



The California Zephyr



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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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WINTER 2020-21

COVID HAS DONE IT AGAIN!

Once again the Tulare County COVID restrictions and the Tulare County Health Department are not allowing a meeting of over 30 people and there is no food and beverage service allowed. I am sure that you realize that we can't have a convention with those limits on service.

The hotel has their hands tied and they are unable to host the convention. The hotel has allowed us to turn a Friday night, Saturday and Sunday Quarterly meeting into a Thursday to Sunday convention for February at the prices noted in the convention contract from June. Same room rate, same meeting space and same luncheon and banquet costs. If you have made hotel reservations for October, call and have the hotel change the dates to February where we have a block of rooms from Thursday until checkout on Sunday. The Wyndham wants us back.

The dates for the convention are now February 4-7, 2021, at the Wyndham Visalia in Visalia. All of the paperwork for the convention is updated and on the CSC web site. The convention announcement and the action dates for the convention are there also.

Convention registration forms, luncheon and banquet order forms have been updated and are on the web site. These forms must be sent in by January 15, 2021. If you have already sent in your registration, luncheon and banquet orders, we thank you for hanging in there with us in these difficult times of the Great Interruption.

Stay safe and stay well,

Dick Southern
Chair
Convention Planning Committee

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WOW! What a year! The Officers and Board of Directors of the California State Council want to express our condolences to the families, friends and Chapter members who have been affected by the COVID-19 virus. It is an understatement to say this year is a challenge. Clearly, the California State Council and National VVA have been affected by the COVID-19 virus, as well. The time worn phrase "adapt and overcome" has become prevalent. Both National VVA and CSC do virtual meetings. National VVA Board of Directors meetings are on the National website, VVA.org. While challenged to hold meetings, fiscal problems have been an issue for both National VVA and CSC.

The efforts by our State Council Officers and National Officers have been outstanding in adapting to the severe income loss caused by Covid-19 shutdown. Many thanks to State Treasurer, Barry Schloffel, and the State Finance Committee for adapting the State

Council Budget and maintaining a financial reserve. The situation at National VVA was more severe and required reduction of staff. However, the work of National VVA Treasurer, Jack McManus, and the National Finance Committee has stabilized the National VVA Budget and reserve. California State Council and VVA National will be financially secure.

CSC has had to reschedule our Convention three times. Many thanks to Meeting Planner, Dick Southern, for his patience and hard work at rescheduling our Convention. Many thanks, also, to the many Chapters who have been able to support veterans and communities. In spite of the many challenges facing VVA and CSC, the strength of VVA continues to be our diversity, resilience, and dedication.

To All, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Be Safe. Be Well.

Dean Gotham

THE GRIEF THEY CARRY



By: Eileen C. Moore
Associate Justice, California Courts of Appeal

In a former life, Justice Moore served as a combat nurse in Vietnam in the Army Nurse Corps. She was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and the Cross of Gallantry with Palm. She is a member of Vietnam Veterans of America as a Life Member. Since 2008, she has chaired the Judicial Council Veterans and Military Families Subcommittee. She is a member of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Armed Forces Law, is an advisor to the California Lawyers Association's Military and Veterans Committee and the Orange County Veterans and Military Committee as well as founding member of US Vets' Women Advisory Committee. She is the author of two award-winning books, Race Results and Gender Results.

We are becoming familiar with the terms Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury and Military Sexual Trauma. But even when a veteran has not been diagnosed with PTSD, TBI or MST, he or she may be experiencing grief. But even when a veteran has not been diagnosed with PTSD, TBI or MST, he or she may be experiencing grief. Not just ordinary grief, but weighty grief resulting from something that happened while serving or transitioning back to civilian life. The vet might have lost a

colleague in combat or to suicide. Or, maybe the vet is upset for doing or not doing an act in the military.

After Vietnam, there was a widespread lack of appreciation for the service performed by our troops. In fact, some chapters of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars would not accept Vietnam vets as members. That's why Vietnam Veterans of America was formed. None of us want a repeat of that despicable treatment of our returning service members. One way for judges and lawyers to show appreciation to our veterans is to simply understand that, in addition to whatever their legal problem, many are carrying around a lot of grief.

Grief Comes in All Shapes

A Ranger who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan bemoaned the loss of his friend who was killed in combat: "We sat in a hooch in Afghanistan, talking about our plans once we got out. He told me he wanted to be a Border Patrol Agent and join the Special Operations, because they do badass stuff."

An Army company commander in Iraq spoke about a comrade who had been killed by a sniper while escorting a convoy just outside Baghdad. As the convoy cleared the scene after the ambush, the soldier who was killed jumped out of the armored Humvee because he had forgotten to record the bumper number of a truck that was destroyed. The company commander said, "This hit me like a kick in the gut. Had I done anything like this already? Was I going to get one of my soldiers killed having my own brain fart?"

A Marine who fought in Fallujah shot six of the enemy. He later said, "I'll never tell anybody. 'Cause I'm not proud of killing people."

A Marine commando spoke about his emotions on his flight home from a mountain camp where he spent 2 1/2 years turning Afghan villagers into soldiers. He was thinking about the many villagers lost in combat. They were his friends and he felt vitally connected to them. Afghan fighters had escorted him on the seven-hour drive to the U.S. base for his flight. The Marine turned his head away from the others on the plane and sobbed.

A Desert Storm Marine watched his best friend get killed. "Just as soon as he hit the sand I had to put it out of my mind. We were under fire and I had other men to keep alive. I tried not to think about it until the war was over. Then it ended and his death hit me like a ton of bricks."

A Vietnam vet described the loss of a comrade. "I couldn't remember his name for years and years, the one who asked to switch missions with me. His name was Chuck. I found his name on The Wall and with tears running down my face, I reminded a ghost who I was and where we had met."

Gap in Grief Research

Roxane Cohen Silver, a professor of psychological science at the University of California, Irvine, found that grief in veterans of our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq has been largely overlooked. The professor told an interviewer, "Our study of responses by U.S. veterans to combat and suicide loss tells a rich story about a previously unexplored consequence of war." Along with Public Health Professor Pauline Lubens, Silver authored an article for the Social Science & Medical journal about grief among our returning soldiers. The article says that as the number of troops killed in action has declined, the military suicide rate has at times surpassed the rate of casualties.

The professors opine that grief in veterans of our recent wars may have the same status that post-traumatic stress disorder did in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Very little research had been done studying grief among military personnel who lost comrades in battle. And now, as a consequence of the increase in military suicide, our service members and veterans are suffering from the loss of buddies who kill themselves as well as those lost in combat. The article laments the gap in research studies, pointing out that we know "virtually nothing" about post-9/11 veterans' grief responses to losing comrades -- especially to suicide.

Regarding a soldier's reaction to the loss of a comrade, does it matter whether the person died in combat or from suicide? Probably. Studies in the civilian community show that the loss of a loved one from suicide results in greater guilt, perception of responsi-

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bility, anger and a sense of abandonment. And soldiers of the post-9/11 generation have been part of a battle buddy system. The idea is to pair each troop with an assigned best friend, and each keeps an eye on the other. They become very close. Everyone has someone to talk them out of darkness. Journalist Sebastian Junger described the brotherhood in war concept, "The willingness to die for another person is a form of love, and is a profound and essential part of the experience."

Lubens and Silver concluded it was easier for soldiers to accept the loss of comrades in combat than by suicide. They wrote, "Combat death is expected and eases the acceptance. Suicide death is unexpected and that can make the acceptance a lot harder."

Why Judges and Lawyers Need to Look for Signs of Grief in Parties Who Are Veterans

California has about 10% of all our country's veterans.

The chances of a veteran going to a lawyer or appearing in court are probable. Plus, the California Legislature has been quite active in passing statutes that concern service members and military veterans.

Part of the Fair Employment and Housing Act, Government Code Section 12920 makes the practice of discrimination because of veteran or military status in housing accommodations and employment against public policy, and Section 12921 says the opportunity for them to obtain housing and hold employment without discrimination is a civil right. Whatever the housing or employment problem, a veteran's grief over something associated with military service may somehow be relevant. Another FEHA statute, Section 12926(0), states that veteran or military status includes a person who is associated with a veteran. Thus, it's at least possible a grieving family member could somehow be involved in litigation. See Castro-Ramirez v. Depend-

able Highway Express, Inc. , 2 Cal. App. 5th 1028 (2016).

Re-entry into marriage, family, jobs and the community presents challenges for returning soldiers, especially those who face additional deployments. Actions that are expected and ordinary in the military are sometimes unacceptable in civilian life.

Returning to intimacy within a marriage may be a problem for a veteran

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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.





Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
California State Council
CalCon 17
February 4 – 7, 2021
Wyndham Visalia
9000 W. Airport Dr.
Visalia, CA 93277
559-651-5000

Hotel reservations are to be made by chapter delegates and guests through the Wyndham Visalia by: **January 15, 2021**

The convention room rate is \$99.00 a night.
Local tax is 12.19%.
\$111.07 a night all inclusive.
This rate is good for up to 3 days before and after the convention dates.

Here is the reservation information that you will need.

- ☐ You can make reservations on line with the Wyndham Visalia at <https://www.wyndhamhotels.com/groups/hr/vietnam-veterans-ca-state-council>
- OR
- ☐ The reservation phone number to call for our group is: **559-651-5000**
Reservation code will be **Vietnam Veterans Group**. Please use only that phone number and code when you call to assure your correct pricing, so that the CSC can get proper credit toward our room guarantee and you can get the room that you are looking for.
- ☐ We have a block of 45 sleeping rooms put aside for Thursday through Sunday. Check out day will be Sunday **February 7, 2021**
- ☐ Our reservation cutoff date is **January 15, 2021**, so you need to act immediately and phone for your reservation at the Wyndham Visalia. Room reservations received after **January 15, 2021**, will be on a space available basis and may not be at the Convention rate.

