



# The California Zephyr



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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I want to say how sorry I am for the residents of Paradise, CA and the surrounding area for what they have had to endure last November. I can't imagine what we would do if we lost everything we had.

It has been estimated that there are around 3,000 veterans living in and around Paradise and the majority of them lost everything they have.

I am very proud of how all the California VVA chapters have come to the aid of those in Paradise. Just a day after the fire started I was flooded with e-mails, text and phone calls from VVA members asking what they could do to help those in need. Chapters were calling Butch Frederickson asking him what they needed. One of Butch's AVVA members, Corena Dixon, took on the task of collecting all donations and making sure the veterans in the area that needed help received that assistance. Not only did Corena opened her house to displaced veterans, she even took in stray dogs to keep them safe. Corena said the best thing to do was to send gift cards that way she would have something to hand out to veteran in need and the gift card could be used anywhere.

Chapters all over the state started donating immediately, sending gift cards to Corena. One of our VVA members thought they would need porta-potties so another VVA member made that happen and had two porta-potties delivered to fire ravaged area. The CSC donated gift cards. National VVA gave CSC a donation from their Disaster Relief Fund for us to use as we see needed. All of the money will go to the assist the veterans in the Paradise area. I had a call from John Weiss, a VVA member from Rhode Island, asking what they could do to help. Arizona State Council President Gene Crego called letting me know they were sending aid to the area.

What we need to remember is once the news reporters stop reporting on the fire damage and leave Paradise, the people of the Paradise area will still be needing assistance. The veterans who are homeless and have no cloths will still be homeless and will still be needing assistance. We need to continue helping for as long as they need the help.

Last year Santa Rosa and Ventura. This year Paradise and Malibu, where will it be next year? Who will need the assistance then? It is good to know that wherever is needed, VVA and its members will be there to assist.

Thank you Everyone.

Steve

## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

By Seth Reeb

### 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CA VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

The ceremony for the 30th Anniversary of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial including the adding of three names to the memorial was held on October 13 in Sacramento in Capitol Park. Nearly 200 people attended this incredible, inspiring and healing two-day event at the State Capitol Park and VFW Post 67 of Sacramento.

Post 67 hosted a reception on October 12th, the night before, and a luncheon the day of the event. There was a live DJ, art work, Sacramento Kings representative's, historical and factual books relating to Vietnam and the military as well as a raffle. A 30th challenge coin, woman's Vietnam Veteran coin and book with the 30 years of history of the memorial, Vietnam war along with posters were available during the ceremony and at the luncheon. VVA 500 played a key role in the success of the event and hosted a booth with information for veterans and their family members.

### NEWLY ELECTED LEGISLATORS

The 2018 general election has concluded. Beginning in 2019, California will have a new Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer, Insurance Commissioner, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and two new State Supreme Court Justices. Gavin Newsom will be the new governor in 2019, for the first time in over 100 years a democratic Governor is proceeding another democratic Governor. New legislators are replacing those who have termed out, moved on to other offices, 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 new legislators (As of November 20 some close races are still being tabulated). VVA-CSC members should try to meet these legislators in their district office and at the All Veterans Capitol Day event held at the state capitol in 2019 (Date to TBD).

### STATE SENATE NEW LEGISLATORS

Andreas Borgeas (SD-8)

Representing the cities of: Clovis, Fresno, Modesto, Turlock.

Anna Caballero (SD-8)

Representing the cities of: Atwater, Ceres, Chowchilla, Coalinga, Hollister, King City, Los Banos, Madera, Merced, Modesto, Patterson, Salinas, Soledad

• She formerly served in the State Assembly from 2006-2010.

Melissa Hurtado (SD-14)

Representing the cities of: Arvin, Delano, Dinuba, Fresno, Hanford, Porterville, Wasco.

Shannon Grove (SD-16)

Representing the cities of: Bakersfield, Caliente, Edwards, Ridgecrest, Visalia.

• She formerly served in State Assembly from 2010-2016 and is a U.S. Army veteran.

Susan Rubio (SD-22)

Representing the cities of: Alhambra, Arcadia, Azusa, Baldwin Park, Covina, El Monte, La Puente, Monterey Park, Rosemead, West Covina.

Maria Elena Durazo (SD-24)

Representing the cities of: Los Angeles.

Bob J. Archuleta (SD-32)

Representing the cities of: Artesia, Bellflower, Buena Park, Cerritos, Commerce, Downey, Hacienda Heights, La Habra Heights, La Mirada, Lakewood, Montebello, Norwalk, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, South Whittier, Whittier.

• He is a U.S Army Veteran.

Tom Umberg (SD-34)

Representing the cities of: Anaheim, Buena Park, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Santa Ana, Stanton, Westminster

• He formerly served in the State Assembly from 1990-1994 then from 2004-2006 and he is a U.S. Army Veteran.

Brian W. Jones (SD-38)

Representing the cities of: Alpine, El Cajon, Escondido, Fallbrook, La Mesa, Poway, Rancho Santa Fe, Santee, San Marcos.

• He formerly served in the State Assembly from 2010-2016.

### STATE ASSEMBLY NEW LEGISLATORS

Buffy Wicks (AD-15)

Representing the cities of: Berkeley, El Cerrito, Emeryville, Oakland, Pinole, Richmond, San Pablo.

Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (AD-16)

Representing the cities of: Alamo, Danville, Dublin, Lafayette, Livermore, Moraga, Orinda, Pleasanton, San Ramon, Walnut Creek.

Robert Rivas (AD-30)

Representing the cities of: Gilroy, Hollister, Morgan Hills, Salinas, Soledad, Watsonville.

Christy Smith (AD-38)

Representing the cities of: Canyon Country, Castaic, Chatsworth, Northridge, Santa Clarita, Simi Valley.

Luz Maria Rivas (AD-39)

Representing the cities of: North Hollywood, Pacoima, San Fernando, Sunland-Tujunga, Sun Valley, Sylmar.

James C. Ramos (AD-40)

Representing the cities of: Highland, Loma Linda, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, San Bernardino.

Jesse Gabriel (AD-45)

Representing the cities of: Calabasas, Canoga Park, Chatsworth, Encino, Los Angeles, Northridge, West Hills, Winnetka, Woodland Hills.

Tyler Diep (AD-72)

Representing the cities of: Fountain Valley, Garden Grove, Los Alamitos, Seal Beach, Westminster.

Cottie Petrie-Norris (AD-74)

Representing the cities of: Costa Mesa, Huntington Beach, Irvine, Laguna Beach, Lunga Woods, Newport Beach

Tasha Boerner Horvath (AD-76) Representing the cities of: Camp Pendleton, Carlsbad, Encinitas, Oceanside, Vista.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Dean Gotham

Chair, Government Affairs

deang1968@gmail.com

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.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml>

## BAKERFIELD COLLEGE'S VETERANS RESOURCE

### CENTER NAMED FOR LONGTIME VETERANS ADVOCATE VERNON VALENZUELA

By Steven Mayer

His life ended in 2012, but friends and admirers say Vernon Valenzuela's legacy lives on.

The Kern Community College District Board of Trustees voted unanimously Thursday, after an impassioned request by three advocates, to approve the naming of a planned veterans center at Bakersfield College in honor of the longtime advocate and supporter of those who served in the nation's military.

Air Force veteran Randall Dickow, a local attorney and longtime friend of Valenzuela, was one of





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Bakersfield College Vernon Valenzuela  
Veterans Resource Center

those who spoke in favor of naming the building the Vernon Valenzuela Veterans Resource Center.

"There is no person more deserving of this honor than Vernon, who always placed service over self," Dickow told the board at the meeting held in Porterville attended by about 30 people.

According to Dickow and Paul Beckworth, faculty director of veterans services at BC, the meeting was extraordinary for its passion and outpouring of feeling.

"It was one of the most emotional days of my career," Beckworth said. One of the trustees, former

Bakersfield Congressman Bill Thomas, was friends with Valenzuela when the young Vietnam veteran was a student at BC and Thomas was an instructor.

"He recalled Vernon coming to BC as a student and Vernon's passion for getting things done," Beckworth said of Thomas' remarks. "Very powerful stuff."

"He was a little choked up. We all were."

Dickow also met Valenzuela for the first



time at BC, when they were members of the Associated Veteran Students. Valenzuela had joined the Marines in 1966 and returned home from Vietnam in the late 1960s after being wounded in combat.

The young man's experiences had awakened in him a deep concern for the many veterans who struggled after coming home. He would go on to earn a degree in counseling, which he used in his lifelong pursuit to help and advocate for the rights of veterans, especially those who suffered from PTSD, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Valenzuela became active at the state and national level with the Vietnam Veterans of America and other veterans organizations. He lobbied in the nation's capital for veterans benefits and for the recognition of the Vietnam-era defoliant Agent Orange as a cause of grave illness in veterans who were exposed to it. He even returned with a recovery team to Vietnam to bring home the remains of U.S. servicemen.

