



# The California Zephyr



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An Organization Chartered By The U.S. Congress



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the April State Council meeting we had a good attendance of chapter delegates. It was good to hear that they are starting to meet again and planning chapter functions. I submitted a start up kit to national for a chapter in southern California and have a chapter forming in Tracy. Our next meeting will be in June where we will hold elections for the next term.

Update on the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial repair. The repairs have been completed prior to Welcome home Vietnam Veterans Day. I would like to thank the following for donating to help repair the memorial:

Bob Mulholland  
Reeb Govt Relations  
California state commander's veterans' council  
Barton Ruud Chapter 446  
Chapter 391

We have a request with the State of California to include funds to repair the memorial, for the estimated cost of \$110,000.00, in the FY 2022-23 state budget

Alan Cook, President

## HELICOPTERS IN VIETNAM

Harry Reasoner wrote the following near the beginning of an operation in Laos named Lam Son 719. We lost many good men and aircraft there in a short period of time.

By Harry Reasoner  
February 16, 1971

"You can't help but have the feeling that there will come a future generation of men, if there are any future generations of men, who will look at old pictures of helicopters and say, "You've got to be kidding."

Helicopters have that look that certain machines have in historical drawings. Machines or devices that came just before a major breakthrough. Record-changers just before the lightweight vinyl LP for instance.

Mark Twain once noted that he lost belief in conventional pictures of angels of his



boyhood when a scientist calculated for a 150-pound men to fly like a bird, he would have to have a breast bone 15 feet wide supporting wings in proportion. Well, that's sort of the way a helicopter looks.

The thing is helicopters are different from airplanes. An airplane by its nature wants to fly, and if not interfered with too strongly by unusual events or incompetent piloting, it will fly. A helicopter does not want to fly. It is maintained in the air by a variety of forces and controls working in opposition to each other. And if there is any disturbance in this delicate balance the helicopter stops flying immediately and disastrously. There is no such thing as a gliding helicopter.

That's why being a helicopter pilot is so different from being an airplane pilot, and why in generality airplane pilots are open, clear-eyed, buoyant extroverts. And helicopter pilots are brooders, introspective anticipators of trouble. They know if something bad has not happened it is about to.

All of this, of course, is greatly complicated by being shot at. American helicopter pilots are being shot at more often and more accurately these days from Khe Sahn to Tchepone than at almost any other time in this whole War.

It's been a helicopter war all along. And the strange, ungainly, unlovable craft have reached the peak of being needed and the peak of being vulnerable at the same moment. Everyone who has flown over combat zones in VN in a helicopter knows the heart-stopping feeling you get when you have to go below 2,000 feet. Well the men going in and out of Laos rarely get a chance to fly that high. They must be very brave men indeed.

This is a War we could not have considered without helicopters. The pilots are beginning to feel like Mark Twain's man who was tarred and feathered. If it weren't for the honor of the thing, they would just as soon have missed it."

Harry Reasoner was wrong about one thing. I don't know of a single Vietnam helicopter pilot..... or crewchief or doorgunner, for that matter..... who would have wanted to have done anything else there. It was hazardous to our health, but we loved it. Most of the time.

We accepted Reasoner's description of us as "brooding, introspective anticipators of trouble" only because we found humor in it, but I couldn't accept any depiction of us as men who would rather have avoided the conflict there for any reason.

War should never be craved or loved, but should not be avoided at all cost either. We went because our country asked us to, and having gone, we are proud of our contribution to the effort. All we had to do to climb aboard our slick each day was to remember that, while we were sleeping in our nice little bed with a roof over our heads, there were troops outside the wire that we had put there, wherever there was, that still needed beans and bullets and a ride back to basecamp whenever their days or weeks in the woods were up. They would then get a shower, hopefully, clean clothes and a hot meal before having to go do it all over again. We existed because of them and for them, and, having seen a little (very little) of what they did, I was glad to do it.

The part that I absolutely hated was hauling the dead. Hated because there was a soldier who had breathed his last breath. Hated because some poor young kid had lost his life, and we knew of it before his parents, wife, kids, or siblings. Hated but glad to be that first link in the chain in getting him home to loved ones.

## VA ESTABLISHES PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION FOR RARE RESPIRATORY CANCERS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS

WASHINGTON — As part of President Biden's Unity Agenda commitment to support the nation's Veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs is adding nine rare respiratory cancers to the list of presumed service-connected disabilities due to military



