



The California Zephyr

Official Publication of the VVA California State Council
An Organization Chartered By The U.S. Congress



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 13 - WINTER 2007

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Chapter News
- 2007 NHRA POW/MIA Dragster
- 25th Wall Anniversary Photos
- Snowball Express Feature
- And more...

CSC MEETING DATES

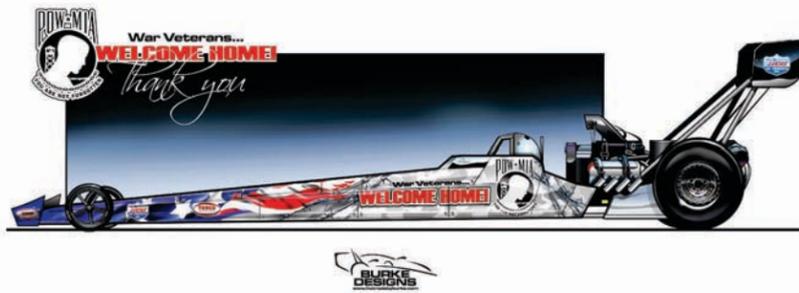
Full Council Meetings:
January 25-27, 2007 - Fresno, CA
April 25-27, 2007 - Fresno CA
2008 State Convention - June 4-8, 2008 - Fresno, CA

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

OUR TAKE – IT WAS A MISSION OF HEALING

Written by Bobby Bennett, Jr.
Photos by Roger Richards
Monday, 12 November 2007

The Vietnam Veterans/POW-MIA Dragster was more than a tribute



walking about incognito, separate of those attending at our invitation.

Many of these guys were teenagers when they were exposed to the horrors of Vietnam. Many attended their first drag races to see the car in almost 40 years.



There are times in our lives when we do good things simply because it's right to do them.

Turn back the clock to a time when the next season of drag racing was just around the corner. Evan Knoll, ensconced in a gliding chair, mulled over the various possible ways in which Melanie Troxel's new dragster could be used to benefit various charities. Somewhere around 3 am, it came to us, Knoll and myself, how we could both help and honor a huge group of people who in a time long past felt more spit upon than welcomed.

their memories, but tuning into ESPN2 during the weekends to see how Melanie did became something they needed to do. Even though she was very much a female, she became a brother-in-arms.

Generally the plan was met with approval, however at least one individual expressed serious reservations.

"Why would you want to open up those wounds? That was such a terrible time in our country. Most of the people in the sport aren't old enough to remember what Vietnam was. I lost a lot of friends over there. Doing this will open up a lot of bad memories."

Wounds have many ways of healing. Some say an open wound never heals. But, fail to treat the wound and the subsequent scar can be just as painful.

The task of interfacing with veterans fell on my shoulders. I was to be the conduit between man and machine. The welcoming mat, if you please.



"Look over there you can see them," Hohmann said. "Watch them closely. They'll walk by and see the POW-MIA flag and then they see the Vietnam Veterans decals and

they stop and make sure they are seeing what they think they are seeing. They'll walk a few more steps, stop and look back. Then they'll walk off, shaking their head and you'll see a smile. That's a guy who's been in the Nam."

He was right. There were many times I watched that scenario play out as I waited for the invited group to arrive each Saturday morning for the what had become a traditional gathering of the veterans. We were allotted eight tickets for each event for veterans to attend the races.

What I discovered in that first event is that Hohmann and some of the other veterans hadn't attended a drag race in almost forty years. I realized just how much drawing power this car had. We even had one guy at retirement age that had never attended a drag race in his life. He came just to see the dragster.

Once they returned to the track, they were indeed back. To them Vietnam would always remain in their memories, but tuning into ESPN2 during the weekends to see how Melanie did became something they needed to do. Even though she was very much a female, she became a brother-in-arms.

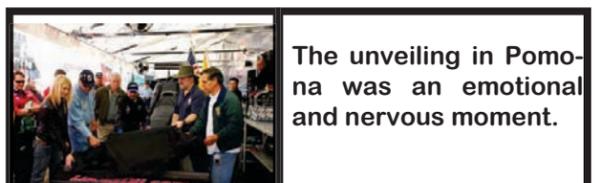
It was a bond created right from the start.

As the season progressed, Melanie transformed. She stepped past being just a national event-winning driver. She became an informed spokesperson for the cause. Evan couldn't have asked for a better person to convey his program than her.

Ann Mills-Griffiths and Karen McManus became dear friends of mine and my heart goes out to them because they lost siblings and no one in our government can tell them what happened much less where they are. During our Saturday morning veteran gather-



Evan Knoll talks with Melanie Troxel and Vietnam vet Tom Hohmann.



The unveiling in Pomona was an emotional and nervous moment.

An elaborate plan of featuring various charities was replaced with a plan to honor war veterans, especially the Vietnam veterans, because in our minds, they'd had to stand at the back of the honor line for far too long. We wanted to include the National League of POW-MIA Families because unfortunately, we've still got over 1,700 servicemen unaccounted and missing despite the war being over for 35 years.

The project moved forward, despite my own reservations. What type of individual would accept our invitation? Were we going to need a medical staff on hand to handle possible flashbacks at the firing of the massive nitro engines? Those thoughts didn't come without a dose of shame and guilt and a feeling of ignorance fueled by the misconceptions often portrayed on television and movies.

Our focus decided I would place the first call to driver Melanie Troxel informing her of the game plan. Her response sounded as if she was confused. "Okaaaay," she responded, adding that she would immerse herself in the project having no real connection to the Vietnam War herself. Troxel was still a young impressionable child at the time the conflict came to a close.

It was my general consensus Vietnam veterans would never talk about their experiences. Thankfully, that opinion was completely wrong. They want to talk; talk about being innocent kids who did what their country asked of them.

It was a point driven home the first time the car appeared at the racetrack.

Tom Hohmann was a Marine wounded in Vietnam.

The more Tom talked, the more I learned a Vietnam veteran was completely different from the traditional stereotype. He quickly pointed out there were many Vietnam veterans walking about in the Pomona crowd. These were vets



To them, Vietnam would always remain in

State Council Officer	Address	Phone/FAX	E-mail
President - Ken Holybee	10311 Woodside Dr. Forrestville, CA 95436	707-887-8891 707-887-1309	holybee@comcast.net president@vvacalsc.com
1st Vice President - Carl Jensen	PO Box 718 Kentfield, CA 94914-0718	415-457-5261 408-847-1195	cjjens@hotmail.com vp1@vvacalsc.com
2nd Vice President - Dick Southern	PO Box 68 Tuolumne, CA 95379	209-928-3848	southern@lodelink.com vp2@vvacalsc.com
Secretary - Tom Hohmann	PO Box 3007 Riverside, CA 92519-3007	951-683-7251	tomh47@aol.com secretary@vvacalsc.com
Treasurer - Tim Forrest	2776 White Sage Dr. Henderson, NV 89052	702-641-1946	treesforever@embarqmail.com treasurer@vvacalsc.com
District Directors	Address	Phone	E-mail
North District - Henry Iasiello	1290 Tuck Rd. Willits, CA 95490-8827	707-459-8601	shiningraven@earthlink.net north_district@vvacalsc.com
Central District - Ed Mentz	2260 Cascade Dr. Atwater, CA 95301-3001	209-563-6067 209-563-6018	csc_vvaed@sbcglobal.net central_district@vvacalsc.com
South District - Gary Colletti	2861 Park Vista Ct. Fullerton, CA 92835	714-990-1436	gmcolletti@aol.com south_district@vvacalsc.com
Director - Richard Jones	4820 School Street Santa Rosa, CA 95409-3567	707-539-8471	amphibvet@sbcglobal.net director@vvacalsc.com
State Council Committee	Chair	Co-Chair	E-mail
Membership	Steve Mackey		nebuskfan@aol.com membership@vvacalsc.com
Public Affairs	Dick Southern		southern@lodelink.com public_affairs@vvacalsc.com
Government Affairs	Carl Jensen		cjjens@hotmail.com government@vvacalsc.com
Minority Affairs	Jerry Yamamoto		n9140y@ca.rr.com minority@vvacalsc.com
Constitution	Bob Johnston		boj201@aol.com constitution@vvacalsc.com
Finance	Barry Schoffel		bshowful@att.net finance@vvacalsc.com
Meeting Planner	Dick Southern		southern@lodelink.net
POW/MIA	Ed Mentz		csc_vvaed@sbcglobal.net powmia@vvacalsc.com
Zephyr	Tom Hohmann		tomh47@aol.com zephyr@vvacalsc.com
SDIT Liaison	Mike McCoy		mikebmccoy@netscape.com sdit_liaison@vvacalsc.com
PTSD	Henry Iasiello		shiningraven@earthlink.net ptsd@vvacalsc.com
Incarcerated Veterans	Ed Mentz		csc_vvaed@sbcglobal.net incarcerated@vvacalsc.com
AVVA Liaison	Sonja Holybee		saholybee@comcast.net avva_liaison@vvacalsc.com
Agent Orange	Dave Sanders		amddave@aol.com agent_orange@vvacalsc.com
Veteran Benefits	Richard Jones		amphibvete6@sbcglobal.net veteran_benefits@vvacalsc.com
ETABO	Gary Colletti		gcolletti@aol.com etabo@vvacalsc.com
Women Veterans	Robert Rosenberger		junecheyanne2@earthlink.net women_veterans@vvacalsc.com

THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR
PUBLISHER
Ken Holybee
EDITOR
Tom Hohmann

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

Contact us at:
VVA CSC
PO Box 3007
Riverside, CA 92519
<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.

ings, Melanie quickly grabbed their attention. "I know it's a popular thing to be behind the troops today," Troxel said. "I realize that in your time it wasn't a popular thing. I think as time has passed, this country has healed. While we can't change what happened then. Today, we can provide a small semblance of gratitude for your unselfish service. I want you to know that we appreciate what you did for us."