Jenny Frank also spoke at Thursday's meeting. The veterans advocate has worked since the beginning at the Bakersfield Vet Center, the veterans support organization Valenzuela was instrumental in founding in 2009.

No one, she told The Californian not long after her friend's passing, has done more for military veterans in Kern County and across the country.

Many in the veteran community considered Valenzuela the godfather of veterans' causes, she said.

The resource center, which is slated to be opened in November 2019, isn't the first structure named in Valenzuela's honor. In 2013, a section of Golden State Highway — from F Street to Q Street — was designated "Vernon P. Valenzuela Memorial Highway."

It's been six years since Valenzuela's death, but his story is not over, Beckworth said.

"One of our veteran education advisers at BC, Armando Trujillo, was mentored by Vernon," he said. "Now Armando mentors the next generation of vets."

"Vernon is still with us," Beckworth said. "His legacy lives on."

APPEALS MODERNIZATION ACT

On August 23, 2017, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 was signed into law. The new law takes effect in February 2019. It creates a new decision review process, which features three lanes: Higher-Level Review – An entirely new review of the claim by an experienced adjudicator. Supplemental Claim – An opportunity to submit additional evidence. Appeal – Review by the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

- This new process is supposed to provide:
- Understandable decision review system.
- Multiple review options instead of one.
- Improved notice about the reasons for VA’s decision and available decision review options.
- Early resolution of disagreements.
- Each lane with a clearly defined start/end point.
- Higher-Level Review and Appeal lanes provide quality feedback to VBA.

VBA as claims agency, Board as appeals agency. Efficient use of VA’s and representatives’ resources for long-term savings and improved service for Veterans.

To better prepare our Veteran Service Officers to deal with this new law, the VVA National Veterans Benefits Department is sponsoring training for two of our VSOs January 13-15, 2019, at the VVA National headquarters in Silver Spring, MD.

The training is from approximately 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on January 13, 14 and 15. Travel days would be on January 12 and 16. This training and associated costs will be covered by the VVA National Veterans Benefits Department at no cost to the California State Council.

We are indeed fortunate to be given this opportunity to learn the best ways to handle this new law in order to better serve our veterans and look forward to being able to deal with the claims process more efficiently.

In other news, the California State Council received notice in October that we once again were awarded the VSF/VVA VSO Grant Program funding for another year. This grant will fund the CSC VSO program through September of 2019. The CSC VSO Program thanks everyone that has helped CSC get this funding through

ADDRESS LABELS WITH INCORRECT NAMES:

As many of you noticed, and let me know, the last mailings of the California Zephyr had errors in the mailing labels. Your address was correct but the name on the label wasn’t yours. The name was another VVA member.

The error occurred when the mailing labels were being printed. Someone hit the wrong button and shifted all the names thus putting your name with someone else’s address. Even though there was a mistake with the names each of us received copy of the Zephyr.

Disregard the labels and enjoy the newsletter. I have been promised that the error has been corrected and we should all receive the Zephyr with the correct name and address.

Things happen.  
Steve Mackey  
President

their matching funds and donations.

Dick Southern  
Chief Service Officer  
VVA CSC, Inc.

2ND VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

- Since the CSC meeting in August I have:
- August 24-26 – Attended the California State Council meeting in Fresno, CA
- Sent out E-mails on various subjects keeping CSC chapters, the CSC BOD and committees informed.
- Continue to administer the CSC VSO program.
- Submitted the 12 month report for the VSO Grant program.
- Sought funds in the form of sponsors for CSC meetings and events.
- Monitored the Household Goods Donation Program.
- Been involved in many Chapter 391 activities.
- Submitted by  
Dick Southern

REGION 9 DIRECTOR’S REPORT

- Since the last California State Council meeting
- August 24-26 -- Attended the California State Council meeting in Fresno, CA.
- September 7-9 - Attended the Colorado State Council meeting in Castle Rock, CO.
- September 28-29 - Attended the Nevada State Council meeting in Tonopah, NV.
- October 12-13 – Attended the Arizona State Council meeting in Phoenix, AZ
- October 17-21 – Attended the VVA National BOD meeting in Silver Spring, MD.
- October 26-28 – Attending the California State Council meeting in Fresno, CA.
- October 31 – Leave for Angeles City, the Philippines.
- November 6 – Attending Chapter 887 Board and General meeting in Angeles City, The PI.
- November 8-12 – Visiting Chapter 668 in Guam and attending their Veterans Day events.
- November 24 – Attending the Chapter 887 Christmas Party for the Holy Trinity Special Education Foundation that chapter puts on for the children at American Legion Post 123 Angeles City.
- November 30 – December 1-2 – attending the New Mexico State Council meeting in San Antonio, NM.
- December 7-9 - Attending the Colorado State Council meeting in Castle Rock, Colorado.
- I continue to be in contact with Chapters and State Councils in Region 9 by E-mail and telephone.
- I write columns for The Veteran.
- I continue to moderate 3 VVA Talk Lists and 1 AVVA Talk List.
- Serving as Combined Federal Campaign Coordinator for VVA. Ending soon.
- Serving as VVA National Resolutions Committee chairman. March 17, 2019 deadline.
- Serving on two VVA National committees - Veterans Benefits and Membership Affairs.
- Submitted by  
Dick Southern

THEY WERE VETERNS FIRST.

Before moral injury led them to drug addiction – before the inhumanity of war led to PTSD and violent acts, they served and sacrificed just like you and me. They served honorably, earned Purple Hearts, and commendations for bravery. Unfortunately, their lives took a wrong turn, leading them to incarceration. I spent 16 years serving these veterans. Four of those years were spent as

coordinator for the Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program under the Department of Labor. In this capacity, I was assigned to California correctional facilities. In addition, I served 12 years serving veterans in state prisons nationwide. Like CSCVVA Incarcerated Veterans Chairman John Mendiola said in his recent article, there are ways all chapters can assist these veterans, and it begins with caring. In a quote from Matthew 25, we are reminded “I was ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.” John cared, and

he helped a Vietnam vet win his parole. I contacted John after reading his story in the CSCVVA newspaper and offered to assist him in his mission. Since we are both disabled, it seemed like a good fit. John agreed, and we are setting our strategies. The key is, we can’t do it all alone. We’re calling for reinforcements. There is that old cliché, “they made their own bed, now they can sleep in it.” But what if he carried your wounded body away from a fire fight, or stopped the bleeding of a dangerous wound. Would you care then? Helping vets win parole like John did, or prepare for successful re-entry into society through employment assistance and transitional housing like I did, there is nothing we cannot do to change lives for the better. Remember, they were veterans first. They are your brothers. Please help John and I reach out to them and welcome them home.

Thank you. Matt Davison, Chapter 53

HONOR FLIGHT

Honor Flight Network recognizes American veterans for your sacrifices and achievements by flying you to Washington, D.C. to see YOUR memorial at no cost. Top priority is given to World War II and terminally ill veterans from all wars.

Honor Flight Network has expanded to include Korean War and Vietnam War veterans. In order for Honor Flight Network to achieve this goal, guardians fly with the veterans on every flight providing assistance and helping veterans have a safe, memorable and rewarding experience.

For what you and your comrades have given to us, please consider this a small token of appreciation from all of us at Honor Flight Network.

If you are a Veteran and would like to experience an Honor Flight at no cost to you, please complete the application at left.

If you know of someone who is a World War II veteran or a veteran with a terminal illness, please fill out an application and send it in on their behalf. And remember, every veteran flies free.

<https://www.honorflight.org/veteran-application/>  
For More Information

For further information, please contact us at 937-521-2400 or via e-mail at [applications@honorflight.org](mailto:applications@honorflight.org).

PTSD  
ARE YOU AT A LOSS ON HOW TO HELP A  
LOVED ONE WITH PTSD? THIS IS WHAT YOU  
CAN DO!!

By Stan Popovich

Do you know someone who is in the military or is a veteran who struggles with PTSD and don’t know how to help them?

Are you not sure how to help a family member or colleague get relief and stop their suffering from PTSD and other fear related issues?

If so, here are 8 helpful tips to help the person cope in these kinds of situations.

1. Learn as much as you can in dealing PTSD, Anxiety, And Depression. There are many books and information that will educate you on how to deal with PTSD and mental health issues. Share this information with the person who is struggling. The main point is that the person who is struggling gets as much information as possible on how to overcome their PTSD. In addition, other family members should be aware on how to deal with someone who is struggling without making things worse. Education is the first step in overcoming a person’s mental health issues.

2. Be understanding and patient with the person





### SEMPER FI FUND'S NEW PILOT PROGRAM FOR VIETNAM VETERANS

**Semper Fi Fund** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We have provided urgently needed resources and support for post 9/11 combat wounded, critically ill and catastrophically injured members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families for the past 14 years. Since our inception in May 2004, we have been able to provide over \$185 million in assistance to more than 22,000 post 9/11 service members and their families.

Semper Fi Fund recently expanded our mission to care for veterans **catastrophically wounded, ill, or injured from combat operations in Vietnam from all U.S. military service branches**. Our New Pilot Program is called the **"LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund for Vietnam Veterans"**.