State Council Officers	Address	Phone/Cell	E-mail
President - Alan Cook	5872 Alderbook Ct. Castro Valley, CA 94552	510-889-1891 510-414-8201	alancook53@aol.com president@vvacalsc.com
1st Vice President - Jerry Orlemann	13760 Cordary Ave. Hawthorne, CA 90250-7411	310-430-5396	jerry@orlemann.net vp1@vvacalsc.com
2nd Vice President - Dick Southern	PO Box 68 Tuolumne, CA 95379	209-928-3848 209-928-9841	dick.southern@gmail.com vp2@vvacalsc.com
Secretary - John Bilbrey	PO Box 442 Spring Valley, CA 91976	619-300-0697	jbilbrey47@gmail.com secretary@vvacalsc.com
Treasurer - George Hunter	8400 Old Melones Rd.#86 Jamestown, CA 95327	209-743-2034	georgehunter391@gmail.com treasurer@vvacalsc.com
District Directors	Address	Phone	E-mail
North District - Butch Frederickson	3609 Houghton Ave. Corning Ca. 96021	530-514-2005	ccfuvnalum@comcast.net north_district@vvacalsc.com
Central District - Al Sickle	PO Box 1424 Murphys, CA 95247-1424	209-728-2138	leanin.al391@yahoo.com central_district@vvacalsc.com
South District - Dirk Young	9341 Pioneer Blvd. #104 Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670	323-448-7315	drifter-13-69@yahoo.com south_district@vvacalsc.com
At Large - Conrad Gomez	16819 Wirdward Ave. Cerritos, CA 90703	562-882-1374	tizi82@aol.com director@vvacalsc.com
Committees	Chair	Co-Chair	E-mail
Membership	Jerry Orlemann		jerry@orlemann.net membership@vvacalsc.com
Public Affairs	Ponce Gonzalez		ponce408@yahoo.com public_affairs@vvacalsc.com
Government Affairs	Vacant		government@vvacalsc.com
Legislative Lobbyist	Seth Reeb		sethreeb@comcast.net legslative@vvacalsc.com
Constitution	Ken Holybee		holybee@comcast.net constitution@vvacalsc.com
Resolutions	Deek Segovia		rsegov11b@gmail.com resolutions@vvacalsc.com
Women Veterans	Kate O'Hare Palmer		koharepalmer@gmail.com women_veterans@vvacalsc.com
Meeting Planner	Dick Southern		dick.southern@gmail.com
POW/MIA	Bob Chaney		bkrbob@charter.net powmia@vvacalsc.com
Zephyr	Tom Hohmann		tomh47@aol.com zephyr@vvacalsc.com
PTSD	Conrad Gomez		tizi82@aol.com ptsd@vvacalsc.com
Veterans Incarcerated	John Mendiola		yardsbyjohn@yahoo.com incarcerated@vvacalsc.com
CA AVVA President	Alice Gomez		argomez@earthlink.net
Agent Orange	Ken Holybee		holybee@comcast.net agent_orange@vvacalsc.com
Veteran Benefits	Al Sickle		leaning.al.391@yahoo.com veteran_benefits@vvacalsc.com
Convention Planning	Dick Southern		dick.southern@gmail.com convention@vvacalsc.com
Finance	Dick Southern		dick.southern@gmail.com finance@vvacalsc.com

environmental exposures to fine particulate matter.

The following list of rare respiratory cancers will be added to VA’s regulations through an Interim Final Rule published in the Federal Register on April 26, 2022:

- Squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx.
- Squamous cell carcinoma of the trachea.
- Adenocarcinoma of the trachea.
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea.
- Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung.
- Large cell carcinoma of the lung.
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung.
- Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung.
- Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung.

VA determined through a focused review of scientific and medical evidence there is biological plausibility between airborne hazards and carcinogenesis of the respiratory tract — and the unique circumstances of these rare cancers warrant a presumption of service connection.

The rarity and severity of these illnesses and the reality these conditions present, is

a situation where it may not be possible to develop additional evidence, prompted VA to take this action.

“Veterans who suffer from rare respiratory cancers associated with their service deserve the very best America has to offer—but they’ve had to wait for the care and benefits they deserve for far too long. That ends now,” said Secretary Denis McDonough. “With these new presumptives, Veterans who suffer from these rare respiratory cancers will finally get the world-class care and benefits they deserve, without having to prove causality between their service and their condition.”

VA will begin processing disability compensation claims for Veterans who served any amount of time in the Southwest Asia theater of operations beginning Aug. 2, 1990, to the present, or Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Syria or Djibouti beginning Sept. 19, 2001, to the present.

Any Veteran who has or had one of the listed cancers

The California  
Zephyr  
PUBLISHER  
Alan Cook  
EDITOR  
Tom Hohmann

Published Quarterly to all members of California VVA and AVVA as part of their membership.

Contact us at:  
VVA CSC  
5872 Alderbrook Ct.  
Castro Valley, CA 94552  
http://www.vvacalsc.com

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

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

VVA’S FOUNDING PRINCIPLE  
“Never again shall one generation of veterans abandon another.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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







Korean group that finally got inducted into VVA as honorary lifetime members.

at any time during or after separation from military service may be eligible for disability compensation benefits. VA will contact impacted Veterans and survivors to inform them about their eligibility and will provide information on how to apply.

Veterans, survivors or dependents who had claims previously denied for any of these respiratory cancers are encouraged to file a supplemental claim for benefits. If you are a Veteran, survivor or dependent applying for the first time, file a new claim here.

To apply for benefits, Veterans and survivors may visit VA.gov or call toll-free at 800-827-1000.

The official version of this rule is scheduled to publish in the Federal Register April 26, 2022. However, the document is available for previewing.

## CHAPTER 933

April 2nd and 3rd, presented its annual spring recruiting booth and history display at the pre-rodeo Big Hats Day street fair in Clovis.

The March 29th Vietnam Veterans Day and 50th Anniversary of the end of the war observance, sponsored by V V A Chapter 933 and the Clovis Veterans Memorial District, included and car show, patriotic concert, room-sized signing map of Southeast Asia, and Vietnam War photo show. Keynote speaker for the event was Medal of Honor recipient Leroy Petry, a former U.S. Ranger who served two tours in Iraq and three in Afghanistan. He emphasized the importance of comradeship and service between veterans of different generations.

John Cline, was one of several Chapter 933 members featured in before-and-after



John Cline - Vietnam Veteran  
1969-1970 - United States Army

photos.at the Vietnam Veterans Day photo show. this year in Clovis.

Chapter member Paul Kaser joined other vets at this room-sized map of Southeast



Asia to start conversations about their time in "the zone" and sign their names to areas, land and sea, where they had served.

## CHAPTER 53

We continues to conduct our monthly meetings with an average of 30 members attending. The Chapter continued meetings over the Covid months, meeting in a park and in the last several months a local VFW hall.

In June the Chapter awarded five \$1000.00 Scholarships to High School Seniors who interviewed a Vietnam Veteran and wrote their essay about the Vet and the Vietnam War. We had twelve entries.