The Welcome Home Reception sponsored by the California Veterans Benefits Fund on **Thursday February 4, 2021** starts off the weekend at 4:00 p.m. with early Registration check in and a Pizza Buffet, a Corn Hole game and a no host bar.

Convention delegate registration, AVVA Luncheon and VVA Banquet reservation information and other needed forms will be handled through the appropriate Convention Committees and are available on the CSC web site
http://www.vvacalsc.com/pages/stateconv/2020/2020_state_conv.html

CalCon 17 Announce



Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.
California State Council
CalCon 17
February 4 - 7, 2021
Subject to Adjustments

Important Convention Dates 2020/2021

15 December	CalCon 17 <i>Zephyr</i> issue available on line.
18 December	Deadline for Election materials submission.
28 December	Election Committee sends election packets to CSC Officers and Board, Chapters and the CSC Website.
7 January 2021	Deadline for Images of Bravery nominations submitted to the Images of Bravery committee. Deadline for Awards Program nominations submitted to the awards committee.
15 January	Deadline for early Delegate Registration. Registration must be received with payment of registration fees. AVVA Luncheon Reservation Form received. CSC Awards Banquet Reservation Form received. Hotel Room Reservations made at the hotel. Deadline for Vendor registration.
4 February	3 p.m. Delegate Registration opens. 4 p.m. Welcome Reception.
5-6 February	CalCon 17
5 February	9 a.m. Convention opens.
6 February	11 a.m. Delegates must be registered at Convention. Any Delegates not checked in at Convention Registration by 11 a.m. will not be seated on the Convention floor or allowed to Vote.
6 February	12:30 to 1:30 p.m. CSC Elections.
7 February	10 a.m. CSC BOD meeting in the Sequoia Board Room.

Dick Southern
CalCon 17
Convention Planning Chair
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grieving over something that happened in the military. Thus, marital difficulties arise.

Issues with children are common as the service member has not been able to fully engage with them while deployed. Passed after we were fighting in Iraq for a few years, Family Code Section 3047 creates a presumption that when a parent's absence is due to a deployment or change of assignment in the military, the parent's failure to visit, by itself, is insufficient to justify a modification of a custody or visitation order. Nonetheless, some courts refuse to reinstate pre-deployment custody orders. See E.U. v. 1 E., 212 Cal. App. 4th 1377 (2012).

Conclusion

Unlike times in the past, today's public is not that familiar with issues concerning our service members and veterans, especially when they transition back into civilian life. If those in the legal system are somewhat acquainted with what vets face, it may tend to make their transition into and adjustment to civilian life a bit easier.

It is likely any veteran who saw combat or lost a colleague through combat or suicide is carrying around grief in excess to what most people carry. A member of Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America wrote on IAVA's website: "I can remember walking down the street as a child and trying to run out my shadow, because it would not leave me alone ... Many veterans and military members have the shadows of their lost battle buddies, survivor's guilt and pain, as well as the trauma of sexual assault and harassment as their constant shadows."

A veteran's grief might have to do with something beyond the ken of most civilians. As an example, I carry grief about shots of penicillin I gave to soldiers with punji stick wounds. Those sticks, buried by the enemy after being dipped in human feces, snapped up and dug into the meaty part of the calf, causing nasty infections. "Can you skip this one, Lieutenant?" or "Why don't you dilute it?" were common requests. I always pretended the guys were just joking and responded with something like, "Turn over, soldier, and assume the position." Had I skipped or diluted the shot, the infection might have resulted in their being sent out of country to a more sophisticated far away facility... to safety. To this day, I don't know if any of those young men, who returned to the jungle after I "cured" them, ended up being killed.

The benefit I always had was that everyone seemed to appreciate the nurses. But the public largely scorned our returning Vietnam soldiers, so they didn't get that appreciation benefit.

Whatever the legal issue involved, when a veteran interacts with the legal system, judges and lawyers should extend those vets the appreciation benefit. They could

demonstrate their appreciation for the vet's service by simply understanding these

MENTORS IN VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS

"Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

"We've got your back."

By Eileen Moore

For nine years, I ran over to the local Veterans Treatment Court, VTC, on Tuesday afternoons to act as a mentor, primarily to women veterans who ended up sideways with the law. The experience provided me a unique insight into what a veteran mentor can do.

The reason I got involved with mentoring is that the judge who launched California's first VTC, the Hon. Wendy Lindley, knew I was a Vietnam vet and asked me if I could tap some of the members of the local chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America to volunteer as mentors. Those Vietnam vets are still at it. But some veterans with more recent experience could make a lot of difference in California's 34 VTCs. To see where California's VTCs are, go to: <https://www.courts.ca.gov/11181.htm#locations>

Many of our returning military have become members of the California bar. Perhaps some of them could squeeze in a few hours a month to volunteer as a veteran mentor, providing current and relevant guidance.

Veterans Treatment Court

Collaborative courts, using evidenced based practices and a team of experts, focus on treatment instead of incarceration. From what I observed and experienced, I concluded there are four main differences between a VTC and other collaborative courts. First, the defendants, at least the ones who are veterans of our more recent wars, are usually inexperienced with the criminal justice system. Second, there is a representative of the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, on the collaborative team.

Third, to a certain extent, there is an emphasis on symbols, phrases, structures and cultural norms that are emblematic of military life. And fourth, and I think most important, each veteran is assigned a mentor. Just like the defendant, the volunteer mentor is usually a veteran.

How a mentor is selected

The majority of mentors have no affiliation with the VA. VTCs often announce to the community that volunteers are needed, and veterans who want to help other veterans come forward.

Different courts assign a particular veteran mentor to a particular veteran defendant in different ways. Most

courts, however, have a person who is an administrator to or supervisor of the mentors. That head mentor position may or may not be a paid position. However, courts often do not have the financial wherewithal to pay for a head mentor, so, along with all the other mentors, the administrators of the mentors tend to be volunteers. Whoever does the pairing of the mentor and defendant tries to find two persons with similar backgrounds. If possible, both will have served in the same branch of service.

Why veteran mentors are important

Everyone with whom the veteran defendant deals in the court process, from the probation officer to the VA representative to the mental health practitioner to the lawyer, is taking notes, giving orders or preaching to the defendant. Most of them have no military experience. The veteran mentor, on the other hand, has experienced some of what the veteran defendant has. At some point, the mentor was in the military and later transitioned back into the civilian world. Thus, the mentor serves as an example of how the veteran defendant can successfully overcome what may seem insurmountable. The mere fact the mentor succeeded in that transition subtly provides guidance and encouragement for the veteran defendant to do the same thing. Additionally, studies have shown that veterans respond better to treatment when they work with other veterans.

Probably the most important function of the mentor/defendant relationship, however, is that the mentor is usually not taking notes or recording anything. The mentor is there for one reason only: to help the veteran defendant. Quite simply, the mentor is a source of constant support and encouragement, an important step toward getting the veteran back on the good citizen track.

Active support from a veteran mentor throughout treatment increases the likelihood that a veteran will remain in treatment and improves the chances for sobriety and law abiding behavior in the future.

The offending veterans can relate to their veteran mentors as people who truly understand what it's like to stand in their shoes because their mentors have served in combat tours themselves. Mentors relate to the veterans through their shared military experiences, and this is important because it fosters camaraderie and helps to break the veterans of their "warrior mentality," so that they will be much more receptive to treatment.

What veteran mentors try to do

Mentors try to be in court when their mentees appear. Between court dates, each relationship depends on the two individuals. Some communicate by telephone or email from time to time. I would occasionally meet for coffee or lunch with my mentees.

Some mentors continue to provide support, even after

graduation.

There seems to be a correlation between what happened in court and how much the mentee leans on the mentor. At the early stage, veteran defendants sometimes have an attitude that the whole process is a waste of time. But when the veteran suffers some sort of sanction, such as an overnighiter in jail, the veteran wants to interact more with the mentor and take the whole matter more seriously. The mentor is there to go with the flow.

In effect, the mentor is like an individual coach who provides encouragement. The veteran mentor is able to communicate with the veteran defendant in ways only another veteran can. They both understand the mentee prefers to suffer in silence because in the military they were taught to "embrace the suck." The mentor is available to engage when the mentee is ready to make the transition from compliance with the court rules to actual engagement with the healing process.

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT A MENTOR CAN DO

One of my mentees, who had numerous tattoos and wild hair colors, sometimes pink or orange, might as well have had "arrest me" written across her forehead. I never asked her, but from some of the things she volunteered, I was of the impression she had been sexually assaulted in the military . I suspected she was trying to make herself unattractive so she wouldn't be attacked again.

Early one Sunday morning, she drove two blocks to a relative's house, still wearing her pajamas. A police officer pulled her over and she was arrested for being under the influence. Before court, she swore to me that she had not taken heroin or any other drug for 54 days. She explained she was scared and nervous when the officer questioned her. During the court session, the prosecutor read from the police report that when she was arrested, she was speaking very rapidly, her pulse was 125 and her eyeballs were shaking. It looked as if she was going to jail, even though the drug test results had not yet made it to court . There was a break in the proceedings and I asked the bailiff if I could approach her in the holding tank. I told her I didn't know how things were going to work out, but that I believed her. And I did. About 20 minutes later, court was back in session and the judge announced they were able to locate the test results. No drugs had been found in her system! The next day, I opened an email from her that had been written after midnight: "Eileen, I just wanted to tell you, thank you for going to court with me and being there and believing me."

ESPRIT DE CORPS

Each time I went to the VTC, the mentors and mentees were just outside the courtroom waiting for the team to finish their collaborations and for the bailiff to open the courtroom doors. Serendipitously, these times genuinely expanded the esprit de corps of the group . Healing and soothing occurs when faces became familiar and people chatted with each other. Smiles, "attaboys" and encouraging pats on backs were common.

Because the judge had a rule that none of the defendants could leave until everyone's case was called, that sense of camaraderie continued inside the courtroom as well. Not only was the group disappointed when one of the offenders was sanctioned for something, the offender appeared to be ashamed for letting the others down. For each case, there seemed to be a common goal of success.

