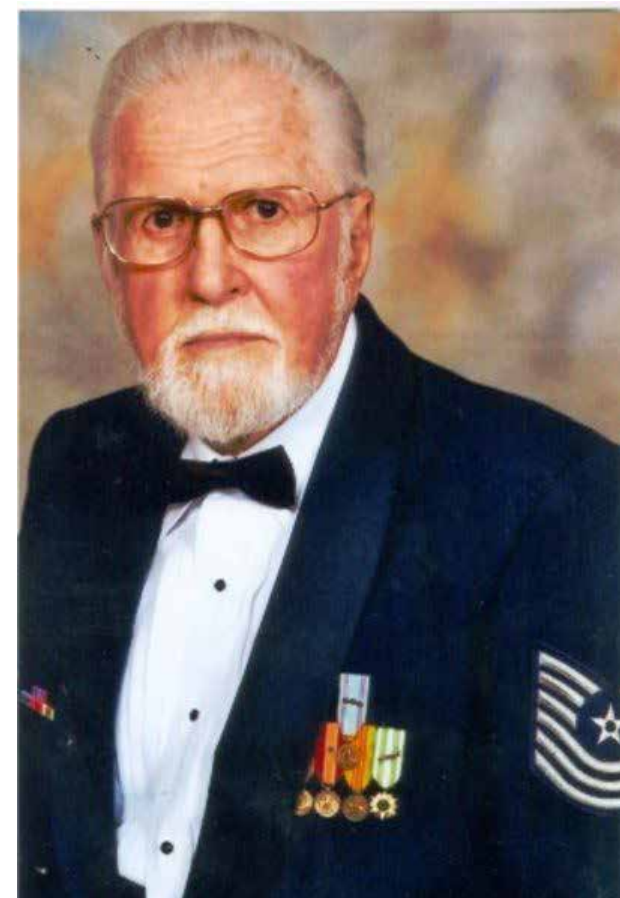
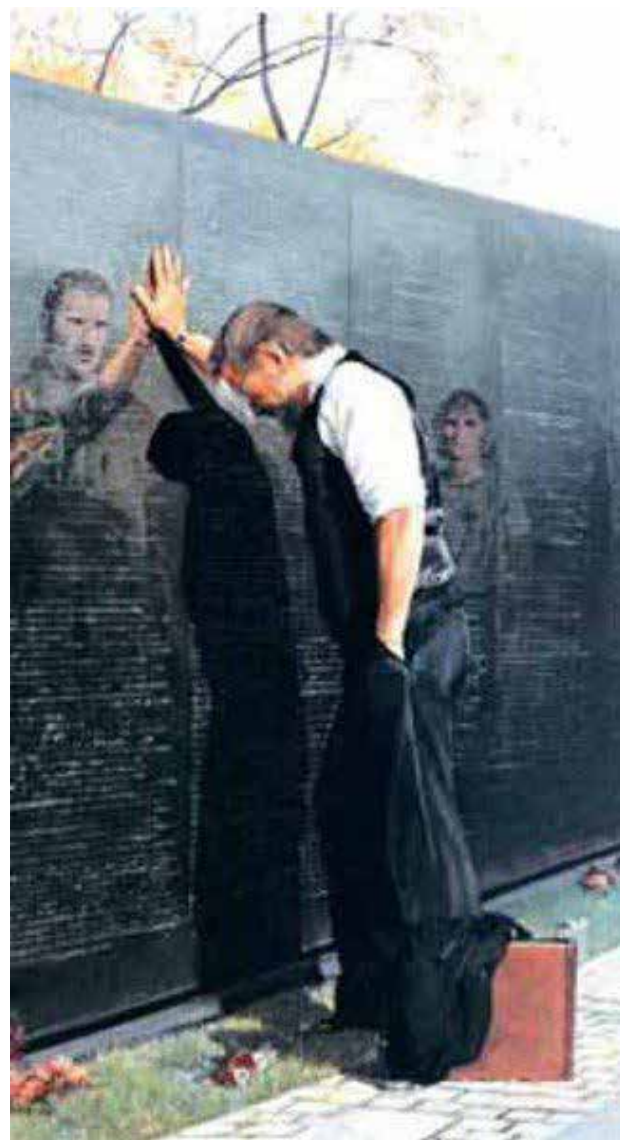
JIM WILLIAMS, 'THE MAN AT THE WALL,' DIES AT AGE 84

Barbara Smith

Jim Williams posed for Lee Teter's "Reflections,"

which appears on several hundred thousand prints, plaques, T-shirts, sweatshirts and coffee mugs that Cumberland Chapter 172 of the Vietnam Veterans of America has sold. He became an icon, even though relatively few people knew who he was.