The Chapter Color Guard participated in a local large Memorial Day Service held at Green Hills Memorial Park in Rancho Palos Verdes California. We have marched in the "Parade of Colors" there for many years.

The Chapter held our Annual Meeting on April 19th electing incumbent officers and one new Board member.

The Chapter has a new website and website team. The site, VVA53.org was re-freshed in June. We thank Jerry Orlemann for his years of work on the former website.

The Chapter Color Guard led the 100th Anniversary Parade for the City of Hawthorne California on July 9th, 2022.

The Chapter recently donated \$1000.00 toward the rehabilitation of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sacramento. The Board of Directors made several donations at our July meeting including the WheelChair Regatta, and Thank a Vet (for homeless Vets).

We are also trying to plan a group activity for our members, TBD.



Flash - Yes We Were Visited By VVA National President Jack Mcmanus At Our Monthly Meeting.

## VVA WOMEN VETERAN

Traveling home from our VVA Leadership and Education conference last week in Greenville, S. Carolina was thirteen hours and gave me time to review another outstanding group of seminars for all our members. The Women Veteran committee hosted "Collecting Oral Histories". Library of Congress Liaison Specialist for Veterans History Project, Andrew Huber, presented a concise review of use of the oral history toolkit and best methods of oral history techniques. For more information contact: [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets) or [Ahub@loc.gov](mailto:Ahub@loc.gov). Sheryl Shaffer, producer of "Veterans Helping Veterans" TV helped with sharing techniques for shorter video techniques for interviews. A great link is: <https://vhvtv.org/vhvtv-digital-production-creating-short-form-content/> We need to tell our stories and get them saved for our families and future generations. Starting this at our chapter levels is not that hard!

Director Leanne Weldin of VA Veteran Benefits presented a seminar on updated Military Sexual Trauma claims. The adjudication of claims has been reviewed closely since 2018 with recommendations for changes due to the high rate of denials. There will now be eight VBA sights that review MST claims to help with better oversight and standardization of claims. 26,000 current claims have an MST component. The passing of the new PACT Act(Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins Act) will help with hiring more staff to process claims. It is important to remember that most of these claims are denied because there is no diagnosis. MST is an event. A medical diagnosis (ie: PTSD ) is needed for the claim. Other "Markers" or identifying events in your service record can help(transfers to another duty station, going off base for treatment, pregnancy test, buddy letters, or large change attitude showing up in evaluations.)It is important not to give up. Denials of claims can be appealed. We have an excellent staff of lawyers at the VVA office that work very hard with greater than 70% success rate. There is no time limit on when the incident occurred during your service. Also, any veteran as well as active duty national guard and reservists can go to a VA Hospital to receive treatment for MST.

Upcoming is the Military Women's Memorial 25th Anniversary Celebration October 14-16, 2022 Arlington VA . Many of us were there for the original dedication. This celebration is to help bring younger women into awareness of the program and build camaraderie. There will be service luncheons, programs, wreath laying, and a candlelight vigil. Check out the website: [Militarywomensmemorial.org](http://Militarywomensmemorial.org)

VVA is the host VSO for the 40th anniversary of The Wall over Veterans Day in November2022 There will be events at the Wall, Arlington, and a reception at Military Womens' Memorial. Look for updates on our VVA Website. Our VVA BOD meeting will be held just prior to Veterans Day.

Diane Carlson Evans, former Army Nurse '68-'69 was honored with our VVA Commendation Medal at the Closing banquet for the Leadership conference. She thanked all of us for the support and financial contributions in the ten year fight to build the Viet Nam Womens Memorial dedicated on the Washington D.C. Mall in November 1993. Her book, Healing Wounds, details the extreme battles and unforeseen bureaucratic obstacles faced prior to the legislation being passed.

There are about 30 women veteran lapel pins left if you want to order them. We are planning on ordering more women honor coins before November. We still need photos of women during their time in service so that we can make a new women veteran information card. Please send your photos to [Mporter@vva.org](mailto:Mporter@vva.org)



We are gathering more information out about healthcare and services for all of us during our senior years. I am interested to hear of any requests that you all have for future topics for our committee. Our VVA website has some great past interviews and webinars for you. We are fewer in number and must remember to be kind and always listen to our fellow veterans. Many of them are still just “coming out” with their stories of time in service. It is amazing what we hold back...all these years later. We are all deserving of respect and help when the time is right.

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

PETER CONATY OBITUARY

Peter Conaty  
November 26, 1939 - July 31, 2022  
Healdsburg, California - Peter Michael Conaty died Sunday, July 31 at his home after a short battle with pancreatic cancer.

Over his 82 years, Pete lived a fascinating life, including several distinguished careers. He was born in Sacramento, CA on November 26, 1939 and raised in Newport Beach. He attended Mater Dei High School in Santa Ana and earned a bachelor's in history from CSU Fullerton. He eventually returned to Sacramento to raise his family.

Serving the military was a central part of Pete's life. He served 21 years in the U.S. Army, retiring as a Lt. Colonel in 1986. Pete was a graduate of the Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, GA, and inducted into their Hall of Fame in 2016. As a member of the famed 101st Airborne Division, Pete served two tours of duty in Vietnam, earning a Purple Heart for wounds received in his first tour. He also served as an Army Ranger and military intelligence officer, receiving many medals and awards, including three Bronze Stars, a Meritorious Service Medal, and an Army Commendation Medal.

During his Army career, he earned a master's in East Asian Studies from CSU San Diego, and studied Japanese at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey.

Following his time in the Army, Pete was passionate about continuing to serve and advocate for his fellow veterans at the state and federal level. Pete joined the California State Assembly as a Legislative Aide in 1986 and spent the next decade in a variety of roles, including Chief of Staff.