Following Troxel's comments, RFC chaplain Larry Smiley would lead the group in a prayer of healing. One thing that may not be common knowledge is that our race pastor is also a Vietnam veteran who was spat on upon returning to the U.S. So was our Torco's CompetitionPlus.com photo editor Roger Richards at the airport in Oakland, Ca., in 1972. Richards was there vir-

tually every weekend to record the camaraderie between veteran and racer.

The program started strong, building each week upon the successes of the previous week.

Then came the acts of gratitude.

Evan was honored with a miniature replica of the POW-MIA statue in Riverside, Ca., by Steve Mackey and a group of veterans in attendance at the Pomona event. The gifts were given from the heart to Evan and don't think for a moment that he didn't appreciate them. He and the team received a number of flags and other gifts throughout the year, each treasured no less than the rest.

At the wall with Judie Taber, whose brother, James B. Mills, was shot down during the early stages of the Vietnam War and hasn't been found yet.



The most heart-touching presentation came in Atlanta when Evan was presented the service medal of one veteran. Denny Fenstermaker said as he presented the medal, still in its original and tattered blue box, "This is for you Evan because I've always felt like you were one of us."

A few gifts were bestowed to me, mostly pins and shirts from veterans, and even a boonie hat, worn by Craig Tonjes in Gainesville. That hat became a landing place for all the pins I attained. The very first pin? That came from my buddy Mr. Hohmann and it represented his company.

"I want you to wear this proudly on your Melanie Troxel hat," Tom said, with his trademark grin.

The reason he grinned is because an hour earlier, he and other veterans had purchased the new hats only to discover the tag on the inside read, "Made in Vietnam." Before the dragster, he might have reacted differently.

Hohmann's pin was the first of so many that it became apparent that I'd need a HANs device just to wear the boonie. Over the course of the year my collection grew including everything from Special Forces to the Vietcong Hunting Club to Medevac.

I learned a lot from these guys and became proficient with their terminology. Did you know, "I've got your 6 -- means I've got your back?"



On a cold Saturday morning in Gainesville, I was presented the boonie hat worn by Craig Tonjes -- back row, second from left. That hat, which he wore in Vietnam, is

now adorned with many company pins of those who have attended the drags.

I also learned that the best way to prepare a veteran that has post traumatic stress disorder for a nitro car is to let them know it sounds similar to calling for fire when they are in the bush or on the hill -- when it hits. This time they didn't have to hit the ground.

I got close to some of those guys, pretty much the same way they got close to one another in the battlefield.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the special bond that I created with the National League of Families and their leadership. Ann Mills-Griffiths and Karen McManus became dear friends of mine and my heart goes out to them because they lost siblings and no one in our government can tell them what happened much less where they are.



The Joliet event had a large gathering of veterans, including the Rolling Thunder group.

There are so many others I could mention that are missing loved ones from the Vietnam War and while I always sympathized with their loss, I think it fully hit home when I was invited to attend the national meetings for the POW-MIA movement. Surrounded by high-ranking government officials, I accepted an award on behalf of Evan but that didn't touch me as much as the reading of those still missing in action.

One of the names hit hard -- Thomas Bennett, missing since December 22, 1972, ironically, the same name worn proudly by my eldest son.

A lot of good came from a year of honoring Vietnam Vets. They might have always been there, but it just seems like one is more likely to see more Vietnam Veteran hats proudly displayed throughout the pits.



Tim Lewis, a Vietnam veteran and Top Fuel team owner, made an unselfish donation to ensure that each veteran left with a special gift commemorating the car.

Drag racing has made being a Vietnam Veteran a thing of honor.

That's why when I found out that Melanie was headed over to the Funny Car ranks it disappointed me that we were down to the end of the tour. But, we had served our purpose and that was to bring honor and respect to a group of life-wearied veterans who had largely known disrespect. They had something to smile for -- mission accomplished.

Tom caught up with me at the Finals in Pomona and wanted to convey a message to Evan.

As his eyes welled up with tears, "I want you to tell Evan just how much this means to all of us. Please tell him, I want him to know this made a difference in many of us."

I haven't gotten a chance to tell Evan yet, I figure I can tell him just as well with this article.

I got an email that same evening from Evan, with a rendering of Melanie's 2008 racecar, and just like Tom in 1967, he's signing up for second tour of duty. The new car will understandably feature his Torco Race Fuels logo but will also be emblazoned with the American flag as well as the POW-MIA logo. But most importantly, it will feature a portion of the Vietnam Memorial Wall.

I'm on board for a second tour as well and it's



largely thanks to my buddy Tom and the hundreds of veterans I met throughout this first tour.

"I would have been honored to serve alongside of you," Tom told me. "I would have always had your 6, because I know you would have had mine. I would have gladly shared a foxhole with you."

Tom, I would have gladly shared one with you, too. Bobby

PRESIDENTS REPORT

As we get ready for the New Year we have a lot going on in the state. We have begun the planning for the 20th anniversary of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Mark your calendars for December 10th thru the 14th 2008. You

will be hearing a lot more about this at the CSC meeting and in the next Zephyr. Jerry Yamamoto is the chair of the planning committee and I expect to hear a lot of good reports from him.

The next big thing we have coming is the state convention. We will be looking for people to run for all board positions. I will not be running for another term but I expect to stay involved in whatever capacity the new president and board would like me to serve in. I have enjoyed my time as president and we have started some very exciting programs and tasks. Among them are the service officer program, our legislative program and the 20th anniversary project. These will keep the next board busy. We have made some attempts at fundraising but we keep falling short in this field. I understand how difficult it is to try to raise money for the state when the chapters are having problems finding ways to raise money for their programs. We have chartered two new chapters during my term but we have actually lost three. Our membership is up and we have a few chapters trying to reach the 200 member mark. It will be interesting to see if any of them reach it by the last day of February to give them five delegates to the state convention.

Barbara Johnston is the elections chair so if you would like to assist her or put your name in to run, she will be putting out the information. Dick Southern is the convention chair and you know he will keep you posted. The resolution chair is Richard Jones. If you have any questions about resolutions or would like to submit a new resolution, contact him. Bob Johnston is the constitution chair and will also be putting out information on how to submit an amendment to the constitution. Information will also be on our web site soon

I hope to see some of you step forward to run or to submit ideas on where we need to be going as an organization.

Ken Holybee, President, CA State Council

FIRST VP REPORT

The California state legislature is at holiday recess until after the first of the new year. This fall, bills involving veterans affairs, particularly ones that would require expenditures from the state general fund (none of any great significance) made it past the appropriations committee.

One of great importance that did not make it through committee was AB 581, the Military Personnel Combat Stress Support Team program. This one bill would have required the military department to create two Combat Stress Support Teams to provide emergency crisis counseling, referral and personal support, combat stress evaluation and mental health support for state military personnel and their families. The proposal should have cost about \$300,000 during the year, however it was shelved by the senate committee on appropriations.

Only three veterans affairs or military related bills have been signed by the governor so far:

AB 257 -- Parks: Veterans park passes would eliminate the fees that are currently charged to veterans who have a disability rating of 50% or higher, and former POWs; recipients of MOH will also be eligible for the pass.

SB 234 -- Consumer warranties: applies the lemon law protection to a vehicle purchase made by an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces, regardless of which state the vehicle is purchased in, provided that the member of the armed forces was stationed in or a resident of this state at the time the vehicle was purchased.

SB 630 -- Veterans Homes; authorizes \$30 million in lease revenue bonds to move forward with the construction of the new veterans' homes in Los Angeles, Shasta and Fresno Counties. The legislation was necessary for the state to qualify for federal funding which is supposed to cover two thirds of the construction costs.

During the state's new legislative year (2008), we will need to lobby hard to see that AB 581 is re-introduced for consideration. This will be done by the middle of February in order to meet the new legislative bills deadline cut off date.

Regarding veterans affairs legislation of particular importance at the national level, Cong. Matsui (Sacto), an original co-sponsor of HR327, voted with an overwhelming majority to pass the Joshua Ombig Veterans Suicide Protection Act. This legislation directs the secretary of veterans affairs to develop and implement a comprehensive program designed to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

Suicide and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among veterans is a very serious problem that must be addressed now. Our government has a moral obligation to provide the most complete and expansive resources available to veterans returning from the middle east and their families. Hopefully HR 327 may help to accomplish that important need. Elements of this bill should mandate the government to:

1. Provide mandatory training for appropriate staff and contractors of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA or VA) who interact with veterans.
2. Conduct screening for suicide risk factors in veterans who receive medical care at a department facility.
3. Effectively track veterans and conduct outreach to veterans and their families.
4. Refer at-risk veterans to counseling and treatment.
5. Designate a suicide prevention counselor at each department medical facility.
6. Research and explore the best practices for suicide prevention.
7. Provide mental health care options for veterans who have experienced sexual trauma while in military service.
8. Create a toll-free, 24-hour mental health care options and a peer counseling support system. – Sounds good let's hope it happens –

Additionally at the national level of importance to California veterans is HR551 (Veterans Homeownership Act) which is to amend the IRS code of 1986 with respect to the eligibility of veterans for mortgage bond financing and purposes, was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means. On October 19, 2007 the language from HR 557 has been amended into the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Tax Relief Act of 2007, which has been assigned now as HR 3997. This bill, if passed, will allow those veterans after 1977 and the Vietnam Conflict/War to be able to apply for the Cal Vet Home Loan programs. It is essential for all of our members and friends to contact their Congressional members and ask them to provide their support of HR 3997, and legislation to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs with assured funding (i.e. mandatory) and for Congress to pass the VA Budget on time so that the department can provide the necessary health care demands of all veterans. As of yet the VA Budget still has not been passed, only a temporary spending bill has been passed allowing the VA to Operate at last year's funding level.

