



The California Zephyr

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An Organization Chartered By The U.S. Congress



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well another convention has come and gone. We had a good turnout with lots of first time attendees and I think everyone had a good time. I only had two complaints and about two dozen compliments. So, I would say we did almost everything right.

I want to thank all of you who attended. It was great to see some old friends, but just as great to see all the new people. I hope you all return in 2020. Maybe some of you will make the quarterly CSC meetings in Fresno.

Congratulations to those elected to the CSC Board of Directors. We have two new members for the next two-year term, Bill Hodges was elected to the secretary position and Jerry Orlemann was elected as the Southern District Director. I know they will both serve our members well.

I want to personally thank Tom Hohmann, the CSC Secretary from 1998-2018 (20 years), for all his hard work and dedication to the CSC. Tom has agreed to stay on as the CSC webmaster and he will continue to put together the CSC Award Winning Newsletter, *The California Zephyr*. So please continue sending your articles for the Zephyr to Tom at tomh47@aol.com.

I would also like to thank Mike Kennedy for his eight years of dedication to the CSC as the Southern District Director. Both of you will be missed but I know the CSC is in good hands with our two new board members.

As we start our next two-year term we would again like to hear from the members on what they would like to see the CSC Board accomplish during the next two years. We have work that needs to be completed, but once that is done we are open to suggestions. What would you like to see at the quarterly meetings? More speakers, training classes, Agent Orange Town Hall meeting, PTSD seminar? If you have any ideas or comments let us know. We are here for you.

If anyone would like to be on my e-mail list for veteran information mailings send me your e-mail address and I will add you. I don't give e-mails out to anyone and I blind copy all my e-mails, so no one receives yours. So, if you want to receive e-mails just let me know at nebhuskfan@aol.com Put "CSC e-mail" in the subject box and I will add you to my list.

This message also goes to all the At-Large members out there; there are 1382 of you. You are part of this organization and I would love to keep you informed on the veteran issues here in California and Nationwide.

Hope to see some of you at the August CSC meeting.
Steve

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

By Seth Reeb, Legislative Advocate

Save The Date- 30th Anniversary of the CA Vietnam Veterans Memorial

The ceremony for the 30th Anniversary of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be held on October 13 in Sacramento in Capitol Park. There will also be a banquet that evening as well as a reception the night before (October 12).

The flyer is included in this newsletter. Please pass the word to all Vietnam veterans. More details to follow.

11TH ANNUAL VETERANS OF THE YEAR LUNCHEON

The 11th Annual Veterans of the Year Luncheon took place on June 20 at the Sacramento Convention Center near the State Capitol. Members of the State Assembly choose a veteran from their legislative district to be honored for their military service as well as their work on behalf of veterans and the community. This year's event was attended by almost 400 legislators, honorees, guests, veterans service organizations, and corporate sponsors.

This is only the second Veterans Recognition Luncheon that I have had the pleasure of participating in, and it is one of the most impactful events that I get to attend. Nearly 400 people attend this event each year and the individuals being honored range from WWII to IOF/OEF veterans. Our country has come so far in the last 60 plus years. From little to no benefits for veterans to open support and gratitude for the men and women that stand and fight for our nation to remain free.

The VVA CSC has been a long-standing sponsor of this event and as such received recognition as a major sponsor which included mention on signage, the program, and during opening remarks by the Master of Ceremonies. The VVA-CSC was represented at the head table by CSC Government Affairs Dean Gotham.

The California Veterans Benefit Fund (CAVBF) has long been an organizing producer of this event and acts as the 501(c)(3) funding mechanism. Excess funds from the event are deposited into the fund and are used to fund worthwhile projects and programs which help veterans. The CAVBF has long funded many VVA-CSC activities.

This year, 26 Vietnam Veterans were honored by their

legislator at the event. Out of those 26, two Vietnam Veterans of America members were recognized, their bios as they appeared in the event program are listed below:

MARTIN SNEZEK-US AIR FORCE / VIETNAM WAR

Martin Snezek served in the US Air Force from 1969-1975. A veteran of the Vietnam War, he spent time at Air Force bases around the world, including San Antonio, TX; McClellan AFB, CA; South East Asia and others.

Mr. Snezek is a member of Vietnam Veterans of America, where he has acted as Vice President, President, and is currently Secretary/Treasurer. He was also appointed Chairman of the Investigative Subcommittee for the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial Honors Committee.

Recognized by: Assemblymember Ken Cooley, District 08

RONALD GARCIA-US NAVY / VIETNAM WAR

Ronald Garcia served in the US Navy from 1965-1969. He deployed multiple times in support of the Vietnam War, and was awarded the National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Navy Good Conduct Medal, Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, and numerous other unit awards and citations. Mr. Garcia continues to serve veterans in his post-service career, working as a Disabled American Veteran (DAV) Veterans Service Officer, assisting hundreds of veterans to receive medical and monetary benefits for injuries received while serving their country. He is also a member of the VFW, American Legion and Vietnam Veterans of America.

Recognized by: Assemblymember Phillip Chen, District 55

CURRENT LEGISLATION:

On July 6, the Legislature began its Summer Recess which will go until August 6. When they return from recess, they will hear the bills which are still alive. August 31 is the last day that bills can be voted on.

Legislation that survives this process will go to the Governor for his signature or veto. Legislation that does not make it past August 31 is dead. The Governor has until September 30 to sign or veto bills. Bills that are signed by the Governor, for the most part, take effect on January 1, 2019 (some bills have clauses which specify that they take

SAVE THE DATE



30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE CALIFORNIA VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

OCTOBER 13, 2018 - SATURDAY

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL, STATE CAPITOL PARK, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Oct 12, Friday: 6:00 pm - Welcome reception (location to be determined).
Oct 13, Saturday: 10:00 am - 30th Anniversary Memorial ceremony begins.
6:00 pm - Banquet. Downtown Sacramento (location to be determined).



THIS EVENT IS FOR ALL VETERANS AND THE PUBLIC TO HONOR THOSE CALIFORNIANS WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM
"ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL"

For more information or sponsorships, contact:

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effect at other dates).

The General Election is on November 6. There will be a new Governor elected as well as some new legislators to replace those who were termed out, moved on to other office, etc. The new Legislature for the 2019-20 Legislative Session will meet for the first time on December 3, 2018 for an organizational session and swearing- in.

Below is a list of the top bills that we have been advocating on for the State Council and their current status (as of July 19). Currently, the Vietnam Veterans of America California State Council is in official support of 34 bills that are making their way through the process. We are also tracking many other bills which may have relevance to veterans or the military and could be amended in the next 2 months.

We will provide a final status of all legislation in early October.

KEY SUPPORTED BILLS:

AB 1873-Obernolte (R-Big Bear Lake)

Would Repeal The \$5 Fee Provisions In Current Law To Obtain “Veteran” Designation On Your Driver’s License, Authorizing An Applicant Whose Veteran Status Has Been Verified To Make A Veteran Designation Request And Requiring The Department To Make That Designation On The Applicant’s License, Without The Additional Charge Of \$5.

Location/Status: Senate Appropriations Committee. Position: Support

AB 2325-Irwin (D-Fullerton)

Would Prevent A County From Denying An Eligible Veteran County Mental Or Behavioral Health Services While The Veteran Is Waiting For A Determination Of Eligibility For, And Availability Of, Mental Or Behavioral

Health Services Provided By The United States Department Of Veterans Affairs.

Location/Status: On The Governor’s Desk. Position: Support

AB 2521-Quirk-Silva (D-Fullerton)

Seeks To Curb Abuses By Unscrupulous Lenders Who Seek To Deny Deployed Military Members The Benefits Of The California Military Families Financial Relief Act Via A Loophole In

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

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.



The Law.

Location/Status: Signed Governor. Position: Support
AB 2568-Reyes (D-Grand Terrace)

Would Require County Jails To, Upon Detention Of A Person, Perform A Case Summary That Includes Checking If The Person Has Served In The United States Military.

Location/Status: Senate Appropriations Committee. Position: Support

AB 2801-Salas (D-Bakersfield)

Addresses The Problem Of Veteran's And Law Enforcement Memorials Being Vandalized. Seeks To Create Penalties For These Actions.

Location/Status: Senate Floor. Position: Support

SB 895- Nguyen (R-Garden Grove)

Would Require The Commission To Develop And Submit To The State Board To Adopt, Modify, Or Revise A Model Curriculum Relative To The Vietnamese American Refugee Experience And A Model Curriculum Relative To The Cambodian Genocide For Use In Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, And High Schools. The Bill Would Encourage A School District, Charter School, Or County Office Of Education That Maintains Kindergarten Or Any Of Grades 1 To 12, That Does Not Otherwise Offer A Standards-Based Curriculum Relative To The Vietnamese American Refugee Experience, Vietnamese Boat People, And The Republic Of Vietnam Armed Forces

Location/Status: Assembly Appropriations Committee. Position: Support

SB 1043-Newman (D-Fullerton)

Increase In Local Assistance Funding For County Veterans Service Officers (From The Current \$5.6 Million To \$7 Million).

Location/Status: Dead. Position: Support

SB 1137-Vidak (R-Hanford)

Will Require California Department Of Veterans Affairs And The California Department Of Consumer Affairs To Increase Awareness And Notification For Veterans Regarding Professional Licensing.

Location/Status: Assembly Appropriations Committee. Position: Support

SB 1314-Nguyen (R-Garden Grove)

Will Require The California Department Of Veterans Affairs (Cal Vet) To Develop A Plan To Accommodate Veterans With Complex Mental And Behavioral Needs At The State's Veteran's Homes. Additionally, The Plan Shall Also Include Improvements In The Security Of Each Home To Ensure The Safety Of All Residents, Staff And Visitors Of The Veterans Homes.

Location/Status: Assembly Appropriations Committee. Position: Support

SB 1357-Gaines (R-El Dorado Hills)

Reinstate The "Veteran" License Plate Which Will Be Available To Only Veterans.