Starting in 1996, Pete founded and operated an independent lobbying firm representing a wide range of clients before the Legislature and other state agencies, including veterans organizations, museums, business, and labor groups. During these years, Pete was recognized with many awards, including the CA Department of Veterans Affairs Annual Secretary's Award on two occasions. After moving on from lobbying in 2018 and until his passing, Pete continued tirelessly advocating for veterans as a consultant.

Professionally, Pete was most proud of establishing a prison diversion program for military and veterans in trouble with the law due to PTSD. He also coordinated the 20th anniversary ceremony for California's Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 2008 and worked to pass legislation declaring March 30 as California's "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

Pete is survived by his wife of 28 years, Laurie Reade Conaty; his beloved children, Patrick Conaty (Ashley), Kathleen Richards (Jeff), Sean Conaty (Quinn), Justin Smith (Adryanna), and Christopher Conaty; and his four beautiful grandchildren, Lucy, Bailey, Joseph, and Liam. He is also survived by his sister, Ann Blacker (Robert), and brother, Paul Conaty (Joan); his nieces and nephew; as well as the brotherhood and sisterhood of veterans and many friends. He was predeceased by his brothers, Mark Ries Conaty and Francis Joseph Conaty.

A memorial service will be held at Sacred Heart Church (1040 39th Street, Sacramento) on Thursday, August 11 at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in memory of Pete to support California veterans through AMVETS Department of California Foundation or another veteran organization.

Published by The Sacramento Bee on Aug. 7, 2022.

JOSE RAMOS MEMORIAL

On August 19th the city of Whittier California dedicated a monument to Whittier native and Vietnam Veteran Jose Guadalupe Ramos. Jose served in the Army as a combat medic, he received the Purple Heart and a Silver Star with V devise. Jose was also a Life Member of VVA Chapter 446, but more importantly he was the founder of Welcome



Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

In attendance were civic leaders from the city of Whittier, representatives from the county, Jose’s family, Veterans and Friends. About 200 people were there for the unveiling. The location of the memorial is in Whittier’s Central Park adjacent to Friends Avenue and a monument of John Greenleaf Whittier.

Jose began his quest in the 90’s to have a day set aside for all Vietnam Veterans to receive the welcome home they didn’t receive after service in Vietnam. His efforts weren’t well received by many, even Vietnam Veterans of America. I must admit I was a skeptic at first but, Jose was so passionate and dedicated I kept my reserva-



Veterans gather at the memorial after the unveiling.



tions to myself. Jose then decided to take his effort across the country. He rode his bicycle not once but twice from Whittier Central Park to Washington DC to present petitions for a National Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. His efforts gained momentum as he was well received by many Veterans across the country. Eventually VVA, America Legion, VFW and other Service Originations began to take up the cause.

Whittier was the first City to proclaim March 30th as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. On September 25th. 2009, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed it into law with Jose by his side. Many states would follow Today 45 states and Puerto Rico proclaiming March 29th as Welcome Vietnam Veterans Day. On March 28th 2017, President Trump signed into law March 29th as National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

Jose’s efforts on behalf of Veterans continued until he died September 2017 after a battle with cancer. Soon after, plans began in different ways to honor him.

Whittier, Michigan Avenue Post Office, was renamed for Jose Ramos in April of this year.

The location of Jose’s memorial was chosen because that is where he began the bicycle rides to Washington DC. My feelings are its location is more significant.

1.) Because it’s adjacent to Friends Avenue. Everyone was Jose’s friend.

2.) John Greenleaf Whittier was an abolitionist and a poet, and the city of Whittier is named for him. But one of his most famous poems is called “Don’t Quit.” This Poem exemplifies the spirit of Jose G. Ramos.

On a personal note; Jose will always be remembered by me for his greeting, He would always have a big smile, give me a hug, and say Welcome Home and God Bless.

Veterans gather at the memorial after the unveiling.

Al Biernesser  
Treasurer  
VVA Chapter 446



CSC FULL STATE COUNCIL AUGUST 2022

The summer quarterly meeting was held August 19-21 and was convened on Saturday morning at the Wyndham Visalia with the presentation of the colors by Chapter 933. 18 chapters answered the roll call. After the opening ceremonies, the officers and directors gave their reports. CSC President Alan Cook then introduced a guest of the CSC and



he was VVA National President Jack McManus. Jack spoke about various VVA activities and answered questions for about a half hour. Chapter 47 President George Swift made a presentation. Since there was still time on the agenda, the Chapter reports were started and will continue on Sunday. Just before the morning break, it was announced that there were vendors in the hall way and that there’s going to be Pizza and a movie at 7 p.m. Some members took some time to talk with Jack before going to their District meeting and lunch.

After lunch from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. were the committee meetings. There were 11 committee meetings and the afternoon ended with Government Affairs that had 27 attending. There is a possibility that there could be 14 committees looking for a tier in October. At 7 p.m. we had pizza and watched an interesting movie.

Sunday morning started at 8:30 a.m. with coffee service and Girl Scout cookies. Lots of Girl Scout cookies. After the opening ceremonies, the treasurer’s report was given and the CSC FY 23 budget was presented and accepted. Committee reports were given followed by the remainder of the chapter reports. Chapter 547 President Ernie Bergman gave a slide presentation on the Wheelchair Regatta being held in October. AVVA California President, Alice Gomez, gave her report followed by the VVA Region 9 Director, Dick Southern, who gave his report.

CSC President Alan Cook adjourned the State Council meeting at 10:42 a.m.

The next CSC Full State Council meeting will be held April 2023 at the Wyndham Visalia.

VVA-CSC LEGISLATIVE

The Governor signed a series of veterans and military related bills in to law this weekend. Note that SB 837 by Senator Tom Umberg fulfills the longtime goal of veterans orgs to remove the fee to obtain the VETERAN designation on the drivers license and ID cards. There are still some veterans bills on the Governor’s desk. Please send this to your members.