Our team has felt for many years that there is a significant gap in care for those who served our country. Two thirds of Vietnam Veterans were volunteers, and our goal is to show this generation of military they are loved and appreciated. We are starting with the most catastrophically injured and **will help in these specific areas:**

- **Adaptive Housing, Home Modifications or Repairs**
- **Adaptive Transportation, Vehicle Modifications or Repairs**
- **Grants for Medical Expenses Not Covered by Insurance or VA**
- **Funeral/Cremation Expense (paid directly to funeral home/mortuary)**
- **One-time grant assistance for past due rent, mortgage, utility bills, storage, etc. (paid directly to vendor)**

We polled many of our donors and our current post 9/11 service members and received a passionate **go for it!** in response to this new program. Our Semper Fi Fund service members feel they received such a warm welcome home from combat due to the lessons learned in Vietnam. It's time to honor these American Heroes!

**This pilot program is proudly named after Bob Parsons, Vietnam Purple Heart recipient. Bob is also SFF's largest donor.** Our hope is that you will be as excited as we are to expand Semper Fi Fund's mission, and welcome Vietnam Veterans into our family.

For more information, please call 760-725-3680 or contact us at  
[Vwestcoastcw@semperfund.org](mailto:Vwestcoastcw@semperfund.org)

struggling with their fears: Dealing with PTSD, depression, and anxiety can be difficult for the person so do not add more problems than what is already there. Do not make things worse by getting into arguments with someone who is suffering. Yelling at your loved one with PTSD will only make things worse.

3. Talk to the person instead of talking at them: It is important not to lecture the person who is struggling with PTSD. Talk to the person about their issues without being rude. Most people will listen if you approach them in a proper manner. It is also important to listen to what they have to say so you get an idea of where that person is coming from.

4. Get the person to see a PTSD Counselor: It is very important to get the person who is struggling with PTSD to talk to a professional counselor. A counselor can give advice and ideas on how to overcome PTSD. Getting advice from a professional is the number one priority in helping your loved one deal with their mental health issues.

5. Find Out The Reasons Why The Person Won't Get Assistance: Some PTSD sufferers may not want to get help for various reasons. If this happens, find out the reasons why that person won't talk to a counselor. Many people who are struggling are fearful and frustrated. Try to find out the reasons why he or she won't get the advice they need and then try to find ways that will overcome their resistance of seeking treatment. Addressing a person's issues and fears of getting assistance will go a long way in helping your loved ones.

6. Your Learning How To Overcome Your PTSD. Some people in the military may think that getting help is a sign of weakness. In this case, remind your loved ones that they are not asking for help. Instead, they are learning how to overcome their PTSD. Remind your military friends and fellow veterans that when they were in the military, they had to constantly learn new ways of doing things. Every member of the military had to learn new things on a regular basis during their time in the service. Dealing with PTSD is no different. There is nothing wrong with learning new things; whether your learning how to start a new job, learning a new hobby, learning how to drive a car, or learning how to deal with your fears and PTSD. Learning is learning and there is nothing wrong with that.

7. Find a local veteran's support group for your loved one. It is also important that the person who is struggling join a local veteran's support group so they can get advice from other veterans. Many people who have been in the military and are struggling with PTSD will be better able to relate to other veterans who may have similar experiences and insights.

8. How To Deal With The Nightmares: Many veterans and military members who have been in combat may get nightmares regarding their past war time experiences. It is not easy to stop the nightmares, but you can start to reduce the frequency of these dreams by getting advice from a PTSD counselor or local veteran's group. The more time you spend in getting assistance to address your PTSD issues, the better the chances that you will be able to reduce those nightmares. Some veterans turn to drugs and

alcohol to fix their problems, but that will only make things worse. In addition, suicide is not the answer.

**BIOGRAPHY:** About Stan Popovich

Stan is the author of a popular managing fear book, "A Layman's Guide To Managing Fear." Stan's book has received over 400 book reviews and offers a lot of free mental health advice on his website. For more information and some more helpful advice, visit Stan's website at [www.managingfear.com](http://www.managingfear.com)

## VETS RECEIVE HOMES

**24 VETERANS PRESENTED WITH KEYS TO THEIR NEW HOMES BY HOMES 4 FAMILIES AND CALVET**

On Saturday, November 17, Homes 4 Families and the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) held a public ceremony to present 24 veterans and their families with keys to their new homes.

"I believe in the American Dream, and for veterans, a big part of that dream is home ownership," said CalVet Secretary Dr. Vito Imbasciani. "Through this project, CalVet and Homes 4 Families have provided the opportunity of home ownership to more than 60 veterans." "

The CalVet REN (Residential Enriched Neighborhood) Program provides permanent, affordable home ownership with manageable loan payments and family enrichment services to low income veterans and their families.

"Our veterans understand the meaning of leadership, dedication, and service, plus they bring these important skills to our community. They are truly an asset," said Donna E. Deutchman, President and Chief Executive Officer, of Homes 4 Families.

This final phase of 24 homes completes the 78 home CalVet REN project in Santa Clarita. The next project near this community will be 56 homes for veterans in Palmdale.

The key ceremony begins at 10 a.m. at 21550 Center Pointe Parkway, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. The event is free and open to the public. There will be a veteran art show at the development. The theme of the artwork highlights the emotions that our military families experience before, during, and after their service.

Contacts: CalVet, Thora Chaves, [Thora.Chaves@CalVet.ca.gov](mailto:Thora.Chaves@CalVet.ca.gov) 916-651-2147.

Homes 4 Families, Stacey Chiang, [SChiang@Homes4Families.org](mailto:SChiang@Homes4Families.org) 818-884-8808.

## WOMEN VETERANS COMMITTEE VETERANS DAY NOVEMBER 2018

This year marked the 25th Anniversary of the Vietnam Women's Memorial in Washington, DC. I want to thank all the people that supported us in putting on these events- it takes a village. Our VVA National organization and the Women veterans committee worked hard to put on a beautiful reception for the women and Red Cross workers who served during the Vietnam war. It was held in the Daughters of the American Revolution Building in Washington, D.C., November 9, 2018. John Rowan opened the event with some great reminiscing about how long it took to get the project completed. VVA was a continued sponsor over the years. Even when Congress put up the fight that "if we put a statue up of the women- next they will want a statue of the Dogs." Diane Carlson Evans, founder of the Vietnam Women's Memorial also talked about all the years of struggle and various people





Gift to DAR of the Vietnam Womens Memorial Statue and Challenge coins from all the services plus VVA and The VVA Womens Honor coin.

Col. Jane Carson, USA(Ret) Spoke of her time as an Army nurse up at 312th Evacuation Hospital in Chu Lai in '69. She was the supervisor of Sharon Lane, KIA June '69 from a rocket attack on the hospital. Col Carson shared her deep depression from this tragedy; losing one of her staff and how her almost suicide years later was stopped by her dog licking her face. This event led her to her current work with rescue dogs in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

May we never forget those names on the Wall-we all have our names and panels. And for this time may we especially remember the Angels on the Wall: Carol Drazba'66, Elizabeth Jones,'66, Eleanor Alexander '67, Hedwig Orłowski '67, Pamela Donovan '68, Sharon Lane '69, Annie Graham'69, and Mary Klinker '75.

Until next time.....Kate O'Hare-Palmer



Mistletoe Elementary School Choir, Redding CA

and Community Caregivers.

We are optimistic those who attended the "Care for those who care Resources fair" will be empowered as Caregivers.

VVA Chapter 357 also reached out to the local Southeast Asian Veterans and Community members

### Chapter 933

The Chapter awarded its Annual William C, Camp Scholarship to a veteran studying at Fresno City College. Camp, a Fresno City Graduate, was a Marine killed in Vietnam.

The Chapter began working with Fresno State's veterans tutoring and guidance program for re-entry students.

We provided an Information and recognition display for the Clovis Vets Center Annual POW/MIA Recognition Day and at the Fresno Annual Gun Show and Antique Show. The program included a lunch with former POW's and their families, and included a visit from 103 year old Jack Schwartz, famed WWII POW.

The Chapter continues financial and volunteer support for the Heart of the Horse Therapy Ranch for medically fragile children and veterans. Chapter members regularly schedule work days at the ranch to construct facilities, maintain equipment, and help handling horses and riders.

Members helped set up and run the Annual Ranch Fundraiser Dinner Dance, which this year brought in over \$25,000 from ticket and auction sales.

The Chapter also helped operate therapy rides programs at Fresno's Children's Hospital.

Chapter Members also assisted in the Clovis Veterans Memorial District's weekly classes, which serve as an historical research exchange and discussion forum for up to sixty veterans of all ages and their spouses each week.