Location/Status: Dead. Position: Support

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Dean Gotham Governmental Affairs - deang1968@gmail.com or Seth Reeb Legislative Advocate - sethreeb@comcast.net

To Access The Legislature's Website Which Has The Language, Status, Votes, And Analyses Of All Legislation From 1999 To The Present, Go To:

<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml>

ADRIAN CRONAUER

'GOOD MORNING, VIETNAM'

D.J., DIES AT 79

By Neil Genzlinger



Charles Krupa/Associated Press

Adrian Cronauer outside his home in Philadelphia in 1987. He said of his radio audience in Vietnam, "They're young guys in this horrendous heat, slogging through rice paddies with mosquitoes the size of Mack trucks, picking leeches off themselves, shooting and fighting and killing and being killed." Credit

Adrian Cronauer, the disc jockey whose story provided the rough outline for the character played by Robin Williams in the 1987 movie "Good Morning, Vietnam," died on Wednesday in Troutville, Va. He was 79.

His death was announced by the Oakley's funeral service. The notice did not give a cause.

Mr. Cronauer was in the Air Force in 1965 when he was sent to Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). His first job was as news director for Armed Forces Radio there, but when the morning host's slot became vacant shortly after his arrival, he settled in behind the microphone. The show was called "Dawn Buster," and he began it with the drawn-out greeting immortalized in the movie's title.

He had actually developed the sign-on thousands of miles away, while stationed on the island of Crete, where he had also had a radio show.

"I said, 'Good morning, Iraklion,' because it was Iraklion Air Station," an Air Force facility near the capital, he told CNN in 1995.

He initially wondered if the greeting might be too upbeat or bombastic to use in Vietnam.

"They're young guys in this horrendous heat, slogging through rice paddies with mosquitoes the size of Mack trucks, picking leeches off themselves, shooting and fighting and killing and being killed," he said.

"Do I want to do that?" he said in reference to using the opening line. "I said, 'Yeah, I do, because if there's a certain amount of irony there, and if they pick up on that, they'll know what I'm really saying.'"

Years later, in 1979, with the Korean War sitcom "M*A*S*H" and the radio-themed "WKRP in Cincinnati" both on the air, he tried selling a treatment of his experiences as a television series but found no takers. A few years after that he pitched a made-for-TV movie.

"This time, a friend's agent in Hollywood got it into Robin's hands," Mr. Cronauer related in the 1995 interview, "and he said: 'Oh, disc jockey; chance to do all my comic shtick. Let's do it as a real movie.'"

Robin Williams as Mr. Cronauer in "Good Morning, Vietnam." The movie was largely fictionalized, but Mr.



Williams said that key elements of the character he created had come from Mr. Cronauer. Credit Touchstone Pictures

But not one that used Mr. Cronauer's version of events; what ended up in "Good Morning, Vietnam," which was directed by Barry Levinson, was a largely fictionalized story from a screenplay by Mitch Markowitz.

Still, Mr. Williams said in a 1988 interview with Rolling Stone, key elements of the character he created came from Mr. Cronauer.

"He did play rock 'n' roll, he did do characters to introduce standard Army announcements, and 'Gooooood morning, Vietnam' really was his signature line," Mr. Williams said. "He says he learned whenever soldiers in the field heard his sign-on line, they'd shout back at their radios." What they shouted is unprintable.

Mr. Cronauer, who in reality was not quite the wild man the film suggested — later in life he worked for Republican causes and became a lawyer — admitted to some unease when he first saw the screen portrayal. But he got over it.

"Finally I said: 'Wait a minute. It was never intended to be a biography. It's a piece of entertainment. Sit back, relax and enjoy it,'" he said. "And that's what I did."

Adrian Joseph Cronauer was born on Sept. 8, 1938, in Pittsburgh. As a youngster he played piano on a local children's television show. He also listened to a lot of radio, particularly absorbing the style of Rege Cordic, a morning host in the Pittsburgh market.

In the 1950s he enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh. He and other students formed the Student Broadcasting Association, which began a campus radio station. He later transferred to American University in Washington,

working at local radio stations in his spare time.

He joined the Air Force and was first assigned to work on training films before being sent to Crete. Then came his Vietnam stint.

He was there only in 1965 and 1966, but the D.J.s who succeeded him picked up his signature opening, and in later years many Vietnam veterans who served after he had left the country would meet him and, because of the movie, say they remembered listening to him.

Mr. Cronauer with Mr. Williams in an undated photo. He was not quite the wild man that the film suggested and



admitted to some unease when he first saw Mr. Williams portraying him. Credit WETA-FM

He said that on the radio in Vietnam he was always conscious that his listeners were young soldiers who were strangers in a strange land.

"Along came the military and literally picked them up, took them halfway around the world and dropped them into a totally alien environment," he told a luncheon in 1997. "Culture shock would set in with a vengeance. And it was our job — or as they like to say in the military, our mission — it was our mission to be an antidote to that culture shock by giving them something familiar to listen to. And what I tried to do is to make it sound as much as I could like a stateside radio station."

After the war he worked at various stations as a news anchor and in other capacities, did voice-over work in New York and owned his own advertising agency. In the late 1980s, thanks to the money he had received from "Good Morning, Vietnam," he was able to earn a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Cronauer was active in veterans' causes and, from 2001 to 2009, was an adviser to the

Defense Department's Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Office. He was also on the board of the National D-Day Memorial and served two terms as a trustee of the Virginia War Memorial.

Mr. Cronauer, who lived in Troutville, was married to Jeane Steppe Cronauer, who died in 2016. His survivors include a stepson, Michael Muse, and four grandchildren.

A sought-after speaker once the movie came out, Mr. Cronauer would often note that Mr. Williams's film rendition of his sign-on was actually somewhat underplayed.

"If you're a morning D.J., it's not a matter of if — it's a matter of when: You are going to oversleep," he told a 2008 gathering. "And when that happens you come tearing into the station at the very last moment, and you're staggering around half asleep, half dressed.

"You don't have any records pulled, you don't know where your headphones are, you haven't put in your contact lenses, you don't have any tapes set up. It's just chaos, and as you walk through the studio door, you hear the newsman saying: 'That's the latest from the Armed Forces Radio newsroom. Next news in one hour.'

"Now you've got to do something. So as you try and pull some records and find your headphones and get things all set up, you turn on the microphone and you say, 'Gooooood morning, Vietnam.'"

While pantomiming the pulling of records off shelves and the putting in of contact lenses, he drew out the "Gooooood" for a full 20 seconds.

AGENT ORANGE COMMITTEE

First, I would like to thank Steve for asking me to chair the Agent Orange committee one again. I will be the first to say that I did not follow thru on enough in the last two years. At the national level we did manage to get the Toxic Exposure Research Act passed. We are now waiting for follow up on the part of the government and the Department of Veterans Affairs. We have many reasons to be concerned with the person that will be leading the VA into the near future.

I am sure most of you have heard of the Agent Orange registry, but do you know about the Burn Pit Registry, or the Golf War Independent Committee to Review Intergenerational Effects of Gulf War Service? Sometimes things are being done that we are not aware of because they don't always apply directly to us. This is being done, I think, because of us but it is not including all veterans and their children.

How many of you have children with health issues? Have they filed a claim with the VA? Are you having trouble finding someone to assist in filing their claim? We, at the national level, are very concerned with the outcome of the claims that have been filed. We are trying to determine if they are still where they are supposed to be or if someone has illegally disposed of them. How many of you have no children because of, for no other reason, your service in the military? It does not matter where you served if you were exposed to toxins. A large number of military based around the world and around the country are some of the most heavily polluted sites in the country or maybe the world.

My point of a lot of this is that we need to return to hosting town hall meetings or symposiums on toxic exposures that are affecting our families. I have heard that the birth defects are reaching into the fourth generation. We need keep this in the forefront of the public. If there is anything that will awaken the Post Vietnam Veterans to the hazards of their service, it will be the wellbeing of their children. We were among the first to do both symposiums and town hall meeting to bring awareness to this issue. Let's get back to our roots and educate those that follow us. Feel free to contact me to learn what is needed to put on these town hall meetings.

Ken Holybee

THE RAINBOW WAR

Destroy all the foliage
That was the plan.
The government called it
Operation Ranch Hand.

Spray the hills and the valleys
With toxic herbicides.
Eliminate the bushes
Where Charlie might hide.

The Colors of Our War
Could not be seen.
Yet the deadly Agents
Were White and Blue and Green.

We polluted the lands
Where the troops were sent.
All laced with Purple and Pink
And that Orange Agent.

For over a decade
We sprayed all the plants.
It got in our hair, on our skin
And all over our pants.

No reason to worry
That's what we were told.
So we brought it back home
Where it slowly took hold.

The toxins ran deep
Where the blood did flow.
It spared but a few
How were we to know.

A Rainbow of Colors
Slowly kills us each day.
Where Charlie had failed,
These Agents lay us in our graves.

Leif K. Thorsten
VVA Chapter 1031

AGENT ORANGE

Agent Orange was a powerful herbicide used by U.S. military forces during the Vietnam War to eliminate forest cover and crops for North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops. The U.S. program, code named Operation Ranch Hand, sprayed more than 20 million gallons of various herbicides over Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos from 1961 to 1971. Agent Orange, which contained the deadly chemical dioxin, was the most commonly used herbicide. It was later proven to cause serious health issues—including cancer, birth defects, rashes and severe psychological and neurological problems—among the Vietnamese people as well as among returning U.S. servicemen and their families.

OPERATION RANCH HAND

During the Vietnam War, the U.S. military engaged in an aggressive program of chemical warfare code named Operation Ranch Hand.

From 1961 to 1971, the U.S. military sprayed a range of herbicides across more than 4.5 million acres of Vietnam to destroy the forest cover and food crops used by enemy North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops.