Challenges to mentors

Most of the offenders in a VTC have abused substances. Thus, sometimes a mentor might smell alcohol or observe something about the mentee that looks like a violation. Keep in mind, a mentor is not an arm of the state. Nor is the mentor usually charged with a duty to report suspicious behavior. Plus, an effective mentor-mentee relationship is strongly dependent on trust.

But to be valuable to the veteran defendant, a mentor has to do something when aberrant conduct is observed. I will tell you what I did on two occasions.

In the first situation, I sat there in court and heard the judge order that my mentee, a young man, not leave the state. At the next court hearing, in the hallway, he told me he had just gotten back from Las Vegas. I gently told him he placed his whole future in jeopardy by violating a court order. I told him that one of the court personnel could easily have seen him over there, and that if he were ejected from the VTC, the next step was sentencing.

On the other occasion, this time a young woman, I thought I smelled alcohol on her breath, but I wasn't sure. The fact that she kept popping mints in her mouth fortified my suspicion. Again in a gentle way, I told her that if she was back to drinking, she wasn't fooling anyone but herself. She looked a little ashamed and appeared to clean up her act after that.

Effects of pandemic

Along with the whole collaborative team, mentors are working diligently to keep in contact with their mentees.

Mentors are on the telephone or some video platform to keep their mentees committed to healing. In one court, the mentors wear special T-shirts when speaking with the veteran defendants electronically.

CONCLUSION

Veteran mentors play a unique role in the VTC model. Volunteer veterans engage with offender veterans by encouraging them to change their lives. Mentors can connect to participants and provide unique peer support based on their shared military service and experience. While veteran mentors are highly beneficial, many VTCs in California, have found it difficult to recruit veteran mentors.

A law degree is not at all necessary for veteran mentors. On the other hand, lawyers often have more control over their schedules than veterans who work in many other fields. Plus, they understand how courts operate. If you are a veteran and want to give a little back to other veterans, consider volunteering as a mentor.

VETERAN BENEFITS COMMITTEE

John Weaver, Chair

The VA is issuing a variety of public announcements regarding what they offer. During this current Covid-19 pandemic it has become more important to be aware of those announcements.

As the possibility of a vaccine approaches reality there have been multiple announcements through mainstream media that the inoculations will be provided at no charge. No announcement has yet been made by VA Senior leadership - I anticipate such an announcement will be forthcoming.

My point is that regardless of where you live, take advantage of this new medical science to increase your odds of survival. We are all in that vulnerable status - many of the infirmities that we cope with, because of our military service, are just those that make us vulnerable.

Increase you odds of survival: wear masks carefully (respiratory ailments DO impact your oxygen intake), maintain social distancing (for your sake as well as for others), wash your hands (and face) often (a good habit even without a pandemic), and do not get caught up in the emotional, political arguments pro or con about how to deal with the current situation. This is about your survival, not about which political attention whore screams the loudest.

Take care, survive. I look forward to seeing all of you at the next CSC meeting - whenever we are allowed to conduct that.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By: Seth Reeb - Reeb Government Relations

Barstow Veterans Home

Budget Subcommittee in the Senate and Assembly heard and considered the Newsom proposal to Close the Barstow Veterans Home on May 21. Both subcommittees agreed that there was insufficient information to justify closure, and that needs to be a detailed plan and stakeholder involvement before considering closure.

The proposed closure of the Barstow Veterans Home was rejected by the Legislature in June, after strong push-back from Veteran Organizations, the community, and several Legislators. As you will see below, the budget requires stakeholder input before the Legislature will consider approving that closure.

The budget for FY 2020-21 included a requirement for stakeholder input. We will make sure that the VVA is at the table and involved in this stakeholder's process.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has been directed to provide a report to the Legislature by February 1, 2021, on its proposed plan for the Barstow Veterans Home. A few of the detailed requirements:

1. A detailed transition plan that ensures that no residents of the home are involuntarily discharged without being provided alternate placement options as part of any transition efforts, and includes the estimated number and timing of any transfer of residents, changes in staffing, and any relocation of jobs to nearby veterans homes.
2. A plan to support staff during any proposed changes.
3. An estimate of the cost and programmatic impacts of the plan for the home on the department's Veterans Homes system.
4. Options for expansion of the home's skilled nursing facility as recommended in the 2020 Master Plan.
5. Options for conversion of the home's intermediate care facility into a residential care facility for the elderly as recommended in the 2020 Master Plan.
6. An option for full closure of the home.

7. A summary of the options discussed, and feedback received, at the stakeholder meetings as well as any outcomes and or deliverables as a result of the stakeholder meetings.

Orange County Veterans Cemetery

Department of Veterans Affairs suffered budget cuts in the face of a massive state budget deficit due to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2019-2020 budget appropriated \$20.4 million to the Southern California Veterans Cemetery Master Development Fund. The monies appropriated were to be used to conduct a study and the development of the new cemetery—\$700,000 to be used for the study of two prospective locations in Orange County, Irvine area. The 2020-2021 budget removes that appropriation and instead now appropriates \$700 thousand to conduct a study of the two sites.

Legislation

Because of the pandemic, the Legislature had to shelve many of its bills in order to deal with the post coronavirus recovery. VVA has taken a position on 15 of the bills that continue making their way through the legislative process.

The Legislature will return from summer recess on July 13. The Legislature will have until August 31 to pass legislation and, the Governor will have until September 30 to sign or veto bills.

Key bills being tracked for VVA:

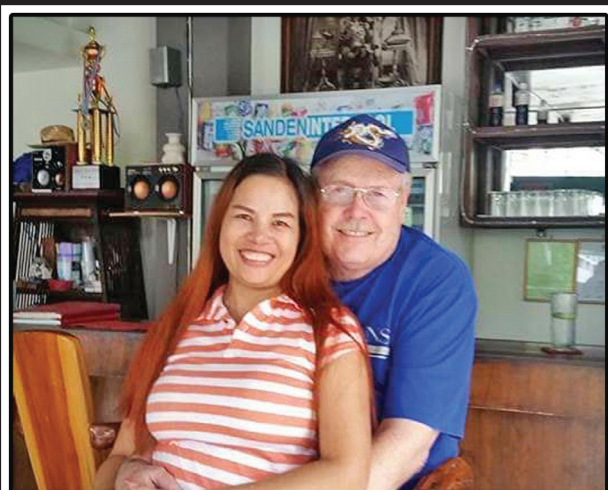
- AB 240
(Irwin) Veterans' homes: lease of property.
Position Support
- AB 345
(Muratsuchi) Natural resources: environmental justice: oil and gas: regulation of operations.
Position Oppose
- AB 694
(Irwin) Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2020
- AB 1935
(Voepel) Veterans: mental health.
- AB 2046
(Voepel) Family law: child support.
- AB 2494
(Choi) Postsecondary education: course credit for prior military education, training, and service.
Position Support
- AB 2549
(Salas) Temporary licenses: military spouses
- AB 3045
(Gray) Department of Consumer Affairs: boards: veterans: military spouses: licenses.
Position Support
- AB 3137
(Voepel) Community colleges: California College Promise: members of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- AB 3300
(Santiago) Homelessness: California Access to Housing and Services Act.
Position Watch
- AB 3371
(Committee on Veterans Affairs) Veteran suicides: report.
- SB 907
(Archuleta) Military Children
- SB 1007
(Hueso) Personal income taxes: exclusion: uniformed services: retirement pay.
- SB 1177
(Jones) Veterans' Home of California system.
- For more detailed information about these individual measures, you can use the link below for the California legislative information. <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/home.xhtml>
- For More information:
Dean Gotham, Government Affairs
deang1968@gmail.com
Seth Reeb, Veterans Advocate
Reeb Government Relations
sethreeb@comcast.net

CHAPTER NOTES

Chapter 201

PASSING OF MIKE SHAW

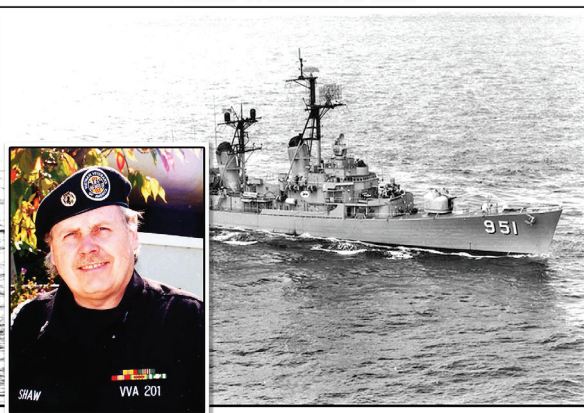
On the 25th of June 2020 long-time member, and numerous times President of Darwin J. Thomas Memorial Chapter 201, Michael K. (Mike) Shaw passed away at the age of 73 in his retirement home in Chiang Mai, Thailand after a lengthy illness. Mike is fondly remembered for his devotion and continuing service to the Vietnam Veterans of America and support of all veterans.



Mike Shaw and wife Nung

As a long-time member of Chapter 201 in San Jose, California, Mike Shaw, a Navy Veteran who served on-board the USS Turner Joy in the Gulf of Tonkin, served as Treasurer and President of the Chapter numerous times and was instrumental in supporting veteran activities in Santa Clara County, California.

PASSING OF MICHAEL K. SHAW



MIKE SHAW, PAST PRESIDENT OF VVA CHAPTER 201, SERVED ABOARD THE USS TURNER JOY IN THE GULF OF TONKIN DURING THE WAR IN VIETNAM

In addition to the Vietnam Veterans of America, Mike Shaw was active in several veteran organizations in Santa Clara County in California including the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Scottish American Military Society, as well as the United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County. When he moved to Chang Mai, he joined a local VFW Post along with several other American Veterans also living in a veteran community in Thailand.