Paul Kaser, VP, Chapter 933

### Chapter 391

On October 13th the 30th Anniversary California Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall was held at the State Capital in Sacramento. It was a very solemn occasion for my wife and myself as we went to represent James Williams, a chapter 391 member and a member of our family. His name along with two others was added to the wall. While the recognition was 50 years after his service, it brought back to the public eye the costs of Agent Orange. His sacrifice along with all those impacted by Agent Orange deserves to be recognized.

October was also the 30th anniversary of the founding of Chapter 391.

As we enter the Fall of 2018 Chapter 391 is looking back on a successful year. Both our golf classic and car show sold out. These and our other numerous events

## CHAPTER NOTES

### Chapter 357

Redding CA/Shasta County and our Associates offered a resource fair to empower both Veteran and Community Caregivers.

The goal was to provide Education, Tools, Resources and support for all Caregivers

Since the recent fires in all counties we all are becoming Caregivers

The "Care For those Who Care Resource Fair" was a community collaborative between

Chapter 357 and our Associates, The McConnell foundation, The Veterans Clinic, The National Caregivers Resources, Debbie Sprague Author of "A stranger in my Bed," Shasta County Agencies, The

Veterans Service Office, Shinning Care and numerous caregiver and resource organizations invited all Veteran

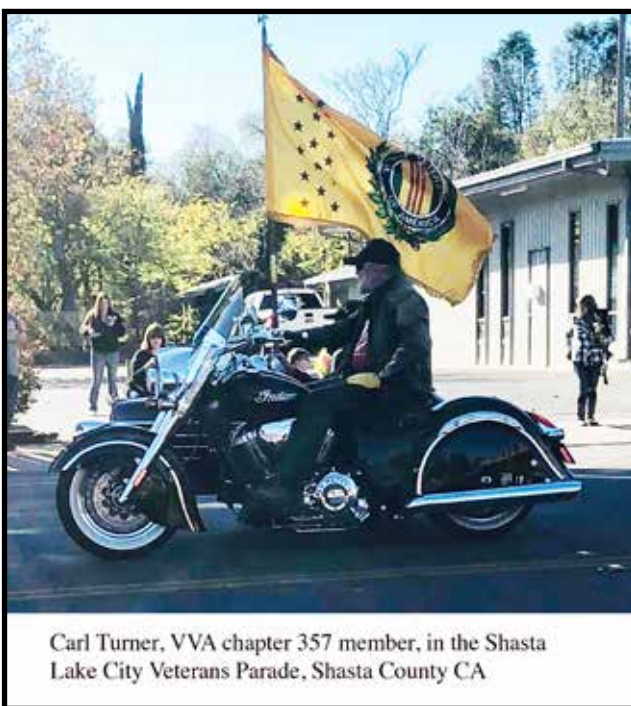


Our Angels on the Wall

that kept her on task to fight to get the statue built. How the memorial is such a place of healing for all those who come to see and touch it. She described the time and models that Glenna Goodacre used to develop those three women and the wounded soldier. The standing woman looking up to the sky cries when it rains, because Glenna sculpted her eyes in that special way. This was a special night for all of us. We met up with some women that we haven't seen for years and we shared incredible stories within the walls of a building that represents the founding women of our country. A truly amazing night.

The weekend included a Candlelight Ceremony on Saturday Night, November 10, in temperatures down in the 20s! There was an opening Spiritual Prayer and Pipe ceremony by Jake Singer, E5, US Army Navajo Nation, Vietnam 67-69, 173 Airborne Brigade. He did the original ceremony 25 years ago. Reflections were given by Barb Lilly, Red Cross Donut Dollie 68-69, Ann Kelsey, Army Special Services Libraries' 69-70(yes there were librarians in Vietnam), and Linda Pugsley, Flight Nurse,USAF, 68-69,'72. These women told some funny, some sad, and some downright hilarious events that happened during their service in Nam. We all huddled close as the temps dropped and the poem, 'Angels of Vietnam" by Darroll Nichols, Vietnam vet, was read by John Sommer, E5 Army Combat Army Medic '68 Vietnam Central Highlands. The song, "I Will Always Remember You," was sung by Kera O'Bryon and it was written by Rod McBrien.

The Annual Veterans Day Observance at the Wall was on November 11, 2018 was a little bigger than usual because of all the extra women vets who came for this anniversary date. We sat together right behind the Gold Star Families in the middle section. There was electricity in the air. The speakers included LCDR Kim Mitchell-USN(Ret). Her story is special as she was a Vietnamese orphan baby girl who was adopted by an American soldier and brought to Minnesota to live. Her story is worth reading and you can find her easily by Googling her. She just accepted the director position for Veterans Village of San Diego. This has served Veterans since 1981, started by two Vietnam veterans who dedicated to "leave no veteran behind." They serve over 2200 veterans per year.



Carl Turner, VVA chapter 357 member, in the Shasta Lake City Veterans Parade, Shasta County CA



Shasta Meadows Spirit Squad, Redding, CA. A performing group and supporter of Remember Everyone Deployed. Chapter 357 is a sponsor of the squad.



raise funds to support the chapter goals of scholarships, community outreach and veteran services.

As we approach Veteran's day the chapter color guard will be participating in many local community celebrations.

We are already looking forward to next year's projects.

Larry Bramblett, President Chapter 391 Sonora

### Chapter 201

The United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County (UVC) conducts a ceremonial Flag Lowering on the last Sunday in every other month to honor those deceased Veterans who are recognized on a Flag Plaque at the entrance to Oak Hill Memorial Park during the previous months. A deceased Veteran does not have to be interred at Oak Hill to have his or her name on the honor plaque. Many Veterans are buried overseas or in the National Cemeteries throughout the country. The names of Veterans to be honored are provided by the families and Oak Hill places the name on the Honor Plaque daily. After a Veteran is honored, the name is recorded in the "Book Everlasting" which is located in the lobby of the Administration Building.

VVA Chapter 201 and Associates performed the Flag Lowering ceremony for the UVC on October 28, 2018 at



the Veterans Section of Oak Hill Memorial Park. Chapter 201 AVVA-201 members provided the Honor Guard and posted the colors for the opening ceremony.

Chapter President Warren Finch officiated for VVA Chapter 201 while Chapter 201 Vice President Gene Fanucchi acted as the Master of Ceremonies. Chapter



member Jack Wells read the names of honored Veterans and Randy Richmond performed as Chaplain. Chapter 201 members Jeff Driskell, Fran McVey (UVC President) and Dennis Foggie (VVA-201 Director) assisted in the lowering of the flag.

Chapter 201 member Jack Wells lowered the Veterans Section flag in honor of deceased Veterans recognized



during the October Flag Lowering ceremony. Chapter members Fran McVey and Dennis Foggie assisted in the folding of the flag.

Chapter 201 member Jeff Driskell presented the



folded flag to Chapter 201 President Warren Finch.

The United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County (UVC) honors all those who have served, and those continuing to serve their country during the largest Veterans' Day Parade in Northern California. The UVC has conducted the annual Veterans' Day parade in downtown San Jose for at least the last 95 years. Over 80 numbered units march in the two-hour parade to honor veterans of all wars and pay tribute to our military service personnel, and their families, who have given so much for their country.

On November 11th, VVA Chapter 201 and Associates participated in the 2018 UVC Veterans' Day Parade in downtown San Jose, California on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day of the "War To



End All Wars." This year the Chapter 201 Color Guard members included Richard Francis, Stephen Thompson (Secretary/Treasurer), Walter Carroll, Jack Wells, Gerald Arnold, Randy Richmond (Chaplain) and Bob Kadlec.

This year over fifty AVVA Chapter 201 members



participated in the Armistice Day Centennial Veterans' Day Parade with a color Guard and several vehicle floats.

### Chapter 500

Since our last report, we have continued to provide veterans in our area assistance with funds for rent and/or food as well as transportation to medical appointments, commissary, and post exchange.

We have held fundraisers at the Harley-Davidson dealer in Sacramento that support our chapter's activities and enabled the chapter to increase funding for our Veteran's Emergency Services Fund.

Our chapter was on of the sponsors of the October 13th ceremony in honor of the 30th anniversary of the dedication of the California State Vietnam Veterans Memorial that was held in Sacramento at the state capitol. The event began at 10 a.m. at the memorial on the capitol grounds was over by one p.m. Over one hundred people were in attendance. VVA National President, John Rowan, was the key note speaker. He told the attendees that those who gave their all-in service to their country can only be honored by being remembered by Memorial Services such as this one held today.

Our Chapter was represented at the service and internment for Art Hinz by AVVA Life Member Deborah Franklin and VVA 500 Member Douglas Mitten. The service and internment were truly honoring of Art's

service in the military and since.

Our chapter will be participating in the Sacramento City Veterans' Day Parade with flag bearers, Marchers, and vehicles.

Our annual Christmas Party will be held in December. The date will be determined at our November Board Meeting.

Douglas Mitten

### Chapter 756

Purchased 20 movie tickets for Long Beach VA Hospital so Veterans who are there can be treated to Night out at the movies about five to seven Veterans go and with their escorts also includes popcorn, candy and soda pop once a month been doing that for over 14 years.