U.S. aircraft were deployed to douse roads, rivers, canals, rice paddies and farmland with powerful mixtures of herbicides. During this process, crops and water sources used by the non-combatant native population of South Vietnam were also hit.

In all, American forces used more than 20 million gallons of herbicides in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia during the years of Operation Ranch Hand. Herbicides were also sprayed from trucks and hand-sprayers around U.S. military bases.

Some military personnel during the Vietnam War era joked that “Only you can prevent a forest,” a twist on the U.S. Forest Service’s popular fire-fighting campaign featuring Smokey the Bear.

WHAT IS AGENT ORANGE?

The various herbicides used during Operation Ranch Hand were referred to by the colored marks on the 55-gallon drums in which the chemicals were shipped and stored.

In addition to Agent Orange, the U.S. military used herbicides named Agent Pink, Agent Green, Agent Purple, Agent White and Agent Blue. Each of these—manufactured by Monsanto, Dow Chemical and other companies—had different chemical additives in varying strengths.

Agent Orange was the most widely used herbicide in Vietnam, and the most potent. It was available in slightly different mixtures, sometimes referred to as Agent Orange I, Agent Orange II, Agent Orange III and “Super Orange.”

More than 13 million gallons of Agent Orange was used in Vietnam, or almost two-thirds of the total amount of herbicides used during the entire Vietnam War.

DIOXIN IN AGENT ORANGE

In addition to Agent Orange’s active ingredients, which caused plants to “defoliate” or lose their leaves, Agent Orange contained significant amounts of 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, often called TCDD, a type of dioxin.

Dioxin was not intentionally added to Agent Orange; rather, dioxin is a by-product that’s produced during the manufacturing of herbicides. It was found in varying concentrations in all the different herbicides used in Vietnam.

Dioxins are also created from trash incineration; burning gas, oil and coal; cigarette smoking and in different manufacturing processes such as bleaching. The TCDD found in Agent Orange is the most dangerous of all dioxins.

EFFECTS OF AGENT ORANGE

Because Agent Orange (and other Vietnam-era herbicides) contained dioxin in the form of TCDD, it had immediate and long-term effects.

Dioxin is a highly persistent chemical compound that lasts for many years in the environment, particularly in soil, lake and river sediments and in the food chain. Dioxin accumulates in fatty tissue in the bodies of fish, birds and other animals. Most human exposure is through foods such as meats, poultry, dairy products, eggs, shellfish and fish.

Studies done on laboratory animals have proven that dioxin is highly toxic even in minute doses. It is universally known to be a carcinogen (a cancer-causing agent).

Short-term exposure to dioxin can cause darkening of the skin, liver problems and a severe acne-like skin disease called chloracne. Additionally, dioxin is linked to type 2 diabetes, immune system dysfunction, nerve disorders, muscular dysfunction, hormone disruption and heart disease.

Developing fetuses are particularly sensitive to

dioxin, which is also linked to miscarriages, spina bifida and other problems with fetal brain and nervous system development.

VETERAN HEALTH ISSUES AND LEGAL BATTLE

Questions regarding Agent Orange arose in the United States after an increasing number of returning Vietnam veterans and their families began to report a range of afflictions, including rashes and other skin irritations, miscarriages, psychological symptoms, type 2 diabetes, birth defects in children and cancers such as Hodgkin’s disease, prostate cancer and leukemia.

In 1988, Dr. James Clary, an Air Force researcher associated with Operation Ranch Hand, wrote to Senator Tom Daschle, “When we initiated the herbicide program in the 1960s, we were aware of the potential for damage due to dioxin contamination in the herbicide. However, because the material was to be used on the enemy, none of us were overly concerned. We never considered a scenario in which our own personnel would become contaminated with the herbicide.”

In 1979, a class action lawsuit was filed on behalf of 2.4 million veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange during their service in Vietnam. Five years later, in an out-of-court-settlement, seven large chemical companies that manufactured the herbicide agreed to pay \$180 million in compensation to the veterans or their next of kin.

DID YOU KNOW?

The controversy over Agent Orange and its effects has persisted for more than four decades. As late as June 2011, debate continued over whether so-called "Blue Water Navy" veterans (those who served aboard deep-sea vessels during the Vietnam War) should receive the same Agent Orange-related benefits as other veterans who served on the ground or on inland waterways.

Various challenges to the settlement followed, including lawsuits filed by some 300 veterans, before the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed the settlement in 1988. By that time, the settlement had risen to some \$240 million including interest.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Agent Orange Act, which mandated that some diseases associated with Agent Orange and other herbicides (including non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, soft tissue sarcomas and chloracne) be treated as the result of wartime service. This helped codify the VA’s response to veterans with conditions related to their exposure to Agent Orange.

LEGACY OF AGENT ORANGE IN VIETNAM

In addition to the massive environmental devastation of the U.S. defoliation program in Vietnam, that nation has reported that some 400,000 people were killed or maimed as a result of exposure to herbicides like Agent Orange.

In addition, Vietnam claims half a million children have been born with serious birth defects, while as many 2 million people are suffering from cancer or other illness caused by Agent Orange.

In 2004, a group of Vietnamese citizens filed a class-action lawsuit against more than 30 chemical companies, including the same ones that settled with U.S. veterans in 1984. The suit, which sought billions of dollars worth of damages, claimed that Agent Orange and its poisonous effects left a legacy of health problems and that its use constituted a violation of international law.

In March 2005, a federal judge in Brooklyn, New York, dismissed the suit; another U.S. court rejected a final appeal in 2008, causing outrage among Vietnamese victims of Operation Ranch Hand and U.S. veterans alike.

Fred A. Wilcox, author of *Scorched Earth: Legacies of Chemical Warfare in Vietnam*, told the Vietnamese news source VN Express International, “The U.S. government refuses to compensate Vietnamese victims of chemical warfare because to do so would mean admitting that the U.S. committed war crimes in Vietnam. This would open the door to lawsuits that would cost the government billions of dollars.”

CHAPTER NOTES

Chapter 391

Celebrating 30 years of service.

In late 1988 a group of eight Vietnam veterans, led by Frank M. Smart, sat down and decided to form a chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America. No one knew what they were doing and really didn't know if or how successful their efforts would be.

They went forward on faith and that organization became Chapter 391, based in Sonora, (Tuolumne County) Ca.

Chapter 391 is now the largest VVA chapter in the

state of California out of 40 such chapters and ranks 9th in the national organization of 640 chapters.

And as the chapter celebrates it's 30th anniversary on September 12th, it is still growing, still heavily involved in the fabric of life in Tuolumne County and shows no signs of slowing down.

The remarkable story of what Frank M. Smart, who served as a Combat Reporter with the First Cavalry Division (AM), and those seven men ultimately accomplished will be detailed in the September issue of The Zephyr.

Stay tuned.

Frank M. Smart, Columbia, California

Chapter 201

On July 16, 2018, VVA Chapter 201 invited the founder of the "Adopt a military mom for Mother's Day", Grace Witt to our monthly meeting. Grace also invited two Blue Star Moms, Gloria Cervantes and Carolyn Silberman, and a Gold Star Mom, Cheryl Walsh, who is the daughter of a VVA Chapter 201 member.

The purpose of the invitation was to allow Grace the opportunity to thank the Chapter for their recent donation of \$500 and to provide the chapter with a more complete understanding of the program.

The "Adopt a military mom for Mother's Day" was started in 2004 to reach out to the moms who have a son or daughter in the service or who may have lost a son or daughter in combat. The event is planned to occur on the Saturday prior to Mother's Day to allow the mom's the opportunity to be with their families on Mother's Day. The cost to the Moms is free and they are provided a nice venue, food and camaraderie among other women. When the program was first started the overall cost was about \$500 and Grace and her family absorbed the costs, although they did solicit donations. Mother's Day 2018 was the largest and most extravagant layout and the costs ran closer to \$15,000, of which a large portion were covered by donations.

The Blue Star and Gold Star Moms spoke highly of the importance of this event and the ability to share this time with other moms with sons or daughters in the service. For many of the moms, they do not have a child at home and often do not have someone to share this time and feel the support and caring nature of all involved

At the end of the presentation, the group presented VVA Chapter 201 with a very large sheet cookie with the American Flag from Mrs. Fields cookie, which was very well received.

For more information or to donate to "Adopt a military mom for Mother's Day by contacting Grace Witt at adoptmilitarymom@comcast.

Memorial Day Ceremony

The annual United Veterans Council (UVC) Memorial Day Ceremony at San Jose's Oak Hill Memorial Park on May 28, 2018 began with the flyover of the Veterans Section by a Vietnam Era UH-1 Huey helicopter, in 25th Infantry Division colors. Following the opening ceremony, the Huey landed at the Field of Honor and was on display for spectators during the VVA afternoon service.



Vietnam Era 25th Infantry Division Huey made three flyovers during the opening ceremony on Memorial Day in San Jose, California

Chapter 201 members participated in both the United Veterans Council (UVC) Memorial Day Ceremony at Oak Hill's Veteran Section and the VVA service at the Oak Hill Field of Honor. The Chapter's National and VVA Colors were posted during the UVC opening ceremony Dennis Whittaker and William McCorquadale. Stephen Thompson, Chapter 201 Secretary/Treasurer and Dennis Whittaker, Chapter Director, placed the Medal Of Honor Wreath.

Linn Malaznik, an Army Sergeant with the 5th Special Forces in I Corps in Vietnam, recipient of a Bronze Star

and a Purple Heart for his actions around Da Nang during



Chapter 201 Member Mike Frangadakis accepts the Medal Of Honor Wreath from Director Dennis Whittaker and Secretary/Treasurer Stephen Thompson

his time in Vietnam, assisted USMC Vietnam War Veteran Ron Wecht, with multiple Purple Hearts, in placing the Purple Heart wreath.