Mike Shaw was instrumental in supporting veteran activities in Santa Clara County, California. A few of the activities Mike participated in are illustrated here.



As members of the Darwin J. Thomas Memorial Chapter 201, Mike Shaw and Ed Aki were avid supporters and participants in Vietnam Memorial walls that visited the Santa Clara Valley. When the Vietnam Wall That Heals visited San Carlos, California in 2000, Mike Shaw and Ed Aki, along with Chapter 201 member Earl Edwards, placed wreaths at the wall. In 2003, when the



Finding A Name On The Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall



Chapter 201 Member Earl Edwards Briefs Students On The Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall

Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall visited Santa Clara, California, Mike Shaw and Ed Aki participated in the opening ceremony at the City of Santa Clara, California's Central Park.

For several years, VVA Chapter 201 held annual BBQs for patients at the Menlo Park California VA Hospital. Mike Shaw was the organizer and leading advocate in supporting hundreds of veteran patients at the VA hospital.



Over the years, Chapter 201 members have participated in the annual Santa Clara County United Veterans Council Veterans Day parades in downtown San Jose California. The annual parade in San Jose honors all those who have served, and those continuing to serve their country. Over 90 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. Mike Shaw was a key member of the Chapter 201 Honor Guard participating in numerous parades.

Each year, on Memorial Day, ceremonies are held at Oak Hill Memorial Park in San Jose, California to honor the fallen of all wars since the establishment of Decoration Day (now Memorial Day) in 1868 that attracts up to 3,000 spectators. Mike Shaw would lead the Chapter 201 Honor Guard in posting its colors and placing the Vietnam Wreath at the Veterans Section of Oak Hill during the annual ceremonies.



ED AKI RETURNS TO HAWAII

Long time Chapter 201 member Edward Aki has returned to Hawaii to be buried at the Punch Bowl National Cemetery in Honolulu, Hawaii. Ed passed away on February 6, 2020 in Gilroy, California. In August 2020, the Chapter 201 Board of Directors approved the donation of funds to the estate of Ed Aki to help offset the expenses for his return to Hawaii from Gilroy, California for burial at the Punch Bowl Cemetery on Oahu.



Punch Bowl National Cemetery

Ed was a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran of both the Korean War and the War in Vietnam. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign War Gilroy Post 6309 (Chaplain) and the American Legion Post 217 in Gilroy, California as well as the Marine Corps League and the Vietnam Veterans of America. He was a Past President of the United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County.

In 2001, The United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County presented a donation to the American Red Cross in the aftermath of 9/11. Darwin J. Thomas Memorial Chapter 201 of the Vietnam Veterans of America UVC delegates Ed Aki, Mike Shaw, Earl Edwards and Randy Richmond presented a check on behalf of the UVC.



Chapter 201 has long honored Prisoners Of War and those Missing In Action (POW/MIA). During the An-

nual POW/MIA Day in downtown San Jose, California in 2002, Chapter members Ed Aki and Mike Shaw assisted in placing a wreath during the annual ceremony.



United Veterans Council President
Gene Fanucchi with Ed Aki and his wife Alexa



honoring Prisoners Of War and those Missing In Action
(POW/MIA) at the Veterans Section.

Chapter 47 Inland Empire CA

VVA 47 Feeds Veterans At Veterans Villages

Chapter 47 distributed 355 frozen turkeys and the fix-
ings at three veterans villages in the inland empire that



Betty Volk (left) - Volunteers for Veterans Foundation and George Swift
(right) - President Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 47



was along with our weekly feeding at our pantries in these locations. Chapter 47 supplies food to these pantries every week including milk and eggs. Just the milk and eggs cost chapter 47 about \$1100 a month we have been blessed with getting donations and of course we were using our household money which we haven't had for some time and now we are getting some monies . On Thanksgiving day we helped distribute ready made Thanksgiving dinners at the Loma Linda veterans village these dinners were donated by the Redlands Elks Lodge and we were there to help them give out these these turkey dinners. We have three locations that we distribute food every week and



VVA Chapter 47 members receives an award from Volunteers for Veterans Foundation for their support of the Pantries at March Veterans Village, Loma Linda Veterans Village, and Beaumont Liberty Village December 3, 2020

they are the March Veterans Village at March Air Reserve Base, Loma Linda Veterans Village in Loma Linda and is not connected with the VA hospital, Liberty village in Beaumont and we sometimes help the Disabled American Veterans chapter 12. At March veterans Village they are constructing 60 more units for Veterans. Some of these



Chapter 47 members Jess and Alice Gomez on Veterans Day 2020 at
Memorial Park in Pomona

veterans were homeless and some we're at risk losing the job or losing their homes.. Next year they will start construction on an 82 unit in Redlands California also they're going to construct a very large one in Indio California. All in the effort to help get homeless and at risk veterans and their families off the street these are not funded by the VA they're funded by private industry through grants from counties, cities, state, and federal government.

With with the December Christmas is coming up and we will be donating toys or gift cards to the children at

During the December 2003 United Veterans Council Flag Lowering Ceremony, honoring the World War II Pearl Harbor Survivors, at San Jose's Oak Hill Memorial Park, Ed Aki served as the Coordinator for the event in tribute to deceased veterans.

"When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them. When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them. When we have joys we yearn to share, we remember them," Aki recited. "As long as we live, they too shall live."



United Veterans Council President Gene Fanucchi with Ed Aki and his wife Alexa during the ceremony honoring the World War II Pearl Harbor Survivors.

During 2013 United Veterans Council Memorial Day Ceremony at Oak Hill Memorial Park, Ed Aki, along with Chapter 201 member Larry Doutherd, place the wreath

these Veterans Village unfortunately with the COVID-19 we won't be able to have any barbecues or Christmas parties like we did last year for these veterans and their families.

Chapter 391
Sonora, CA.

COVID affected the activities such as meetings and fundraisers for Chapter 391 as well as most all of the chapters and State councils in VVA. 391 didn't get to start any



fundraising until the annual Rifle Raffle that we do. Some 300 raffle tickets are sold for \$10 each and the raffle sales are done in June to August with the drawing in September. 391 made a nice profit on the raffle.

The next event was our annual golf classic that had 130 players and many sponsors resulting in a 5 digit profit for the chapter.

In November, we had our annual Veterans Day raffle with a first prize of \$500 worth of gas cards at a local gas station that were provided by Gold Development and Chicken Ranch Casino. 300 Tickets were sold at \$5 each and the drawing was held at the Veterans Day celebration at the Black Oak Casino Resort in Tuolumne. The second prize was donated by the Black Oak Casino Resort and was a hotel, restaurant and free play package. Third prize was donated by Applebee's and was a dinner for two.



The charitable donations by 391 given out to the community during the holiday season amounts to \$5,000. The donations went out to a food bank, a Meals On Wheels program and families for the Holidays.

Our Scholarship program for 2020 gave out eleven scholarships to qualifying students in the amount of \$1,000 each.

The Chapter 391 Color Guard didn't get to do all that they were asked to do for events because of COVID but they managed to do a fair amount that kept them busy.

Chapter 391 is hoping for a happy and prosperous New Year in 2021.

THE DOOMPATROL

By Jack Wells (LtCol, USMC, Ret), VVA Chapter 201

In February 1968, eight Marines volunteered for a suicide mission

After 32 casualties during the first 30 hours of Operation Pursuit, initiated in mid-February 1968 by the 1st Marine Division to search for enemy rocket caches in the mountains west of Da Nang, Lt. Col. Bill Davis, Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines, ordered Charlie and Delta companies of the 1st Battalion,

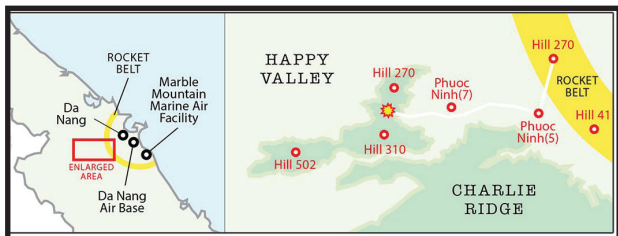


7th Marine Regiment, to get off Hills 270 and 310 and return to their base camps in the flatlands to the east.

A Navy corpsman (medic) with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, looks up, trying to spot the helicopter he requested to evacuate the wounded after an ambush in the hills near Da Nang on February 14, 1968. There wasn't room for one of the dead Marines, whose body was left behind.

Thousands of North Vietnamese Army troops had trekked down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in eastern Laos and moved through South Vietnam's A Shau Valley before making their way to high ground, including Hills 270 and 310, overlooking an area known as Happy Valley and the Marine positions to the east.

Units from the 31st NVA Regiment and the 368B



Artillery Regiment operated frequently out of Happy Valley before moving into the “Rocket Belt,” an arc running north to south around the western side of Da Nang at the ideal range for NVA forces firing Soviet-made 122 mm and 140 mm rockets at Da Nang Air Base, Marble Mountain Air Facility and vital ammunition dumps and fuel depots. The inner edge of arc’s belt was about 5 miles from the Da Nang installations; the outer edge of the belt was about 7½ miles away. If NVA rocket squads were outside that belt on the western side, their rockets would likely fall short. But if they were too close to Da Nang on the inner side of the belt, they might overshoot their targets.

Each battalion of the 7th Marines was responsible for a section of the belt, making sure no enemy rockets got inside the arc and within firing range. The 1st Battalion's headquarters was on Hill 10, inside the belt. Its 72-square-mile area of responsibility extended westward toward the high ground that included Hills 270 and 310, about 3 miles from Hill 10 (the designations reflected hill elevations in meters).

On February 13th, the day before the start of Operation Pursuit, Lt. Col. Davis met with Col. Paul Graham, the 1st Marine Division operations officer. A few days earlier, a large secondary explosion was observed on the saddle-shaped area connecting Hills 270 and 310. The explosion indicated the presence of NVA rocket caches, and Graham relayed an order from the division commander, Maj. Gen. Donn J. Robertson, to conduct a search of that area - one of the toughest jungle/mountain terrains in the battalion's assigned territory.