He had wanted no part of being prominent, but accepted it with grace and a sense of duty because it allowed him to be part of something far greater and more iconic than any individual could be.



His face can be found in hundreds of thousands of places across America — on walls, desks and shelves and in kitchen cabinets, clothes closets and drawers.

Even if they never met him and didn't know his name, it's likely that millions of men and women loved him because of what he represented.

He represented them ... and the pain, loss and survivor's guilt they felt for those who didn't come home with them, some of whom they had grown to love and think of as family, a bond that cannot be understood by those who haven't been a part of something like it.

Retired U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Jim Williams died Dec. 19 at his home in Corriganville at age 84. He continued to serve his country long after retiring from his 20 years in uniform.

Williams was portrayed as "The Man at The Wall" in the "Reflections" print, head bowed and eyes closed in

polite knocking at the door of the nurses' quarters by a major and a captain, 'Do you girls want to have a drink with us?'" Moore recalled, noting the women declined several times. The situation escalated, Moore said, and ultimately she jumped out the window and then dragged "the perimeter guard by his Sam Brown belt [back] to the outside of our quarters' window."

When the guard saw the officers climbing into the nurses' room, Moore said he politely saluted and apologized for disturbing them. "I whimpered something like, 'Don't salute them; shoot them,'" Moore said. "The major and captain spewed out more vulgarity and left. I spent the rest of the night sobbing in a corner." The next morning, Moore sought out the executive officer and told him what happened. "There was a twinkle in his eyes as he sucked his tongue through his teeth," she said in her speech. "It looked to me as if he was thinking, 'Why did I have to miss all the fun?'" As a young combat nurse, Moore said she felt schizophrenic. On one hand, she believed every one of our soldiers would protect her with their life, "and I loved them for that," she said Sunday. On the other hand, she was constantly afraid that a soldier might hurt her, Moore recalled, and "I still feel guilty about that."

Former Army combat nurse and Vietnam veteran Diane Carlson Evans founded the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation and served as master of ceremonies for the monument's 25th anniversary commemoration. Each year on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day, the foundation sets up an on-site podium and microphone and invites Vietnam veterans and their loved ones to share stories. Evans invited Moore to tell her story at this year's event. The judge was hesitant to participate at first, Evans recalled, but Moore later asked if she could speak about military sexual trauma. "I affirmed with Eileen that she should share whatever she was comfortable doing," Evans said. "If we keep these secrets, we're not helping ourselves, and we're not helping our sister veterans either." When she and Moore served, women accounted for less than one percent of the military force, Evans explained. "We had to be very careful, and we had to watch our backs," Evans said. "Women were raped in Vietnam. Were they all raped? No. Were all men rapists? No, but there was that fraction." Noting Moore's speech addressed both the good parts of the experience - "caring for the soldiers" - and the bad, Evans said, "She was wonderful. She was so honest. It was so heartfelt, and she's very eloquent." Many attendees were, seemingly, flabbergasted after hearing Moore's story, Evans said. "I think they were pretty stunned and saddened." Involved in veteran's events now for over 30 years, Evans acknowledged she hasn't heard every person's story but was quick to note she's heard many. "I think this was the first time a woman was brave enough to really say it happened to her," Evans said, "and give the details about it."