AVVA President Cang Kim Dong and Joseph Tran



Chapter 201 Member Linn Malaznik, Dressed in Civil War Attire In honor of the 150th Anniversary of Memorial Day, Assists Ron Wecht in Placing the Purple Heart Wreath

placed the Prisoners Of War in Vietnam and Missing In Action (POW/MIA) wreath. Both were Prisoners Of War in Vietnam.



Cang Kim Dong and Joseph Tran placed the POW/MIA wreath

Former UH-1 Huey helicopter Pilot, Warren Finch (Chapter 201 President) having received the Distinguished Flying Cross for actions during the War in Vietnam, and Air Force Veteran Rose Herrera (Chapter Director) placed the Vietnam War wreath during the UVC Ceremony.



Chapter 201 AVVA Honor Guard Places the Vietnam War Wreath at the Field of Honor

Following the UVC Ceremony, Chapter 201 members and Associates held their annual ceremony at the Field of Honor, including the Missing Man Table Service. With President Warren Finch performing as Master of Ceremonies and Randall Richmond acting as Chaplain. The Chapter's Colors were placed by Stephen Thompson (National Colors), Gerald Arnold (POW/MIA Flag), Gene Fanucchi (VVA Flag) and Rose Herrera (Chapter 201 Flag).



Chapter 201 President Warren Finch conducts the VVA service at Oak Hill Memorial Park Field of Honor

The Missing Man Table Service was conducted by U.S. Volunteers of America Major Scott Cassell. Assisting at the Missing Man Table were Stephen Thompson and Dennis Whittaker.



Chapter 201 Secretary/Treasurer Stephen Thompson and Director Dennis Whittaker assist in the Missing Man Table Service

AVVA Chapter 201 President Cang Kim Dong led AVVA Members in the posting of the Vietnamese and AVVA Colors following the posting of the Chapter Colors. AVVA members placed the Vietnam War and POW/MIA wreaths, fired the honor volley and played of Taps during the Field of Honor ceremony.



Chapter 201 AVVA Honor Guard Places the Vietnam War Wreath at the Field of Honor

The 16th Biennial Vietnam Veterans of America California State Convention (CalCon 16) was held in Fresno from 22 through 24 June, 2018. Chapter 201 delegates to the convention were Past Chapter President David Sanders, Secretary/Treasurer Stephen Thompson and Sergeant At Arms John Hassenplug.

During the Installation Banquet, at the conclusion of the convention, Chapter 201 Secretary/Treasurer Stephen Thompson was honored to receive a 2018 California State Council Image of Bravery Award.

Steve Joined US Navy in September 1965 and trained as a Hospital Corpsman. He was reassigned to the US Marine Corp in August 1966 and ultimately served with 3rd Force Recon in Dong Ha, Vietnam. While serving



with this unit, he was awarded the Silver Star for his actions during the 1968 Tet Offensive. There were eight men on the patrol and by the time they were extracted by helicopter, five were killed in action and two were wounded. Steve was the only one not wounded. His unit commander was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor when he jumped off the helicopter to go back to look for one of his men who was unaccounted for. Steve is Lifetime member of VVA Chapter 201 and was elected as the Secretary/Treasurer in April 2018.

Chapter 756

Veteran Cemetery
Orange County Great Park

The efforts to get us a Veterans Cemetery in our area contacts to get both sides of the issue are:

1—Ed Pope, (he is a Army Veteran who has lived in Irvine many years), is “Chair of the Campaign to Save the Veterans Cemetery In the Great Park.” The mailing address is 5405 Alton Parkway, Suite A-438, Irvine. See the e-mail and address below

2—That e-mail also has the names and e-mail addresses for the three Irvine City Council members,(Wagner is the Mayor), who oppose and stopped construction at the last minute when 5 Points a big bucks developer wanted to swap land near the 5 and 405 freeways for the already approved land on or near the Great Park land.

3—The two Irvine Council members, (City of Irvine owns the Great Park which was the WW II El Toro Marine base), who support the previously approved Cemetery at or near the Park area are Jeffry Lalloway and Lynn Schott.

4—Larry Agran a former Mayor of Irvine is also the editor of the on-line “Irvine Community News and View” is a big supporter for the Cemetery to be placed as originally approved

The matter went to a vote at the Primary on June 5th and the people of Irvine voted against the developers attempt to swap land. Since then just last week the Mayor notified 5 Point that the swap was off per vote of Irvine residents. He now is calling for further study of the original location. Also now all of a sudden one of the County Commissioners said the county owns land near the 241 and the 91 freeways that is being looked into for it if Irvine fails to come up with a solution—now the City of Anaheim has also jumped on the band wagon saying we owe the Veterans and would love to have it in our city!



Dave Chapelle went home to be with The Lord
he went peacefully in his sleep.



Chapter 53 Color Guard At National Leadership Conference: Richard Carlos - USAF, Cliff Rapp - USN Seabees,
John Warhank - USA, Ed Sakihama - USA, Kirk Gillett - USN Seabees
Not pictured: David Jonta - USA, Color Guard Leader, Steve Crecy - USA

Another very recent development is that Nick Berardino, a former Marine, has already or soon will jump into the fray. He recently resigned from the Orange County Fair Board to use his skills and reputation to get a Veterans Cemetery in Orange County. He supports a Cemetery for Orange County but supported the land swap that failed. Suspect he will or is already a good contact.

There was some Veteran support for the strawberry location but was rather low key in my opinion.

Lots of pro and con on this and the beat goes on.

Googling the subject will provide more read than one wants! At one point, (I'd guess, 5 Points who allegedly spent 1 million supporting the vote for their land swap offer), had Gov Brown out here to look—his comment was he liked the strawberry patch next to the 5/405 freeways

With that I would encourage VVA to first support A Veterans Cemetery in Orange County and after due diligence recommend, (hopefully), that it be placed where originally approved near/in the Great Park.

Hope this is more than needed for VVA Local to move forward Conrad.

Last—?)recommend this mail be forwarded to the Brothers in our VVA Chapter and Air Force LA/OC AFSFA Chapter.

Thanks
Lyle (Brakob)
949 856 4445

Chapter 53

Veterans Memorial Highway

It is with great pleasure I announce the installation of the LOS ANGELES COUNTY VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY signs in Redondo Beach (LACOVVMH). I've been checking almost daily as we were expecting them and I almost crashed my car today when I saw they were installed! They are located along Pacific Coast Highway near Beryl Street in Redondo Beach.

Many thanks go out to Col. Tom Lasser (ret.), Kirk Gillett VP, Our VVA Chapter 53 Board, Redondo Beach City Manager Joe Hoefgen, Ted Semann RB Public Works Director, Carrie Bowen CALTRANS District 7 Director, Mr. Yunus Ghausi CALTRANS, Abbas Aalem CALTRANS, other unnamed CALTRANS personnel.

Our committee will soon meet with the City to determine an appropriate way to announce these signs to the public. As you know the designation of PCH (Highway 1) as LACOVVMH for it's length through Los Angeles County was achieved in circa 2000 by the



efforts of our president Jerry Yamamoto and the dedicated members of Chapter 53. These signs are a replacement for



one that stood in Redondo 2005 to 2017. It was removed due to a sale of school property.

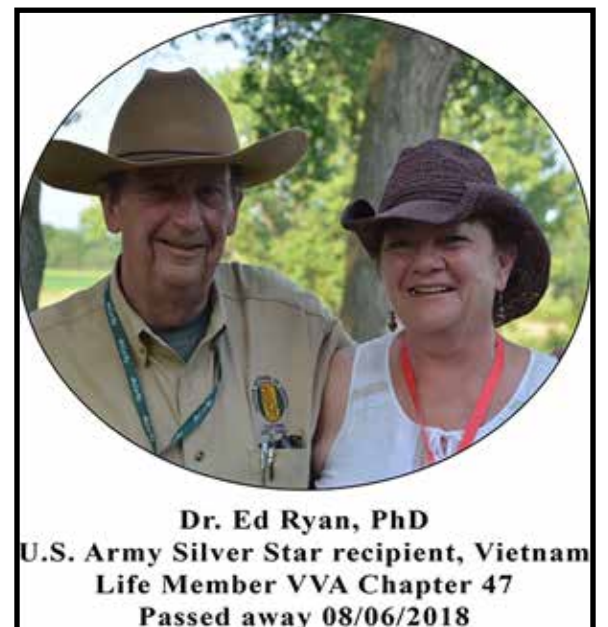
Steve Crecy, Board member and committee chair

Chapter 47

We received the sad news on August 6 from Charlotte Ryan that her husband Dr. Ed Ryan passed away. Ed was a long time Life Member of VVA's Inland Empire Chapter 47. Ed Ryan served with the U.S. Army in Vietnam and was the recipient of the Silver Star and Purple Heart.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Charlotte and the family.

Ed Ryan will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery. Chapter 47 will make an announcement on behalf of the family when plans for a local memorial are finalized.



Dr. Ed Ryan, PhD
U.S. Army Silver Star recipient, Vietnam
Life Member VVA Chapter 47
Passed away 08/06/2018

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

HONOR EARP

By Manny Otiko

Zack Earp, a descendant of the legendary outlaw Wyatt Earp, recently received a National Medal of Honor from the Daughters of the American Revolution. The civic group honors heritage and people who make a difference, according to its website.

The organization was started 125 years ago and has



2018 Scholarship Essay Award winners. Left to right: Matthew Dalby of Torrance High School, Faith Deitz of Mira Costa High School, Rebecca Leventhal of California Connections Academy, Andrew Rodriguez of Redondo Union High School, Yunha Choi of Torrance High School

Scholarship committee members Kyle Orlemann AVVA, Mike Welch and David Jonta pictured with Chapter 53's 2018 scholarship recipients.



Bill Hodges, Andy Huntoon & Steve Rogers at the Veterans Outreach table for VVA Chapter 400, Alameda's Spring Festival.

185,000 members.

Earp, who lives in Riverside, was honored for his volunteer work with veterans. He served in the Marine



Zack Earp, center, recently received a National Medal of Honor from the Daughters of the American Revolution. Earp is a descendent of legendary outlaw Wyatt Earp.