Worki with Vietnamese Community of Southern California, Meeting at the Vietnamese Memorial in Westminster on the 1st Sunday of the month." Lest We Forget" our Fallen.

Donated food cards to Fisher House program at the LBVA.

Chapter donating help to Patriots and Paws (supports Veterans), Air Force Sergeant Assoc., supporting VSO at Long Beach VA, Vets to Vets (PTSD group) at the Long Beach VA.

Attended meeting with Chapter 1024 and flag raising Veterans Parade in Long Beach Nov. 12, 2018

Donated to a needy family from the 13th MEU, who were homeless at one time, Marine injured during exercise drill.

Diaper and wipes drive for the 13th MEU Marines from Anaheim, Marine Unit now deployed in Afghanistan and supporting mothers of the new born infants with diapers and wipes. One Marine has already been lost.

Helping support Gold Star Mothers and Fathers in Long Beach, food cards and gas cards.

Working with CAP (Civil Air Patrol ) at Los Alamitos joint Training base .

### Chapter 464

PTSD Visit at Menlo Park VA, October 7

BBQ at San Bruno VA Clinic every 2nd Tuesday of the month, VVA co-sponsors

30th Anniversary of the Dedication of the CA Vietnam Veterans Memorial Ceremony, Oct. 13, Sponsorship sent Cars & Bikes-Stars & Stripes Show & BBQ, Nov. 4, chapter provides hamburgers, etc.

Fleet Week Veterans Resource Fair, Oct. 2

Homeless USMC Veteran funeral, Sept.25, Golden Gate National Cemetery

Monterey County Homeless Veterans Stand Down, Sept. 28-30

Unsung Heroes Luncheon, date in November 17th, Veterans Memorial Building, Redwood City

Veterans Day Ceremony, Nov. 11, Golden Gate National Cemetery

All Veterans Group Luncheon, Dec. 22, Harry's Hofbrau, Redwood City

DAV Information Seminar, Benefits & Claims, Nov. 2, Veterans Memorial Building, Gold Star Room, Redwood City

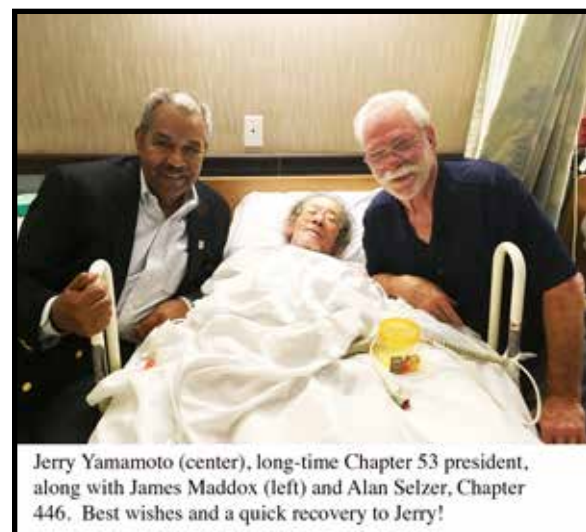
United States Volunteers Dinner & Fundraising Auction, Nov. 10

SF Veterans Day Parade, Nov. 11, Sunday, Fisherman's Wharf

San Mateo County Veterans Commission's Veteran of the Year Luncheon, Nov. 8, Thursday, Marriott Hotel, San Mateo.

McCormick & Kuleto's complimentary lunch or dinner for Veterans Day, Nov. 11

Bikes4Vets Giveaway, Nov. 17, AtWater Tavern, SF



Jerry Yamamoto (center), long-time Chapter 53 president, along with James Maddox (left) and Alan Selzer, Chapter 446. Best wishes and a quick recovery to Jerry!



Chapter 53

The Torrance Social Services Commission kicked off the weekend with the Torrance Annual Veterans Appreciation Luncheon & Resource Fair for local Veterans of all wars on Friday, the 9th. Over 200 veterans and guests were in attendance for a wonderful meal and the chance to take advantage of nearly two dozen resource stations. Representatives from VA Health Care and VA Benefits, armed with computers, were there to sign up those in need. Other organizations represented were the Disabled American Veterans and the Bob Hope USO. The National Anthem was sung by Candace Ford, the wife of a Chapter 53 member, and the keynote speaker was Vietnam Veteran Ron Kovic, author of 'Born on the 4th of July.'

Instrumental in the success of this year's event was Chapter 53 Board member Bob Chiota, also a member of



the Social Services Commission.

Members of VVA Chapter 53 Color Guard posted colors at the luncheon. Pictured center is former State Assemblyman George Nakano, the author of the Los Angeles County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway designation for the section of CA Highway 1 through Los Angeles County. Also pictured is Torrance City Councilman Geoff Rizzo (r). Also Pictured are Color Guard members Ed Sakihama, Richard Carlos, Cliff Rapp, John Warhank, and Chapter VP Kirk Gillett. (photo by Color Guard leader Steve Crecy)

On the evening of Saturday, the 10, the City of Hawthorne Veterans Affairs Commission sponsored a Veterans Day Celebration complete with a live band, refreshments, and comedienne Gayle Ocheltree, former Army and one of the first women to earn her Jump Wings.



The City honored all city employees and members of the Hawthorne PD who are Veterans.

Significant to the success of the planning and organization was Chapter 53 AVVA Liaison Kyle Orlemann who is the Chair of the Hawthorne Veterans Affairs Commission. Providing assistance were Chapter 53 members Neil Gaffney (also an honoree) and Jerry Orlemann. Former Hawthorne Citizen of the Year Dennis Wild, Chapter 53 Secretary, was also in attendance.

The Chapter Color Guard was called upon one more time on Sunday evening of the 11th to post the colors at the Hermosa Beach Veterans Memorial Veterans Day



Commemoration.

Pictured are Color Guard members Ed Sakihama, John Warhank, Richard Carlos, Cliff Rapp, and Chapter VP Kirk Gillett. (photo by Color Guard leader Steve Crecy)

Chapter 785

Our VVA 785 has increased it's membership, bringing them home one at a time.

Again this year we have supported 10 high school JROTC programs, with \$500 scholarships. Also supported USC AND UCLA JROTC UNITS with a \$1000 donation FOR THEIR Edwards Air Force Base trip

We continue to supported and donated funds to OUR VSO Karen, who does a great job helping our veterans with VA claims.

Our members have Participated in two very inspiring trips with Healing Waters, to Bishop fly fishing. We have donated to this program for our disabled veterans.

VVA 785 Membership chair Steve Edmonds is on his 21st trip to Vietnam. While traveling the countryside he helps build some houses, provide medical SUPPLIES, provides school children with school supplies and PROVIDES hundreds of pounds of rice, noodles and cooking oil TO SEVERAL VILLAGES.

OUR members have supported PATRIOTS AND PAWS they PROVIDE assistance to homeless veterans with clothes and household goods to veterans families.

VVA members were pinned with our anniversary pin by our local Congressman Lou Correa. A certificate from Congress thanking us for our service was presented.

Our members were signed a condolence card to be given to the John Mc Cain Family

Members attended the 25th Anniversary Women Veterans Luncheon at Turbin VA Medical Center Long Beach, with over 200 women Veterans in attendance. Three 785 officers attended the national leadership conference this past summer.

Our life member Combat Nurse Eileen Moore was invited to be a featured Speakers Nov 11 at Vietnam



Veterans Women Memorial in Washington DC next week. She was a nurse at the 67th Evacuation Hospital in Quin Nhon. Justice Moore is currently an Associate Justice in California's 4th District Court of Appeal, Division Three in Santa Ana.

Chapter 218

Hap DeSimone

This is the cadence that I wrote. I had for a long time been dissatisfied that the cadences that we were calling were from other wars, other branches, other times. They did not fit our experiences, even though they were much like those of our Brother Veterans from times past. There was nothing that wasn't sickly sentimental, overly patriotic or just wrong in describing our Viet Nam experiences. Many cadences actually immortalized the creep who was moving in on our girls: JODIE!

Nothing that spoke to the ELEPHANT in the room: Very Few Guys Went! Most of us were Draft Dodgers. (Me Too, for a while). But unlike those of my friends

who ran away; got married, had two kids quick and got a Defense job, protested and all: the lot of us stood up and took The Oath.

I've met a lot of Viet Nam Veterans who weren't Infantry, Combat Marines, LRPS, ParaRescue, Arty, Armor or Close Support Aviation. MANY of them feel sheepish about their service, that they weren't like the Hollywood definition of a Viet Nam Veteran.

WWII Hollywood imagery dominated the movie scene for decades after it was no longer needed to attract volunteers in the 1940's. That imagery defined, in black and white, how a "Real Man" looked and behaved (chiseled features, acts like Superman).

NONE of us fit the "role". I know more heroic clerks, cooks, radio operators and truck drivers than draft dodgers.

And that brings us to that Elephant: Those able bodied civilians who were too afraid of being hurt overseas committed incredible things to avoid combat.