Operation Pursuit began at 11 a.m. on February 14th as Charlie Company crossed the western end of Hill 10 while Delta Company departed from Hill 41, about 2 miles to the southeast. Accompanying them were 1st Division combat correspondent Sgt. Robert Bayer and photographer Cpl. R.J. Del Vecchio.

The two companies linked up on the approach to Hills 270 and 310. The dense jungle growth at the base of Hill 270 channeled the Marines into a single-file column during the slow, exhausting climb that forced the men to hack out a trail with machetes. By 6:30 p.m., Delta Company had secured Objective 1, the saddle between Hills 270 and 310. Charlie Company had secured Objective 2, the top of Hill 270.

Operation Pursuit Marines climbing Hill 270 had to



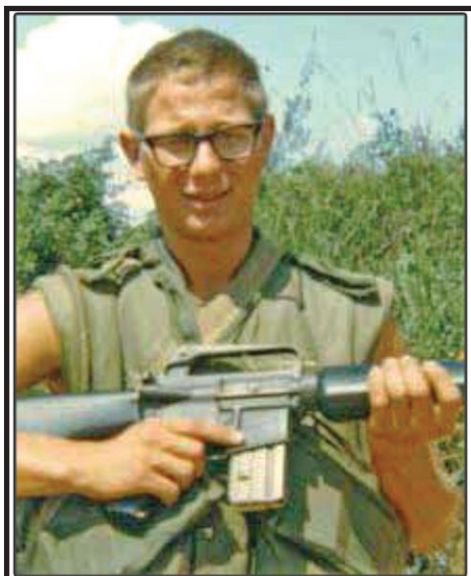
claw their way through thick vegetation to reach the top

The commander of Charlie's 2nd Platoon, 2nd Lt. Mark Whittier, later wrote a letter to his wife describing evidence of the enemy that these men discovered: "We got to the top of Hill 270 and found a bunker and communication system that the [NVA] had been using. Also, we uncovered a log that we translated. This bunker had a perfect view of the entire Da Nang area and the diary had accounts of when units left our hill and where they were going.... The last entry in the diary was that 'there were beau coup Marines leaving Hill 10 for this position.'" The bunker had been vacated in haste, and the radio was still on.

Charlie Company used the bunker as an overnight command post and blew it up the next morning, February 15th. Around that same time, an enemy ambush wounded four Marines of Delta Company in the saddle area. Charlie Company, with Whittier's platoon in the lead, moved quickly down the south side of Hill 270 to reinforce the ambushed Delta squad.

Suddenly, 2nd Lt. Whittier's point squad, which had reached the saddle, was also ambushed by NVA soldiers concealed in bunkers and "spider holes," foxholes hidden underneath a camouflaged lid. Three Charlie Marines were killed immediately, and several were wounded. Pfc. Michael J. Kelly, a member of the point squad who had been with the company for only two months, was hit by an enemy bullet that struck a grenade on his cartridge belt. The detonation killed Pfc. Kelly, severing a leg in the process.

The point squad's machine gun team leader, Lance



PFC Michael Kelly had been killed on a mountain that was still teeming with NVA soldiers

Cpl. Russell Naugle, ran down the trail toward one of the wounded Marines while firing his M60 machine gun from the hip. As the corporal pulled his comrade to safety, he was wounded four times. Lance Cpl. Naugle died later that day from his wounds and posthumously received the Silver Star.

Medevac helicopters flew in to evacuate the casualties, but the side of Hill 310 above the saddle was covered with such dense jungle undergrowth that the choppers had to lower extraction harnesses for the pickups, often while under fire from NVA rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47 assault rifles and 12.7 mm machine guns. Finally, after five hours of battle and medevac efforts, Charlie Company got out all its casualties except Pfc. Kelly. When the day ended, Charlie and Delta companies had suffered five killed and 27 wounded.

Wounded Marines are moved to an evacuation area.



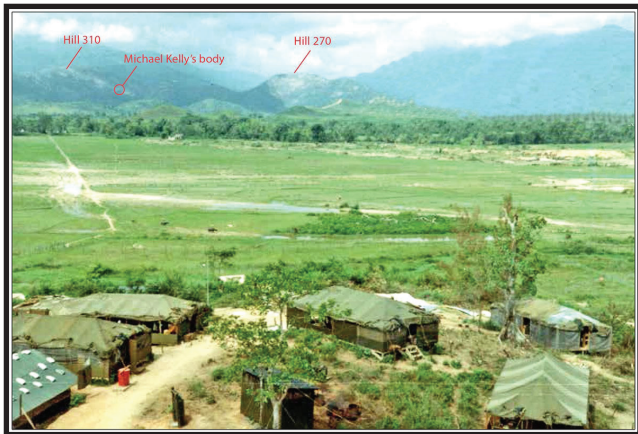
The terrain was so rough that medevac helicopters could not land and had to hoist the wounded up in slings.

The next day, February 16th, around 7:30 a.m., after Lt. Col. Davis issued the order for Charlie and Delta companies to return to their base camps, his 1st Battalion command group and Delta Company were preparing to move down to the valley floor when Charlie Company commander 1st Lt. Dana F. MacCormack radioed. The lieutenant reported that his men, still in the saddle area as they descended from Hill 270, were taking gunfire from bunkers concealed in thick vegetation above them on the north side of Hill 310. Six NVA soldiers were firing at them - so close that 1st Lt. MacCormack's Marines could make out their uniforms, flak jackets and helmets.

A little later that morning of February 16th, the acting commander of Charlie Company, 1st Lt. MacCormack, whose men were descending from Hill 270, radioed Lt. Col. Davis: “Here come the NVA, colonel! I’ve got one more KIA that the last helo did not have room for. We are having a hell of a time carrying this body, and the bones are cutting up the body bag.” Lt. Col. Davis, on Hill 310

with the battalion command group, told 1st Lt. MacCormack to get Charlie Company off the mountain immediately to avoid any more casualties. And that meant leaving the body behind.

Hill 10 camp, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines headquarters



(home of Charlie Company). Pfc. Michael Kelly's body was located approximately in the area circled.

A Marine reconnaissance team to the west, on Hill 502, advised Lt. Col. Davis that a large North Vietnamese Army (NVA) force was headed toward the Charlie Marines. The colonel alerted 1st Lt. MacCormack, who soon announced that he could see the NVA coming and added that his men were having "a hell of a time" carrying Pfc. Kelly's body.

As the company continued its descent, 1st Lt. MacCormack again radioed Lt. Col. Davis: "I've got five WIA being helped down Hill 270, which is slowing us down, so I had to leave our KIA [Pfc. Kelly] in a bomb crater on the saddle. We can come back out and get his body later."

In early afternoon, out of food and water and low on ammunition, the weary, battle-shocked Marines of Charlie Company arrived at Hill 10 and were met by the actual company commander, Capt. Karl Ripplemeyer, who had been on leave and just returned. Delta Company, meanwhile, had reached its base camp on Hill 41.

Surviving Marines of Operation Pursuit cross a river on their way back to base camp

Lt. Col. Davis radioed the regimental commander,



Col. Ross R. Miner, and told him that the Marines were back at the command posts, but added that a dead Marine had to be left behind. A few hours later, Col. Miner told Lt. Col. Davis that a B-52 bombing mission was scheduled to strike Hills 270 and 310 and ordered him to send a team to recover Pfc. Kelly's body before the bombing started. Lt. Col. Davis, however, did not want to risk any more lives in those mountains before the bombing runs were completed and argued against an immediate recovery mission, but Col. Miner wouldn't rescind his order.

Lt. Col. Davis discussed Col. Miner's order with



Ripplemeyer, as well as the battalion operations officer and the officer who coordinated air support for the battalion. Davis decided to use Charlie Company volunteers for the recovery since they knew the location of Pfc. Kelly's body.

"Suicide mission" was an unintentionally appropriate term, given Charlie Company's long-standing nickname: "Suicide Charley." The unit had earned its nickname dur-

ing the October 1942 Japanese assault on Guadalcanal, when 1st Battalion was led by Lt. Col. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, who later became the Corps' most decorated Marine and finished his career as a lieutenant general. During the battle, Charlie Company held its line against a far larger Japanese force despite suffering heavy losses. The day after the fight, a white flag of parachute cloth with a picture of a skull and crossbones rose over the company's position. Emblazoned on the flag was "Suicide Charley."

The patrol to recover Kelly's body had only a few hours to prepare for its departure. A runner was sent to Charlie Company seeking the volunteers, including an ex-



perienced squad leader. Sgt. John D. McCreless, then a 20-year-old sergeant, recalled: "When the decision came down to use a squad of volunteers, I got crazy and raised my hand and said I'd lead it."

Sgt. John McCreless volunteered to lead the squad

Lance Cpl. Stephen B. McCashin responded similarly: "When I heard they were asking for volunteers, I said anyone who would go back into those mountains again would have to be crazy. I thought it was a suicide mission, but since I'm on my second tour here, I must be crazy, so I decided to go."

Pfc. Joseph A. Hamrick signed up because, he said, "I was the only one of the volunteers who knew exactly where the body was, so even though I had only been in the 'Nam' for a month and had never walked point, I figured I could go right to it."

The other Marines on the eight-man patrol were Pfc. Thomas M. Adamson, Lance Cpl. Tyree Albert Chamberlain, Pfc. Alfred P. Granados, Cpl. Billy R. Ranes and Pfc. Pedro A. Rodriguez. Someone - no one can remember exactly who - dubbed the volunteers the "Doom Patrol."

Pfc. Grandos, the radio operator, remembers their preparations. "Our equipment was light for a short recon patrol - no helmets, flak jackets or cartridge belts, and all but one of the men of the Doom Patrol asked to trade their M16s for the more reliable M14, and permission was granted," he said. "We were to make no enemy contact, travel by stealth in the dark, get the body and return. If we ran into a superior enemy force, we were to abort, split up and get back any way we could."