Corps in Vietnam for about two years and was forced to retire after being injured by a landmine.

Earp said he has several medical problems caused by the use of Agent Orange, a chemical used to clear foliage during the Vietnam War.

Although Earp has battled arterial disease, Parkinson's disease and prostate cancer, he said he still

tries to stay active in the community. He is also head of the local Vietnam Veterans Association and continues to advocate for veterans still dealing with the effects of Agent Orange.

Earp is also a retired educator, has helped with community policing and volunteered with the Boy Scouts. He also has a high school football stadium named after him.

"I refuse to lose," he said. He said receiving the award was "humbling and overwhelming."

"It was quite an experience," he said.

Earp's name was submitted for the Medal of Honor by Daughters of the American Revolution Aurantia Chapter Regent Judy Dillard and Chapter Americanism Chair Rosanna Weir of Riverside. According to Linda L. Winthers, a national chair with the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Medal of Honor rewards people who have provided extraordinary service in their community. She

explained that the award honors people for their achievements in four areas, leadership, trustworthiness, patriotism and service. The group was particularly impressed with the work Earp had done with local veterans.

"He revitalized the veterans association and became the face of Agent Orange," said Winthers.

Earp's application was bulging with his lengthy achievements in the community.

"They (the people that nominated him) can't say enough good things about him," said Winthers. "They were thrilled that he was going to be nominated."

CHOSE VA

VA'S NEW 'CHOOSEVA' CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS VETERAN BENEFITS AND SERVICES, AIMS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN EMPLOYEES

Emphasizing a multitude of benefits and services to its 9 million Veteran customers, as well as promoting the organization as a great place to work, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) kicked off its new "ChooseVA" marketing campaign July 5.

"We know from a recent research study as well as feedback from Veterans who use VA benefits and services, that VA provides some of the highest quality care and benefits available anywhere," said VA's Acting Secretary Peter O'Rourke. "The ChooseVA campaign not only highlights VA's longstanding commitment to caring for Veterans and their families, but encourages all stakeholders to make an ultimate decision to ChooseVA."

The ChooseVA campaign includes testimonials from Veteran customers and employees, and will run initially on social and digital media platforms, then later on traditional media channels to include billboards and banners, as well as through broadcast media. The campaign focuses on the following three areas:

Spotlighting VA's foundational services in the areas of rehabilitation, prosthetics, spinal cord injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, mental health, home loans, memorial services, women's health, etc., and how these services benefit Veterans. The foundational services focus area encourages Veterans to ChooseVA to meet their needs.

Attracting future employees, especially Veterans, who want to give back those who have served in the U.S. military. Potential employees are urged to ChooseVA as their next career move.

Retaining the "best and brightest" employees by leveraging industry best practices that acknowledge talent, external competitive forces and a work environment with improving infrastructure. Exceptional employees are inspired to ChooseVA.

"The ChooseVA campaign was developed to inform and demonstrate to Veterans, their families and our employees the foundational services that VA provides and how it benefits all our customers and stakeholders," said John "Wolf" Wagner, principal deputy assistant secretary for VA's Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, who is leading the initiative. "The campaign's focus on attracting future employees shows how they can serve their communities by caring for Veterans."

As of May 2018, VA's 386,630 employees included over 125,670 Veterans, representing 32.5 percent of the workforce.

"We invest a lot of time and money training our employees," Wagner said. "Coupled with the on-the-job experience that they gain over the years, retaining them is critical to VA's overall success, and the ChooseVA campaign helps us do just that."

SWEEPING VA REFORMS TO INCREASE PRIVATE CARE, EXPAND CAREGIVER BENEFITS APPROVED By Nikki Wentling

The Senate easily approved extensive reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs, extending benefits

to more veteran caregivers, averting a funding crisis and increasing veterans' access to private-sector health care.

After contentious negotiations that spanned more than a year, senators voted 92-5 to pass the VA Mission Act – a \$52 billion deal struck between Republicans and Democrats to boost funding for VA programs, as well as the agency's use of private doctors.

The bill went through multiple iterations and debate dragged on for months, at times dividing veterans groups and straining ties between lawmakers and the VA. The negotiations intensified infighting at the VA that, in part, led to former Secretary David Shulkin's ouster in March.

The legislation will now go to President Donald Trump for his signature. Trump is expected to sign the bill before Memorial Day, which is the deadline he imposed on Congress to pass it. Trump has posited it as the fulfillment of a pledge that he made during his presidential campaign to give veterans more autonomy over their health care

****WOMEN VETERANS****

SAVE THE DATE. 11.9.18. 5-7pm

VVA Women Veterans Committee
Hosting a Reception Celebrating
25th Anniversary of the
Vietnam Womens Memorial
at DAR O'Bryne Gallery
Washington, D.C.

Please contact Pattie Dumin
Vice Chair: pmdumin77@att.net
Information for all events for
25th Anniversary Of VNWM
Veterans Day Weekend
November 9-11, 2018 on:
vietnamwomensmemorial.org

Headquarters Hotel: Embassy Suites
1250 22nd Street NW,
Washington, D.C. Georgetown
Phone: 1-202-857-3388
Special group code: VWM





decisions.

“We finally dealt with the accessibility of health care for our veterans,” said Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee. “There’s not going to be any more cases of veterans dying because they can’t get an appointment. That’s the very least we owe our veterans.”

Changing Choice

In response to the 2014 VA wait-time scandal, Congress passed the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act, creating a program that allows veterans to receive private-sector health care and ease demand on VA services.

The Veterans Choice Program was implemented hastily, and many veterans thought the rules were too rigid. The program allows veterans to seek private-sector care only when they live more than 40 miles driving distance from a VA facility or it is estimated their wait for a VA appointment is more than 30 days.

Veterans, especially ones in rural areas far from VA clinics and hospitals, sought more flexibility.

“The Choice program was implemented quickly,” said Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the ranking Democrat on the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee. “It’s had a lot of hiccups. It’s time to move on to another program that’s simpler for veterans to use.”

The VA Mission Act upends the current program. Once the new rules are put into effect, veterans will be allowed into the private sector if they and their VA doctor agree it’s in their best interest. A host of issues could be taken into consideration when making that decision, including whether the veteran faces an “unusual or excessive burden to accessing a VA facility.”

The bill also introduces the possibility of veterans receiving access to the private sector if their closest VA is determined to be “deficient” compared to other nearby facilities.

In the instance the VA rejects a veteran’s request to go into the private sector, they could appeal it through the VA’s clinical appeals process.

“The Choice program has been a wreck,” Tester said. “What we’ve done, we’ve simplified it, cut the red tape, made the veteran the center of the decision-making. That’s the way it should be.”

The new program is expected to be implemented one year after the bill is enacted. In the meantime, the VA will continue to use the Choice program.

Congress allotted \$10 billion for the Choice program when they created it in 2014. The VA used up that money in 2017, and since then, it has faced a series of funding crises.

The program was expected to run out of money again as early as May 31, but the Mission Act includes another bailout – it authorizes \$5.2 billion for the program, expected to keep it going until next May.

Privatization fears

During negotiations about changes to the Choice program, many veterans organizations worried unfettered access to the private sector would erode VA resources and eventually dismantle the agency – an occurrence often referred to as “privatization.”

Shulkin blamed the fight over Choice for his dismissal

in March. He claimed White House insiders working at the VA aggressively sought to push veterans’ health care into the private sector and viewed him as an “obstacle to privatization.”

But major veterans organizations support the VA Mission Act, which they believe does enough to stymie a flow of veterans and dollars into the private sector.

Shulkin and five other former VA secretaries signed a statement of support for the bill.

“We believe this bipartisan legislation to be critical to [the VA’s] ability to effectively deliver on the needs of this generation’s veterans and the next,” Shulkin wrote, along with former secretaries Anthony Principi, Jim Nicholson, James Peake, Eric Shinseki and Robert McDonald, as well as former VA administrator Max Cleland.

However, there was still some resistance to the VA Mission Act in weeks leading up to the Senate vote.

The American Federation for Government Employees, a union that represents hundreds of thousands of VA employees, opposed the bill. AFGE claims it will “starve the VA for resources” and doesn’t do enough to demand the VA fill thousands of vacancies.

National Nurses United, the largest organization of registered nurses, alleged the bill masks a “corporate, far-right goal” of dismantling the VA.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., issued his statement of opposition before the vote Wednesday, expressing concerns the bill would lead continue a “slow, steady” privatization of the agency.

“My fear is that this bill will open the door to the draining, year after year, of much needed resources from the VA,” Sanders said in the prepared statement.

The bill gives the VA secretary broad authority to implement new regulations for the altered Choice program. The issue is expected to be a focus of the confirmation process for Robert Wilkie, who Trump announced last week was his pick to lead the VA on a permanent basis.

Garry Augustine, executive director of Disabled American Veterans, dismissed concerns about the Mission Act as misleading. He and 37 other veterans and military organizations signed onto a letter of support for the bill.

“Let me assure you, we would not be supporting this legislation if we weren’t convinced it would expand access to medical care for rural veterans and strengthen the VA health care system that we all support so strongly,” Augustine said.

Louis Celli, director of the American Legion, said he was confident the bill maintained the VA as the gatekeeper to private-sector health care – a key component he believes will prevent privatization and ensure veterans receive quality health care.

“This legislation went through several iterations, at least 20,” he said. “One of the driving factors the American Legion needed to see was that the VA is the gatekeeper, so the VA could make sure all decisions that are made are in the best interest of the veteran.”

Veteran Caregivers

For some veterans and their families, the Mission Act marks the end of a years long fight for VA benefits that they felt they were wrongfully denied.

Through a VA caregiver program implemented in 2010, benefits such as monthly stipends, health insurance,

medical training and access to home health aides are available to family caregivers for veterans – but only ones injured after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Caregivers for veterans injured before 9/11 viewed it as an unfair discrepancy. Augustine said it left thousands of deserving veterans and caregivers without VA support.