We all saw what they did. And many of those actions can be attributed to but a single word: COWARDICE!

TO A MAN we all did what 99% of the country WOULD NOT DO. We stood up, raised our right hands and said: SEND ME!

And I will be forever grateful and respectful of you for that.

Santa Barbara Chapter 218 has tried this cadence, and it is a bit tough to get the words out at a standard marching pace. We will, from now on, change to a slower marching pace, just to call it, then speed our marching back up.

The concept of a BEAT is very important here. There MUST be a PAUSE between the question "Who Do They Call?" and the answer "SEND ME!" The question is asked starting on the left foot (WHO), and it's last word is spoken on the right foot (CALL). Then there is a full step (The Left Foot) for a SILENT PAUSE, then the REPLY is spoken on the next two steps: "SEND" (Right) "ME" (Left)

Written out, it looks like this:

Caller: Company:  
(SILENT  
Who Do They Call? PAUSE) SEND ME!  
(Left) (Right) (Left) (Right) (Left) (Right)

It is yours to do with what you want. If the words are too childish or syrupy, use your own words instead. We didn't even call the last three stanzas ourselves. Many of us Viet Nam Veterans have been viciously shamed, blamed and slandered. I've always been sheepish and reluctant to share my persona as a Viet Nam Veteran in the Far Left environment where I live in California.

Lately I have no such feelings holding me back, hence the "SGT Hap".

I'm proud of what I did, where I've been, who and what I stood up for and most especially of you, my comrades who shared the pain. Sgt Hap DeSimone

"Jump Team" Chief  
A Co., 53rd Sig Bn (Corps)  
Second Field Force Vietnam  
1969-1970  
VVA 218, Santa Barbara, CA  
Chaplain, MOPH 750

SEND ME! - SGT HAP

WHO DO THEY CALL  
When its GOTTA get done  
Not Just ANY old Son  
Who can carry a gun,

WHO DO THEY CALL? SEND ME!

WHO DO THEY CALL  
When Its REALLY all Busted  
The Clown That Done Started IT's  
REALLY DISGUSTED

WHO DO THEY CALL? SEND ME!

WHO DO THEY PICK  
When John Wayne calls in Sick  
If Chuck Norris said NO  
That He's TOO TIRED to GO

WHO DO THEY CALL? SENDME!

If RAMBO said PLEASE  
Running just hurts my knees  
If Arnold just said  
That He's going back to BED

WHO DO THEY CALL? SEND ME!

WHO'D They be Gettin'



If THE HULK's Baby Sittin'  
Superman's got the FLU  
and Batman's sick too

WHO DO THEY CALL? SEND ME!

Who could be trusted  
If Ironman's Rusted  
If George Foreman is still  
Cooking Steaks on his Grill

WHO DO THEY CALL? SEND ME!

WHO DO THEY GET  
When it REALLY need fixin?  
They Get YOU, They Get ME,  
and Our Pal, Richard Nixon!

WHO DO THEY CALL? SEND ME!

The Egghead Who Started It  
KNOWS Its A MESS,  
He's SCARED to Go OVER,  
He's White as a SHEET,  
He Ran OUT in the Street,  
LOOK, HE's WEARING A DRESS!  
WHO DO THEY CALL? SEND ME!

If you ASK for a WAR  
FIRST you Count Up the Score  
Of the STAGGERING COST  
And The MEN that We Lost

Unless YOU ARE READY  
To Go in our STEAD  
And COME BACK IN SILENCE  
A FLAG for your Bed

And DON'T BE SO QUICK  
To Say "Go 'cross the Sea"  
For those SONS and those DAUGHTERS  
YOU SEND COME FROM ME!

But WHO DO THEY CALL? SEND ME!

With Absolutely NO Apologies from:

Sgt Hap DeSimone  
"Jump Team" Chief  
A Co., 53rd Sig Bn (Corps)  
Second Field Force Vietnam  
1969-1970  
VVA 218, Santa Barbara, CA  
Chaplain, MOPH 750

## COLA 2019

The COLA for 2019 will be 2.8 percent. That applies to military retirement pay and VA disability pay, as well as Social Security. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the COLA is higher because the costs of things you buy have gone up.

The COLA is not really a "pay raise." It's meant to protect your retirement income from being eaten up by inflation.

One of the issues TREA is going to be watching very closely next year is whether there will be an attempt to change the COLA and reduce the amount you get under the current formula. There is something called the "chained CPI," which we have reported on before, that if adopted would reduce your COLA from what it otherwise would be. The reason politicians like it is because it would save the government money and help them reduce the federal deficit.

If it raises its ugly head next year we will let you know immediately and do all we can to kill it.

## AVVA MEMBERSHIP

VVA MEMBERS YOU CAN NOW BECOME AVVA LIFE MEMBERS FOR ONLY \$50.00.

That's right, only \$50.00 and you can become a Life Member of AVVA. At their October Board meeting National AVVA decided to lower the dues for VVA members to \$50.00. I would love to see every VVA member join AVVA. We need to support them as they have supported us. So dig out that \$50.00 bill, fill out the

Continued on page 10



Chapter 47 members at front of class at Chapman College field questions from students



Chapter 47 Director Jess Gomez (left) and AVVA Liaison Alice Gomez (right) meet Wayne Newton at the National Leadership Conference



Chapter 47 VP Mike Kennedy (center/left) and Director Jess Gomez (center right) present donation to Ranch High Veteran Interview members



Chapter 47 members at college class answering questions.



Chapter 47 Director Jess Gomez in Hesperia honoring veterans





## Run For The Wall May 15-25, 2019

One **Mission**  
Three Routes

[www.rftw.us](http://www.rftw.us)



### Mission Statement:

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

### Philosophy:

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



### Goals:

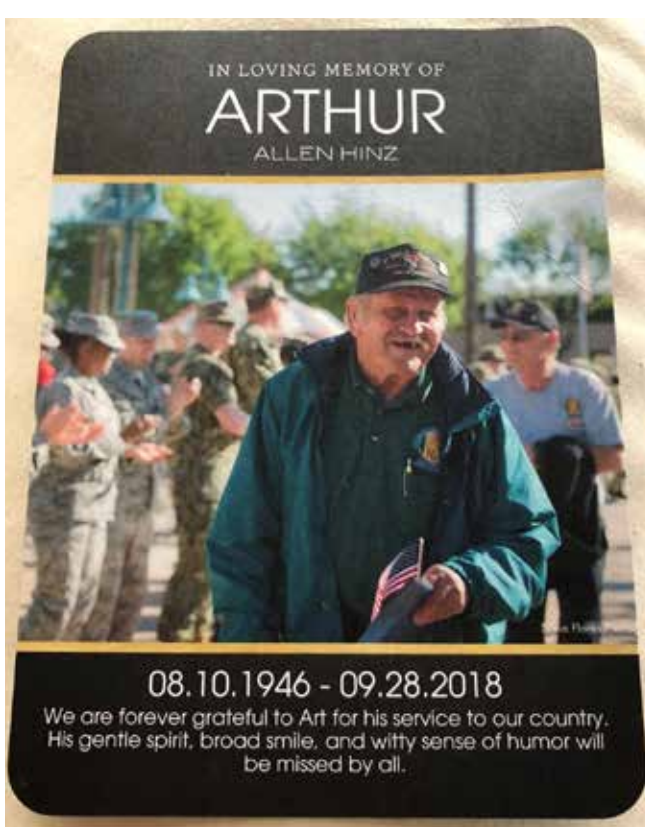
1. To guide the participants across America.
2. To educate future generations as to the importance of accountability in wartime actions emphasizing that no one should be left behind.
3. To participate in Rolling Thunder in support of their demand for government accountability for POW/MIA's.

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

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



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



**Promote healing among all veterans, their families and supporters and to support our military personnel all over the world.**

**WHAT:** Motorcycle event  
**WHERE:** Ontario, CA to Washington, DC  
**WHEN:** May 15<sup>th</sup> thru May 25<sup>th</sup> 2019  
**INFORMATION:** [www.rftw.us](http://www.rftw.us)

**Veterans of recent conflicts and those currently on active duty are especially welcome to join us, ride for one or more days or all the way. All veterans and supporters are welcome**



application and send it off to AVVA. Let’s show them we care.

Steve

**AGENT ORANGE**  
**VIETNAM, US COMPLETE CLEANUP OF AGENT ORANGE FROM AIRPORT**



A warning sign stands in a field contaminated with dioxin near Danang airport, Aug. 9, 2012, during a ceremony marking the start of a project to clean up dioxin left over from the Vietnam War. AP FILE PHOTO

Vietnam and the United States said Wednesday they have finished the cleanup of dioxin contamination at Danang airport caused by the transport and storage of the herbicide Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

The 30 hectares (74 acres) of land cleansed of the toxic chemical were handed over to Vietnam at a ceremony.

Vice Defense Minister Nguyen Chi Vinh praised the U.S. government’s involvement in the cleanup.