Before the men departed, a senior staff sergeant told Sgt. McCreless: "None of you will probably return alive, but to increase your chances, if things get hairy you can just bring back the leg." The eight Marines weren't totally on their own for the mission. The battalion air officer had arranged for continuous air support for the patrol.

At 2 a.m. on February 17th, Sgt. McCreless' squad left Hill 10. A little more than an hour later, near the abandoned village of Phuoc Ninh (5) - military maps distinguished villages with the same name by numbering them - the Marines spotted NVA soldiers moving toward them. Lance Cpl. Chamberlain opened fire and killed one of them, but the patrol was now compromised. Sgt. McCreless faced a difficult decision: abort the mission or stay the course. He spoke to the battalion command center and was told to proceed. No one wanted an empty casket sent to Pfc. Kelly's family, and the men on the mission knew the odds when they volunteered.

On the move again toward the base of Hill 270, the Marines observed another enemy patrol, and Sgt. McCreless stopped for an hour near another abandoned village, Phuoc Ninh (7), a precautionary pause in the dark to make sure there was no other NVA activity in the area before continuing their journey.

By sunrise, around 5 a.m., the patrol had cleared the open rice paddy areas and started into the dense jungle on the side of the mountain - with a long march still ahead, which meant they would have to conduct their "stealth" mission in broad daylight. Three hours later, the men were in a flat area above the bomb crater where Pfc. Kelly's body lay, covered with a poncho. There they waited while pilots in O1-Bird Dog propeller-driven planes called



in airstrikes.

One of the pilots radioed Sgt. McCreless to tell him that napalm drops by F-4 Phantom II fighter-bombers would land just forward of the bomb crater. He instructed the patrol members to take cover, take three deep breaths, exhale and hold their next breath. The napalm struck about 100 yards in front of the patrol. Pfc. Granados still remembers the intense heat and dust being sucked past his face into the inferno. The shock waves from the blast seemed to raise him off the ground.

After the napalm flames diminished, Granados saw



NVA soldiers emerging from bunkers and spider holes. Sgt. McCreless, worried that the enemy troops were about to move against his seriously outnumbered men, yelled: "Get the leg, and let's get the hell out!"

Moments later, Lance Cpl. Ranes and Pfc. Adamson dashed to the crater. They grabbed the severed leg and quickly strapped it to a backpack that Lance Cpl. Chamberlain carried. The eight Marines then ran back down the trail, amid the still-smoldering napalm and the enemy fire tearing into trees and brush around them. A final strafing run by F-4 Phantoms silenced the firing.

After reaching the flatlands, the patrol came upon Charlie Company's 1st Platoon, sent to assist the squad if any of the men had been wounded or killed. The platoon escorted Sgt. McCreless' squad to base camp, and by 2 p.m. all the Marines were back on Hill 10.

Amid great rejoicing, Lt. Col. Davis summoned the men to his quarters and handed them cigars and cold beer to celebrate their incredible accomplishment. (He wasn't aware at that time that the full body had not been recovered.) As recounted in his autobiography Tet Marine, Davis told the Doom Patrol that he had been a fan of Suicide Charley since the Chosin Reservoir battle during the Korean War. "I've been proud of them during all these years, because they did great things at the Reservoir," he said. "But never did they do anything greater than YOU did, as volunteers, last night and today."

Sgt. McCreless said: "The only reason I can think of why we were able to pull it off is that the NVA just couldn't believe that we were stupid enough to go in there and do what we did. They must have thought we were bait for some kind of trap."

After the celebration, Lt. Col. Davis typed a letter to the 7th Marines commander: "Dear Colonel Miner, I've never been prouder to be a Marine than at this moment! This magnificent squad [from Suicide Charley] went on what appeared to be a suicide mission. I wish you could have heard this young Marine [Pfc. Joseph Hamrick] describe why he volunteered. He just couldn't imagine that an empty casket would go to a Marine's parents. He knew they had to do the job, and while he was scared all the way out, and all the way back, he knew that they just had to succeed. I've just lived through an experience that I'll always hold dear to me. Semper Fi."

Members of the Doom Patrol happily prove that they



all survived their "suicide mission." Standing from left, Thomas M. Adamson, Tyree Albert Chamberlain, John D. McCreless and Alfred P. Granados. Kneeling from left Billy R. Ranes, Joseph A. Hamrick, Stephen B. McCashin and Pedro Rodriguez.

Within 10 hours of the patrol's return, the B-52s from Andersen Air Force Base on Guam devastated the high ground on Hills 270 and 310. But the NVA then re-

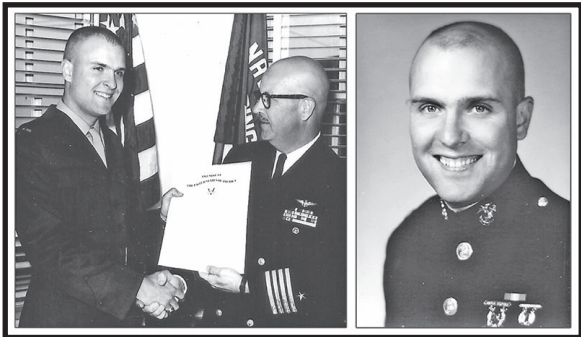
turned to Hill 310, and many more Marines were wounded or killed there the following month during Operation Worth and in August during Operation Mameluke Thrust.

On March 8, Whittier and Sgt. McCreless were wounded. Later that day, at the Navy hospital in Da Nang, Whittier died from his wounds. A few days later, Sgt. McCreless was medevaced to Japan for additional surgery. During fighting on May 30, Doom Patrol volunteer Rodriguez was killed.

2nd Lt. Mark Whittier, who was the Platoon Commander for most of the Doom Patrol volunteers, described the recovery effort as a "100% suicide mission."

In January 1967, Mark Whittier graduated from Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and received his commission as a Marine Corps 2nd Lt. Mark Whittier chose to have his Navy Captain father, who was the Commanding Officer of the Naval Auxiliary Landing Field in Monterey, California perform the formal commissioning. Captain Whittier received the Navy Cross for sinking a Japanese warship in March of 1942.

Men from E Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines,



found Pfc. Kelly's body on March 25 during Operation Worth. A medevac helicopter picked up the remains and took them to the mortuary in Da Nang. A funeral with a casket containing Kelly's leg was held in his hometown of Findlay, Ohio, in March 1968. A second funeral, with the rest of his remains, was held in April 1968.

A gravestone in Findlay, Ohio, marks the site where

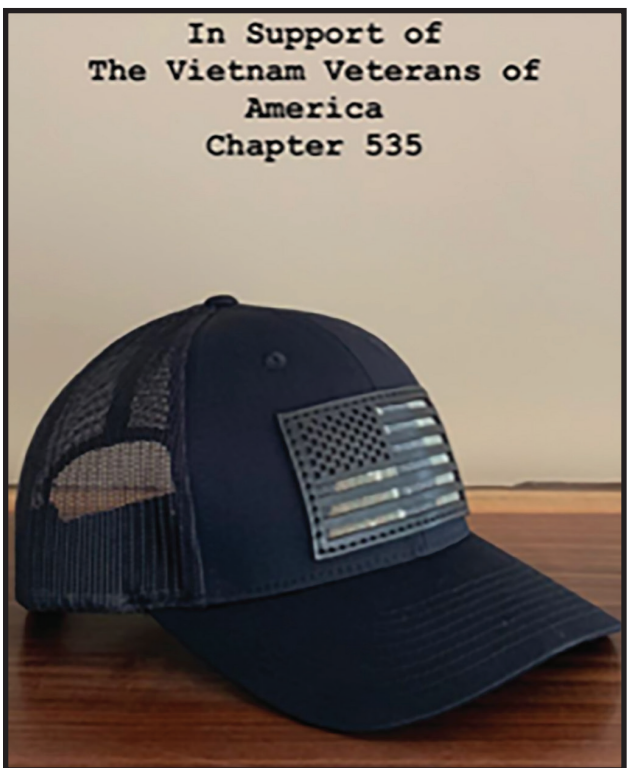


Kelly's remains were buried - in two funerals.

Jack Wells served in Vietnam during 1968-69 as an artillery forward observer with Alpha and Bravo companies, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, and later as executive officer of H Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. This Doom Patrol article appeared in the April 2019 issue of the Vietnam magazine.

Chapter 535

VVA Chapter 535, Nevada County, CA has been a recent recipient of a portion of the profits from a hat devel-



oped and marketed by Eagles and Angels, Ltd.

See www.eaglesandangelsltd.com and <https://www.eaglesandangelsltd.com/shop/mthompson/> where you can learn about the E&A Ltd. story.

The Michael E. Thompson Tiger Stripe hat was constructed of remnants of a tiger stripe uniform worn by Sgt. Thompson during his deployment as a Teletype Intercept specialist when attached to the 5th Special Forces Group, MACV-SOG, at the Phu Bai Combat Base in 1966-67.

The 120 Special Edition hats sold out online in September 2020 in a matter of minutes. Eagles and Angels, Ltd., in concert with Thompson's direction, donated \$750 to Chapter 535. The most probable use of the funds will be in support of Veterans faced with food insecurity or similar livelihood expenses they may be challenged with during our currently stressful economic times.

Chapter 53

On October 30, 2020 Members, Bob Chiota, Steve Crecy, Dick Cunningham and Kirk Gillett picked up and delivered numerous cases of Girl Scout Cookies to Veteran and several non-profit organizations. If you look very hard at the side of Dick's truck you will see the reflection of Kirk's truck that is also carrying a pallet of cookies. Trailing Dick is Bob Chiota (COOKIE 6). We received the cookies through the Bob Hope USO at LAX. The cookies were kept in cold storage courtesy of American Airlines.

Veterans Day 2020 presented unexpected challenges as we all know. In Chapter 53's region events were virtual and visual.