The VA Mission Act contains a gradual expansion of caregiver benefits to veterans injured before the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Under the bill, caregiver benefits would become immediately available to veterans injured before May 7, 1975. Two years after the bill is enacted, veterans injured between 1975 and 2001 would be eligible.

Other changes

A measure included in the Mission Act could change the physical size of the VA nationwide.

The bill would create an asset-review commission tasked with reviewing VA buildings and recommending which facilities to unload and where the VA should invest. Under the terms of the bill, the commission will conduct its work in 2022 and 2023.

Divesting old and under used facilities was one of Shulkin’s priorities for the department. Under his watch, the VA began the process last year of disposing of -- or finding another use for -- 430 vacant or nearly vacant buildings. Another 784 buildings were up for review.

There is a list of other provisions in the bill, including one to provide scholarships to medical students in return for 18 months of work at a VA facility. The VA will be required to post publicly a list of job vacancies and submit annual reports detailing the amounts of bonuses awarded to agency executives.

To offset some costs, the bill extends pension reductions for Medicaid-eligible veterans in nursing facilities and continues fees on VA-guaranteed home loans. The cuts were put in place in 2014 when the Choice program was first created. They were set to last until Sept. 30, 2024, but the Mission Act would move the end-date through Sept. 30, 2028.

Future funding fight

The House approved the bill May 16 by a 347-70 vote.

Tim Walz, D-Minn., the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and a key negotiator on the Mission Act, voted against it. He worried it would create funding troubles for the VA next year and in the long term. The increased spending for the bill could trigger potential cuts when budget caps are reinstated, Walz said. He also worried those cuts would come from other VA programs.

“I agree these reforms are needed, and I agree these programs were debated in a logical, fair and open manner. We got much of what needed to be done in this,” he said. “But I’m suggesting we budget honestly in this so we don’t reach a nightmare scenario.”

Some Senate Democrats didn’t have the same qualms. Tester called it a minor issue that he thinks can easily be resolved.

“We can work through this...There’s nobody up here who wants to short-change any other program on behalf of veterans,” he said.

The White House Office of Management and Budget issued a statement May 15 stating Trump would sign the bill if Congress approved it. It was uncertain Wednesday afternoon when the signing would take place.

The full title of the bill is the John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka, and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Networks Act of 2018. It’s named for Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Rep. Samuel Johnson, R-Texas, both of whom were prisoners of war in Vietnam, as well as Daniel Akaka, a World War II veteran and former Democratic senator from Hawaii who died in April.

Wentling.nikki@stripes.com

Twitter: @nikkiwentling

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE NOTES

House Veterans Affairs Committee passes VVA top legislative priorities H.R. 299 Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act and language in H.R. 5674 VA Mission Care Act extending caregiver benefits to pre-911 veterans

Veterans Affairs’ Committee Passes VA MISSION Act, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, 14 Other Bills

Chairman Phil Roe, M.D. (R-Tenn.) released the following statement after the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs passed 16 bills out of committee, including the VA MISSION Act and the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, and assigned Rep. Conor Lamb (D-Pa.) to the Subcommittees on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Oversight and Investigations:

“Today, the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs doubled down on our promise to build a stronger VA for our nation’s heroes and ensure veterans are receiving the care and benefits they deserve by passing the VA MISSION Act, bipartisan, bicameral legislation supported by leading veterans service organizations, VA and the White House. This is a transformational, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reform VA, and I am so proud of the strong support this bill received in today’s markup. President Trump has called on Congress to pass this bill before Memorial Day, and today’s vote gets us one step closer to the president’s desk. I’d also like to thank Senators Isakson and Tester for their hard work throughout this process and Ranking Member Walz for his constructive feedback.

“We owe it to the brave veterans who served in the Vietnam War to provide benefits for conditions they may have developed because of exposure to Agent Orange. I’m also proud of our work today to send the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act to the full House, and I’m grateful for Rep. Valadao’s continued leadership on this important legislation.

“Finally, I’d also like to welcome Rep. Conor Lamb to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. Rep. Lamb serves in the Marine Corps Reserves, and I know America’s veterans will benefit from his service on this committee.”

The following bills were passed out of committee:

- H.R. 299: The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017
- H.R. 5674: The Department of Veterans Affairs Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks “MISSION” Act
- H.R. 1972: The VA Billing Accountability Act
- H.R. 2147: The Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act
- H.R. 3642: Military Sexual Assault Victims Empowerment (SAVE) Act
- H.R. 3832: The Veterans Opioid Abuse Prevention Act
- H.R. 4635: To direct the secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors providing counseling for women veterans
- H.R. 5520: The Veterans Affairs Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2018
- H.R. 4245: The Veterans’ Electronic Health Record Modernization Oversight Act of 2017
- HR 4334: The Improving Oversight of Women Veterans’ Care Act of 2017
- H.R. 4451: The Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2017
- H.R. 4830: The Servicemembers Improved Transition through Reforms for Ensuring Progress (SIT-REP) Act
- H.R. 4958: The Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018
- H.R. 5044: The Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act
- H.R. 5215: The Veterans Affairs Purchase Card Misuse Mitigation Act
- H.R. 5418: The Veterans Affairs Medical-Surgical Purchasing Stabilization Act

Source: <https://veterans.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2158>

VIETNAM

EFFECTS OF VIETNAM WAR LINGER FOR ONE

VETERAN

By Dave Sutor

Gary Hechler was a young man studying and playing basketball at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown.

Then, suddenly, he was drafted into the Army and sent to fight in Vietnam where he spent most of 1968.

Personally experiencing combat as the crew chief on a Huey helicopter changed Hechler’s life. Meanwhile, back at home, the nation was going through a historic and controversial year that included riots in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Kansas City and other big cities, protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago and assassinations of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy.

“The time in Vietnam was a trying time for all of us and not just because of the unrest that was back at home,” said Hechler.

“It was a truly unique experience, especially for the people that were not career military people. Combat is a terrible thing. But it can be exhilarating at times, especially for the fliers. I tell people that I wouldn’t take a million dollars to do it again, but I wouldn’t give you a million dollars for the experience either.”

Vietnam removed Hechler’s “rose-colored glasses.”

He arrived in Vietnam during September 1967 and worked in maintenance until the Tet Offensive — a coordinated series of attacks carried out by the North Vietnamese — began in January 1968.

Hechler then served as a crew chief until leaving in October 1968, a time during which he witnessed injury and death during “terrifying” combat assaults.

“I was fortunate I was never wounded, but I had every position on my ship at one time or another wounded,” Hechler said. “I was shot down three times. It’s hard to describe the terror. But the training kicks in and you react.”

He continued: “I think the worst was retrieving the KIAs from the field and taking them back to the airfields for deposition. Some of them had been out in the field for days, so they were very well decomposed in that heat and humidity. It was a terrible thing to have to pick the pieces up and carry them in.”

When Hechler returned to the United States, he found a divided nation in which veterans did not receive heroes’ welcomes as they did in the past for World War II and other military conflicts.

“First of all, me, specifically, I was very confused,” Hechler said. “I didn’t understand why they were targeting me, instead of the politicians. I was still of the opinion that the war was just. I’ve since changed my mind. But, back then, I still felt that I’d done the right thing.

“Well — to this day — I still think that I did the right thing, but I think the government was wrong in the way they handled the war.”

Hechler, who returned to his studies at UPJ and eventually graduated from Pitt’s main campus, said he “got in a scrape or two” with anti-war protestors and “deeply resented” draft dodgers who went to Canada and later got pardons from President Jimmy Carter.

Vietnam still affects Hechler’s outlook on life. After learning, years later, how former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara felt, in retrospect, his effort in leading the war was “wrong, terribly wrong,” Hechler was left with the feeling that “we were really sacrificed for basically nothing.”

At 71, Hechler, a retired computer programmer, lives in a rural residence that is about 3.5 miles from his mailbox, calling his decision to live away from people a “product of Vietnam.”

When seeing military personnel getting joyous receptions after fighting wars in the Middle East, Hechler has felt “proud of the job that our troops did over there, but I was a little resentful of the welcome homes they got, compared to what happened to us. I probably shouldn’t be that way, but I thought we were treated grossly unfairly.”

He attended the Vietnam Veterans Recognition Ceremony held at the Cambria County War Memorial Arena in 2015.

“I think we earned the right to have that. ... All of us were saying, ‘Yeah, this is fine, except it’s 50 years, too late.’ But, yeah, it was gratifying,” he said.

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TWO VIETNAMS: KEN BURNS’ & OURS

By Ed Bergin & Dan Daly

U.S. Navy Swift boats, like PCF-76 shown here, operated independently and quite effectively shut down the coastline of South Vietnam to smuggling from North Vietnam and China.

As expected, Mr. Burns’ latest effort “Vietnam” does a creditable job as a documentary. He covers the political incompetence and misdeeds that were well known to many of us. The competence of the North Vietnamese senior military personnel most likely came as a surprise to most viewers. What is regretful is his relatively flat and neutral portrayal of U.S. troops. According to his telling, there were few U.S. victories, the troops were all dissatisfied, and from a humanitarian standpoint they did little.

For whatever reason, the discussion of the successful Market Time mission received less than two minutes of attention by Mr. Burns. We know something about this first-hand.

In his Episode Four 1967 & 1968, “Resolve,” Mr. Burns describes how the U.S. Navy effectively shut down the coastline of South Vietnam to the smuggling and the transport of weapons and troops from North Vietnam and China. Clear and simple evidence that Market Time was a well-defined victory and a tremendous success is the fact that the Ho Chi Minh Trail was then expanded and became the primary source of troop and weapons transport from North Vietnam. This Trail was more than 1,000 miles long and wound through the dense jungles of Laos and Cambodia. The nighttime methods of portage were both

human and motorized vehicles. They were subject to continuous bombardment from aircraft. Constant repairs and detours were required, and much of the work was done by hand. Certainly, transport by water and ships would have been far simpler and more efficient were it not for the effectiveness of Market Time.