Hope every one had a pleasant holiday. I look forward to seeing you at our CSC meeting in January.

Carl Jensen, CSC First Vice President
Veterans Affairs & Legislative Affairs Chair

REGION 9 NEWS

December 2007

Hi,
Happy Holidays to you and yours.

Let's get right into it. Since my last newsletter, I have been busy.

OCTOBER NATIONAL BOD MEETING

I attended the October meeting in Silver Spring.

The first day was taken up with the new BOD member training and orientation on the National Office. The conference of State Council Presidents met the same day with Ken Holybee of CA, Virgie Hibbler of NV, and Bill Messer of AZ in attendance. The second day started with a BOD breakfast followed by the BOD and National Committee meetings. Saturday started out with the Regional Directors breakfast and was followed by the Committee reports and the BOD meeting. We heard from the VMW, heard a report on the 25th anniversary event. We will have the 2011 convention in Reno; just don't have a hotel yet. We saw a presentation from the Minority Affairs Committee. We heard a presentation on the can coin program. It was a long day as the meeting was adjourned after 7 p. m.

Nevada State Council Visit

I visited the NV State Council meeting in Tonopah, NV on October 20. It was a nice 4 hour ride to Tonopah from my house over the Sonora Pass and around the Salton Sea and I saw a lot of the high desert. Virgie Hibbler ran a good meeting with all of his officers present and a good turnout of the chapters. Business was conducted and plans were made for various projects. It was good meeting new friends and seeing many good friends that I have known for years.

NHRA Finals and 2008

On November 3, I attended the NHRA finals in Pomona, CA, representing Region 9 and thanking the Vietnam Veteran - POW/MIA Top Fuel Dragster team for carrying the VVA logo on the car for 2007. They campaigned the car in CA, AZ, NV and CO during the past year. They generously had tickets for 4 VVA members at each stop on the race series. The team has signed up for a "second tour" with VVA and will be racing in the Funny Car class in 2008. Watch for an announcement of the schedule for 2008. There are 7 races in Region 9.

25th Anniversary of the Wall

November 10 was the day for thousands of Vietnam Veterans to be welcomed home with a huge parade in Washington, DC. There are a lot of pictures on the www.vva.org web site. Check the site out. You might even see Bill Messer there.

Speaking of events... Region 9 meeting... March 14-16. The city would be Phoenix, AZ and the hotel is here: <http://www.graceinn.com/> I am working on the agenda and would like to have your inputting it together. What would you like to see on the meeting agenda? Any ideas on a guest a speaker? I am thinking of a schedule something like this:

Friday March 14...travel day
Saturday March 15 - Meeting 9-Noon...
Lunch Noon to 1:30...
Meeting from 1:30 to 3:00...

Then free time for the evening to explore the Atugewa area of Phoenix.
Sunday march 16 - Meeting from 9 to Noon.

Events:

1/3-6/2008 CSCP Meeting Colorado Springs, CO
1/10-13/2008 National BOD meeting Silver Springs, MD
1/19/2008 AZ State Council meeting Tucson, AZ
1/25-27/2008 CA State Council meeting Fresno, CA
3/08 NM State Council Meeting Santa Fe, NM

The Wall That Heals

"The Wall That Heals" in St. George Utah at the Dixie Center, from Dec 6 thru the 9th, 2007. The Colors posted by the 11th Mounted Cav. on December 6th at 10 AM. An opening ceremony the evening of the 6th at 7pm inside at the Dixie Center. During the Wall various choirs singing patriotic songs etc. Closing Ceremony 4 PM on the ninth. All veterans to attending were encouraged to please wear your uniform or Vietnam hat, jacket or whatever. We should be proud to be Veterans.

Thursday, December 6, 2007

10am – 11th Mounted Cavalry will present the colors.

10:30am – Washington Elementary to perform

on the outside stage.

5pm - Tuachan High School Choir will perform
7pm – Opening Ceremonies in the Dixie Center Ballroom. Ceremony included reading of names from or with local connection to the Southern Utah area, Music by the Tuachan High School Choir and a special POW guest speaker. Candle ceremony and presentation of memorial wreaths also included.

Friday, December 7, 2007

10:30am – Pine View High School Choir performed on the outside stage.

1pm – Dixie Middle School Choir performed on the outside stage.

5pm – Reading of local names and bagpiper played.

Saturday, December 8, 2007

5pm – Reading of local names and bagpiper to play.

Sunday, December 9, 2007

4pm – Closing Ceremony in the Dixie Center Ballroom. Ceremony included special guest soloist with a moving patriotic musical number, retired Major Val Smith the Guest Speaker, a special Native American ceremony performed, music by the Color Country Chorus and a moving, respectful and patriotic service to close the evening.

Membership Totals as of October 31, 2007

IND 28,022	ASC 4,738
LMP 25,655	ALP 1,938
LMT 381	ALT 44
IVI 1,839	OLP 67
PHV 247	OLT 0
Total 56,144	OTH 79
	IVA 93
	Total 6,959

VVA Monthly total for this month last year 55,000
- Growth Rate 2.1%

AVVA Monthly total for this month last year 6,826
- Growth Rate 1.9%

VVA New Members - This month 749; 2004 - 2006 average for this month 582

AVVA New Members - This month 178; 2004 - 2006 average for this month 114

VVA Members Region 9 - 5,707

AVVA Members Region 9 - 773

State VVA Members	State AVVA Members
-------------------	--------------------

AZ 636	AZ 68
CA 3299	CA 555
CO 325	CO 16
GU 86	GU 20
HI 129	HI 16
NM 401	NM 23
NV 593	NV 50
PI 110	PI 9
UT 128	UT 16

In order to schedule visits to the various state councils in the region, I will have to know the dates, time and location of your meetings. Do you have events coming up that you would like the rest of the region to know about? Let me know and I will get the word out for you.

Dick Southern

National Board of Directors – Region 9
209-928-3848 or 209-768-9841
southern@lodelink.com

DISABILITY PAYMENT INFO

Payments under the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program are no longer taxable and disabled veterans who paid tax on these benefits in the past three years can now claim refunds. Recipients of CWT payments will no longer receive a Form 1099 from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Disabled veterans who paid tax on these benefits in tax-years 2004, 2005 or 2006 can claim a refund by filing an amended return using IRS Form 1040X. According to the VA, more than 19,000 veterans received CWT in Fiscal Year 2007. The IRS has agreed with a U.S. Tax Court decision issued earlier this year, which held that

CWT payments are tax-free veterans' benefits. In so doing, the agency reversed a 1965 ruling which held that these payments were taxable and required the VA to issue 1099 forms to payment recipients.

According to the VA, the CWT program provides assistance to veterans unable to work and support themselves. Under the program, the VA contracts with private industry and the public sector for work by veterans, who learn new job skills, re-learn successful work habits and regain a sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

Related Item: Revenue Ruling 2007-69

Here is the full text but you only need write what I stated above.

Internal Revenue Bulletin: 2007-49
December 3, 2007
Rev. Rul. 2007-69

Table of Contents

- * ISSUES
- * FACTS
- * LAW AND ANALYSIS
- * HOLDINGS
- * EFFECT ON OTHER REVENUE RULINGS
- * DRAFTING INFORMATION

This ruling provides that payments made by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs under the compensated work therapy program are exempt from federal income tax as veterans' benefits. Rev. Rul. 65-18 revoked, Rev. Rul. 72-605 amplified.

ISSUES

(1) Are payments made by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) under the compensated work therapy program described in 38 U.S.C. § 1718 (CWT program) exempt from federal income tax as veterans' benefits?

(2) Are payments made by the VA under the CWT program required to be reported on an information return?

FACTS

The CWT program administered by the VA provides assistance to veterans unable to work and support themselves. Many of the veterans in the program have histories of one or more conditions such as psychiatric illness, substance abuse, and homelessness. Under the program, the VA provides a range of vocational rehabilitation services, with the degree of structure and level of support provided to the participating veteran geared to his or her needs. The goal of the program is to assist in restoring, to the maximum extent possible, the physical and psychological functioning of ill or disabled veterans. See 38 U.S.C. § 1701.

Title 38 of the United States Code addresses veterans' benefits. Section 1718, entitled "Therapeutic and Rehabilitative Activities," provides that the VA may enter into contracts with third parties to provide therapeutic work for patients in VA health care facilities. Section 1718(c)(1) establishes the "Department of Veterans Affairs Special Therapeutic and Rehabilitation Activities Fund" (Fund), from which distributions are to be made to patients for therapeutic work. Fund payments are intended to furnish veterans with work skills training, employment support, and job development and placement services, although the primary objective of the program is therapy and rehabilitation. See 38 U.S.C. § 1718(a) and (d).

With respect to the taxation of veterans' benefits, 38 U.S.C. § 5301(a)(1) provides that payments of benefits due or to become due under any law administered by the VA made to, or on account of, a beneficiary shall be exempt from taxation.

LAW AND ANALYSIS

Section 61 of the Internal Revenue Code provides that gross income includes all income from whatever source derived, unless specifically excluded by law.

Section 134(a) provides that gross income does not include any qualified military benefit. The term "qualified military benefit" means any allowance or in-kind benefit (other than personal use of a vehicle) which—

(A) is received by any member or former member of the uniformed services of the United States or any dependent of such member by reason of such member's status or service as a member of such uniformed services, and

(B) was excludable from gross income on September 9, 1986, under any provision of law, regulation, or administrative practice that was in effect on such date (other than a provision of Title 26). Section 134(b)(1).