- AB 305 by Assemblymember Brian Maienschein (D-San Diego) – Veteran services: notice.
  - AB 325 by Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks) – Veterans: discharge upgrades.
  - AB 738 by Assemblymember Janet Nguyen (R-Huntington Beach) – Community mental health services: mental health boards.
  - AB 1633 by Assemblymember Kelly Seyarto (R-Murrieta) – Public postsecondary education: veterans’ educational benefits: information sharing.
  - AB 1715 by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance) – Space Force.
  - AB 1731 by Assemblymember Laurie Davies (R-Laguna Niguel) – Postsecondary education: Title 38 awards: postsecondary educational institutions: application for approval or renewal.
  - AB 1762 by Assemblymember Devon Mathis (R-Porterville) – State Capitol: Gold Star Families monument.
  - AB 2119 by Assemblymember Heath Flora (R-Ripon) – Veterans: Medical Foster Home Program.
  - AB 2509 by Assemblymember Vince Fong (R-Bakersfield) – Vehicles: vehicle license fee and registration fees: exemptions.
  - SB 837 by Senator Thomas Umberg (D-Santa Ana) – Driver’s licenses: veteran designation. (See notes below)
  - SB 949 by Senator John Laird (D-Santa Cruz) – Veterans: California Central Coast State Veterans Cemetery.
  - SB 984 by Senator Bob Archuleta (D-Pico Rivera) – Military service: leave of absence: pay and benefits.
  - SB 1041 by Senator Toni G. Atkins (D-San Diego) – Sales and use taxes: general exemptions.
  - SB 1182 by Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton) – Family law.
  - SB 1195 by Senator Shannon Grove (R-Bakersfield) – Veterans homes.
  - SB 1237 by Senator Josh Newman (D-Fullerton) – Licenses: military service.
- SB 837, the bill to delete the \$5 fee for the VET driver’s license has been signed

by the Governor. However, there is a requirement in another bill that deals with DMV that states that SB 837 will only go into effect if SB 1193 also gets signed in to law and SB 837 is signed first. SB 1193 is still on the Governor’s desk. SB 1193 would allow for Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) customers to opt in to receiving select DMV notices electronically. It is expected that SB 1193 will be signed in to law since it seeks to streamline processes at DMV.

SB 1193, Newman. Department of Motor Vehicles: electronic notifications and transactions.

Existing law requires a state department, including the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), or a division, officer, employee, or agent, to give various notices or communications to persons and requires that whenever that notice is required to be given, the notice is to be given by personal delivery, by certified mail, or by mail.

This bill would, among other things, for a provision of the Vehicle Code or of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations that requires the DMV to mail, notify, deliver via certified or first class mail, provide information in written form, or otherwise references the use of paper, a writing, or the mail to convey information to a person, authorize that requirement to be satisfied by electronic notification, if certain conditions are established by the DMV, including that the person consented to the electronic receipt of the document or information delivered. The bill would authorize the DMV to adopt regulations to implement these provisions and would make conforming changes.

Existing law requires a person to have a valid license or temporary permit issued by the DMV to act as a vehicle salesperson and requires the DMV to issue a license bearing a fullface photograph of the licensed vehicle salesperson, among other information, upon their application for the license.

This bill would authorize the DMV to require a photograph at the time of the license renewal.

This bill would incorporate additional changes to Section 12811 of the Vehicle Code proposed by SB 837 to be operative only if this bill and SB 837 are enacted and this bill is enacted last.

For full text of the bills, visit: <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov>.

Dana Nichol

Reeb Government Relations, LLC

CHAPTER 933

Members of VVA Chapter 933 are pleased to support the Fresno State Veterans Education Program with financial donations and in other ways. The program provides



L to R: 933 Member Jim Johnson, Student Justin Johnson (Marine), Program Development Dir. Katie Adamo-Bewarder, Cynthia Gomez (Army)



L to R: Student Tancredo Pastores Jr. (Army) , 933 Member Jim Johnson, Christopher Kivett (Navy), 933 member Paul Kaser.





L-R: Army Vet Cynthia Gomez and 933 Member John Cline reminisce about their Army careers.



At the induction of the new vet-student cohort are: student Jacob Wadell (Army), student Cynthia Gomez (Army), 933 Member John Cline, 933 AVVA member Norma Kaser.

incoming student cohorts with free tuition, books, special tutors, counselors and instructors to help the veteran-student cohorts succeed in meeting their education and career goals at the university. We feel privileged to meet regularly with these outstanding men and women veterans and hear their amazing stories.

CHAPTER 53 COLOR GUARD HONORED

By Steve Crecy

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund in Washington DC annually conducts events on Veterans Day at the WALL. This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the WALL and VVA was invited to participate in the ceremony in a big way. The plan was for a Color Guard from each state (and territory) to attend. Chapter 53’s Color Guard was honored to be chosen and to represent California.

Our detail consisted of three: Kirk Gillett, Cliff Rapp and me, Steve Crecy. No rifles are allowed at the WALL and most of the units were small with a few at five members. We arrived in DC late on November 9th and soon after dropping our bags at our hotel we went to the WALL for a night visitation; a must if you go. As we approached we could see lights at the apex and hear names being recited over a loudspeaker. Once we got to the stage we noted there were people respectfully lined up waiting to read names. We asked if help was needed and we were graciously told yes. Steve and Kirk each read 30 names and



were humbled and honored to do so just before the midnight pause. Of note: our Board Member, John Masaki was along for the trip using his personal resources. John took some video of us and we are grateful for his help all through the trip.