In the City of Manhattan Beach our own former Army Captain and Vietnam Veteran Bob Holmes did the Keynote Address for the pre-taped Virtual presentation. Bob did a wonderful job providing the history of Veterans Day as well as highlighting the recent loss of our Chapter member and highly Decorated Vietnam Veteran Judge Vincent Oakamoto. See the Manhattan Beach event here: <https://youtu.be/y-nS7IQ3xxo>

Read more about Judge Oakamoto here: <https://www.rafu.com/2020/09/obituary-vincent-okamoto-76-judge-vietnam-war-hero/>

The City of Hermosa Beach honored all Veterans with an online and televised slideshow and special markers at the Hermosa Beach Veterans Memorial. Several VVA members were honored as the 26 year old Memorial was built and is largely supported by Chapter 53.

The slideshow can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/RXC-Tq-QvgE>

The City of Redondo Beach held a Virtual Veterans Day event highlighting the Redondo Beach Veterans Memorial and its history. USA Col. Tom Lasser (ret) is a Chapter member and one of the leaders of the Redondo Beach Veterans Memorial Task Force. The event may be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/IIGDKKC5ioA>

Chapter 464

A Veterans Story

A request for a Veteran to tell their story to a class of middle school students to add emphasis for Veterans Day went out. I volunteered to do an on line presentation for a group of 7th graders. I asked that they think of questions that came to mind after reading my bio. The only questions that were out of bounds were like, "Did you kill anyone?" and similar questions in that vane. Mostly they were interested in my day to day life, was the food good and did I miss home. I have included my bio and the thank you email from the students.

Ponce Gonzalez currently resides in Willow Glen. He has 2 daughters, Stacey and Stephanie; 2 granddaughters Ashley and Sophia; and a grandson Sean. His oldest granddaughter is a life-member of Associates Vietnam Veterans of America. Ponce grew up in Fremont, Ohio, and graduated from St. Joseph's Catholic School. He graduated from Columbus Technical Institute, Columbus Ohio with a degree in Electronic Engineering. He's held various engineering and senior management positions with Ohio Bell, Pac Bell, Northern Telecom, Ericsson and Tandem Computers.

Ponce was drafted in April of 1965 when the government began its ramp up for the war in Vietnam. Ponce chose to join the Navy and follow in his uncles' footsteps who served in Pacific theater during WWII. He was assigned as the secondary battery battle station plotting room petty officer during general quarters. Ponce served 4 years in the Navy and was separated on July, 1969 and received his Honorable Discharge in 1971.

His service awards include:

Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnam Service Medal w/ 1 silver and 1 bronze devices, Navy Unit Citation, w/ 1



bronze star device, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross w/Palm, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Republic of Vietnam Civil Action 1C Palm Unit Citation, National Defense Service, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Other awards include: Captain's commendation for superior performance of duty from December 16th, 1968 to June 13th, 1969 for his service supporting the Marines in hostile action.

Since his discharge, he has used his association with the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Veterans (AmVets) and American Legion (AL) to champion veterans' issues. It includes attending the California Legislative Day in Sacramento to advance laws that help California veterans. Also, as a delegate for his Vietnam Veterans chapter he helps to support veterans at a national level by voting on legislative agendas to help all veterans in their transition in coming home. Mr. Gonzalez was recently honored by The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 69 & Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 464 with a Veteran of the Year Award and continues to work with not-for -profits in the Bay Area to help veterans in need.

Thank you email from students:

Arjun - Hello Mr. Gonzales, we greatly appreciate your service to this country as a war vet, and the least we could do is to thank you by writing this letter. It was great to hear from you about your experiences, and was through the eyes of a vet. I was enthralled to hear about your exciting times, the good food, and many others.

Suraj - Hi Mr. Gonzales! It was very nice meeting you on Wednesday, and I really hope you enjoyed our questions and the performances. I would like to thank you for coming and answering our questions, and also for your service as a war veteran. You have made America a better place with your service, and I hope you enjoy our letter!

Rida - Bonjour Mr. Gonzales! It was a pleasure meeting you and learning about your great contribution to the country. Thank you for all that you have done for the country and also thank you for taking time out to meet us. I am really happy that I got a chance to learn about veterans for you! Thank you!

Chelsea- I just wanted to thank you for visiting our school and educating us about your time serving. I really enjoyed all of your stories and the information you shared with us.

Raj- Hello Mr. Gonzales! I would just like to thank you for your service and it was a pleasure to meet you. Learning about your experience in the Navy was truly a wonderful experience and I would also like to thank you for taking the time to answer our questions. I am really grateful that you have put so much on the line to serve for America, and I hope you have a good day!

Alexandra- Hi Mr. Gonzales! Thank you for coming to our class to speak about your experience as a veteran. We all learned a lot by listening to you, and by asking our questions. Thank you for all that you have done for our country.

Mrs. Iacobovici - Dear Mr. Gonzales, as you can see my students really enjoyed you coming to our class. One more time thank you for all you had done for the United States of America.

CSC SECOND VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

Dick Southern

First of all, I want to wish you and yours a very happy holiday season.

The VVA Household Goods Donation Program made the last payment to the California State Council in June.

Well, good news has finally come into play. HGDP funds have started again in the month of October and will continue through February but at a reduced rate.

This is good news since HGDP chapters will receive income that has been sorely missed in support of their programs and activities. The CSC with their portion of the HGDP funds will be able to fund non HGDP chapters to make quarterly meetings once the meetings start up again.

It is also good news that VVA National is recovering from a bad income year due to the impact on business

from the COVID 19 restrictions.

The California State Council Service Officer Program is still in operation and being funded by the VVA National Veterans Benefits Department with matching funds from the California Veterans Benefits Fund. The funding is good from October 2020 to September 2021.

You may know that back in March as COVID started to be an issue, the VA closed the building where our Service Officer, Karen Olszewski, did claims. Karen, instead of stopping her claims activities, started doing claims from her home. It was a rocky start without all of the accommodations that were available at the Long Beach VAMC, but Karen preserved and is now continuing to help veterans and their families with their VA claims. Our other two Veteran Service officers, Richard Silbert and Bill Montgomery, continue to work from their homes are both very successful in winning claims for veterans and their families. Claims work doesn't appear to be slowing down as our VSOs have been working Blue Water Navy Agent Orange Claims since January. Recently there is a possibility that they will be working claims for Blue Water Navy veterans that were denied their claims prior to January 2020 and that could result in a lot of work and some very good retroactive pay for veterans with good claims.

Chapter 982
Family, Associates and Friends,

Wow what can be said for the year 2020. It could be said that this last year was a test of our resolve to become stronger and more enduring. We have had a lot of setbacks this year and I would say for our 982 family that we are going to make 2021 with better things insight to the future. We are waiting for a green light from the City of Guadalupe so we can organize our first meeting in 2021, regroup and get organized once again. We are hoping for January 2021 and if not then February 2021 and this depends on when the lockdown is lifted. Be patient folks okay. So with that we the Board of Directors would like to say Happy Holidays and a very safe Happy, Happy New Year 2021.

Remember to stay safe and healthy, do your distancing, wearing of your masks and wash those hands. Your care and security of self protects you and your family as well as those around you.

Best Wishes,
The Board of Directors

CALIFORNIA AVVA

My Goal is to increase the AVVA membership!How is that done? I need an AVVA representative from every AVVA chapter in the State preferably not a dual member as they would not have the voting rights according to our Association, but yes VVA can be Dual members. I believe growth and assistance will benefit VVA California and AVVA.

Looking forward to your support
~ "Together Always" ~
Alice R. Gomez - AVVA California President

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL
AUDIT

After a more than four-year intensive audit, VVMF finds number of names/casualties listed on The Wall to be 58,276

For more than four years, VVMF has been working to reconcile the differences between the numbers of names in our printed directories, our web-based database (the Wall of Faces), other databases found online and the Department of Defense records.

Through various efforts to understand the differences in number, researching the names of those known to be included by error, those who lived and others – it became clear that a full and complete audit of exactly what is inscribed on The Wall was necessary.

In 2015, VVMF began an intense effort to replace our traveling replica Wall – The Wall That Heals. No digital file existed with a list of names by panel and line, and we believe there has never been one total and complete digital file of exactly what was inscribed on The Wall. We had to have one to create a new replica.

Thus began a multiyear effort that included thousands of hours of staff and volunteer time to establish a database of exactly what is inscribed on The Wall – errors and all.

After completing that audit and reconciling different databases, lists and explanations, VVMF is changing the



Lorem Ipsum

SSGT Adam Byler USMC, accepts a check for \$500 from VVA Chapter 400 members Joe LoParo and Bill Hodges, at the commencement of the Toys 4 Tots Marine Corps annual drive.

number to accurately reflect the number of casualties listed on The Wall.

At the conclusion of those reviews, we were left with three databases. The DoD database maintained by their staff and policies contains 58,276 entries. Those 58,276 entries match identically to the records found in the Wall of Faces database and the associated file for The Wall printed directories. Finally, The Wall inscription database (the list of names physically inscribed on The Wall) has 58,390 names yet contains associated records of names which were duplicates, errors, and corrections.

So How Do You Get from 58,390 Down to 58,276?



Total Names Inscribed on The Wall 58,390
Corrections (re-inscribed)-69
Total Duplicates-13
Those Who Lived/Unknown Status-32
How many names/people are on The Wall?
58,276
So to rephrase the question and its answers:
How many names are inscribed on The Wall?
There are 58,390 names inscribed into the 140 panels. This number includes corrections, duplicates and those who lived.
How many names/service members are on The Wall?
There are 58,276 names/casualties on The Wall.
To see more detailed findings of the study – please read our full 7 page report

ARLINGTON CEMETERY

Jeopardy Question:
On Jeopardy the other night, the final question was "How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns?" All three contestants missed it! This is really an awesome sight to watch if you've never had the chance.
Fascinating. Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
1. How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why?
21 steps: It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.
2. How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?
21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1.
3. Why are his gloves wet?
His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.
4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and , if not, why not?
He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.
5. How often are the guards changed?
Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.
6. What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?
For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30.