The legislative history to § 134 indicates that the allowances that were authorized on September 9, 1986, and excludable from gross income on that date, include veterans' benefits authorized under 38 U.S.C. § 3101 (now 38 U.S.C. § 5301). See H.R. Conf. Rep. No. 841 (Vol. II), 99th Cong. 2d Sess. 548 (1986). See also § 140(a)(3) (cross-referencing 38 U.S.C. § 5301 for the exemption from taxation of benefits under laws administered by the VA).

Rev. Rul. 72-605, 1972-2 C.B. 35, holds that payments of benefits under any law administered by the VA are excludable from the gross income of a recipient.

Rev. Rul. 65-18, 1965-1 C.B. 32, holds that certain payments made by the VA under the CWT program in 38 U.S.C. § 618 (the predecessor to 38 U.S.C. § 1718) are includible in a recipient's gross income as compensation for services, even though intended for therapeutic or rehabilitative purposes. Rev. Rul. 65-18 also requires information reporting on Form 1099 with respect to these payments. See § 1.6041-1(i) (requiring information returns on Form 1099 of certain payments made by any agency of the United States).

In *Wallace v. Commissioner*, 128 T.C. 132 (2007), acq., 2007-44 I.R.B. , the Tax Court disagreed with Rev. Rul. 65-18 and held that payments made by the VA for work performed under CWT programs are exempt from federal income tax as veterans' benefits within the meaning of 38 U.S.C. § 5301.

The Service agrees with the *Wallace* decision that payments made by the VA under the CWT program are veterans' benefits within the meaning of 38 U.S.C. § 5301. Accordingly, the payments are qualified military benefits under § 134 and are exempt from federal income tax.

HOLDINGS

(1) Payments made by the VA under the CWT program are exempt from federal income tax as veterans' benefits.

(2) Because payments made by the VA under the CWT program are exempt from federal income tax, the payments are not required to be reported on an information return.

EFFECT ON OTHER REVENUE RULINGS

Rev. Rul. 65-18 is revoked. Rev. Rul. 72-605 is amplified.

DRAFTING INFORMATION

The principal author of this revenue ruling is Michael F. Schmit of the Office of the Associate Chief Counsel (Income Tax & Accounting). For further information regarding this revenue ruling, contact Mr. Schmit at (202) 622-4960 (not a toll-free call).

Tim Forrest, CSC Treasurer

AT LARGE DIRECTOR

The last few months have been relatively slow as far as performing any duties as At large Director although on April 20th I will fill in for President Ken Holybee at the CDVA Semi Annual Secretary's Conference in Sacramento. This will be my 4th or 5th trip to the conference a lot of good information comes out of these conferences but, as the Zephyr is coming out prior to the conference I will have to save the info until next time. One bit of information I can pass on is that Yountville has numerous openings for single Vet's if you know of any have them contact the Veterans service office in there area or contact me. The main requirement to getting in is you need to be ambulatory and be able to take care of your self if after the first day things fall apart they then take care of you what ever your needs are

Richard Jones, Director at large CSC

AGENT ORANGE (AO)

Health Issues Vol 1, December 2007

By Dave Sanders Chapter 201, CSC AO Chair

Welcome Home once again. At the last meeting in Fresno we had a poor showing of the usual suspects at the AO tier meeting which caused me to pause and think that weekendwhy? It dawned on me as I looked around at my fellow Vet friends and saw most all were not only dealing with the effects of AO but also had many other age or causative medical issues to deal with from peripheral neuropathy, (could be AO caused?) to things like chronic pain from knee, foot or back problems. Besides that we all (I hope) already know what the presumptives are with the VA due to AO. What we have mostly forgot was our weaponry to fight. Now I am not going to go back to basic training 40 or more years ago with the anniversary of TET fast approaching but your DI, if you remember that bastard, he took care of you to train you how to use your weaponry - the first being your body! A sharp mind and a well-conditioned body meant victory or at least a fighting chance. Same way now as one mind any weapon still applies. With this in mind I have suggested to Henry Iasiello and the State President Ken Holybee that we maybe combine our PTSD tier with a portion pertaining to Health Issues (aka HI) to confront re-education of what and why general senior health matters in addition to the priorities of PTSD and AO. I have no desire to be your DI as I have enough discipline problems with myself, as to the required menus and exercise schedules needed to confront the normal aging process. With all this in mind I believe "we" as a group can share our chronic and acute health issues and how to deal with the VA in the process to get the proper care and benefits we all have sacrificed for. I will not have all the answers but with all of us combined we have a pretty good library of medications, arthritis help, diet plans, spirituality, suicide and how to's. Lastly, many of us who came back did not receive a Purple Heart for our "wounds" such as, but not limited to, PTSD, Agent Orange or whatever. If you have been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes or cancer or another presumptive illness currently recognized by the VA, you are eligible to complete an application for the Order of the Silver Rose Award. You can get that application online at http://www.silverrose.info/print_application.htm - you must send a copy of your DD214 and diagnosis proof. To get further information on this please visit <http://www.silverrose.info/> where you can get information on Agent Orange and recommendations. Until the next time.... Comments/questions and inputs welcome at amddave@aol.com. Stay tough stay healthy. Caring is sharing, sharing is caring. Dave

CHAPTER NEWS:

CHAPTER 691

Elections were held at VVA #691 - Merced, The Community Friendly Chapter, and new officers,

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC., CALIFORNIA STATE COUNCIL - WINTER 2007