We spent the next day doing recon first, since parking there is abominable. We did find an area we thought would work almost a click away. It was a good walk in on Veterans Day from our previously scouted parking spot. On the 10th we visited Arlington Cemetery and witnessed the changing of the Guard and that is not to be missed. As Veterans we especially felt the reverence in the air. Good people from everywhere were paying their respect.

Did I mention that each day of our journey had clear weather EXCEPT Veterans Day? Yes we had rain, heavy at times. However, during the 40th Anniversary Ceremony the rain let up! Cliff attributed this to his heavenly connections. As in any military or quasi military event there was “hurry up and wait”. There were 33 Color Guards in attendance. We had a great time cajoling with guys from other states. We were pleased to receive several kudos regarding our uniforms.

In fact, we ditched our panchos taking a chance the rain would hold off, and we were right, so our uniforms were easy to see.

The event was fantastic. The line of Color Guards went in first at the back. Seats were saved for us and we sat and listened to several inspirational speeches. I am provid-



Kirk Gillett reading names on the WALL.

ing a link here for anyone who has not seen any of the coverage.

<https://youtu.be/h1ZdDYGbcYU> In summary, this was an event we will never forget and I know each member was proud to represent California Vietnam Veterans of America and to honor those on the WALL.

VVA WOMEN VETERAN COLUMN.

Traveling home from our VVA Leadership and Education conference last week in Greenville, S. Carolina was thirteen hours and gave me time to review another outstanding group of seminars for all our members. The Women Veteran committee hosted “Collecting Oral Histories”. Library of Congress Liaison Specialist for Veterans History Project, Andrew Huber, presented a concise review of use of the oral history toolkit and best methods of oral history techniques. For more information contact: [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets) or [Ahub@loc.gov](mailto:Ahub@loc.gov). Sheryl Shaffer, producer of “Veterans Helping Veterans” TV helped with sharing techniques for shorter video techniques for interviews. A great link is: <https://vhvtv.org/vhvtv-digital-production-creating-short-form-content/> We need to tell our stories and get them saved for our families and future generations. Starting this at our chapter levels is not that hard!

Director Leanne Weldin of VA Veteran Benefits presented a seminar on updated Military Sexual Trauma claims. The adjudication of claims has been reviewed closely since 2018 with recommendations for changes due to the high rate of denials. There will now be eight VBA sights that review MST claims to help with better oversight and standardization of claims. 26,000 current claims have an MST component. The passing of the new PACT Act(Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins Act) will help with hiring more staff to process claims. It is important to remember that most of these claims are denied because there is no diagnosis. MST is an event. A medical diagnosis (ie: PTSD ) is needed for the claim. Other “Markers” or identifying events in your service record can





President Alan Stelzer and Treasurer Al Biernesser flanked by Chapter 446 San Gabriel Valley members present Sylvia Ramos, widow of Jose G. Ramos founder of WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY and member of Chapter 446, a Memorial Box at the Chapter's monthly meeting held at the Jose G. Ramos Memorial in Central Park Whittier Ca.



From the left, George Hunter, Ray Crnkovich, and Barry Schloffel of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 391, Sonora, California fold the American flag in a ceremony performed at Black Oak Casino Tuolumne, California on Veteran's Day. The flag was presented to a Me-Wok Tribal elder, Dennis Hendricks, who is also a Veteran.

help(transfers to another duty station, going off base for treatment, pregnancy test, buddy letters, or large change attitude showing up in evaluations.)It is important not to give up. Denials of claims can be appealed. We have an excellent staff of lawyers at the VVA office that work very hard with greater than 70% success rate. There is no time limit on when the incident occurred during your service. Also, any veteran as well as active duty national guard and reservists can go to a VA Hospital to receive treatment for MST.

Upcoming is the Military Women's Memorial 25th Anniversary Celebration October 14-16, 2022 Arlington VA . Many of us were there for the original dedication. This celebration is to help bring younger women into awareness of the program and build camaraderie. There will be service luncheons, programs, wreath laying, and a candlelight vigil. Check out the website: [Militarywomensmemorial.org](http://Militarywomensmemorial.org)

VVA is the host VSO for the 40th anniversary of The Wall over Veterans Day in November 2022 There will be events at the Wall, Arlington, and a reception at Military Womens' Memorial. Look for updates on our VVA Website. Our VVA BOD meeting will be held just prior to Veterans Day.

Diane Carlson Evans, former Army Nurse '68-'69 was honored with our VVA Commendation Medal at the Closing banquet for the Leadership conference. She thanked all of us for the support and financial contributions in the ten year fight to build the Viet Nam Womens Memorial dedicated on the Washington D.C. Mall in November 1993. Her book, Healing Wounds, details the extreme battles and unforeseen bureaucratic obstacles faced prior to the legislation being passed.

There are about 30 women veteran lapel pins left if you want to order them. We are planning on ordering more women honor coins before November. We still need photos of women during their time in service so that we can make a new women veteran information card. Please send your photos to [Mporter@vva.org](mailto:Mporter@vva.org)

We are gathering more information out about healthcare and services for all of us during our senior years. I am interested to hear of any requests that you all have for future topics for our committee. Our VVA website has some great past interviews and webinars for you. We are fewer in number and must remember to be kind and always listen to our fellow veterans. Many of them are still just "coming out" with their stories of time in service. It is amazing what we hold back...all these years later. We are all deserving of respect and help when the time is right. Until next time..... Kate O'Hare-Palmer

## CHAPTER 526 – WEST LOS ANGELES

Under the direction of Ken Carline, newly elected President 2022-2023, VVA Chapter 526 is proceeding with 3 most important projects – one new and two existing.