“It is proof that we are opening a future of good cooperation between the governments of Vietnam and the United States,” Vinh said. “Today marks the day that Danang airport is no longer known as a dioxin hotspot, the day that Danang people can be assured that their health will not be destroyed by chemicals left over from the war.”

Large amounts of Agent Orange, which contains dioxin, were stored at Danang airport during the war and sprayed by U.S. forces to defoliate the countryside and deny communist fighters jungle cover. Vietnamese still suffer from the effects of the spraying.

U.S. Ambassador Daniel Kritenbrink called the joint cleanup a significant milestone in the expanding partnership between the two countries.

“This project truly is a hallmark of our countries’ shared vision to be honest about the past, deal responsibly with remaining legacy issues and turn a point of contention into one of collaboration,” he said.

Kritenbrink said working together on the issues of the past “builds strategic trust and enables us to further strengthen our forward-looking partnership that advances shared interests and strong people-to-people ties.”

Between 1962 and 1971, the U.S. military sprayed roughly 11 million gallons of Agent Orange across large swaths of southern Vietnam. Dioxin stays in the soil and in the sediment at the bottom of lakes and rivers for generations. It can enter the food supply through the fat of fish and other animals.

Vietnam says as many as 4 million of its citizens were exposed to the herbicide and as many as 3 million have suffered illnesses caused by it — including the children of people who were exposed during the war.

The U.S. government says the actual number of people affected is much lower and that Vietnamese are too quick to blame Agent Orange for birth defects that can be caused by malnutrition or other factors.

Last month, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis visited Bien Hoa air base north of Ho Chi Minh City, the former Saigon, another dioxin hotspot.

The U.S. Agency for International Development will soon begin a soil restoration project at the base that is estimated to take several years and cost \$390 million.

**NEW RESEARCH COULD LEAD TO DISABILITY BENEFITS FOR VIETNAM VETERANS WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**

By: Leo Shane III



Two U.S. paratroopers squat in tall elephant grass and look toward the area where sniper fire was heard during landing operations north of Saigon, Vietnam, on Nov. 8, 1965. New research shows a strong link between chemical defoliant exposure during that war and high blood pressure later in life. (AP file photo)

WASHINGTON — New research linking veterans’ high blood pressure with wartime exposure to chemical defoliants could dramatically expand federal disability benefits for tens of thousands of Vietnam-era troops.

The findings, from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, conclude that “sufficient evidence” exists linking hypertension and related illnesses in veterans to Agent Orange and other defoliants used in Vietnam, Thailand and South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s.

They recommend adding the condition to the list of 14 presumptive diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure, a group that includes Hodgkin’s Disease, prostate cancer and Parkinson’s Disease. That’s an upgrade from past research that showed a possible but not conclusive link between the toxic exposures and high blood pressure problems later in life.

If Veterans Affairs officials follow through with the recommendation, it could open up new or additional disability benefits to thousands of aging veterans who served in those areas and who are now struggling with heart problems.

Veterans who struggle with high blood pressure issues are eligible for health care at VA facilities. But the illness is eligible for disability benefits in only select cases.

Adding an illness to VA’s presumptive list means that veterans applying for disability benefits need not prove that their sickness is directly connected to their time in service. Instead, they only need show that they served in areas where the defoliant was used and that they now suffer from the diseases.

That’s a significant difference, since proving direct exposure and clear health links can be nearly impossible for ailing veterans searching for decades-old paper records.

A change in the designation of hypertension by VA could also add significant new costs to the department’s disability payout expenses.

In 2010, when then Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki expanded the list of presumptive illnesses for Agent Orange exposure to include ischemic heart disease and Parkinson’s, the department estimated additional costs of more than \$42 billion over a decade.

It’s unclear how many veterans suffer from high blood pressure and would be eligible for disability payments if the change is made. In a statement, VA spokesman Curt Cashour said the department “is in the process of evaluating this report and appreciates the work” of the group.

Regardless the cost, officials from the Veterans of Foreign Wars are already calling for VA officials to move ahead with adding hypertension to the list.

“There is no doubt in anyone’s mind that Agent Orange made veterans sick, it made their children sick, and it brought pain and suffering and premature death to many,” VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence said in a statement. “Even though it’s been a half century since they were exposed, the results of that exposure is something they continue to live with daily.”

Over the last year, advocates for “blue water” Navy veterans — sailors who served in ships off the coastline of Vietnam — have been fighting with department officials over a decision to deny them presumptive status in Agent Orange related claims.

VA officials have insisted that scientific evidence does not exist linking their illnesses to exposure to the defoliant miles away from the Vietnam mainland.

The new study is available at the National Academies Press website.

**HYPERTENSION UPGRADED IN LATEST BIENNIAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON HEALTH PROBLEMS IN VETERANS THAT MAY BE LINKED TO AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE DURING VIETNAM WAR**

The latest in a series of congressionally mandated biennial reviews of the evidence of health problems that may be linked to exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the Vietnam War found sufficient evidence of an association for hypertension and monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS). The committee that carried out the study and wrote the report, Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 11 (2018), focused on the scientific literature published between Sept. 30, 2014, and Dec. 31, 2017.

From 1962 to 1971, the U.S. military sprayed herbicides over Vietnam to strip the thick jungle canopy

that could conceal opposition forces, destroy crops that those forces might depend on, and clear tall grass and bushes from the perimeters of U.S. bases and outlying encampments. The most commonly used chemical mixture sprayed was Agent Orange, which was contaminated with the most toxic form of dioxin. These and the other herbicides sprayed during the war constituted the chemicals of interest for the committee. The exact number of U.S. military personnel who served in Vietnam is unknown because deployment to the theater was not specifically recorded in military records, but estimates range from 2.6 million to 4.3 million.

Hypertension was moved to the category of "sufficient" evidence of an association from its previous classification in the "limited or suggestive" category. The sufficient category indicates that there is enough epidemiologic evidence to conclude that there is a positive association. A finding of limited or suggestive evidence means that epidemiologic research results suggest an association between exposure to herbicides and a particular outcome, but a firm conclusion is limited because chance, bias, and confounding factors could not be ruled out with confidence. The committee came to this conclusion in part based on a recent study of U.S. Vietnam veterans by researchers from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which found that self-reported hypertension rates were highest among former military personnel who had the greatest opportunity for exposure to these chemicals.

The committee concluded that there was sufficient evidence of an association between exposure to at least one of the chemicals of interest and MGUS, a newly considered condition. This finding is based on a recent study in which investigators found a statistically significant higher prevalence of MGUS in Vietnam veterans involved in herbicide spray operations than in comparison veterans. MGUS is a clinically silent condition that is a precursor to the cancer multiple myeloma, but only an estimated 1 percent of MGUS cases progress to multiple myeloma each year.

While some new studies suggest an association might exist between exposure to the chemicals of interest and Type 2 diabetes, the committee could not come to a consensus on whether this and the other available evidence continued to be limited or suggestive, or merited elevation to sufficient. Both newly and previously reviewed studies consistently show a relationship between well-characterized exposures to dioxin and dioxin-like chemicals and measures of diabetes health outcomes in diverse cohorts, including Vietnam veteran populations. The risk factors for diabetes, such as age, obesity, and family history of the disease, were controlled for in the analyses of most studies reviewed. However, some members of the committee believed that the lack of exposure specificity and the potential for residual uncontrolled confounding influences complicated attribution of the outcome to the chemicals of interest.

In addition, VA asked the committee to focus on three health outcomes: possible generational health effects that may be the result of herbicide exposure among male Vietnam veterans, myeloproliferative neoplasms, and glioblastoma multiforme. The evidence of association for exposure to the chemicals of interest and glioblastoma (and other brain cancers) remains inadequate or insufficient, the committee concluded. While it is appropriate for VA be mindful of the concerns raised about the possible association between Vietnam service and glioblastoma, the outcome is so rare and the information concerning herbicide exposures so imprecise, that it is doubtful that any logistically and economically feasible epidemiologic study of veterans would produce meaningful results regarding the association between exposures and the disease. For this reason, the committee recommended that VA should focus on fostering advancements to inform improved glioblastoma treatment options.

There are relatively few studies on the health effects of paternal chemical exposures on their descendants, and none address Vietnam veterans specifically. Therefore, the committee recommended further specific study of the health of descendants of male Vietnam veterans.

Myeloproliferative neoplasms and myelodysplastic syndromes are diseases of the blood cells and bone marrow. The committee's search of epidemiologic literature yielded only one relevant paper on these diseases -- a study of these cancers in Vietnam veterans that was reviewed in a previous update. Given this paucity of research, the committee recommended that investigators should examine existing databases on myeloid diseases to determine whether there are data available that would allow for an evaluation of myeloproliferative neoplasms in Vietnam veterans and others who have been exposed to dioxin and the other chemicals of interest.

Although progress has been made in understanding the health effects of military herbicide exposure and





This photo was found years ago in a garage in Rancho Cucamonga California years ago. It would be nice for the men or family in this photo to have it. E-mail us if you recognize any of them.