Chapter	Address/Phone	E-Mail/ Web Site	Primary Contact	Meeting Information	Activities
47	PO Box 3007 Riverside 92514-4277 951-781-6137	nebhuskf@aol.com www.vva47.com	Steve Mackey	3rd Saturday, 10 am at Lifespring church Social Hall located at the corner of Columbia and Main St. in Riverside. Board meets prior to the meeting (check web site for special meeting locations & times)	Vietnam Wall project at Riverside National Cemetery; veteran assistance; hospitalized veterans; membership recruitment; speakers bureau; scholarships; community service awards; NASCAR at CA Speedway, info booth
53	PO Box 7000-185 Redondo Beach 90277 310-540-8820	n9140y@ca.rr.com www.vva53.us	Jerry Yamamoto	Monthly at 7 p.m., 4th Wednesday at Billy's Restaurant, 5160 W. 190th St., Torrance, CA 90503 (except in December)	Monthly cleaning of Hermosa Beach Memorial; deployment ceremonies; membership/info booth at JROTC competition; bingo night at LBVAMC
201	PO Box 26203 San Jose 95159-6203 408-246-2288	poka513@comcast.net www.nichecom.com/vva	Robert Beresford	Board meets on 3rd Monday at 7:30 pm; chapter social on 3rd Monday at 7 pm. Both held at VFW Post 3982, 1313 Franklin St., Santa Clara 95050	Change of command ceremony; assisting deployed troops' families
218	PO Box 2241 Santa Barbara 93120 805-682-0550	vva218@vva218.org www.vva218.org	Keith Perkins	Meetings on 2nd Tuesday at 6:15 pm at Veterans Memorial Building, 112 West Cabrillo Blvd., Santa Barbara	PTSD group formed; studying women veteran issues; interviews by local paper of chapter members about returning troops
223	1352 Maple Ave. Santa Rosa 95402 707-521-4218 / Fax: 707-838-1430	vets@vva223.org www.vva223.org	John Crooker	2nd Tuesday 7 pm. Board; General Meeting 3rd Tuesday 7 pm. Vets Building, 1315 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa. 3rd Saturday is a chapter breakfast.	Motorcycle poker run & BBQ; homeless outreach; booth at air show, membership recruitment; visit returning wounded troops
355	PO Box 2986 Canyon Country 91386-2986 818-508-9626	lostpatrol@msn.com	Frank LaRosa	3rd Sunday of each month, 11 am, at a local restaurant	Work with other agencies on stand downs; Patriot Guard Riders involvement
357	PO Box 4021 Redding 96099 530-242-1596	coonrad@snowcrest.net	Rocky Cantrell	2nd Tuesday each month, 7 pm at Redding Veterans Memorial Hall	highway cleanup; Color Guard activities; sponsor local boxer; fundraising for Salvation Army
368	PO Box 1566 Mariposa 95338 209-966-4039	rainbow@sti.net	Larry Coan	1st Thursday, 7 pm at the VFW Hall in Mariposa	Winter cooking events; work with Sheriff as first responders when vets involved, or incarcerated
391	PO Box 5391 Sonora 95370 209-928-3848	chap391@lodelink.com www.vietnamveterans391.org	Dick Southern	General Meeting, 2nd Tuesday, 7 pm.; Board, 1st Tuesday 7 pm, at Sonora Veterans Hall, 9 N. Washington St, Sonora, CA	Golf tourney planning; Cinco de Mayo celebration; All Veteran Information Fair; scholarships; membership drive; Lumber Jubilee; Mother Lode Fair; Father's Day Fly In
400	200 Grand Ave., # 208 Oakland 94610 510-444-5235	fdrdocent@comcast.net	Bill Hodges	3rd Tuesday, 7 pm, Oakland Vets Bldg, 200 Grand Ave.	Memorial Day event planning with other organizations, Veterans Park in Alameda
441	782 N. Brundage Farmersville 93223 559-594-5710	rod6768@mindWinter.com	Rod Hughes	2nd & 4th Mondays, 7:30 pm	work with local legislator; veterans health care day; Gold Star Mothers ceremony; donations to community groups; Veterans Day events
446	87 N. Raymond Ave., Suite 210 Pasadena 91103 626-795-8141 (also Fax)	vva446@att.net	Steve Malmberg	Board meets 1st Friday each month, 7:30; General Meeting 2nd Tuesday, 7 pm, Senior Center, 85 E. Holly St., Pasadena	Working with returning troops, providing point of contact for families; local legislator involvement; West LA VA project - Citizens For Veterans Rights
464	PO Box 747 San Carlos 94070-0747 650-513-5586	vva464@yahoo.com theveteran.net/vva464	Ponce Gonzalez	1st Wednesday, 7:30 pm at American Legion Post 666, 757 San Mateo Ave., San Bruno 94066	
472	2115 Park Blvd. San Diego 92101-4792 619-239-5977	vva472@hotmail.com www.vva472.com	John Weaver	Member meeting held quarterly, announced on Web site; Board meets 4th Wednesday 7 pm at Veterans Memorial Center, 2115 Park Blvd., San Diego	Memorial Day preparations; Vet Village Stand Down preparations
500	PO Box 255484 Sacramento 95868 916-481-6020	vva500@sbcglobal.net www.norcaltravel/vva500.html	Mary Lou McNeill	General Meeting, 3rd Tuesday, 7 pm; Board - 1st Tuesday, 7 pm. Roosevelt Veterans Memorial Hall, 110 Park Drive, Roseville (Royer Park)	New meeting format working well; Vietnamese New Year participation; September Stand Down; gathering clothing for vets in VA job search program; support troop rally; membership recruitment
526	PO Box 2222 Culver City 90232 310-260-6910	wmctaggart@pmcos.com	John Hamilton	1st Tuesday, 7:30 pm	
535	PO Box 37 Grass Valley 95945 530-470-8507	wreddekopp@sbcglobal.net http://www.nccn.net/%7evvanc/	Harold Graves	1st Thursday, 7 pm. Grass Valley Veterans Memorial Bldg., 255 South Auburn, Grass Valley	Support Friends of Montagnard Orphanages, donated \$1500; Friends of Nevada County Military, sending packages to troops; air show booth, membership recruitment
547	PO Box 884 Kentfield 94914 415-454-8823 / Fax: 415-454-2737	cjjens@hotmail.com http://www.vietnamveteransmarin.org/	Carl Jensen	3rd Wednesday, 7 pm. American Legion, Post 313, Club Room, 12 Ward St., Larkspur, CA 94939	Vietnam education program in local schools; working on Women Veterans Committee issues (Robert Rosenberger - chair)
563	PO Box 751284 Petaluma 94975-1284 707-762-9078	johnc85393@aol.com	John Cheney	Veterans Memorial Bldg., Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma, 4th Thursday each month except Nov. & Dec.	November 11 parade
582	1017 5th Ave. Corning 96021-3004 530-824-2100 (10 am to 2 pm only)	kencorning@sbcglobal.net members.fortunecity.com/vva582	Ken Correlle	2nd Saturday each month at Scotty's Landing on River Road (outside of Chico on the Sacramento River), board meets at noon, members' meeting 1 pm	car show; sponsor Iraq veteran; Flag etiquette training; veteran parade
643	PO Box 745 Dinuba 93618 559-528-2811 / Fax: 559-528-2384	nafw@sbcglobal.net	Peter McManus	2nd Wednesday, 7 pm at Dinuba Memorial Building, 249 S. Alta Ave., Dinuba, CA 93618	Walk For Life sponsor - cancer; preparations for Cinco de Mayo event; sponsoring Dinuba Little League team
691	PO Box 2226 Merced 95344-0226 209-356-1938	csc_vvaed@sbcglobal.net www.merced.com/0704k163.html	Ed Mentz	3rd Monday, 7 pm, Citi Bank, 19th & M, Merced - 6:30 pm for potluck dinner. Board - 1st Monday, 7 pm Community Center in Castle Vista	CSC Delegate Jerry Peterson hospitalized; selling veterans collectibles
702	PO Box 525 Yountville 94599 707-252-7537 / Fax: 707-944-0955	rossisvva@aol.com	Ross Hall	1st Tuesday, 7 pm at Yountville Veterans Home in the Lee Lounge (second floor of main building). Board meets 3rd Saturday, 8 am in the canteen (first floor)	Yountville Vets Home memorial services; co-sponsoring Moving Wall; membership recruitment at vet home, sponsor ones in need
756	PO Box 90994 Long Beach 90809 562-596-5170	stumpfires@verizon.net	Dave Stumpf	1st Wednesday, 7 pm at VFW Post 8615, 2805 South St., Long Beach	Long Beach VAMC movie presentation; suport families of deployed; Thanksgiving dinner for Gold Star Moms; improving meeting location with chapter memorabilia
781	1100 Main St. PO Box 102 Ferndale 95536 707-725-6946	carlhandup@suddenlink.net www.vva781.org	Carl Young	2nd Tuesday each month, 7 pm, Ferndale Veterans Memorial Hall, 1100 Main Street, Ferndale, 95336	Christmas dinner planning; collecting informaton for list of local area services available
785	2345 Barranca Parkway Irvine 92606 714-540-8518 / Fax: 714-662-2033	gunnymims@aol.com www.vva785.org	Bill Mimiaga	1st Wednesday, 6 pm (social hour prior), at US Army Reserve Training Center Armory, 2345 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, CA	Participation in Run For The Wall; LBVAMC involvement & July BBQ planning there; POW/MIA-VVA Dragster unveiling; transporting vets to hospital; PH ceremony
880	508 Riddle Court Modesto 95356 209-523-3880	emg@msn.com	Errol Green	3rd Tuesday, 6 pm at American Legion Lodge, 1001 S. Santa Cruz, Modesto	Food drive for needy vets; potluck at chapter meetings; Moving Wall assistance
933	PO Box 26256 Fresno 93720 559-855-3565	hanniford@comcast.net	Carl Shipley	1st Tuesday at Clovis Veterans Memorial Bldg., 453 Hughes Ave., Clovis 93612	Annual Stand Down; Veterans Day Parade; Vietnam Memorial Project; Memorial Day Sunrise Service
951	PO Box 1313 Lakeport 95453 707-262-5651	barnett@tgaxpro.net vva951.org	Dean Gotham	Board - 1st Tuesday at 290 N. Main St. 7 p.m.; General Meeting - 2nd Tuesday at 801 N. Main St. 6 p.m. (St. Mary's Hall), Lakeport	Sending boxes to deployed troops; donation to church where chapter meets (chairs); support A.L. Post 437; wounded troops assistance at Travis AFB
982	4814 Talmage Rd. Moorpark, CA 93021 805-529-1313	halfaro12000@yahoo.com	Henry Alfaro		

President Jim Sutherland, Vice President David Alvarez, and Board Member Mike McIntyre were seated and will serve until our next election in May, 2008. They were sworn in by Louise Farley, a representative from Senator Jeff Denham's office.

We are very pleased to be presenting a new Presidential Award for outstanding members, citizens and volunteers in the organization. Charlie and Babette Pigott were the first recipients and were recognized for their outstanding work and efforts in behalf of our organization.

We were invited to post the Colors for a grand opening for Winfield Grammar School in Winton. The theme used was "Remember America" and it was well carried out. We have been working with Mrs. Barbara Beltz for many years helping out wherever needed.

Our committee has rewritten our by-laws and they have been submitted for review of the general membership.

We attended and participated in the POW/MIA Ceremony at the Court House Park and it was a very solemn occasion. These ceremonies always bring back memories of what we all stand for and what, we too, have been through. Participation in these ceremonies are so important so the community knows we have not forgotten.

We had a very large contingent of members marching and riding in the Veteran's Day parade and also the local Christmas parade and had very enjoyable times and a lot of good fun. We are a very active organization and have been working hard on various projects. We have collected 75 coats for the Salvation Army, with the help of Mike Woodbury from Gottschalk's Department Store in Merced, we collected Teddy Bears for Veterans in convalescent hospitals who need buddies and visitors, we are decorating the Castle Air Museum for the holidays and serving meals to the homeless at the National Guard Armory.

Our latest project is collecting money for postage to send packages to our troops in Iraq. We know this is going to be a great project and a successful one as after one phone call, we received a donation of \$100.00 from the local parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West. Veritas Parlor #75, Merced has an active Veteran's Affairs Project that runs all year long. Presenting the check were President Patsy Doughty and Veteran's Affairs Chairman Margie Treanor. If any of you who are reading this article and can help us continue this project, please do so by sending a check made out to the US Postmaster and mail it to;

Operation Adopt a Troop
Jim Sutherland
1910 D Street
Merced, Ca 95340

We have been invited to a meeting of the Merced City Council to be recognized for all the efforts we are putting forth for the community. It is such an honor to have our members contributing their time and effort and getting the recognition they deserve. Now, we are shooting for new members with an ongoing membership recruitment.

Chapter 691 bought groceries for a distressed veteran and his family

CHAPTER 785

We acknowledge, recognize and salute...SSGT Christopher Moore US Army, American hero, father and friend, who gave his tomorrows so that we could have our todays.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christopher L. Moore, 28, was killed Saturday, May 19th, 2007 in Baghdad along with five other soldiers when an improvised explosive device detonated near their Bradley, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Chris was born in Bakersfield, California on June 14, 1978 and joined the Army after he graduated from Alpaugh High School in 1996. He was a great soldier. Chris attended Basic Training in Fort Benning, Georgia. After completing basic training, he was ordered to Fort Campbell and assigned to the 101st "Screaming Eagles" Airborne where he earned his Air Assault Badge. He was then deployed to Kuwait to guard Patriot Missile Sites.

After returning from Kuwait, he was assigned to Fort Benning, GA and attended Airborne School. Successfully completing Airborne School, he was stationed with the 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, NC.

A short break in the service and giving a try at civilian life didn't suite Chris and the call of duty to proudly serve his country called him back to the Army life. He re-enlisted and was stationed at Fort Hood, TX. From Fort Hood, Chris was deployed with 3 Corp in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 2. He was assigned to convoy security and successfully completed his first Tour in Iraq.