NORTH DISTRICT

CSC North District report may sound more like a chapter report because of the circumstances brought about

Some of the Freedoms Preserved by the Military and Veterans
FREEDOM OF SPEECH ★ RIGHT TO VOTE ★ FREEDOM OF RELIGION ★ FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The Inland Empire Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 47
& Allied Veteran Groups Proudly Present the 2019
**Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Motorcycle Ride
& Patriotic Ceremony at Riverside National Cemetery**
— ALL VETERANS, FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND PUBLIC INVITED —
Saturday, March 30

As We Observe
Welcome Home
Vietnam
Veterans Day,
We Honor
All Veterans and
Active Military

Motorcycle Ride
Begins at:
American Legion Post 79
at Fairmount Park
(951) 788-8635
2979 Dexter Ave.
Riverside, CA 92501
Registration:
7:30-9 am
Depart/En route
to RNC: 9 am

**Patriotic
Ceremony**
(a CA State Holiday)
Amphitheater Riverside
National Cemetery
22495 Van Buren Blvd.
Riverside, CA 92518
10-11 am
FREE ADMISSION

— AFTER THIS CEREMONY —
Vietnam Veterans and families and all other era Veterans and families are invited to March Field Air Museum
for refreshments. Afterwards, everyone is invited to American Legion Post 79 at Fairmont Park.

— 2019 —

PROCEEDS AND DONATIONS TO BE USED
FOR VVA CHAPTER 47 VETERAN AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

MOTORCYCLE RIDER INFORMATION

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____
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MOTORCYCLE YEAR: _____ MOTORCYCLE MODEL: _____
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\$25.00 OR \$30.00 MOTORCYCLE RIDE FEE	PRE-REGISTER \$25.00 • AT THE GATE \$30.00
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FOR MORE INFORMATION:	EMAIL RUBENRASSO@AOL.COM CELL PHONE (951) 452-9207
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I AGREE TO HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNIFY VVA CHAPTER 47, AMERICAN LEGION POST 79 INCLUDING THEIR BOARD MEMBERS, ASSIGNS AND VOLUNTEERS, FROM ANY AND ALL LIABILITY FROM A LOSS, CLAIM, EXPENSE OR COURSE OF ACTION RESULTING FROM PERSONAL INJURY AND/OR DAMAGE RELATED TO THIS EVENT.

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

grief, with a hand pressed against a few of the more than 58,000 names that are etched into the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The names are those of American servicemen and women who died in Vietnam or later succumbed to wounds they received there.

“The Man at The Wall” cannot see that another hand is pressing against his, and that the shades of several soldiers and nurses are looking back at him. (Eight women, all of them nurses, are among America’s Vietnam War dead).

Williams was one of the first to join the Vietnam Veterans of America and played a part in creating Cumberland Chapter 172 of the VVA when it was formed in 1984.

“Jim was a great patriot, serving his country with honor and pride,” Chapter President Bob Cook said.

Cook said Williams was instrumental in the chapter’s success through the part he played in “Reflections,” which appears on several hundred thousand prints, plaques, T-shirts, sweatshirts and coffee mugs that Chapter 172 has sold.

“Jim posed for Lee Teter (who painted the original ‘Reflections’) as being a businessman visiting the Vietnam Memorial Wall,” said Cook. “And one can infer what is going through this man’s mind and heart while honoring those names on The Wall.

“Jim would sign the print for anyone who asked him, knowing that proceeds of this print would benefit Chapter 172,” he said.

Williams had been a chapter officer and member of the board of directors and color guard and vice president of the Maryland State VVA Council.

“He will be sadly missed,” said Cook.

Chip Sours, a Chapter 172 member who was described in Williams’ obituary as “a faithful friend ... who was like a son,” said Williams never talked about how he came to be “The Man at The Wall.”

“Jim was a very humble person,” said Sours. “He never brought it up in the 20 years I knew him, and that’s the way he wanted it.”

Sours said Williams hadn’t believed he deserved to be in the print because he had never been in combat. He accepted the role because of what “Reflections” represented and because it would help Chapter 172.

When asked for an autograph, he signed. After enough people asked him for his card, he had them printed to give out.

“Every Vietnam veteran in this country should feel the way I feel about Jim because of what he did for them with that print,” Sours said.

“The guy loved everybody and was dedicated to the chapter and the organization and what it stood for,” he said.

The VVA was founded in 1979 with the motto, “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.”

Rather than being greeted with “Welcome Home,” many returning Vietnam veterans found that they were despised by many other Americans — some of whom went to airports to curse at them and throw refuse at them. Some veterans’ service posts wanted nothing to do with them, but others welcomed them.

All that has changed, and the VVA advocates for all veterans. They are grateful for the fact that they now are appreciated, but remember all too well that few people advocated for them when they needed it.

Williams was active in several veterans organizations and volunteered at the Cumberland VA Outpatient Clinic.