First, under the leadership of Steve Goldberg, At-Large Director 2021-2023, the Chapter has finally moved into the 21st century by establishing a Chapter website! Using the domain title of "VVA526.org", the website is now active and will hopefully be an immediate source of electronically available information not only for Vietnam War era veterans in the West Los Angeles region, but will also serve as a resource for Vietnam War era historians and supporters worldwide. You are all invited to log in whenever you can and be on the lookout for future website enhancements.

Second, under the direction of Joseph Montoya, AVVA Associate Member Liaison 1990-2023, the Chapter recently selected its 32nd annual scholarship recipient. In conjunction with the Culver City High School Scholarship Foundation, this annual scholarship is offered to a graduating senior from either Culver City High School or Culver City Continuation School. First awarded in June 1991, the scholarship was renamed on 19 December 2003 in memory of Eugene "Gene" Partyka [2 November 1938 – 26 November 2000], a decorated U.S. Navy combat aviator and proud Vietnam War veteran. After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry from Michigan Technological University, Gene enlisted in the U.S. Navy on 4 October 1961 and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He served as a McDonald Douglas Phantom [F-4] fighter jet Radar Intercept Officer [RIO] (call sign "Dakota") and completed two [2] combat tours of duty and 174 combat missions during the Vietnam War while flying off the aircraft carriers USS Intrepid [CVS-11], USS Ranger [CVA-61] and USS Constellation [CVA-64] with Fighter Squadron VF-142 [the "Ghostriders"] of the Navy's 7th Fleet. Gene's military



Eugene "Gene" [Call Sign "Dakota"] Partyka

Lastly, Memorial Day – 30 May 2022, members of VVA Chapter 526 attended – for the 34th annual time – the services at the Los Angeles National Cemetery in the Westwood neighborhood of Los Angeles. Those present render salute to all deceased members of the U.S. military – including the 17 members of VVA Chapter 526 who have died since the Chapter was formed in 1990.

## CHAPTER 201

Honored on Vietnam War Veterans Day

During the March 28th Chapter meeting, on the eve of the National Vietnam War Veterans Day, the Chapter was honored by Julie DeMaria, Founder of Operation Care and Comfort (OCC) and Nancy Hughes, Regent of the Santa Clara Chapter of the Daugh-



ters of the American Revolution (DAR), along with other members of the DAR, with a hosted lunch, a BIG THANK YOU for our service, Welcome Home salutation and a gift bag with a number of very thoughtful gifts. The Chapter attendees were very moved by the experience and loudly thanked this group for their thoughts and generosity.



Suzi Logan, Nancy Hughes, Julie DeMaria, Chapter 201 President Warren Finch, Sue Fitzpatrick, Chapter 201 Secretary Treasurer Steve Thompson, Betsy Riccomini and Lisa Oakley

Every Chapter member in attendance at the March 28th meeting received the personal thanks and a gift bag from the DAR and OCC representatives



USAF Chapter 201 Member Frank Lem Receives Thanks From DAR and OCC Representatives

Also during the March 28th Chapter Meeting, USAF Chapter member Rose Herrera, President of the United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County, introduced Michael Pearce, Deputy Chief of Staff to San Jose Councilmember Maya Esparza, who



Michael Pearce, Deputy Chief of Staff to San Jose Councilmember Maya Esparza and Santa Clara County United Veterans Council President Rose Herrera

announced that National Vietnam War Veterans Day will be honored with a proclamation presented by San Jose at the City Hall Council Chambers on March 29th.

**Chapter 201 Holds Annual Election**  
The annual election of Chapter 201s officers for 2022 to 2023 was held on April 25th. Thirty-four Chapter members, Associates and guests witnessed the re-election of President Warren Finch, Vice-President Gene Fanucchi and Secretary/Treasurer Stephen Thompson. Dennis Whittaker was elected to the three-year term as a member of the Board of Directors (BOD). David Sanders was elevated to the two-year BOD term, Dennis Foggie moves to the one-year BOD position while Richard Veit was re-elected to the one-year "rotating" position.



Warren Finch Steve Thompson Dennis Whittaker Dennis Foggie Wayne Heimsoth

Chapter 201 Election Committee members elected were Dennis Foggie, Wayne Heimsoth and Dennis Whittaker. Delegates elected to the California State Council and the VVA Conventions were Steve Thompson (Delegate) and David Sanders (Alternate).



President Warren Finch presents Certificate of Appreciation to William McCorquadale

Following the elections, Chapter President Warren Finch presented Chapter Assistant Chaplain William McCorquadale with a Certificate of Appreciation for his outstanding performance as the Installation Officer for the newly elected Officers during the annual Election.

CHAPTER 47

**LOCAL HISTORY** San Bernardino native Jim Valdez loved his hometown and its history During my years researching San Bernardino's past, more than a few "colorful" characters have come up. One individual's incredible memory made local history during his lifetime even more interesting — that was the late James R. Valdez Jr.

This man loved sharing his personal history and knowledge.  
Jim was born in San Bernardino on March 29, 1930, the second of five children Steve Doyle, left, and Jim Valdez on April 16, 2016, during the 100th Anniversary re-dedication of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument.

**COURTESY PHOTO** born to James and Carmelita Valdez, and went on to be a lifelong resident of his hometown.  
After graduating in 1948 from San Bernardino High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served 20 years as a hospital corpsman 1st Class, which included time on the USS Guadalupe and USS Eversole.  
After retiring from the Navy in 1969, Jim worked at Sage's Market on Base Line, as a retail clerk at Clark's Nutrition, and as a caregiver with Upjohn.  
Meanwhile, his devotion to his hometown never wavered.





Jim Valdez, right, longtime VVA Chapter 47 member and board of director, passed away in October. We at the chapter will miss Jim and his many stories.  
Rest In Peace...see you on the other side

When he wasn't gardening — a hobby he thoroughly enjoyed — Jim was volunteering.