In October 2006, Chris was assigned to Alpha 1 - 5 Calvary Division. He deployed with Operation Iraqi Freedom 4 as a Bradley Tank Commander.

Chris was a great soldier, but an even better father and friend. When things seemed to get everyone else down, Chris could always make you smile. He would flash that smile and say something witty, and everyone's spirits would be lifted. He loved his three daughters and would do anything for them. There are few men that I have met that were as outwardly passionate about their children as Chris was about his daughters. He didn't lift weights to work out...he lifted his girls up in the air. We have so many memories of Chris being used as a jungle gym by not only his children, but other nieces and nephews as well. He loved being apart of a large family.

He was such a giving person. The last weekend Chris was in the States was a short story of Chris's life. On Friday of that weekend, Chris took a group of family members to Six Flags because they wanted to go. His car was towed from the restaurant he parked at, but instead of that getting to him; he turned it into a great story the next day. On Saturday, he volunteered to paint a house for an elderly woman he didn't even know for an event called Cowtown Brush-up, sacrificing one of his last free days to enjoy himself. On Sunday, he got to do something he loved. He played paintball, and on that day, there was no one better at it then him. Looking back on it, that weekend was Chris - loving, sacrificing, caring, giving, selfless, chaotic, and fun.

While we know that Chris is gone, he is in a better place. This week has been difficult for all of us and time will heal us. Being a soldier, Chris was a sheepdog. He watched over the sheep, protecting us from wolves. We know that even though he is gone from us here on earth, he is still our sheepdog up in heaven and will continue to watch over his sheep.

SSG Christopher L. Moore is survived by his daughters; Ashlyn - age 9, Kailyn - age 7, and Taylor - age 4; his mother, Martha Moore; his sisters, Nancy Ince and Misty Collins; his brother, Robert Moore; his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Moore; mother of his children, Kindell Mills; mother-in-law, Vel Mills; father-in-law, Steve Mills; and a numerous list of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.



THE "SNOWBALL EXPRESS" STORY...making sure that everyone, to include "Squishy"... returned home safely.



STORY ABOUT SQUISHY

Jim,

I am attaching a story about Squishy. I am sure I didn't list many people that helped in this search, so please make sure that they know how thankful Ashlyn and I are. Also, the girls made a gift for American Airlines, that I would like to send to you. If possible, please send me a mailing address, so that I can get this out.

Thanks again for your amazing help.
Kindell

On May 19, 2007, SSG Christopher Moore was killed in Iraq. Chris had three little girls; Ashlyn (10), Kailyn (7), and Taylor (5). One of the last things Ashlyn received from her dad was a pillow named Squishy. On November 29, 2007, my three daughters and I left Texas for California to attend Snowball Express 2007. Ashlyn took Squishy with us to California, because she never went anywhere without it. Snowball Express was wonderful. My girls played, laughed, and made great friends that could relate to their same situation. But all good things must come to an end, and on December 3, 2007 we packed our bags and headed home. Ashlyn decided she wanted to put Squishy in the duffle bag, instead of carrying it on, so at the last minute I shoved squishy into the bag and headed for the airport. Once we arrived at the airport things were really crazy. We were trying to get our bags checked and get through security, so that we could board the plane. In the mix of everything, our bag was switched with another family from Snowball Express. We had a wonderful trip, and American Airlines made even the flight home unforgettable. The children colored pictures, ate ice cream, and played with their new friends. Everyone took such good care of us. When we arrived in Texas and collected our bags, I noticed a friend of mine, Shallamae Warford, standing there with no luggage at all. I asked where her luggage was, and she informed me it did not make it off the plane. I wished her luck and headed home. When I arrived home I opened my duffle bag to unpack, and realized it was not my bag, it was Shallamae's bag, the other lady who had lost her luggage. I called her immediately to find out if she had my bag, and that's when I received the news that my bag was missing, and in it was Squishy. That night my daughter cried herself to sleep. She told me that Squishy helped her when she was scared, and that now it was out there somewhere lost. It broke my heart to know that she had to go through this pain. I comforted her as much as I could, and told her that hopefully we would find it. The next day I contacted the American Airlines lost luggage department, but because it was a charter flight they were having trouble locating the bag. I didn't know what to do. I decided I would contact Kris Currier, because she had been our point of contact before and during the trip. Kris had not even made it home



from our long weekend when I called, but she instantly understood how important Squishy was, and made some phone calls for me. Kris got me in contact with Jim Palmersheim. Jim started making call after call to get in contact with anyone he could, so that we could find Squishy. We reached Steve Blankenship a few minutes later, and all brainstormed on where Squishy might be. I explained to them that the bag was not in my name, and that I had no baggage tag receipts to help them in the search. They both assured me that Squishy would be found, and that no stone would be left unturned in the search. I hung up the phone with hope, but felt that it was probably a long shot that the black duffle bag would actually be found. Jim and Steve continued to make calls and emails throughout the night and into the following days. They made finding Squishy their number one priority. I received call after call from people assuring me that Squishy was being looked for, and stayed in constant contact with Kris, Jim and Steve. Ashlyn asked constantly if Squishy had been found, and after about five days she asked me if Squishy would be home for Christmas. This will be the first Christmas without their dad, and I know Ashlyn needed her pillow, but did not want her to get her hopes up. I explained to Ashlyn that everyone was looking very hard, but that Squishy might not be found at all. I told her to keep praying that Squishy was found. On Sunday December 9 my parents added Squishy to the prayer list at church, and knew God would understand how important it was to find this very special pillow. This morning I woke up and got the kids off to school. I got ready for work, and headed out to face another day. I had lost all hope that Squishy would be found, and debated how I could make it up to Ashlyn. I decided tonight we would decorate our Christmas tree, and while we were decorating my phone kept ringing and ringing. I couldn't figure out why someone would call constantly, and decided I better pick it up. When I answered the phone it was the best news I had ever heard. Squishy had been found at JFK Airport in New York by a man named Dennis. I immediately called Jim and Steve and gave them the good news. We were all so happy! My daughter heard me on the phone and kept asking if Squishy was found. When I told her yes it was found, she started jumping up and down and clapping. Ashlyn was so excited. I continued to make phone calls to let everyone know that we had found Squishy, and when I got off the phone Ashlyn handed me a box. I asked her what was in the box, and she explained it was a gift to AA for finding her bag. All of my kids worked to make this gift. I will be sending this box out to Jim, and he can let everyone know what is in it.

Squishy traveled from Orange County California, to JFK Airport in New York. The luggage had a completely different name on it, and was way off route, but with the help and dedication from American Airlines it was found. Tomorrow Squishy will board a flight to Austin and driven from Austin to Killeen, to be reunited with Ashlyn. I am so thankful to everyone for all the hard work and brainstorming in finding Squishy. Special thanks to Kris Currier, Jim Palmersheim, Steve Blankenship, Mark DuPonte, Chanel Warner, Arrian Saadzoi, Dennis (JFK lost luggage) and all the other employees that searched for Squishy. You all made a very special girl so happy. God bless you all!

Love, Kindell Mills

MESSAGE FROM LtCOLONEL ROY WHITE
Chairman of the Board, Snowball Express.

To all,

Please read the letter from Kindell Mills on the saga of "Squishy".



Jim (pictured with Dr. Westphall shortly before his death) at Angel Fire Vietnam Veterans Memorial, New Mexico. This beautiful

memorial was created by Dr. Westphall for his Marine son who was killed in Vietnam and for all of his "Band of Brothers and Sisters" who have joined him on "the Wall."

Jim Palmersheim has worked day and night since finding out there was a missing bag from Kindell's family. The odds against finding this bag were fairly small with the mis-tagging that occurred. Yet every AA employee was energized by the passion of this story and Capt Palmersheim's relentless effort to motivate others around the system to find the missing bag and "Squishy".

Thanks to Jim and all of the employees at AA who made this story have a happy ending and kept the Snowball Express dream a positive one for a small child and family.

Jim has gone the extra mile on veteran's initiatives for several years; this is typical of his character and performance. I'm proudly submitting his name as a nominee to join the Snowball Express Board of Directors at our next BOD meeting.

Lt. Col. Roy White (Ret.)
Chairman of the Board, Snowball Express
Cell - 214.924.9033
2973 Harbor Blvd #401
Costa Mesa, CA 92626-3912
Phone/Fax 714.662.2033
www.snowballexpress.org

CHAPTER 472
Greetings VVA Members,

The Annual VVA Chapter 472 Christmas Party at our home. The "heated" Christmas gift exchange, good food, as well as the warmth of renewed friendship was nice and a lot of fun. It is so very good to be part of this unique membership. Although only in the Chapter since late July, Lita and I appreciate the turn out and par-



ticipation. More is in the works as you will see in an upcoming calendar of events to be made available to the membership via our President, John Weaver.

Sincerely, Nino and Lita Martinez
Have A Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

Also, a photo of the outstanding members that marched in the Veterans Parade. The warmth and genuine response of the people along the parade route was wonderful. It makes all of this worthwhile. We will strive for a hundred march-



ers in 08! You will experience a sweet and revived patriotic feeling. Promise. Revive and Renew, our watchwords. It's so good to be an American!

CHRISTMAS FAMILY ADOPTION

Once again, VVA Chapter 472 will be "adopting" a family in the VVSD "Welcome Home" program.

This program provides apartment living for Families whose veteran member has completed the treatment program at VVSD Village on Pacific Coast Highway. The family members work and go to school and save enough to get their own apartments.