“Jim wanted things to be right for everybody,” Sours said. “He had no enemies and treated everybody right, and everybody loved him.

“He pretty much adopted me and told me I was like the son he never had. We went to a number of national VVA conferences together.

“Jim had a very lovely family ... and he hung in there until the last daughter got there to be with him at his home, after traveling for several hours, before he died,” Sours said.

Williams is survived by his widow, Laura, and four daughters, three stepsons, 12 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.



CALIFORNIA VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA AUDIO/VIDEO HISTORY PROJECT

Ponce Gonzalez & Hap DiSimone



Many of us have a story to tell about our service in Vietnam. You are part of a legacy that should not be forgotten with the passing of time. We have both good and not so good memories of our service together. I feel that it’s important to concentrate on the good memories to reinforce the bonds we made for a lifetime. That’s not to say that you don’t have bad memories, but if you focus on more of the good memories, you just might stimulate memories that you might have forgotten. Many of us have said to ourselves at least once in our lives, “I wish that I had asked my Dad, Mom, Uncle about their experiences. I have heard many of my fellow veterans lament that they wanted to to know more about their experiences. That’s us, but what about your family what stories do you have to tell them before they too say, I wish that I had asked the question. With the help of Hap DiSimone, We have tried to make it easy for you to share your stories. You have things inside you that should be shared. You paid dearly for your experiences, and the treasure of what you learned could enrich others The questions that follow are guidelines/boilerplate for an interview. An interview that has the power to record your strongest most touching thoughts and feelings so that your story may be past on.

YOUR PERSONAL STORY - IT NEEDS TO BE TOLD!

Getting started can be simple or more complex depending on your expertise or the expertise availablewithin your chapter. I used a digital camera in the video mode and a simple script to get started. With some practice you will be able to share your stories with your fellow vets and your family

- Let’s start with an information gather to refresh your memories
- Name, Rank and Serial Number?
 - Branch of Service, Age at enlistment, MOS/Rate, Duty Station, Combat Assignment?
 - Who do you most WANT most to hear your story, be specfic here? Who NEEDS to hear it? Grand Kids, Your Son, Your Daughter, Your Family, Future War Fighters, Politicians, Voters? Maybe Someone you will never get to meet in person.
 - Why did you join up? What influenced your decision to join the military?
 - What was your training like? What was your state of mind then?
 - What MOS/Rate did you learn? What training stuck with you throughout your service?
 - What was most useful about your training? Did it kick in when it was needed?
 - What profession did you follow after the service and what are you doing now? If currently serving, what is your current job?
 - What was your duty station like? What did it smell like? What was strange about it?
 - Describe a day in your life.
 - What was a bad day back then. DON’T DWELL on the NEGATIVES, keep it moving.
 - Touch on the importance of your involvement: Who benefited from your work?
 - Did you participate in combat operations? If so, could you describe those which were significant to you? What changed about you during your exposure to war?
 - Were any of the medals or awards you received for Valor? If yes, could you describe how this was earned
 - Of the medals, awards and qualification badges or devices you received, what is the most meaningful to you and why?
 - Who was the most useful person you ever met in the service?
 - What did they do that was helpful?
 - What personal attributes did they have?
 - What is worth emulating about them?
 - Which individual person from your service stands out as the one who had the biggest impact on you and why?
 - Should everybody be required to do this?
 - Share your most positive thoughts about your involvement.
 - You fought for America. Was it worth it?
 - What is the most important idea that you could pass on to future generations? What would you caution those who read your words.
 - What advice would you have for those that are still serving?
 - How has military service influenced the way you have approached your life and career?
- If you need help, ping Hap DeSimone, MOPH Chpt 750, at SGTHAP218@yahoo. We can try to digitize stories recorded on cassette tapes, but what is important is that you GET IT WRITTEN DOWN OR RECORDED!



VVA CA State Council (contact info inside - page 2)

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To:

In this issue:
• Chapter/Council Activities-Events/Photos
• Legislative News
• Veteran Info
And more...

CSC Meeting Dates & Events
April 26-28, 2019, Fresno, CA
August 23-25, 2019, Fresno, CA
National Convention - July 16-20, 2019 - Spokane, Washington
October 25-27, 2019, Fresno, CA
Zephyr deadlines 2 weeks AFTER to each CSC meeting