WASHINGTON — This month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is celebrating the 15th anniversary of My HealtheVet an online patient portal created to empower Veterans to become active participants in their health care.

Launched on Veterans Day 2003, My HealtheVet has grown from a simple website to a robust suite of tools and resources that further enables Veterans to take charge of their health care by allowing them to refill their VA prescriptions, exchange private secure messages with their VA health care team, access their VA health records and more.

“My HealtheVet elevates the level of service offered to our Veteran patients by ensuring they can easily access and manage their VA health information,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “It’s a great example of VA’s modernization efforts and is a significant tool in increasing

Veterans’ access to care.”

To date, My HealtheVet has more than 4.5 million registered users who have requested over 127.7 million prescription refills, downloaded nearly 32 million personal health records and exchanged more than 69.4 million secure messages with their VA health care teams.

Earlier this year, My HealtheVet won a 2018 Government Innovation Award for the VA Medical Images and Reports feature, which allows Veterans to view, download and share electronic copies of their radiology studies, such as X-rays, MRI and CT scans from their VA electronic health records.

For more information on My HealtheVet and its 15th anniversary, visit the site today.

All Veterans and Service Members are encouraged to create a My HealtheVet account at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov).

## WEST LA VA LAND

### VA SELECTS WLAVC AS PRINCIPAL DEVELOPER TO CREATE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AT VA WEST LA

(WLAVC is comprised of three Los Angeles based firms: Century Housing Corporation, United States Veterans Initiative, and Thomas Safran & Associates)

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has selected a Principal Developer to implement a critical aspect of the Draft Master Plan for the Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System – West Los Angeles Campus. In response to VA’s solicitation pursuant to its Enhanced Use Leasing

authority and the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016, VA received multiple competitive responses from highly qualified supportive housing development and operations teams nationwide. VA selected the West LA Veterans Collective LLC as the Principal Developer after a rigorous evaluation process.

The West LA Veterans Collective LLC (WLAVC) was formed for the sole purpose of serving as VA’s Principal Developer, charged with revitalizing the North Campus through the development of a supportive housing community for homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. VA has committed to building 1,200 units of housing on the West Los Angeles Campus, of which at least 900 units will be developed by the WLAVC team. WLAVC is comprised of three Los Angeles based firms: Century Housing Corporation, United States Veterans Initiative (U.S.

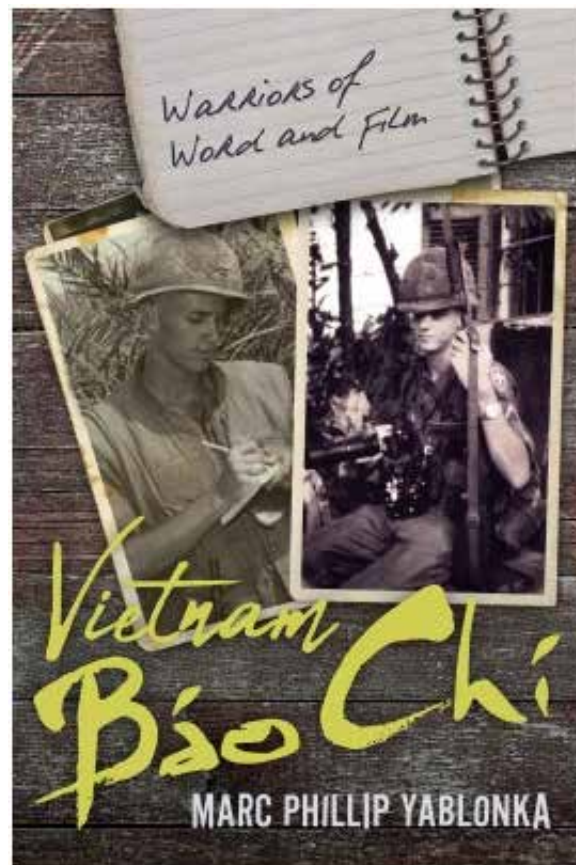
VETS), and Thomas Safran & Associates. Together, these Veteran-led and Veteran-focused organizations possess the experience, capabilities, financial wherewithal, and relationships to successfully achieve VA’s goals for the West Los Angeles Campus.

VA’s selection of a Principal Developer is a critical step in accelerating the delivery of supportive housing units for homeless and at-risk Veterans on the West Los Angeles Campus. The Principal Developer will be responsible for assembling a multi-faceted team to plan, coordinate, and execute all development activities associated with the creation of a safe, affordable, housing community for homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families on the West Los Angeles Campus. The Principal Developer will facilitate integration of the various housing developments on the campus into a true community.

Pre-development activities for Building 207, the first asset to be developed by the Principal Developer, are expected to begin immediately. Simultaneously, the Principal Developer will begin preliminary community / neighborhood planning activities for the rest of the North Campus. Once VA fulfills the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Principal Developer can begin the development process for additional North Campus assets to be approved by VA

## VIETNAM BAO CHI: WARRIORS OF WORD AND FILM

Military Journalist Marc Phillip Yablonka Announces The November Publication Of His Book Vietnam Bao Chi: Warriors Of Word And Film



"There is a plethora of books available about and by the civilian press who brought the Vietnam War home in stories and photos.

But this is the first book about the Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, Sailors and Coast Guardsmen who wrote the stories and captured the still and motion picture images of what the war was really like." -- Casemate Publishing Vietnam Bao Chi: Warriors of Word and Film is available soon in book stores and now from the following online sources: Casemate Publishing: <https://www.casematepublishers.com/> War Stories Press: <https://warstoriespress.com> (Marc's web site) (Also available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble.com)

Author available for interviews.....

Marc Phillip Yablonka Military Journalist & Author "Vietnam Bao Chi: Warriors of Word and Film" Available through: <https://www.casematepublishers.com> <https://warstoriespress.com> [marc.yablonka@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marc.yablonka@sbcglobal.net) (818) 554-0756.

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Editor's Note: In the last issue an article was published on a book “American Gangster – Operation Beaucoup Dinky Dau.” The story was also published on the CSC Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/vvacalsc/permalink/2105495432803788/> where you will find information on the author. The book was supposed to be published in November, we are now in December but I don't know how the book publishing world's calendar works. You can message the author on Facebook for more information; I have but have not heard back yet. We will keep you updated as we receive information.

## IN-COUNTRY



NOBODY WANTS TO BE AROUND A SHORTIMER!



A VETERAN DIED TODAY

He was getting old and paunchy  
And his hair was falling fast,  
And he sat around the Legion,  
Telling stories of the past.

Of a war that he once fought in  
And the deeds that he had done,  
In his exploits with his buddies;  
They were heroes, every one.

And 'tho sometimes to his neighbors  
His tales became a joke,  
All his buddies listened quietly  
For they knew where of he spoke.

But we'll hear his tales no longer,  
For ol' Joe has passed away,  
And the world's a little poorer  
For a Veteran died today.

He won't be mourned by many,  
Just his children and his wife.  
For he lived an ordinary,  
Very quiet sort of life.

He held a job and raised a family,  
Going quietly on his way;  
And the world won't note his passing,  
'Tho a Veteran died today.

When politicians leave this earth,  
Their bodies lie in state,  
While thousands note their passing,  
And proclaim that they were great.

Papers tell of their life stories  
From the time that they were young,  
But the passing of a Veteran  
Goes unnoticed, and unsung.  
Is the greatest contribution  
To the welfare of our land,  
Some jerk who breaks his promise  
And cons his fellow man?

Or the ordinary fellow  
Who in times of war and strife,

Goes off to serve his country  
And offers up his life?

The politician's stipend  
And the style in which he lives,  
Are often disproportionate,  
To the service that he gives.

While the ordinary Veteran,  
Who offered up his all,  
Is paid off with a medal  
And perhaps a pension, small.

It is not the politicians  
With their compromise and ploys,  
Who won for us the freedom  
That our country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger,  
With your enemies at hand,  
Would you really want some cop-out,  
With his ever-waffling stand?

Or would you want a Veteran  
His home, his country, his kin,  
Just a common Veteran,  
Who would fight until the end.

He was just a common Veteran,  
And his ranks are growing thin,  
But his presence should remind us  
We may need his likes again.  
For when countries are in conflict,  
We find the Veteran's part,  
Is to clean up all the troubles  
That the politicians start.  
If we cannot do him honor  
While he's here to hear the praise,  
Then at least let's give him homage  
At the ending of his days.  
Perhaps just a simple headline  
In the paper that might say:  
"OUR COUNTRY IS IN MOURNING,  
A VETERAN DIED TODAY."

PLEASE pass On The Patriotism! YOU can make a difference. If you are proud of our Vets, then send this to them. You'll be glad you did. Then send it to ALL your friends.



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

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To:

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

CSC Meeting Dates & Events  
January 25-27, 2019, Fresno, CA  
April 26-28, 2019, Fresno, CA  
August 23-25, 2019, Fresno, CA

Zephyr deadlines 5 weeks prior to each CSC meeting