With the commencement in the fall of 1965 of Market Time, larger U.S. Navy ships and the Coast Guard provided offshore barriers supported by reconnaissance aircraft. Often detection would commence off the coast of China or North Vietnam. Contacts could be lost on the transit south because of foul weather or deception when the vessels appeared to be innocent cargo transports. The process was an all-hands, joint-service effort. The last segment of the enemy’s voyage was a rapid 90 degrees turn to the west, then a non-stop, full-speed sprint to the coast of South Vietnam. On shore were the enemy troops (Viet Cong or North Vietnam well-armed soldiers) waited to rapidly unload the cargo.

Vessels like this one smuggled weapons and supplies from North Vietnam to South Vietnam during the war, until U.S. Navy and Coast Guard forces began interdicting



them in Operation Market Time.

Intercepting those vessels that were able to penetrate that screen were the U.S. Navy Swift boats. They were the last line of defense of Market Time. The Swifts conducted



daily patrols along the shoreline, usually 100 to 500 yards off the beach and also maintained a presence in the river mouths. As a result, the enemy’s transport of weapons by sea, which had been both efficient and effective, was now denied to them. The message to the enemy was a simple one: “You can try, but you probably won’t succeed.”

The Swift boat program encompassed approximately 130 small high-speed 50 foot aluminum boats. Originally, the boats were designed to service offshore oil rigs. They were available and purchased off-the-shelf by the U.S. Navy. Grey paint was the major modification. There was the addition of significant armament, three 50-caliber machine guns and an 81-mm. mortar. The boats were quarter-inch aluminum, and there was no armor plating.

The crews (one “officer-in-charge” and five enlisted professionals) were the most important component of the program. Throughout the program the majority of the men who served were volunteers. Over a five-year period approximately 3,500 men went to battle in Swifts. Their average age was about 23. They conducted more than 130 patrols during their 12 months in country. The program was a new mission for the Navy, and therefore there was minimal top-down oversight. The result was on-site situational leadership where a crew of six was often responsible for carrying out a life-and-death mission in a demanding combat environment. Most patrols were 30 hours, and boredom could turn into a deadly fire fight in a matter of seconds. Brutal weather could arrive with little warning, and the monsoon could build seas beyond 15 feet. Finally, there were no heroes only young men committed to the mission, proud of their service then as well as today.

Frequently our missions were humanitarian in nature bringing medical personnel and supplies to Vietnamese who badly needed them. Fresh food and fruit were often our cargo. In sharp contrast, we also provided gunfire support for Marine detachments living in small villages protecting the Vietnamese. We also evacuated entire

villages of people before they were destroyed by the enemy.

While these additional tasks were not an official part of Market Time, the Swift crews’ operations were successful and easily documented. Still, Mr. Burns gives scant coverage to these ops. The men in Swift boats were not unique. Their dedication, their humanity, and their service to country existed in every branch of the service in Vietnam. We were the skippers of PCF-79 and PCF-76 in 1967 in 1968. We were blessed with crews made up of people who remain today some of the finest men we have ever met.

“Politicians make war. Soldiers merely carry out orders.” Perhaps it is time for someone such as Mr. Burns to lead a charge that says to these brave men and brave women, Vietnam veterans, “Welcome Home.”

VETERANS FIGHT TO GET RARE FORM OF CANCER COVERED BY VA

by Allen Martin and Abigail Sterling

It took decades for the Veterans Administration to acknowledge the connection between Agent Orange and the illnesses of hundreds of Vietnam veterans. Now some vets are fighting to get help for another deadly killer that they believe is connected to their years of service.

Michael Baughman made it home safe from Vietnam. But five decades later, the war is killing him.

He suffers from a rare form of cancer that he believes was caused by fish he ate when his troop ran out of rations in rugged mountain terrain near the demilitarized zone.

“Before the helicopter could come in and drop the food, we would just go down to the local watering hole. They had these little smaller hand grenades and we would throw those into the river and then dive down and get the fish off the bottom,” said Baughman.

ALSO READ: Veteran’s Photos Of Dirty VA Clinic Room Go Viral, Prompt Apology

But in the military, they don’t hand out cookware.

“I remember it like it was yesterday: trying to get a skewer, get it scaled. And there were some fuel tabs to actually do the cooking. But it never really fully cooked,” he said.

The cancer, called Cholangiocarcinoma, or cancer of the bile duct, goes undetected for decades, making it often incurable by the time it’s diagnosed.

“These are rare cancers,” said Dr. Kate Kelley, an oncologist at UCSF Medical Center and an expert on the disease.

Fluke Parasite

She says its causes are still unknown, but there are clear risk factors, including a parasite called a fluke that infects fresh water fish in Southeast Asia.

“When people eat raw fish, the fluke can then infest our own livers and cause an infection, which generally is cleared over time, but results in another cycle of inflammation that can lead to mutations that result in cancer,” said Dr. Kelley.

“That’s the only thing it could be,” said Baughman. But when he applied for disability benefits, the VA wouldn’t believe him.

“We don’t think its related,” he says they told him.

Three times his claim was denied. The stated cause: “There is no evidence that this condition is associated with herbicide exposure.”

In other words, it’s not Agent Orange, so you’re not covered.

“There any help from them. Their job is to give you the denial, keep the numbers down,” said Baughman.

Other veterans are going through the same thing. From 2013 through 2017, the VA received 240 disability claims for Cholangiocarcinoma. Only 57 — or about 23 percent — were granted.

As a result of all the claims, the VA conducted a pilot study published late last year that confirmed for the first time “evidence of exposure to the liver fluke parasites in U.S. soldiers during their service in the Vietnam war.”

But in an e-mail, a VA spokesperson told KPIX 5, “a larger study would be needed to establish a link.”

In Michael’s case, his personal doctor came to the rescue.

“We realized in speaking to him, he has a history of actually being out in combat,” said Dr. Philip Yee.

For Dr. Yee, the connection was obvious.

“It’s not chance that he has the most rare tumor! There is a really good possibility that he was exposed,” said Dr. Yee.

Dr. Yee sent a letter to the VA stating the connection was “more likely than not.” That did the trick with the

Veterans Administration.

Last year, three years after his first diagnosis, the VA finally approved Baughman’s disability claim.

But he can’t forget the hundreds of other fellow soldiers still waiting for relief, and the hundreds more who don’t even know they have the disease.

“Let’s get the veterans aware that there is an issue. That is why we are here. That is why we are talking,” Baughman said.

The VA says about 700 patients with Baughman’s kind of cancer have passed through the agency’s medical system in the last 15 years. But fewer than half the vets submitted claims, because they didn’t know there could be a possible link to their service.

THE VA IS WORKING JUST FINE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH

By Andrew J. Cohen May

Andrew J. Cohen is former chief of nephrology at the Providence VA Medical Center, where he continues to practice, and a professor of medicine at Brown University’s Alpert Medical School.

“A government-run, single-payer, bureaucratic health-care system that doesn’t work.” That’s how Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) described the Department of Veterans Affairs on “Meet the Press.”

Johnson’s remarks are typical of Republicans in Congress, who have made no secret of their intention to privatize the department. President Trump’s firing of Veterans Affairs Secretary David J. Shulkin constitutes the latest Republican assault on the agency. Shulkin’s poor judgment regarding his well-publicized trip to Europe would not have provided sufficient cause for firing were it not for his well-known opposition to the privatization of VA services. Remember Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin’s use of government aircraft or EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt’s need to fly first class?

What is clear is that the dismantling of VA is desirable to Republicans because of what it represents: a successful, publicly funded, integrated health-care system.

Yes, I said successful.

Sure, VA suffers from a bloated bureaucracy. Delays in getting appointments with primary-care providers have been subjected to considerable scrutiny. But doctor shortages plague U.S. health care as a whole. Just ask anyone who is seeking a new primary-care physician.

VA provides much-needed care to a complex, chronically ill and largely elderly population. The abundance of published, peer-reviewed data indicates that VA care is comparable or, in many cases, superior to that in the private sector. An independent assessment of VA by the consulting firms of Grant Thornton and McKinsey & Company along with the Rand and Mitre corporations found that, compared with private-sector care:

- VA post-operative complications were lower.
- VA inpatient care was more or as effective.
- VA hospitals were more likely to follow best practices for prevention of catheter-related infections.
- VA mortality rates decline more rapidly for some conditions.
- Veterans in nursing homes were less likely to develop pressure sores.
- VA outpatients received better follow-up care, better mental health and obesity counseling, and better blood-pressure control.
- Elderly VA patients were less likely to receive medications that could make them sicker.

For more than 40 years, I have practiced as a kidney specialist, largely in the world of private insurance and Medicare. Ten years ago, as part of my employment in a Brown University medical school-affiliated practice, I became section chief of nephrology at the Providence VA Medical Center. Having worked in both worlds, I can say with full confidence that the care of veterans with complex medical conditions, such as chronic kidney disease, in VA facilities is generally far superior to that of private health care. That’s because VA coordinates care among many needed providers via its system wide electronic medical record and at a lower cost. Collaborative care, coupled with lower drug costs (unlike Medicare, VA negotiates drug prices with pharmaceutical companies), makes VA highly cost-effective.

And VA circumvents profit-driven decision-making, which permeates the U.S. health-care system. Recent research in the Journal of the American Medical Association illustrates this well: A study looked at more than 11,000 veterans with kidney failure age 67 or older receiving kidney care through either VA or Medicare providers. While those treated by Medicare physicians were more likely to be started on dialysis, regardless of

coexisting conditions such as dementia or metastatic cancer, two-year mortality was substantially lower in those treated in VA facilities, despite an equivalent severity of illness.