The San Bernardino High graduate remained loyal to his alma mater by becoming involved with the Old-timers Alumni Association, sponsoring Mr. and Miss Cardinal events and with the dedication of a new campus flagpole.

Jim's passion for helping promote the good things about San Bernardino was evident with his involvement with the San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society. He was a wonderful storyteller and he frequently brought up interesting anecdotes during question-and-answer sessions toward the of the group's presentations.

Jim would also reminisce during informal gatherings. One such topic was about the long-since-torn-down Magnolia Market at 696 Magnolia Ave. in San Bernardino.

He informed me that the man who ran the popular grocery store from 1937 to 1955 was Arthur Gorian, who seemingly always had a cigar in his mouth and was known as the "Mayor of Magnolia Ave." Jim mentioned that while attending San Bernardino High, the market was a favorite gathering spot during lunch periods. There was a huge walnut tree next to the market where the kids sat with their brown bag lunches. Back then, the cost of soda, ice cream or a candy bar was 5 cents, while a cheese and bologna sandwich with tomato and lettuce cost 15 cents.

With the San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society, Jim proudly served on the Board of Directors from 2001 until his recent passing. Among his valuable contributions were participating in the Harvest Fair, hosted by the Center For individual Development, or C.I.D., helping to coordinate both the 80th and 100th anniversary re-dedication of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument near the Feldheym Library in Pioneer Park and co-leading a walking tour of San Bernardino's intersection of Base Line and E Street.

This tireless man was extremely patriotic to our country and he showed it during a wonderful presentation called "The Homecoming from World War I." The presentation to the Historical Society was focused on the significance of the event in our country's history, which took place in February 1919. Jim highlighted our local returning soldiers from San Bernardino's Company K and American Legion Post 14. He also focused on the reason the Soldiers and Sailors Monument that stands on the grounds is such an important memorial to all men and women who sacrificed their lives for the United States.

Jim's pride in being an American didn't stop here, however. He served on the inaugural Riverside National Cemetery Support Committee for more than 26 years as well as with the Memorial Honor Detail. He was also involved with the Fleet Reserve Association (Norco No. 8) and a board member of Vietnam Veterans of America (Chapter 47).

San Bernardino native Mario Montecino recently told me that Albert Okura, founder of Juan Pollo Chicken and creator of the Original McDonalds Museum in San Bernardino, wanted to create a small museum for military veterans to "hang out." Mario, a veteran himself, created the museum and met Jim Valdez in 2003, who told his new friend he had accumulated memorabilia. Before long, Jim became a docent for what is now called the Inland Empire Military Museum.

Over the years, Jim sponsored patriotism contests in elementary schools, provided scholarships for college-bound students and was a generous donor of time and money to veterans' organizations, historical societies and nonprofits for children, individuals having disabilities, homeless services and libraries.

He served as officer for many nonprofit groups.

"Uncle Jimmy" — as his family fondly called him — continued his lifetime interests in gardening, history, love of San Bernardino, and sharing his knowledge until he died in October at age 92. Older sister Patricia Knox, youngest brother John Valdez and numerous nieces, nephews and friends survive him.

He is buried at Riverside National Cemetery.

Contact Nick Cataldo at [Yankeenut15@gmail.com](mailto:Yankeenut15@gmail.com) and read more of his local history articles at [Facebook.com/BackRoadsPress](https://www.facebook.com/BackRoadsPress).

## IN MEMORIAM CRAIG MEADORS 1941 -- 2022

Craig Meadors, a valued member of VVA Chapter 933, died April 14 at the VA hospital in Fresno California.

For his work as designer and editor, he received the VVA Veterans of America Chapter Newsletter of the Year Award (2017).

Craig arrived in Da Nang, May 1965, and began service with the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, as a medic. From his camp two miles from Da Nang, he joined Marine patrols with his medical bag, flak jacket, and pistol strapped to his side.

As a part of a special medical team including four corpsmen and one doctor, he went

into nearby schools to conduct "sick call" for children and mothers.

In January 1966 he took part in Operation Double Eagle into Quang Ngai Province, the biggest amphibious assault landing since Inchon, Korea.

As Craig recalled, his unit hit the beach in the rain and at nightfall it was still raining as they were told to "hunker down". He dug into the sand and laid all night in the rain-soaked hole, feeling it was "the longest night ever."

He remembered thinking, "Hey, I joined the Navy to sail the mighty seas and see the world. What happened to that idea?"

But he said he was thankful to be able to tell his story, unlike the American service men and women who never made it back.

After his Navy/Marine service, he expressed his artistic talents by designing several well-known logos for companies and other institutions, and he enjoyed a high reputation and recognition in the design, editing, and printing fields.

933 members will not forget Craig's dedicated service to the Chapter and his kindness and concern for his fellow veterans and their family members. He was a true gentleman, reserved, reverent, devout and generous.

He is survived by two sons and daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and his devoted wife Marilyn, who continues Craig's work as a loyal and caring supporter of Vietnam era veterans.



Some of the members of the Chapter 391 Color Guard presenting colors at the installation of the new Postmaster, Sandie Black in Jamestown, California.

Participating Color Guard members were George Hunter, Barry Schlofel, Mark Weber and Ken Kameran.

## IN-COUNTRY







*Korean group that finally got inducted into VVA as honorary lifetime members.*



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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**

- Full Council Meeting - January 6-8, 2023 - Visalia
- VVA National Meeting - January 20-21, 2023
- Full Council Meeting - April 6-8, 2023 - Visalia
- VVA National Meeting - April 21-22, 2023
- Full Council Meeting - June 9-11, 2023 - Visalia
- VVA National Convention August 8-12, 2023 - Orlando, FL
- Full Council Meeting - October 27-29, 2023

**Zephyr deadlines 2 weeks AFTER each CSC meeting**