They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform or the tomb in any way.
After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin.
The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt.
There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.
The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery.

A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are:
President Taft, Joe Lewis {the boxer} Medal of Honor winner Audie L. Murphy, the most decorated soldier of WWII and of Hollywood fame.
Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty. ETERNAL REST GRANT THEM O LORD AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM.
In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington, DC, our US Senate/House took 2 days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!" Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a service person. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7,

since 1930.
VIETNAM SERVICE STATISTICS
Courtesy of Pat Bodelson

Only 31.4% of Vietnam Vets are still alive.
In case you haven't been paying attention these past few decades after you returned from Vietnam, the clock has been ticking. The following are some statistics that are at once depressing yet in a larger sense should give you a HUGE SENSE OF PRIDE. "Of the 2,709,918 Americans who served in Vietnam , less than 850,000 are estimated to be alive today, with the youngest American Vietnam veteran's age approximated to be 60 years old." So, if you're alive and reading this, how does it feel to be among the last 1/3rd of all the U.S. Vets who served in Vietnam?! I don't know about you guys, but this gives me the chills, considering this is the kind of information I'm used to reading about WWII and Korean War vets. For the last 14 years we have been dying too fast, only a few will survive by 2025... if any. If true, 390 VN vets die each day. In 2190 days from today, lucky to be a Vietnam veteran alive... in only 6-10 years. These statistics were taken from a variety of sources to include: The VFW Magazine, the Public Information Office, and the HQ CP Forward Observer - 1st Recon April 12, 1997.
STATISTICS FOR INDIVIDUALS IN UNIFORM AND IN COUNTRY VIETNAM VETERANS: * 9,087,000 military personnel served on active duty during the Vietnam Era (August 5, 1964 - May 7, 1975).
* 8,744,000 GIs were on active duty during the war (Aug 5, 1964-March 28,1973).
* 2,709,918 Americans served in Vietnam. This number represents 9.7% of their generation.
* 3,403,100 (Including 514,300 offshore) personnel served in the broader Southeast Asia Theater (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, flight crews based in Thailand, and sailors in adjacent South China Sea waters).
* 2,594,000 personnel served within the borders of South Vietnam (Jan.1, 1965 - March 28, 1973). Another 50,000 men served in Vietnam between 1960 and 1964.
* Of the 2.6 million, between 1-1.6 million (40-60%) either fought in combat, provided close support or were at least fairly regularly exposed to enemy attack.
* 7,484 women (6,250 or 83.5% were nurses) served in Vietnam.
* Peak troop strength in Vietnam: 543,482 (April 30, 1968).
* Agent Orange is taking a huge toll on Vietnam Veterans with most deaths somehow related to Agent Orange exposure. No one officially dies of Agent Orange, they die from the exposures which causes Ischemic Heart Disease and failure, Lung Cancer, Kidney failure or COPD related disorders. CASUALTIES: The first man to die in Vietnam was James Davis, in 1958. He was with the 509th Radio Research Station. Davis Station in Saigon was named for him.
Hostile deaths: 47,378 Non-hostile deaths: 10,800 Total: 58,202 (Includes men formerly classified as MIA and Mayaguez casualties). Men who have subsequently died of wounds account for the changing total.
8 nurses died - 1 was KIA.
61% of the men killed were 21 or younger.
11,465 of those killed were younger than 20 years old. Of those killed, 17,539 were married.
Average age of men killed: 23.1 years Total Deaths: 23.11 years Enlisted: 50,274; 22.37 years Officers: 6,598; 28.43 years Warrants: 1,276; 24.73 years E1: 525; 20.34 years 11B MOS: 18,465; 22.55 years Five men killed in Vietnam were only 16 years old.
The oldest man killed was 62 years old.
Highest state death rate: West Virginia - 84.1% (national average 58.9% for every 100,000 males in 1970).
Wounded: 303,704 - 153,329 hospitalized + 150,375 injured requiring no hospital care.
Severely! disabled: 75,000, - 23,214: 100% disabled; 5,283 lost limbs; 1,081 sustained multiple amputations.
Amputation or crippling wounds to the lower extremities were 300% higher than in WWII and 70% higher than Korea.
Multiple amputations occurred at the rate of 18.4% compared to 5.7% in WWII.
Missing in Action: 2,338 POWs: 766 (114 died in captivity) As of January 15, 2004, there are 1,875 Americans still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War. DRAFTEES VS. VOLUNTEERS: 25% (648,500) of total forces in country were draftees. (66% of U.S. armed forces members were drafted during WWII).
Draftees accounted for 30.4% (17,725) of combat deaths in Vietnam.
Reservists killed: 5,977 National Guard: 6,140 served: 101 died.

Total draftees (1965 - 73): 1,728,344.
Actually served in Vietnam: 38% Marine Corps Draft: 42,633.
Last man drafted: June 30, 1973. RACE AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND: 88.4% of the men who actually served in Vietnam were Caucasian; 10.6% (275,000) were black; 1% belonged to other races.
86.3% of the men who died in Vietnam were Caucasian (includes Hispanics); 12.5% (7,241) were black; 1.2% belonged to other races.
170,000 Hispanics served in Vietnam; 3,070 (5.2% of total) died there.
70% of enlisted men killed were of North-west European descent.
86.8% of the men who were killed as a result of hostile action were Caucasian; 12.1% (5,711) were black; 1.1% belonged to other races.
14.6% (1,530) of non-combat deaths were among blacks.
34% of blacks who enlisted volunteered for the combat arms.
Overall, blacks suffered 12.5% of the deaths in Vietnam at a time when the percentage of blacks of military age was 13.5% of the total population.
Religion of Dead: Protestant - 64.4%; Catholic - 28.9%; other/none - 6.7% SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: Vietnam veterans have a lower unemployment rate than the same non-vet age groups.
Vietnam veterans' personal income exceeds that of our non-veteran age group by more than 18 percent.
76% of the men sent to Vietnam! were from lower-middle/working class backgrounds.
Three-fourths had family incomes above the poverty level; 50% were from middle income backgrounds.
Some 23% of Vietnam vets had fathers with professional, managerial or technical occupations.
79% of the men who served in Vietnam had a high school education or better, when they entered the military service. 63% of Korean War vets and only 45% of WWII vets had completed high school upon separation.
Deaths by region per 100,000 of population: South - 31%, West -29.9%; Midwest - 28.4%; Northeast - 23.5%. DRUG USAGE & CRIME: There is no difference in drug usage between Vietnam Veterans and non-Vietnam Veterans of the same age group. (Source: Veterans Administration Study) Vietnam Veterans are less likely to be in prison - only one-half of one percent of Vietnam Veterans have been jailed for crimes.
85% of Vietnam Veterans made successful transitions to civilian life. WINNING & LOSING: 82% of veterans who saw heavy combat strongly believe the war was lost because of lack of political will.
Nearly 75% of the public agrees it was a failure of political will, not of arms. HONORABLE SERVICE: 97% of Vietnam-era veterans were honorably discharged.
91% of actual Vietnam War veterans and 90% of those who saw heavy combat are proud to have served their country.
74% say they would serve again, even knowing the outcome.
87% of the public now holds Vietnam veterans in high esteem.



VVMF - WALL OF FACES
California Missing Photos - 12/28/2020

California continues to have 2 names on the Wall of Faces that are missing photos. We are very close to our goal, but we still need everyone’s help. Please help us “put a face to every name” on the Wall.

Although having a California Home of Record, Vernon Parr SMITH was born, attended high school and is buried in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There are no photos of SMITH in the high school yearbooks. Alonso ARAGON Jr has a Home of Record of San Jose, CA. There had been a photo attached to his Wall of Faces record, his sister recently reported that the photo on file was NOT her brother. A search of all available high school yearbooks from San Jose so far have revealed no photos of Alonso ARAGON Jr.

This list displays their Name, Rank, Branch of Service, Date of Casualty, Home of Record and Unit. Please review the list to see if you might know one of these men and help us find their much-needed photos. Hopefully, someone will recognize one of these heroic warriors and provide information that will lead to their photo being found.

If you have information that might help, you can email it to mike3sps@verizon.net.

Additional information on these and others lost during the Vietnam War is available by going to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund website (https://www.vvmf.org) and clicking on the Wall of Faces link at the top of the page.

Image may contain: text that says '2 California names the VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL have no photo attached to their Wall of Faces record 2020 Help honor them by finding their photo RANK BRANCH CASUALTY NAME ALONSO ARAGON JR SP4 USA 05/26/44 San Jose, CA UNIT A Trp, 1st Sqdn, 1st Cavalry, Americal Div, USARV HOME OF RECORD VERNON P. SMITH SN USN 02/05/68 UNIT- NAVSUPACT Da Nang, YFU-67, USNAVFORV Los Angeles, CA



2 California names on the VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

have no photo attached to their Wall of Faces record

DECEMBER 28, 2020

Help honor them by finding their photo



NAME	RANK	BRANCH	CASUALTY	HOME OF RECORD
ALONSO ARAGON JR	SP4	USA	05/26/44	San Jose, CA
UNIT - A Trp, 1st Sqdn, 1st Cavalry, Americal Div, USARV				
VERNON P. SMITH	SN	USN	02/05/68	Los Angeles, CA
UNIT - NAVSUPACT Da Nang, YFU-67, USNAVFORV				



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

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To:

In this issue:

- Chapter/Council Activities-Events/Photos
- Council Officer/Committee Reports
- Legislative News
- Veteran Info

And more...

CSC Meeting Dates & Events

State Convention February 4-7, 2021 - Visalia
2021 Meeting Dates To Be Decided Due COVID-19 Restrictions
Zephyr deadlines every quarter; next May 1, 2021