This study confirms my personal observations over many years. In the private sector, kidney specialists are more likely to expedite dialysis in sick, elderly patients despite the absence of clear benefit. This is because transferring patients to dialysis is both easier and more lucrative for kidney specialists. The JAMA study demonstrates what many fighting for “right care” — avoiding potentially toxic drugs and unnecessary tests and procedures — have long understood: Contrary to unsubstantiated claims, VA provides clinically appropriate and often superior care.

Republicans don’t want you to know about this. Why? Because VA represents something they fear: a single-payer health-care system that works.

VIETNAM WAR VETERINARIANS

During the Vietnam War, American soldiers relied on working military dogs for a variety of crucial tasks. They could alert a soldier to an enemy presence or detect explosives, trip-wires and land mines. It is estimated that 10,000 lives were saved by more than 4,000 military working dogs in Vietnam.

Capt. Jack H. Crawford, veterinarian, 245th Med Det (Vet), examines a dog's teeth at the pet clinic of the



245th Med Det (Vet) which provides veterinary care and treatment for animals and pets belonging to US government personnel.

These hard-working military war dog required specialty care, and soldiers who were trained veterinarians were the ones to offer it. Vietnam veterinarians provided everything from emergency care to everyday exams and treatment of disease and heat exhaustion. Veterinarian care was essential to keep both soldiers and animals healthy.

Military dogs were not the only animals cared for by Vietnam veterinarians. They often cared for sick animals like unit mascot dogs and adopted pets.

Vietnam veterinarians also participated in a civic project that provided care for animals that belonged to the local Vietnamese people. Captain Harold Lupton, a military veterinarian with the 175th Veterinary Detachment, recalled patching up an injured water buffalo that belonged to a local villager. “First they’ll bring in a dog for treatment. If that goes all right, they’ll bring in their pig. Last week we had a guy in here with 25 chickens to be examined,” Lupton said. Vietnam veterinarians set up hospitals and clinics in locations across Vietnam.

Vietnam veterinarians earned praise and commendations for their exemplary work in Vietnam.

We salute the veterinarians who worked hard to care for our working military dogs and other animals.

WALL OF FACES

On the next page is an updated list for Monday, 08/06/18. There were 2 names removed from the California list of missing photos provided on 07/30/18. Today the nationwide total number of missing photos stands at 2218, a decrease of 46 names from last week.

There are now 260 California names without photos according to the VVMF Wall of Faces website. There were 430 California names without photos when CSC started this project. Today’s number is a 39.5 percent decrease from our October 2017 start.

Please let me know if you locate photos for any of the names on the list. This is the only way that we can document the value of this project and CSC’s success.

REMINDER: We are ONLY looking for photos of

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund - Wall of Faces
California Missing Photos – August 06, 2018 – TOTALS

California Service Members listed on Vietnam Memorial	5575
California Service Members listed with photos	5315
California Service Members listed without photos	260 - 2
Note: California Service Members listed as MIA	162
All Service Members listed as MIA	1571
California Service Members – Home of Record	76 Cities or Communities
Alameda County	16 - Missing Photos
Contra Costa County	7 - Missing Photos
Los Angeles County	173 - Missing Photos - 1 117 Los Angeles City
Orange County	19 - Missing Photos
San Diego County	8 - Missing Photos
San Francisco County	19 - Missing Photos - 1
San Joaquin County	4 - Missing Photos
San Mateo County	5 - Missing Photos
Santa Clara County	8 - Missing Photos
Total	260 - Missing Photos - 2
Wall of Faces Website	– http://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/
Wall of Faces Website Search	– http://www.vvmf.org/Wall-of-Faces/search/results
Wall of Faces Website Submit Photo	– http://www.vvmf.org/how-to-submit

California Missing Photos – Comparison to other States/Territories
States/Territories with over 100 missing photos

Total Missing Photos Nationwide – 2218 - 46

Location	Missing Photos	Change	Total Casualties	Percent Missing
California	260	- 2	5575	4.7
New York	616	- 5	4126	14.9
Illinois	138	- 7	2938	4.7
Michigan	130	- 1	2666	4.9
Georgia	236	- 11	1585	14.9
Virginia	151	0	1306	11.6
Alabama	161	- 6	1210	13.3
Puerto Rico	190	- 1	347	54.8

those listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Please do NOT submit photos of living veterans.
Thanks
Mike Kennedy
Vice President
Chapter 47, Inland Empire
Vietnam Veteran of America
mike3sps@verizon.net
“Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another”

VA WEST LA MASTER PLAN
UNDER ATTACK

Right when VA gets serious about building homeless veteran housing at VA West LA, the master plan comes under attack.
The Brentwood Homeowners Association is attempting to obstruct homeless veteran housing at the VA West LA campus. After VA proposed a strategy to speed up delivery of housing on campus, the group of homeowners is calling the approach “unconscionable” and wants VA to slow down.
What’s unconscionable is that Los Angeles continues to be the nation’s capital of homeless veterans with nearly 5,000 of our brothers and sisters sleeping on the streets every single night. What’s unconscionable is that there are 388 acres of mostly empty land at the VA West LA campus that was donated in order to permanently maintain a Soldiers Home.
The VA is seeking community input regarding a proposal to expedite master plan implementation and obtain a private sector affordable housing developer “to finance, design, construct, renovate and maintain” at least 900 additional homes for veterans currently without

refuge.
You’ve heard from the Brentwood Homeowners Association. Now it’s your turn.

LEGENDARY ‘FULL METAL
JACKET’ ACTOR
DIES SUDDENLY
AT AGE 74
By K. Brooks

Best known for his role in “Full Metal Jacket,” news of R. Lee Ermey’s passing came as a shock to fans across on Sunday, April 15.
He was only 74 years of age. The news was released by his manager, Bill Rogin.
Ermey was famous for playing military personalities in movies and television, but for him, it wasn’t just acting.
He was also a former Marine Corps drill instructor, retiring after 11 years of service.
Besides “Full Metal Jacket,” his other acting credits include “Mississippi Burning,” “Prefontaine,” and the remake of “The Texas Chainsaw Massacre.”
He also voiced the Army green soldier from “Toy Story”

and had voiced roles in “SpongeBob SquarePants.”
In a statement posted on Facebook, Rogin said Ermey passed away from complications from pneumonia.
“It is a terrible loss that nobody was prepared for,” wrote Rogin. “He has meant so much to so many people.”
“And, it is extremely difficult to truly quantify all of the great things this man has selflessly done for, and on behalf of, our many men and women in uniform.”
“He has also contributed many iconic and indelible characters on film that will live on forever,” wrote Rogin.
He ended the heartfelt statement with, “Semper Fi, Gunny. Godspeed.”
Our thoughts are with his family during this difficult time.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Inside of all of us older than fifty—there’s a 20 year old wondering, “What they heck happened?”
We got older and that’s better than not having this opportunity. AND, the really great secret that aging allows us to understand —which is at the root of our disbelief about our age— is that we really haven’t changed that much in our 50, 60, 70 or 80+ years and still retain much of our 20 year old selves. Of course our bodies change, but the essence of who we are, our spirit, doesn’t change that much.
Yes we get knocked around and build back up. We cry a little and hopefully laugh a lot more. We sometimes stay and other times move on. It’s the continuum of life. The time flies by everyday when we’re not even noticing (unless we’re sitting in traffic or late for a meeting).
We got older. Now lots of old people don’t get wise with age...but aging is a catalyst in the process of accruing greater wisdom along with appreciation for others, life in general and a more spontaneous, childlike sense of fun.
So for those wondering, how do I accept aging? Or more importantly how do we ignore any negative thoughts we might have about age? By reminding ourselves we are still the very same person that we always were. Think of it this way...we’re not getting older...we’re becoming classics!
Don't stop looking forward & living your life... and while you're at it? Forget your age.





A PERFECT FILM AT THE PERFECT TIME...
By Colonel Bill Fortier, US Army, Retired

...That is how Richard Jellerson of Storyteller Original Films, a former Vietnam helicopter pilot and filmmaker, refers to his heartfelt work of love that took four years to complete.

It is a perfect film and it is at a perfect time because presentation of his film, A Solemn Promise, America’s Missing in Action comes at a time when North Korea has just released 55 boxes carrying the remains of Americans who died as a result of the Korean War. The film is also “just in time” to honor America’s fallen warriors who are still missing and unaccounted for on America’s National POW/MIA Recognition Day (Sep 21, 2018).

The concept for the film began eight years ago when Richard and fellow Vietnam helicopter pilot, Tom Lasser, discussed the fact that, had either of them gone down in Vietnam and still be missing and unaccounted for, America would still be conducting searches to locate their remains. That fact was fascinating to Richard, and it became the seed, which developed into a four-year project to produce A Solemn Promise.

The film tells about America’s ongoing worldwide efforts to locate, identify and return each of America’s fallen warriors to their families for burial with full military honors. The film was produced primarily from his personal funds, although AUSA and American Legion Post 43 in Hollywood, California provided some assistance along the way.

The film will be premiered in California and Georgia for National POW/MIA Recognition Day, Sep 21, 2018. In California it will show at the Palm Springs Air Museum and in Georgia at the Central Georgia Technical College in Warner Robbins, Georgia at The Ride Home, a major POW and MIA Families 3-day event that is held annually.

- For more information about the two events for Sep 21st:
- Palm Springs Air Museum <https://palmspringsairmuseum.org>
 - The Ride Home <http://www.theridehome.com/itinerary-2018.html>
- For more information about the film, A Solemn Promise:
- Screen Storyteller Original Films at storytellerfilms.tv
 - Richard Jellerson: (626) 355-0260, Email richard@storytellerfilms.tv



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

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In this issue:

- Chapter/Council Activities-Events/Photos
- Legislative News
- Veteran Info

And more...

CSC Meeting Dates & Events

August 24-26, 2018, Fresno, CA
October 26-28, 2018, Fresno, CA

Zephyr deadlines 5 weeks prior to each CSC meeting