This year our family consists of a father and two daughters, Nicole (16) and Margaret (14). The girls' wish list as follows:

Gift cards, White or black Nike tennis shoes "Pink" stuff (did not specify) (Size 8-1/2) Raider football stuff, Large radio w/CD player, Savon gift cards, Gift card to get nails done; Make up; Gift card from MAC makeup; Digital camera; Hair supplies (hair ties, clips, gel; Mary Higgins Clark books; mousse, shampoo, conditioner; Hair supplies hair spray); Presents for her father; Pierced earrings; CD's: Alisha Keys (No One), Tyrese; (Sweet Lady), Joe (My Name is Joe); Mary J. Blige (No More Drama); Brandy (Have You Ever), Fifty Cents; (Curtis) and Justin Timberlake (Future Love Sex Songs)

Yvette also said that in the past gift cards from Wet Seal, Charlotte Russe, Target, J.C. Penney, Walmart are always good.

The father didn't ask for anything except things for his girls, but Yvette says he is an avid Raiders fan—and she suggested a gift certificate from Walmart.

CHAPTER 933
VVA Chapter 933 will hold a formal dedication ceremony for its Vietnam Era Veterans Memorial at the Fresno VA Hospital on January 27 at 2 p.m. All veterans and friends are invited to attend. This six foot tall black granite stone will remind all visitors to the VA facility in Fresno of the sacrifices of Vietnam era veterans. One side will display a map of the Vietnam war theater, the inscription "All Gave Some - Some Gave All", and the dates 1960-1975. The obverse side bears an image of a veteran remembering friends at the National Wall and the inscription "In honor of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War - Our nation honors the courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country of its Vietnam Veterans." For further information, contact Richard Hanniford 559 226-6754.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WALL PARADE

Photos from the parade, credit Ryan C. Morris, (my nephew). Happy to answer any questions or provide additional information. Additional photos are available on request.

Santa Barbara Vietnam Veterans Chapter President Keith S. Perkins (cap) and former Lompoc Chapter President Christopher C. Brooks (beret) traveled to Washington, D. C. to participate in the events commemorating the 25th anniversary of the dedication of "The Wall", the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D. C. They carried a Chapter banner and were joined by several other California chapter representatives who traveled to D. C. for the weekend. (see opposite page) Brooks served in the Army and was awarded a purple heart. Perkins served with the U. S. Marine Corps air wing in Chu Lai.

Keith S. Perkins
3627 Campanil Dr.
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
805-682-0550-FAX (805) 682-7420

"We love death. The U. S. loves life. That is the big difference between us."
Osama Bin Laden November, 2001



Opinions, Information and Reminiscences

WEST LA VETERANS HOSPITAL

Dear Ms. Lochhead

The article attributed to Citizens Against Government Waste describing Sen. Feinstein's attempt to protect the integrity of the VA campus is hugely misleading.

The first and most important point is that the land was donated to the United States in 1888 by patriotic citizens who intended it to be used to "permanently maintain" the land exclusively for the benefit of veterans. The VA is hell-bent on violating that trust so that it can cannibalize the land and avoid using current revenues that the Congress feels are better spent on anything other than veterans' healthcare.

Secondly, the legislation does not "circumvent" the CARES process. CARES itself is an attempt to circumvent the congressional mandate to create a Master Plan for the campus (PL 105-368). Thirdly, the Enterprise lease violates the Fiscal Year 2006 Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriation Act (for both, see attached letter dated Feb. 12, 2007). Congressman Waxman has been most emphatic in telling the VA that the so-called CARES process is NOT a substitute for the Master Plan.

Last, and most importantly, there are no "excess" buildings at the campus, especially in a time of war. The VA has systematically underfunded both healthcare programs and building maintenance for decades to create the pretext of "underutilization." Congressman Swift of Riverside made these same observations over 80 years ago when the Congress refused to fund the construction of a new fireproof barracks on the site.

Three of these "excess" buildings were just earmarked to be rehabilitated for use by homeless veterans (but operated by independent contractors). Noble as this gesture may be, it is insufficient. The need for these three buildings did not arise overnight. Together, the three buildings will assist only a small fraction of the estimated 21,000 veterans within a 50 mile radius of the hospital. There are more veterans in this same area than in 42 other states combined. The need for services is not decreasing, but if CARES succeeds, the facilities will be diminished.

It is wholly inappropriate for any one to call the protection of veterans' land an "earmark". That term applies to the selfish use of current revenue, not the protection of veterans' land that was donated for specific use 119 years ago. Protecting this land from economic predators is a high civic duty. Presuming that veterans' land may be plundered to relieve the obligation of the United States to care for its veterans is immoral. Please do not collude with the politicians and politically well connected real estate developers who are intent on plundering this land.

Respectfully,
John Aaron
907 Kagawa Street
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
310-901-8001
Sgt. USAF (1967-1971)

FIGHTING OVER MEMORIAL REPLICAS

By Jessica Gresko - The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Fla. — They fought together in Vietnam, but now two veterans groups are battling with each other over a symbol both deeply respect — the Vietnam Wall.

Some of the former troops are grandparents now, but they can still hold their ground. It comes down to this: on one side a veterans group based in Michigan, on the other, a Florida group.

Both have built replicas of the Vietnam Veterans

Memorial in Washington — Michigan's two walls constructed more than a decade ago and Florida's unveiled last year. In the past few months, however, the groups have fired off volleys of e-mails over a trademark dispute and threatened each other with legal action.

The Michigan-based Vietnam Combat Veterans Ltd. says Florida's group has used its name, "The Moving Wall," on a commemorative coin it sold and on other literature. The Florida group, Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, says any use was a mistake and has stopped selling the coins. Both groups agree only on that they're trying to honor the same 58,000 names.

So why not just settle the conflict? It's not that easy, the groups say.

"They're using our name to make money. That's desecration of the name of every man and woman on the Wall," said Channing Prothro of Vietnam Combat Veterans. On behalf of the group, he's demanded a return of some of the Florida group's profits.

Ken Baker, a past president of the Brevard group, says only about \$600 was made from the coin and calls the conflict "a shame."

The pair of walls aren't the only ones traveling the country. A half-scale version called "The Wall That Heals" is managed by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the nonprofit group that built the Washington wall. A company that sells funeral services sets up its "Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall" in cemeteries. And another organization, the American Veterans Traveling Tribute, includes a wall with several memorials to American soldiers.

The traveling walls can be easier to get to than the Washington original and, at a fraction of the size, more manageable for veterans like Arizona resident Greg Cook. He visited the Florida wall in April but said visiting Washington's wall is difficult, comparing facing it to confronting a hand grenade.

"It's like somebody put a hand frag in your gut and a hand frag in each of your ears and pulled the pin, and Boom!" Cook said.

Veterans in Florida have been able to visit a traveling wall during their annual reunion for almost two decades. By tradition, some of the same people help set it up every year, carrying wall panels that contain names of people they knew. During the week of the reunion, some veterans visit early in the morning or late in the evening when it's quiet, often bringing a beer to drink and another to set at the wall's base for a friend. In April, a pack of cigarettes and a deck of playing cards had been left along with wreaths and flowers, and both Florida and Michigan groups save anything that gets left.

"It's more than just an empty beer bottle," said Greg Welsh, who manages and travels with the Florida wall. "It's somebody sharing with a fellow comrade."

For many years, Florida veterans like Welsh paid to bring "The Moving Wall" to their reunion. The Moving Wall's founder, John Devitt, built the replica after attending the 1982 dedication of the Washington memorial, adding a second wall and — for a time — a third.

A few years ago, however, Devitt's walls stopped coming to Florida. Whether it was a scheduling or a personality conflict, it's hard to untangle. But Devitt was frustrated by the Florida group, and the Florida veterans felt betrayed by the short notice they had to find a replacement.

Since then, the two groups have been at odds. In 2005, the Florida veterans built "The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall" so they would never

have to rely on others. But "The Moving Wall" name still appeared — unintentionally, the group says — on some of its literature and a gold commemorative coin it sold, one produced before the two groups parted ways. The coin incensed Devitt's group, which says it doesn't sell any wall memorabilia.

The result: e-mails setting a deadline for the coins to be removed from Florida's Web site and posted warnings about the Florida group on the Michigan Web site. A taped phone call between them was also briefly posted on The Moving Wall's site. The Florida group, took the coins off its site but did not send any money it made back. Now, the conflict is at a sort of stalemate.

Both groups say it shouldn't affect people coming to the various walls, though many attending Florida's reunion know the story. What's important is that people visit, the groups believe.

And when it comes to diminishing what the other is trying to do, neither has a parting shot.

VETERANS AND SERVICEPERSONS NOT IN UNIFORM SALUTE FLAG

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-OK) today praised the passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S.1877) clarifying U.S. law to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag.

Current law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states that veterans and servicemen not in uniform should place their hand over their heart without clarifying whether they can or should salute the flag.

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Senator Inhofe said. "Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform.

"Unfortunately, current U.S. law leaves confusion as to whether veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag. My legislation will clarify this regulation, allowing veterans and servicemen alike to salute the flag, whether they are in uniform or not.

"I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly at baseball games, parades, and formal events. I believe this is an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the United States who have served in the military and remain as role models to other citizens. Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others."

VETERANS DISABILITY BENEFITS COMMISSION ISSUES REPORT

VETS COMMISSION CALLS FOR UNIFORM DISABILITY RATING SYSTEM FOR VETERANS

Washington D. C., October 3, 2007—The Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission today released its report: Honoring the Call to Duty: Veterans' Disability Benefits in the 21st Century calling for the Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) to use a consistent and uniform policy for rating disabilities of U. S. veterans.

"For almost three years, the Commission has studied the existing systems and found disparities that directly impact the benefits that our veterans receive," said Commission Chair,

James Terry Scott, retired Army Lt. Gen. "It is important that all those who have served our Nation receive an appropriate, equitable and consistent benefit for their sacrifices."

The Commission's report provides 113 recommendations that would help to ensure that the benefit fairly compensates the service-disabled veterans and their families, as well as help them live with dignity as they rehabilitate and reintegrate into civilian life.

The Commission identified 14 priority recommendations, among them include:

Using an updated VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) that would include the evaluation and rating of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental disorders and of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in both the DoD and VA and would be revised to account for new diagnostic classifications, medical criteria and medical advances;

Identify specific criteria for PTSD rating and establish a holistic approach to PTSD that couples compensation, treatment, and vocational assessment. Re-evaluation should occur every 2-3 years to ensure that treatment is effective;

Initially increasing compensation rates up to 25 percent to take into account the quality of life and other non-work related effects of severe disabilities on veterans and their families;

Eliminating the ban on concurrent receipt for all military retirees and for all service members who are separated from the military due to service-connected disabilities, as well as eliminating the SBP/DIC offset for survivors of retirees and in-service deaths, with priority for the more severely disabled veterans.

Expediting compatible information systems for VA and DoD;

Realigning the disability evaluation process so that the Military Services determine fitness for duty and service members who are found unfit for duty are referred to VA for disability rating;

Improving the claims cycle by establishing a simplified and expedited process using best practices and maximizing use of information technology;

At the start of its work, the Commission developed 31 key research questions, which helped define the scope of its mission and enabled the Commission to arrive at essential findings on the appropriateness of the benefits.

During the course of its comprehensive investigation, the Commission conducted eight fact-finding site visits throughout the country and heard from thousands of veterans, advocates and family members regarding the current vet-

erans' disability system. In addition, the Commission employed the Institute of Medicine to review the medical and functional criteria used to rate impairments and other related areas and the CNAC Corporation to provide an overall analysis of the disability and survivors benefits.

"We thank all of the veterans and their family members who took the time to share their experiences with us," said Scott. "Your contributions not only helped us understand the day-to-day trials you face but allowed us the opportunity to meet a few of the brave men and women who have defended our country with great personal sacrifice.

"On behalf of all of the members, it has been an honor to serve on this Commission. It is our obligation, as a grateful Nation, to show our appreciation and take care of our disabled veterans. Through this Commission, we were given the opportunity to ensure that we do it right for all generations of veterans—now and into the future."

There are almost 25 million U. S. veterans currently worldwide—more than 19.5 million are wartime veterans.

Contact Information: Craig Brownstein, (202) 326-1799 (work) ; (202) 390-1602 (cell) Email: Craig.Brownstein@Edelman.com

The Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission is an independent, bipartisan body created by Public Law 108-136 and appointed by the President and leaders of Congress, mandated to study the benefits and services intended to compensate and assist veterans and their survivors for disabilities and deaths attributable to military service. The Commission conducted a thorough, objective, and impartial analysis of the full range of programs that are intended to meet the needs of disabled veterans and survivors.

VIETNAM VET - VA SECRETARY

By Michael A. Fletcher and William Branigin

President Bush nominated retired Army Lt. Gen. James B. Peake to head the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is struggling to make the drastic changes needed to care for the large number of wounded troops returning home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I'm pleased to announce my nomination of an Army doctor and combat veteran who'll be a strong new leader for this department," Bush said at the White House in a joint appearance with Peake, who served as Army surgeon general from 2000 to 2004. If confirmed by the Senate, the twice-wounded veteran of the Vietnam War will be the first physician and first general to serve as secretary of veterans affairs.

Peake's nomination comes as the administration and Congress are wrestling with the prob-

lems facing troops returning home with physical and psychological wounds from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Earlier this month, Bush sent legislation to Congress to restructure the health-care and disability system for U.S. troops wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan by eliminating duplicative bureaucracy and providing greater assistance to families dealing with the long-term effects of their injuries. The proposals are part of a broader effort by the Bush administration to overhaul how wounded service members are treated once they return from war, a project launched after revelations eight months ago of shoddy conditions and paralyzing red tape at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Bush said Peake's first task in office would be to implement recommendations of a bipartisan commission that studied ways to improve care for wounded troops. Speaking after Bush's introduction, Peake declared that "fundamentally, I'm a soldier" and said it was a high honor to be offered the opportunity to continue his life's work taking care of fellow service members.

"Though it is an honor," he added, "this is not an honorary position, and there's a lot of work to be done," notably on implementing the recommendations of the commission. He said the U.S. disability system for veterans is "largely a 1945 product," and it is "time to do some revision."

Former senator Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.), who co-chaired the commission to improve health care for wounded troops, said Peake seems to be a good choice.

"He's been on both sides," Dole said. "He was a patient after he was wounded in Vietnam, and he spent much of his career as a caregiver."

Still, Peake appears likely to face tough questioning in his Senate confirmation hearing on what he knew about poor outpatient care for wounded soldiers when he was Army surgeon general.

"Given Dr. Peake's past posts running the Army health-care system, he will have serious and significant questions to answer about failed preparations for our returning wounded warriors. For months we've been hearing horror stories from Walter Reed and other military care centers, and I will want to know what role, if any, Dr. Peake played in the failures of the system," said Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

A 1966 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Peake, 63, was awarded a Silver Star, a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam as a platoon leader with the 101st Airborne Division. After Vietnam, he attended Cornell University Medical College.

More recently, he was executive vice president and chief operating officer of Project Hope, a nonprofit international health foundation with offices and programs in more than 30 different countries on five continents. He currently serves as chief medical director and chief operating officer of California-based QTC Management, which calls itself the largest private provider of government-outsourced occupational health and disability examination services in the nation.

Despite Peake's long experience, some veterans advocates worried that as an outsider he would not know enough to quickly make the changes needed at Veterans Affairs.

"We'd feel more comfortable having somebody with much more intimate knowledge of the VA than someone from outside," said David W. Gorman, executive director of Disabled American Veterans. "He's a gentleman, a professional, and he has dedicated his professional career to caring for active-duty military. But there is a line drawn between them and veterans, and there needs to be an understanding of that difference."

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Individual membership is open to Veterans who served on active duty in the US Military (for other than training purposes) from February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975 or from August 5, 1964 and May 7 1975 for Vietnam-era Veterans.

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____
+ _____

Phone _____ email _____

Individual membership or Associate membership Dues:
\$20 for Annual ___ / \$20 for Renewal ___ / \$50 for 3 Year Membership ___

Life Memberships:
\$250 ___ (age 49 and under) \$225 ___ (50-55) \$200 ___ (56-60) \$175 (61-65) \$150 (66+)

For individual membership a DD214 is required if not already on file.

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America is an adjunct organization with VVA, Both Veterans and non-Veterans may join. If joining AVVA you are eligible to be a member of VVA Yes ___ No ___

Print this page and fill out and mail with DD214 (if needed) to our address above.

If you are a current member, to renew provide your Membership # _____ Chapter _____

HUMOR - IN AND OUT OF UNIFORM

Three men are sitting stiffly side by side on a long commercial flight. After they're airborne and the plane has leveled off, the man in the window seat abruptly says, distinctly and confidently, in a loud voice, "Admiral, United States Navy, retired. Married, two sons, both surgeons."

After a few minutes the man in the aisle seat states through a tight lipped smile, "Admiral, United States Coast Guard, retired. Married, two sons, both Judges."

After some thought, the fellow in the center seat decides to introduce Himself. With a twinkle in his eye he proclaims, "Master Gunnery Sergeant, United States Marines, retired. Never married, two sons, both Admirals."

During training exercises, the lieutenant who was driving down a muddy back road encountered another car stuck in the mud with a red-faced colonel at the wheel. "Your jeep stuck, sir?" asked the lieutenant as he pulled alongside. "Nope," replied the colonel, coming over and handing him the keys, "Yours is."

Having just moved into his new office, a pompous, new colonel was sitting at his desk when an airman knocked on the door. Conscious of his new position, the colonel quickly picked up the phone, told the airman to enter, then said into the phone, "Yes, General, I'll be seeing him this afternoon and I'll pass on your good wishes sir." Feeling as though he had sufficiently impressed the young enlisted man, he asked, "What do you want?" "Nothing important, sir," the airman replied, "I'm just here to hook up your telephone."

Officer: "Soldier, do you have change for a dollar?" Soldier: "Sure, buddy." Officer: "That's no way to address an officer! Now let's try it again! Do you have change for a dollar?" Soldier: "No, SIR!"

Q: How do you know if there is a fighter pilot at your party? A: He'll tell you.
Q: What's the difference between God and fighter pilots? A: God doesn't think he's a fighter pilot.

An Air Force chief master sergeant and a general were sitting in the barbershop. They were both just getting finished with their shaves, when the barbers reached for some after-shave to slap on their faces.

The general shouted, "Hey, don't put that stuff on me! My wife will think I've been in a whorehouse!"

The sergeant turned to his barber and said, "Go ahead and put it on me. My wife doesn't know what the inside of a whorehouse smells like."

"Well," snarled the tough old Navy chief to the bewildered seaman, "I suppose after you get discharged from the Navy, you'll just be waiting for me to die so you can come and pee on my grave." "Not me, Chief!" the seaman replied. "Once I get out of the Navy, I'm never going to stand in line again!"

The elderly American gentleman arrived in Paris by plane. At French Customs, he fumbled for his passport.

"You 'ave been to France before, monsieur?" the customs officer asked sarcastically. The old gent admitted that he had been to France previously.

"Zen, you should know enough to 'ave your passport ready for inspection."

The American said, "The last time I was here, I didn't have to show it" '

"Impossible. You Americans alwayz 'ave to show your passports on arrival in France!"

The American senior gave the Frenchman a long hard look. Then he quietly explained, "Well, when I came ashore at Omaha Beach in '44 I couldn't find any Frenchmen to show it to."



Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 223
California State Council
PO Box 1583
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

NON PROFIT ORG
NON PROFIT
US POSTAGE PAID
Santa Rosa CA 95402
Permit # 679

To: