



# The California Zephyr®

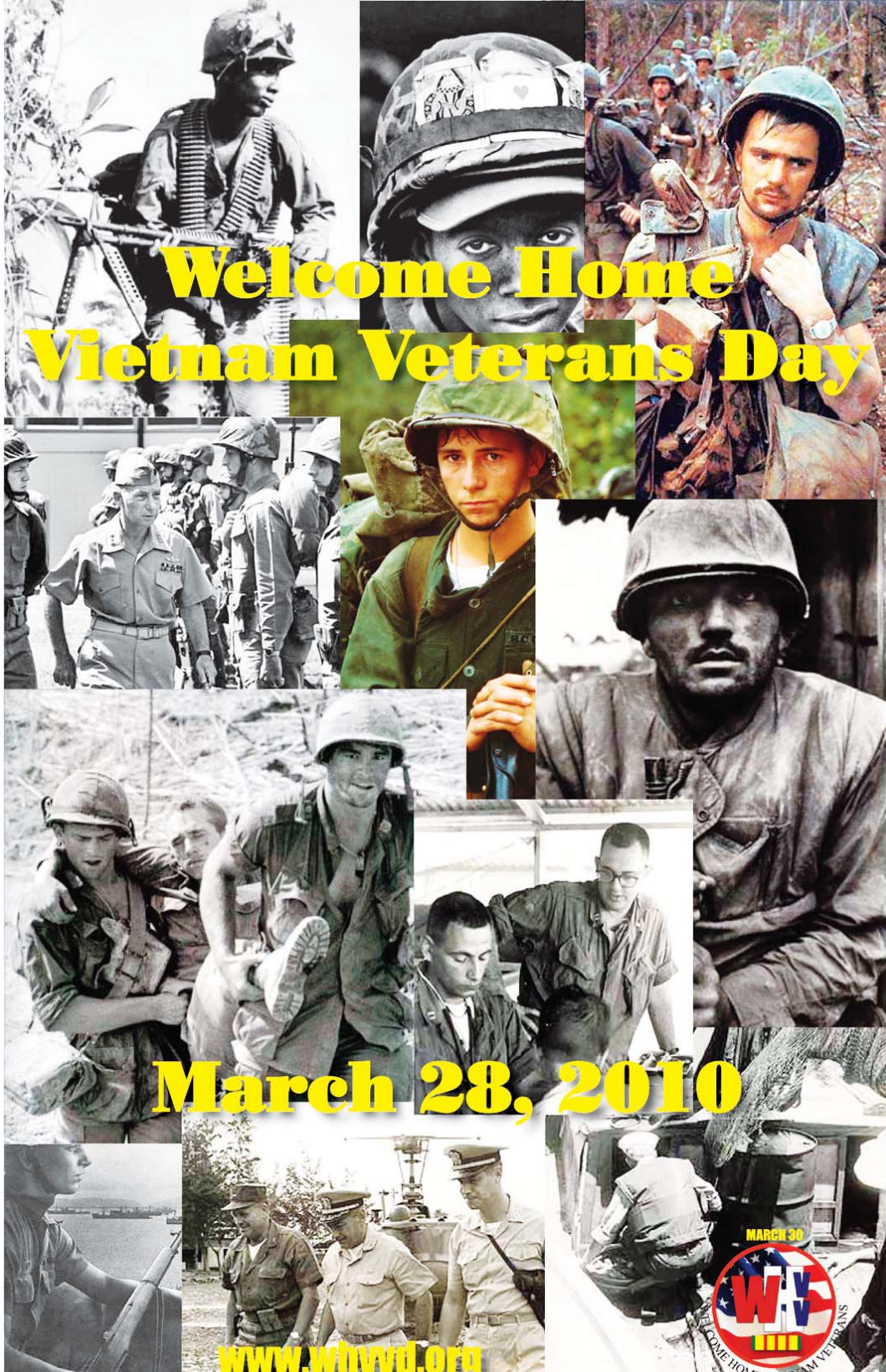


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[www.wvva.org](http://www.wvva.org)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

"Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day 2010"

During the week of Sept. 7th thru the 11th, I received several phone calls from Sacramento, from the Governor's Office, the California Department of Veteran Affairs (CDVA) and from the CSC Lobbyist Pete Conaty, all regarding AB 717 the "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" proposed legislation by Assemblyman Paul Cook. Since the original bill was first introduced by Co-Authors Paul Cook and Ted Lieu as AB 624, it was re-introduced on Sept. 10th as AB 717, by Paul Cook. The bill passed

both houses in Sacramento on September 11th, and went to the Governor for final approval. The VVA, CSC was the sponsoring Veterans Organization for this legislation, and as such, we were invited to be a part of the signing of the bill, and I received a formal invitation to be a guest speaker at the Bill signing by Governor Schwarzenegger at the Twenty Nine Palms USMC Base on Friday Sept. 25th.

I was Honored to represent the members of VVA and the CSC, and address those in attendance at the event as one of the 5 guest speakers, including Governor Schwarzenegger, Assemblyman Paul Cook, Jose Ramos, Actor

and WHVVD supporter Jon Voight, and USMC Major General Lehner, Commander West Coast Marine Forces. Following the speeches, the Governor signed copies of AB 717 and presented it and the pen that he used to each of speakers. I presented him with a VVA challenge coin, and received one of his

in return. Photos were taken throughout the event and it was also video recorded and is available on the internet at <http://gov.ca.gov/multimedia>.

Since that memorable day, the WHVVD movement has made great progress not only here in California but across the USA. Recently the city of Rancho Cucamonga in Southern California passed a city proclamation declaring March 30th of every year as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day". There are several other cities within California that are considering making their own proclamations, initiated by suggestions from VVA members and chapters.

To carry this idea forward and promote a statewide involvement in recognizing March 30th as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day", I would ask that each chapter in the state to take on as a Chapter Project and work with their local cities and counties to join in this movement, and use the Rancho Cucamonga document as a model for other proclamations.

The California State Council is working on developing a program to celebrate "WHVVD 2010" with a multi-city event taking place on Sunday March 28th, throughout the state. Initial considerations are for ceremonies to occur in Sacramento, Fresno, Whittier and San Diego. Contact your CSC District Vice President for available details. Additional information will be made available as planning develops, and will be posted on the CSC web site.

## WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY - WHVVD

-now It's A National Campaign  
-with Your Help Your State Will Join Us

On Sept. 25, 2009, our California Governor, signed Legislation AB 717 proclaiming March 30 of EVERY year as WHVVD. This signing was in conjunction with Congresswoman Linda T. Sanchez's efforts which began in 2004. Since then, the US Congress has unanimously passed WHVVD proclamations every year, because of her concern and love for ALL Vietnam Veterans. Below you will find a letter which Representative Sanchez has written to all in Congress, asking they support our efforts for a national WHVVD, by cosponsoring her letter to the President of the United States, asking the White House administration to recognize the gallant service and efforts of ALL who served in and during the Vietnam War.

Now the rest is up to us. Our part now is to contact ALL Congressional Reps in the country, asking them to support the letter below. Please contact your Rep today and make sure they support OUR letter to the White House. The torch has been lit in California, the effort is nation wide, please do your part so that all Vietnam Veterans are finally given the respect and recognition they earned and deserve. Especially those in your State and in your community.

Let's make sure that March 30, 2010 is proclaimed for the first time as WHVVD. As March 30, 2010 falls on a Tuesday, we, in California will celebrate WHVVD on Sunday March 28, and will continue to hold WHVVD celebrations on the LAST SUNDAY OF MARCH every following year.

Thank you all for caring. God bless you. God bless America and ALL WHO SERVED.

Jose G. Ramos. Founder/Chairman  
[www.whvvd.org](http://www.whvvd.org) - 562.761.2681

**SUPPORT A NATIONAL "WELCOME HOME**

**VIETNAM VETERANS DAY"**

Urge The President to establish a day to celebrate our Vietnam War Veterans October 30, 2009

Dear Colleague:

On March 24, 2009, the House of Representatives passed H. Res. 234, a resolution expressing the sense of the House that there should be a national "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day," a day to honor our Vietnam veterans with the heroes' welcome they deserve. I hope you will join me in sending the letter below to President Barack Obama, urging him to establish a federally recognized day celebrating the contributions and sacrifice of Vietnam veterans. Unlike the praise and support our troops returning from Afghanistan and Iraq receive, many of our dedicated ser-

vice members returned from Vietnam to face ridicule, criticism, and even ostracism. A "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" is a step toward healing the emotional wounds suffered by so many Vietnam veterans.

Similar to other commemorative days celebrated in the United States, this day of observance would not involve a paid holiday and is budget neutral, with no cost to the taxpayer. I urge you to join me in writing to President Obama to request that he proclaim March 30 "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

If you are interested in co-signing this letter or would like more information please contact Ruth Carnegie (x 5-6676 or [Ruth.Carnegie@mail.house.gov](mailto:Ruth.Carnegie@mail.house.gov)) in my office.

Sincerely,  
Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

\*\*\*\*\*

President Barack H. Obama  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 205001

Dear Mr. President,

We would like to commend you for your work on behalf of America's veterans. You have honored their commitment to our country and have ensured that returning veterans receive the necessary support to make a successful transition back to civilian life.

You have demonstrated a commitment to providing the full medical and educational benefits veterans have earned and recognized the importance of their courageous actions in support of our Nation's security.

As you know, the Vietnam War deeply divided our Nation. Legitimate debate about the reasons behind the war and the methods by which it was prosecuted eventually gave rise to anger against the young troops, most of them draftees, returning home after bravely serving their Nation. Some of those who opposed the war took their frustrations out on the veterans, who were often ignored and insulted. Some were even assaulted and attacked.

To help provide the proper homecoming that so many Vietnam veterans never received, we respectfully request that you proclaim March 30 as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day." "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" began from the grassroots efforts of Jose Ramos, a Vietnam veteran and resident of Whittier, California. Through his relentless work and vision, a number of cities across the United States have issued proclamations declaring a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" in their communities.

Congress has also taken action. On March 24, 2009 the House of Representatives unanimously passed H. Res. 234, a resolution expressing support for designation of a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day." A few days later, the Senate passed a similar bill - S. Res. 89. It is time for the rest of the country to officially join.

Regardless of the intense disagreement that many had with the rationale for the Vietnam War, there is no question about the sacrifices made by our service men and women and their families. These veterans should have been welcomed home as heroes. An official "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" would give our Vietnam veterans a proper and long overdue "welcome home."

We urge you to declare an official, national, Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. Should you have any questions, please contact Ruth Carnegie at [Ruth.Carnegie@mail.house.gov](mailto:Ruth.Carnegie@mail.house.gov) or 202-225-6676.

Sincerely,  
Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

January 2010

By Pete Conaty, Legislative Advocate

On March 25, 2010, the California State Council will have its First Annual Legislative Day at the State Capitol. This will be a day long event in which all VVA members are encouraged to attend. CSC members will hear reports from legislators, key staff members, and other state officials. There will also be a luncheon with keynote speakers. Further details on the Legislative Day and

the luncheon will become available on the California State Council web-site. Please be sure to sign up as soon as the information becomes available and pencil in March 25 as an all day event. The sooner we can develop an accurate number of attendees, the sooner we can reserve the proper meeting rooms and meals.

Since this will be VVA's first legislative day it will be a new experience for most of our members. This is a great opportunity to hear what is being done to address our legislative agenda and how we can work with the legislators to move our veterans legislation through the process.

This legislative day will be a big step in getting the VVA's name better known in amongst policy makers at the State Capitol. This day also helps us to make known our state and national issues in front of the State Legislature.

In conjunction with this first ever legislative day, the VVA will also be awarding its first ever Legislator of the Year awards. This year's recipients are Senator Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) and Assemblyman Paul Cook (R-Yucaipa).

Senator Steinberg and Assemblyman Cook were both instrumental in getting AB 717-Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day passed into state law. AB 717 names March 30 of every year as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. Jose Ramos from Whittier is a Vietnam veteran who has spearheaded the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day at the federal level and provided the impetus to get the individual states to enact similar legislation. Cook authored the bill which was sponsored by the VVA. Under Cook's experienced hand and with assistance from my office and members of VVA chapters, the bill passed fairly smoothly through most of the legislative process (Cook and I are both Vietnam vets). However, at the very end of the process, it got caught up in an unrelated political dispute and almost died. Without Senator Steinberg's assistance, AB 717 would not have been signed into law. Steinberg is the President Pro-Tem of the State Senate and along with the Governor and Assembly Speaker is one of the three most powerful people in California state government.

Furthermore, both Steinberg and Cook have shown a long-time commitment to veterans issues and the VVA can look forward to working with these two legislators.

Senator Darrell Steinberg



Darrell Steinberg is the 46th President pro Tempore of the California State Senate. Elected to the Senate in 2006, Steinberg's district includes the capital city of Sacramento, parts of Elk Grove, Citrus Heights and Rancho Cordova.

His Senate colleagues elected him to lead the State Senate as President pro Tempore in August 2008.

In the California State Assembly, Steinberg passed the first significant expansion of community mental health programs in more than a decade, expanded after school programs and cracked down on illegal firearm trafficking. As a California State Senator, he passed nationally recognized legislation to reduce carbon emissions from automobiles through smart planning, made public schools accountable for dropouts and ensured foster and adopted children can get mental health services.

Steinberg's SB 375, which was signed into law in 2008, is the first bill in the nation that links land use decisions in transportation and housing to greenhouse gas reduction goals. Experts expect the bill will become a model for legislation at the federal level and for other states.

In addition, Steinberg co-authored Proposition 63, the mental health initiative that was approved by more than 5.6 million California voters on November 2, 2004. Proposition 63 generates more than \$1 billion per year in state and federal funds to establish mental health programs throughout the state.

Steinberg was born in San Francisco on October 15, 1959. He earned a BA in economics from UCLA and a JD from UC Davis Law School. He served as an employee rights attorney for the California State Employees Association for 10 years before his work as an Administrative Law Judge and mediator. Steinberg served on the Sacramento

City Council from 1992 to 1998.

Assemblyman Paul Cook



Paul Cook is a retired Marine Colonel and a Vietnam Veteran, receiving a Bronze Star and 2 Purple Hearts in that war. He is a current member of the Assembly Veterans Affairs Committee and has authored numerous pieces of legislation to help veterans, service members, and their families. Most notably, Cook authored the Council's 2 sponsored bills; Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day and Stolen Valor-Forfeiture of Office. Both of these bills were signed into law by the Governor. Cook has given many speeches on the Assembly Floor regarding Vietnam and his experiences and memories of the war. He has brought visibility about the war to a new generation of legislators who were not around during the 1980's when Vietnam veteran B.T. Collins was in Sacramento.

In 2009 alone, Cook carried 6 bills that help veterans or military members. These bills sought to enhance outreach to veterans in the state prison system, acknowledge the contributions of Filipinos to the Allied effort in WWII, adjust rules governing absentee voting to better accommodate service members overseas (Cook has carried 2 bills on this subject), and streamlining the DMV registration process for active duty military and CA National Guard members serving outside California.

In his first term in office in the 2007-2008 session, Cook carried legislation to make it an infraction for a person, with the intent to defraud, to wear any military decoration, or falsely represent himself or herself to have been awarded any military decoration. This bill was the predecessor to this year's forfeiture of office bill. Cook also carried legislation to establish a Purple Heart Memorial in the Capitol area, direct the Governor and state agencies to take steps to resolve USERRA violations against state workers who serve in the Guard and Reserves, improve the CA Military Family Relief Fund, and made Dec 10-14 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Week to coincide with the CSC's 20th anniversary of the CA Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Capitol Park.



## CSC TO HOLD FIRST STATE LEGISLATIVE DAY

Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council is planning its first legislative day in Sacramento. We have selected March 25, 2010 as the date to meet in Sacramento, and award our legislator of the year to a State Senator and Assembly member. This will be a day long event including reports from legislators and other state officials. Although the agenda has not been set and speakers have not been confirmed we need to set aside this date. If you are interested in attending we will have a site set up on the California State Council, [vvacalsc.com](http://vvacalsc.com) web site, as well as the California Veteran Benefits Fund, [CAVBF.org](http://CAVBF.org), web site to keep the information up to date and available for your comments. There will also be a luncheon, and representatives have been invited to join us. There will be a cost for the luncheon, to be announced at a later date.

Since this will be our first legislative day it will be a new experience for most of our members. It is a time to hear what is being done to address our legislative agenda and how we can work with the legislators to get our bills through the process. This is a big step in getting our name better known in Sacramento and also puts our national issues in front of the state legislators. Please plan on attending if you can and mark the date on your calendars.

### 2010 STATE ELECTIONS

June 3rd thru June 5th 2010, we will be holding our state elections. All positions will be open for the election process.

As elections chair I will be accepting letters of intent to run

for the positions of President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, North District, Southern District, Central District and At Large Vice Presidents. I would like to have the letters of intent mailed by April 1st 2010, however you can still run off the floor at the convention. In your letter of intent I would like; your name, position you are running for, membership number and a short information bio with your VVA history. Please mail these to Ken Holybee, 10311 Woodside Dr. Forestville, CA, 95436. Questions can be sent by e-mail to [Holybee@comcast.net](mailto:Holybee@comcast.net). You may also call at 707 887 8891. Please call at a reasonable time.

I am planning a candidates' forum on Friday night June 4th at 6 PM at the convention. All petitions to run from the floor must be in to the Elections Committee by 5 PM on Friday June 4th. The elections will be on Saturday June 5th at a time and place to be announced and approved by the members, with approval of the convention agenda. Please feel free to ask questions and submit your name to run for office.

Ken Holybee, 1st V.P.; Govt. Affairs Chair

## SERVICE OFFICER PROGRAM

By Dick Southern, Chief Service Officer

The CSC VSO program is building and getting better and better at helping veterans and their families. We have a number of accredited VSOs. They are Karen Olszewski, James Maddox, Gary Colletti and Scott Will. I have to mention that Karen wrote over \$4 million dollars in claims in the first half of 2008. We also have two people waiting for accreditation; Richard Silbert and Dick Southern. Richard will be operating out of the Oakland Regional Office. Richard's most recent experience was as a full time VSO for the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He will be filling a part time position with us.

I was approached at the October National Board meeting and asked if I would consider taking the VSO training in Silver Spring in November. At the October CSC meeting, I went to the Veterans Benefits committee seeking funding to take the basic VSO course. The veterans Benefits committee then presented their recommendation for attendance and funding for the training to the CSC BOD. The CSC Board then approved the budget for the training and appointment as the Chief Service Officer for the CA VSO program. 2009 is starting to look very good for the CSC VSO program since we are getting grants from the California Veterans Benefits Fund, the Veterans Support Foundation and Vietnam Veterans of America and the Petrus Foundation. This funding, along with what CSC budget in support of the program, will allow the program to expand into other areas of the state, provide funding for additional training and support of our Veteran Service Officers. We will continue our mission to help veterans and their families.



## SOUTHERN DISTRICT VP REPORT

I am looking forward to the upcoming January Leadership Training Class in Fresno. I have been busy trying to get the Southern District Chapters to be involved. The training will be very helpful for the chapter President, Vice-president and Treasurer. Each chapter will be given their own copy of the Quicken program to install on their computers to make it easier for your Chapter Treasurer to do his or her work. This is also a chance for the chapter officers to come to Fresno to meet other chapter members and the entire CSC. Come to learn, meet new friends and have a good time.

I attended the funeral for Colonel Lewis Millett, Medal of Honor Recipient (Korea), who served in WW II, Korea and Vietnam, which took place on December 5th at the Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, CA. The ceremony was well attended, as it should have been. Colonel Millett was and always will be a National Hero. I am very honored to have known this man, his girlfriend and his

family. Colonel Millett was a Life Member of VVA and attended numerous Chapter 47 meetings and functions. He will be greatly missed.

On 09-25-09 I attended the signing of California AB 717 at the Marines Corp. Base at 29 Palms California. The California Governor was there to sign the bill which makes March 30 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. California is the first State to authorize a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. The signing of the bill was well attended by numerous Vietnam Veteran organizations from throughout Southern California, AVVA members and the American Legion Auxilarray. Also the event was well attended by active duty personnel, including Army, Marines and Navy. Jose Ramos, Vietnam Vet. and VVA Chapter 446 member, the man behind this bill becoming reality was also present for the ceremony.

Steve Mackey, VVA CSC So. District V.P.

## CA AVVA

CA Associates hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

We have a lot of plans and opportunities for 2010. We will definitely be another year older but wiser we hope.

I would like to share with you a quick run down of some of what we have accomplished in 2009 at the CA level of AVVA.

- Supported VVA CSC
- Started a Secondary PTSD Program & Committee
- Members were appointed to CSC Committees
- Supported Chapter 951's Moving Wall with a donation
- Gave VSO, Karen Olszewski a thank you donation
- Supported: Beacon House in KY. as part of our 2009 Leadership Conference
- Raised our own money to fund programs (We receive no National funding)

We are looking forward to the work we will be doing with the Secondary PTSD Program. Plans are to also add Agent Orange to our growing committees. The information that we will be using will be sent to all of our chapters for their use in these areas.

At the January 2010 Chapter Leadership Workshop sponsored by the CA State Council, CA AVVA has been asked to present a workshop on how VVA and AVVA can work together. We are proud to present this workshop and glad that we are being included.

For those chapters who have a functioning AVVA within their group, you know how valuable this joint effort can be. We still love to serve the coffee and rolls, we like them too, but AVVA is much more vital and can have so much to offer.

On the National level of AVVA: The Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) are proud to announce that on July 17, 2009, The Honorable Eric K. Shineseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA), signed the paperwork for AVVA to become a veterans service officer organization. This recognition will allow our organization to directly represent and assist America's sons and daughters who have worn the uniform of our country while defending our liberties, as well as assisting their families.

Thank you & Welcome Home!  
Elayne Mackey, President CA AVVA

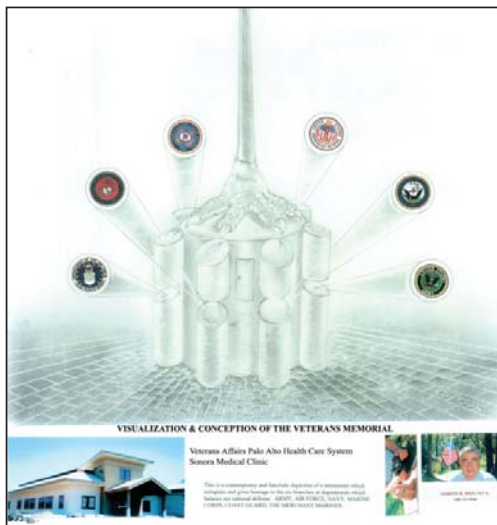
## VVA-391

### ELDRIDGE NAMED MEMBER OF THE YEAR

The Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 391 of Sonora has named George Eldridge their 2009 Member of the Year. Eldridge received the award at the Chapter's Christmas Dinner on December 8 at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds. Eldridge is the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) for VVA 391. This is the first time the Chapter has made this award. According to Barry Schloffel, Chapter Treasurer, "He has been most valuable to our organization and has been since he first joined and later became a Life Member. Just this year he served on the Golf Tournament Committee and the Veterans Memorial at the VA Sonora Clinic Committee as well as chairing a parade committee for Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day (WHVVD) on

March 28, 2010. This was a richly deserved award." Eldridge designed their web site several years ago and maintains it for the chapter. It carries a lot of information for all veterans. He also started up the Chapter Newsletter several months ago to improve communications with the organization's members. He designs all flyers, posters and forms for the group's various fund-raisers. He is a retired Navy Chief Petty Officer having served 20 years of which one year was in DaNang, Vietnam. He was a Navy Journalist and PAO for various commands during his career. "One of the high points of my career was serving with the Navy Office of Information in Boston and writing the pamphlet for the USS CONSTITUTION in 1975," said Eldridge.

He grew up in Center Ossipee, NH and joined the Navy right out of high school (Brewster Academy in Wolfboro). In 1976, he was selected by the Navy to attend the University of Southern California to study cinematography. After graduating, he became a motion picture scriptwriter and won several awards producing cinema and video products. He retired in 1985. Eldridge moved to Jamestown in 1993 from Mission Viejo, CA. After moving to Jamestown, he started up George Eldridge Advertising and designed web sites for many businesses in Tuolumne County including the Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce and the Visitors Bureau. Three years ago, he retired due to ill health. He was exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam which led to kidney disease. He started on dialysis two years ago. Because he had much free time, he took on more responsibility for public affairs with the Chapter and he was recently named co-PAO for the VVA California State Council. He's also chairmen of the Agent Orange Committee. He is married to Cynthia Totten of Pasadena and has five children who are located in Irvine, Trabuco Canyon, and Newport Beach in California as well as a son in Seattle, WA and a daughter in Virginia whose husband is in the U. S. Army.



**VETERAN MEMORIAL CONTRACTS SIGNED**

VVA, Chapter 391 has signed the contract with Gereon R. Rios, the artist of the Veterans Memorial who reports that it will be three to six month completion of construction depending on the weather. October 30 was the deadline for getting donations for the bricks and pavers; however, a new area adjacent to the Memorial has opened up and the committee agreed to offer another 250 bricks to the public. VVA 391 has received donations for over 730 bricks. Frank Smart, VVA 391 member, began this drive several months ago along with other members and the contractor for the Veterans Affairs (VA) Sonora Medical Clinic, Mark Patterson of California Gold Development. The Veterans Memorial honors all veterans from all services including the Merchant Marines from all this nation's wars from the Revolution to Iraq and Afghanistan. "We have veterans represented from all over the nation including Missouri, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Texas, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wisconsin, and more," said Smart. A 4 X 8-inch brick donation is \$50 and can contain four lines of 18 characters while the 8 X 8-inch paver donation carries eight lines of 18 characters each. Also available is a Certificate of Honor for \$10 that carries a facsimile of the brick or paver and the name of the donor. Many got the brick as a gift and the certificate is the announcement to the individual. Applications for the bricks and pavers

are available at the VA Sonora Clinic, Veterans Service Office, and local libraries as well as VVA 391's web site at [www.VietnamVeterans391.org](http://www.VietnamVeterans391.org). According to Rios, the Memorial was conceived as a "Peacemaker" revolver. This was a weapon used during the late 1800s in the west and carried by lawmen. There are six stainless steel cylinders surrounding a main stainless steel cylinder which has a diameter of 2.5 feet. This inner cylinder will be 5.75 feet high with the added American eagle talons on top. The flagpole will rise from the center of the talons. Each service's shield will be located in a 45-degree cutout on each of the six cylinders. "This art piece will rival many of those around the nation including New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. Rios will also be offering laser prints of the Memorial, signed and numbered. VVA 391 is the largest chapter in California with over 400 members and ninth out of 650 chapters in the nation. The California VVA State Council named VVA 391 Chapter of the Year for its very active support to its community involvement and contributions.

**NEW AREA ALLOWS FOR MORE BRICKS**

A new area adjacent to the Veterans Memorial at the Veterans Affairs Sonora medical clinic has been opened and the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 391 of Sonora are able to receive donations for another 250 memorial bricks.

"Because the demand for these memorial bricks and pavers has been so great, we put our heads together and located a spot between the front door and the Memorial that will hold more bricks. I like to call it the Veterans Memorial Garden," said Frank Smart, chair of the Memorial Committee. The committee has set November 30 as the deadline for the remainder of the bricks to be sold, contact info below - see if they are still available.

The VVA 391 began offering the bricks several months ago and as of October 29 they surpassed their goal of 720. Three members of the committee met with the contractor, Mark Patterson of California Gold Development to discuss placing the bricks at the Memorial site when an adjacent areas next to the site was considered. "Originally, we were going to have a walkway with the bricks from the main entrance, but the area was filled in for planters. It is this area that allows for another 250 bricks," said Smart.

The Veterans Memorial honors all veterans from all services and the Merchant Marines from all of the nation's wars. "We have bricks representing veterans from all over the nation including Missouri, New Hampshire, Texas, Pennsylvania, Washington, Wisconsin, and more," Smart added.

For more information, contact:  
**Frank Smart**  
 Chair, Memorial Committee  
 (209) 536-0439  
 FSmart@Rocketmail.com

Smart is being assisted in this endeavor by Vietnam Veterans John Bright, Dave Bonnot (also a member of the Central Sierra Arts Council) Bill Chamberlain, George Eldridge, and Geron Rios (the designer of the Memorial).

VVA Chapter 391 is the largest in California with over 400 members and ninth out of 650 in the nation. The California State Council of VVA has named VVA 391 Chapter of the Year for its very active support for its community involvement and contributions.

**VVA-785**

Justice Eileen Moore being recognized as "Judiciary of the Year 2009"



Vietnam Veteran and Chapter 785 Director for the past decade, Justice Eileen Moore, was recently featured as the

outstanding Orange County "Judiciary of the Year 2009" and this past week recognized by the OC Register for her Herculean efforts with Education and the Arts in Orange County. She is again making headlines as an author with her soon to be released best seller. This is a must read for those who want to remain on the cutting edge of Supreme Court decisions and others who want the truth about bias and racism in Hollywood.

Justice Eileen Moore was a combat nurse in Vietnam and returning home from the war, became a lawyer, then a Superior Court Judge and because of her knowledge of the law, her fair and balanced rulings and her tenacity to see justice served, she was appointed to the California Appellate Court by then Governor Gray Davis. She has continued to distinguish herself as evidenced by her recent awards by her peers.

If you would like to visit her web site, go to: <http://www.eileen-moore.com> Justice Eileen Moore has proudly and courageously served her Country and continues to support our veterans and their families in need as well as publicly serving the community at large. I am proud to call her and her husband Mike close personal friends and I am asking all to show our support by purchasing her book as a great read for ourselves or as a gift for family and friends.

Synopsis: Justice Moore's book *Race Results: Hollywood vs. the Supreme Court - Ten Decades of Racial Decisions and Film* (published by Cool Titles) will be officially published on November 10. The book compares ten decades of racial decisions from the Supreme Court and popular Hollywood films. It is hardcover with 20 rare photos.

If you are planning to purchase this book online, her publisher asks that you wait until Tuesday, November 10. Then, during the day on November 10 (if possible), please order from Amazon.com. If Amazon.com receives a lot of orders in a short period of time on that day, it will give the book a wonderful jump start. Justice Moore's outstanding academic and literary work deserves to be on the New York Best Seller List as her book has far more reaching depth and insight than Hannity, Rush and Bill O'Reilly's best sellers. Here is the link to Amazon.com: [http://www.amazon.com/Race-Results-Hollywood-Supreme-Decisions/dp/1935270001/ref=src\\_1\\_lie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1254702129&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Race-Results-Hollywood-Supreme-Decisions/dp/1935270001/ref=src_1_lie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1254702129&sr=8-1) - Just copy it, and then paste it into your browser. Send your name, city and state, and your amazon.com order confirmation number to [raceresults@cooltitles.com](mailto:raceresults@cooltitles.com) between November 10 and 15 and her publisher will send you a special pdf file of a bonus chapter of *Race Results*. The publisher's web site is: <http://www.CoolTitles.com> Please feel free to pass this information along to others you think may be interested in her book!



Chapter 785 Members at the Los Alamitos Base Annual Veterans Day Recognition event. L to R: Karen Olszewski (VVA VSO), Maria Solis and her husband, and Ken Porizek. They provided VVA information, claim assistance, etc.

**VALLEY VIETNAM VET AMONG HONORED SOLDIERS**

By Cyndee Fontana / The Fresno Bee

The nameless battle in Vietnam was forgotten — just like the men who fought it. Back then, Ray R. Moreno was a skinny 18-year-old who had seen little beyond the small farm town of Cutler in Tulare County. Three weeks into his tour, deep in dense jungle near the Cambodian border, Moreno was part of an almost hopeless rescue mission that produced heroes, but not headlines. On March 26, 1970, a unit from the 1st Cavalry Division was trapped after pushing into a massive North Vietnamese bunker complex. Charlie Company's calls for help galvanized Moreno's unit — Alpha Troop, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry — to answer. By nightfall, the troop had helped rescue about 100 soldiers — some badly wounded. From the field, the troop's commander, Capt. John Poindexter, submitted the names of men who deserved recognition. But his request slipped through the cracks of war. It would be more than

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC., CALIFORNIA STATE COUNCIL - WINTER 2010**

| Chapter | Address/Phone  | E-Mail/ Web Site   | Primary Contact             | Meeting Information   |
|---------|--|--|-----------------------------|---|
| 47      | PO Box 4277<br>Riverside 92514-4277<br>951-781-6137                          | nebuskf@aol.com<br>www.vva47.com   | Steve Mackey                | 3rd Saturday, 10 am at LifeFall 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) |
| 53      | PO Box 7000-185<br>Redondo Beach 90277<br>310-540-8820; FAX:310-257-9053     | n9140y@ca.rr.com<br>www.vva53.org  | Jerry Yamamoto              | Monthly at 7 p.m., 4th Wednesday at Billy's Restaurant, 5160 W. 190th St., Torrance, CA 90503 (except in December)  |
| 201     | PO Box 26203<br>San Jose 95159-6203<br>408-847-5477                          | vva201@aol.com<br>www.nichecom.com/vva                                     | Robert Beresford            | 3rd Monday, 7:30 pm, American Legion Post 564, 2120 Walsh Ave., Santa Clara, CA 95050   |
| 218     | PO Box 2214<br>Santa Barbara 93120-2241<br>805-455-3365                      | ksperk@verizon.net<br>www.vvachapter218.org                                | Keith Perkins               | Meetings on 2nd Tuesday at 6:15 pm at Veterans Memorial Building, 112 West Cabrillo Blvd., Santa Barbara, 93101   |
| 223     | PO Box 1583<br>Santa Rosa 95402-1583<br>707-526-4218                         | vets@vva223.org<br>www.vva223.org  | John Crooker                | 3rd Tuesday 7 pm, Santa Rosa Veterans Building, 1315 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa.  |
| 355     | PO Box 2986<br>Canyon Country 91386-2986<br>818-508-9626 or 661-212-4377     | vietnam6970@msn.com<br>the51504sure@yahoo.com                              | Frank LaRosa<br>Nick Callas | 3rd Sunday of each month, 11 am, at one of two local restaurants  |
| 357     | PO Box 4021<br>Redding 96099<br>530-242-1596                                 | coonrad@snowcrest.net  | Dennis Hipley               | 2nd Tuesday each month, 7 pm at Shasta County Veterans Memorial Hall  |
| 368     | PO Box 1566<br>Mariposa 95306<br>209-966-2292                                | orland123@yahoo.com  | Dennis Croucher             | 1st Wednesday, 5:30 pm at the American Legion Hall on Bullion St., Mariposa   |
| 391     | PO Box 5391<br>Sonora 95370<br>209-928-3848 - Fax same #                     | southern@lodelink.com<br>www.vietnamveterans391.org                        | Dick Southern               | General Meeting, 2nd Tuesday, 7 pm.; Board, 1st Tuesday 7 pm. Both meetings held at Sonora Veterans Hall, 9 N. Washington St, Sonora, 92370   |
| 400     | 200 Grand Ave.,<br>Oakland 94610<br>510.444.5235                             | fdrdocent@comcast.net  | Bill Hodges                 | 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 pm; alternate between Oakland Vets Bldg, 200 Grand Ave. (upstairs), and Fremont Veterans Memorial Bldg.   |
| 441     | 782 N. Brundage<br>Farmersville 93223<br>559-594-5710                        | rod6768@mindfall.com   | Rod Hughes                  | 2nd & 4th Mondays, 7:30 pm  |
| 446     | 1000 E. Walnut St.<br>Pasadena 91106<br>626-795-8141 (also Fax)              | vva446@att.net   | James Maddox                | Board meets 1st Friday each month, 7:30; General Meeting 2nd Tuesday, 7 pm, at chapter office conference room   |
| 464     | PO Box 25540<br>San Mateo 94402<br>650-303-2725                              | leomcardle@hotmail.com   | Leo McArdle                 | Veterans Memorial Senior Center, 1455 Madison Ave., Redwood City (Goldstar Room) on the fourth Saturday each month at 10 a.m.   |
| 472     | 2115 Park Blvd.<br>San Diego 92101-4792<br>619-239-5977                      | vva472@yahoo.com<br>www.vva472.org   | Sal Pellerito               | Combined membership and board meeting on second Saturday each month, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Veterans Museum and Memorial Center, lower level, 2115 Park Blvd, San Diego, 92101                       |
| 500     | PO Box 255484<br>Sacramento 95865-5484<br>916-481-6020; Fax: 916-485-9910    | vva500@sbcglobal.net<br>www.norcaltravel/vva500.html                       | Mary Lou McNeill            | General Meeting, 3rd Tuesday, 7 pm; Board - 1st Tuesday, 7 pm. Both meetings held at: Roseville Veterans Memorial Hall, 110 Park Drive, Roseville (Royer Park)  |
| 526     | PO Box 2222<br>Culver City, CA 90232<br>310-260-6910                         | wmctaggart@pmcos.com   | John Hamilton               | American Legion Hall, 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City; First Thursday each month at 7:30 p.m.   |
| 535     | PO Box 37<br>Grass Valley 95945<br>530-798-9967                              | http://www.nccn.net/%7evvanc/  | Joseph Sanders              | 1st Thursday, 7 pm. Grass Valley Veterans Memorial Bldg., 255 South Auburn, Grass Valley (in Remembrance Room)  |
| 547     | PO Box 735<br>Corte Madera, CA 94976-0735<br>415-457-8005; Fax: 415-454-2737 | webmaster@vietnamveteransmarin.org<br>http://www.vietnamveteransmarin.org/ | Pat Williams                | 3rd Wednesday, 7 pm. American Legion, Post 313, Club Room, 12 Ward St., Larkspur, CA 94939  |
| 563     | PO Box 751284<br>Petaluma 94975-1284<br>707-762-9078                         | johnc85393@aol.com   | John Cheney                 | Veterans Memorial Bldg., Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma, 4th Thursday each month at 6:30 p.m.   |
| 582     | PO Box 3070<br>Paradise, CA 95967<br>530-893-8435                            | zashiban@sbcglobal.net   | Stephen Wilson              | 3rd Wednesday each month, Veterans' Memorial Hall, 554 Rio Lindo Ave., Chico, CA 95928  |
| 643     | PO Box 745<br>Dinuba 93618<br>559-528-2811 / Fax: 559-528-2384               | geodrid@sbcglobal.net  | Peter McManus               | 2nd Wednesday, 7 pm at Dinuba Memorial Building, 249 S. Alta Ave., Dinuba, CA 93618   |
| 691     | PO Box 2226<br>Merced 95344-0226<br>209-388-9729                             | rgrisby@sbcglobal.net<br>www.mymerced.com/0704k163.html                    | Ron Grisby                  | 3rd Monday, 7 pm, Citi Bank, 19th & M, Merced. Board - 1st Monday, 7 pm   |
| 702     | PO Box 525<br>Yountville 94599<br>707-252-7537 / Fax:707-944-0955            | rossivva@aol.com   | Ross Hall                   | 1st Tuesday, 7 pm at Yountville Veterans Home in conference room B. Board meets 3rd Saturday, 8 am in temporary canteen, building D.  |
| 756     | PO Box 90994<br>Long Beach 90809<br>562-433-6756                             | aircop72@gmail.com<br>www.vva756.org                                       | Max Stewart                 | 1st Wednesday, 7 pm at VFW Post 8615, 2805 South St., Long Beach  |
| 781     | 1100 Main St.<br>PO Box 102<br>Ferndale 95536<br>707-726-7842                | digitaldan@suddenlink.net<br>www.vva781.org                                | Daniel Lawrence             | 2nd Tuesday each month, 7 pm, Ferndale Veterans Memorial Hall, 1100 Main Street, Ferndale, 95536  |
| 785     | 2345 Barraca Parkway<br>Irvine 92606<br>714-932-2014                         | kenbartend@yahoo.com<br>www.vva785.org                                     | Ken Porizak                 | 1st Wednesday, 6 pm (social hour prior), at US Army Reserve Training Center Armory, 2345 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, CA   |
| 880     | 508 Riddle Court<br>Modesto 95356<br>209-416-0200                            | emg@msn.com  | Errol Green                 | 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 pm at American Legion Hall, 1001 S. Santa Cruz, Modesto   |
| 933     | PO Box 26256<br>Fresno 93720-6256<br>559-297-5253                            | sdoak@unwireddb.com  | Stephen Doak                | 1st Tuesday, 6 pm, at Clovis Veterans Memorial Bldg., 453 Hughes Ave., Clovis 93612   |
| 951     | PO Box 1313<br>Lakeport 95453<br>707-262-5651                                | deanvva951@hotmail.com<br>vva951.org                                       | Dean Gotham                 | 2nd Tuesday at 801 N. Main St. 6 p.m. (St. Mary Immaculate Hall Parish Hall), Lakeport, 95453; potluck 6 pm, General Meeting 7 pm   |
| 982     | PO Box 1002<br>Guadalupe, CA 92434<br>805-233-2201                           | halfaro12000@yahoo.com   | Henry Alfaro                | American Legion Post 371, 1025 Guadalupe St., Guadalupe, CA; last Saturday each month at 11 a.m.  |
| 1024    | 735 South Brea Blvd.<br>Brea, CA   | gmcolletti@aol.com<br>vva1024.org  | Gary Colletti               | Meetings second Wednesday each month, 7 p.m., Brea Veterans Club, 735 South Brea Blvd., Brea CA   |
| 1031    | PO Box 2742<br>Escondido, CA 92033-2742<br>760-666-9806 / Fax: 760-598-9184  | webmaster@vva1031.org<br>vva1031.org                                       | Scott Wolf                  | Meetings first Tuesday each month at Mose Lodge #1874, 25721 Jesmond Dene Rd., Escondido  |

30 years before Poindexter stumbled across the oversight and began campaigning to correct it. Last month, the anonymous battle — and the men who fought there — moved from the jungle of Vietnam to the Rose Garden of the White House. There, Moreno and other veterans of Alpha Troop were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest honor for a military unit. The citation, created during World War II, has been awarded about 100 times. In his remarks, President Barack Obama said "these soldiers define the meaning of bravery and heroism." Moreno, now 58, deflects the hero label and applies it instead to the 58,261 names on the wall of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. "We're not heroes," he said. "We did our job ... any unit out there would have done the same thing." But back on March 26, 1970, Alpha Troop was just about the only unit close enough to try. And it was already dealing with tragedy. The night before, a mortar round exploded in one of the troop's vehicles, setting off more shells and killing three men. Most soldiers were up all night as they helped evacuate the injured and move other vehicles to safe positions. "It was the first time I saw dead Americans," Moreno said. Morning brought another test. Charlie Company was pinned down a few miles away. Capt. George Hobson, the company commander, said in an interview that the foliage and vegetation was so thick that "we got right up into the bunkers before we knew they were there." Several of Hobson's men were killed or wounded in the first burst of gunfire. The unit was badly outnumbered, essentially surrounded and quickly exhausting its ammunition. Hobson called for help and more ammunition, but the dense jungle and enemy fire kept all but one helicopter at bay. Despite the danger, Hobson said, Maj. Gen. George Casey brought in his helicopter to drop cases of ammunition. The act of bravery bought precious time. With nearby Alpha Troop, 26-year-old John Poindexter monitored radio traffic and heard that Charlie Company was "facing extinction at nightfall." Poindexter had a terrible choice because of the potential toll to his men. But he could not ignore the call; he volunteered and set out with another infantry company. It took four hours to move through the few miles of jungle to reach Charlie Company. American forces were outnumbered three to one; enemy fire was constant. Moreno fired and reloaded nonstop from his position on an armored personnel carrier. As nightfall approached — when the odds would turn even more against them — the Americans collected the dead and wounded and fell back to Alpha Troop's original position. Poindexter said seven men died and more than 70 were wounded by the mortar explosion and in the battle. He still carries some of the shrapnel that hit his face and neck. The war marched on, and the battle was forgotten by most. "We weren't worried about the last battle," Poindexter said by way of explanation. "We were worried about the next one." But in 2002, he read a book that mentioned the rescue. Poindexter was stunned to find that men he'd recommended for honors still were empty-handed. Poindexter, owner of a diversified manufacturing company based in Texas, began a campaign for recognition. He wrote letters to his men, collected their stories in a self-published book — "The Anonymous Battle" — and applied for the presidential citation with painstaking documentation, including his 2004 book. Poindexter, 65, wouldn't say how much he spent, but acknowledged it was in six figures. But "to see the look on these men's faces at the White House, I would have paid triple." Moreno almost didn't make the trip. For decades after the war, he didn't want to remember. Just a few weeks after graduating from Orsi High School, Moreno volunteered for the Army as a means to support his family: wife Angie and 1-year-old son Ray. He also had another baby on the way; daughter Lorraine was born four days before the Charlie Company rescue. Moreno served out his tour and returned home in 1971. At the San Francisco airport, protestors shouted "baby-killer" at him. Moreno left the airport, packed up his uniform and never put it on again. At home, he picked oranges, worked construction and found odd jobs before landing a job in 1979 with Tulare County's road department. He's now a district superintendent. Moreno didn't talk about the war to his wife, family or anyone else. He had nightmares and other struggles, but tried to deal with them by pushing away the war memories. Eventually, friends from Alpha Troop — along with Poindexter's crusade — helped him deal with the past. They "are the only other people who would understand what you went through," Moreno said. Now, he attends reunions and belongs to several veterans' organizations. Even so, Moreno's Alpha Troop friends had to cajole him into attending the recognition ceremony. Last month, Moreno and fellow veterans stepped onto buses to ride from the Pentagon to the White House. Traffic stopped on the freeway so they could pass. People lined streets and waved signs. This time, the message was different. The signs read: "Thank you."

## WOMEN VETERANS

Vietnam Women's Memorial. This November will be the 15 Anniversary for the Vietnam Women's Memorial. Some of you who have been to Washington, DC for the dedication or 10th Anniversary of this memorial. If so, then you have experienced the unforgettable emotions and spirit of reunion as we came together with our brother and sister vets to recognize our service in-country and throughout the world during the Vietnam war. If you have never been there, then it is time to come join your sisters. It is truly a life changing experience. The statue in bronze was made as a legacy of hope and healing. To stand beside it, within yards of the Vietnam Wall brings you a sense of the extreme teamwork, compassion, and strength that we experienced. It allows us to grieve and it also brings us peace. November 9-11th, 2008 has a schedule of events that include Oral History Interviews, Candlelight Ceremonies and events at the monument. Please check out the website: [www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org](http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org) for all program information. I will be there with nurses from the 2nd Surgical Hospital and 312th Evacuation Hospital. There will be message boards to link up with your former units.

Women's Health Care The VA held its National Summit On Women Veterans' Issues this past June. For those of you who are VVA members, you can read the whole review in this September/October issue of the Veteran. As you know, women as percent of active duty deployed forces has changed over the years. Vietnam-WWII era: 3-5% Gulf: 10% OEF/OIF: 14% The percent of women using the VA services at least once: Prior eras: 14% OEF/OIF: 42% Under Secretary for Health Michael J. Kussman promised to establish Women veteran clinics at all VA Medical Centers, although no timetable was given. Women veterans have access to a primary care provider that is competent in women's issues. If you served in-country Vietnam and have never been to a VA Medical Center for your environmental screening, you should do so to establish a baseline of care for your exposure to Agent Orange. That screening is

pg3 mandated. Many women of our era have never gone to a VA Medical Center. If you have other health insurance, you may not be aware of the VA Co-Pay system. You may receive care at a Private medical center but may be eligible to receive your medications through the VA. There are criteria that you must qualify for, but it is worth the research. Nearly 60% of women using the VA are post Vietnam War veterans and 56% are under the age of 45. Women currently receive less preventive health care in the VA system and this may be due to fragmented care. The last VA survey on Women Veterans was done in 1984. A new study this year will look at many issues of need and barriers to care.

### WOUNDED WARRIOR REGIMENT - 1-877-478-6299

This program has been set up by the Marine Corp and is available to all marines and sailors who served marines(corpmen) It is available for active duty folks, but they will not turn a marine away. The focus is to help those in need to navigate the sometimes difficult and complex medical care that is needed for those soldiers coming home wounded or those who are now facing medical issues years after service. The bond of the marines is that no one will leave a marine behind... on or off the battlefield. By calling the phone number above, a marine will be sent to that person's home to evaluate and stand by. There are 50 combat nurses worldwide that can be activated to go to the home and evaluate and make a plan with the family for care. They will not do the medical care but they will manage it. This is a system that has people to people link that works. The Director, Ken Ductor, is a Vietnam Veteran who's office is in Quantico, VA. He coordinates this program with all charitable organizations that can be of help to the marine.

A Note to the Women This is the first women veteran column in a while. When looking at the roster of California women VVA members, it is small. I know that there are many more out there. Each of us probably knows at least one other woman that served during our era. Call them and invite them to join. We all need the support. I would like you to write to me with your concerns and questions. Let me know what you want to hear about. I had only five email addresses listed at the National Office for women members in California! I look forward to these next two years. Kate O'Hare-Palmer Women Veteran Committee [koharepalmer@gmail.com](mailto:koharepalmer@gmail.com)

## WEST LA VA LAND PROTEST

James Maddox, President, VVA 446

As you may know Robert Rosebrock has been spearheading the Sunday afternoon protest at the West Los Angeles V.A. property on the corner of Wilshire and San Vincente for the past 85 Sundays.

We need to help. I suggest that each of you try to get one person to volunteer for one Sunday a month. Here is how it would work a veteran or their family would know that for example the 2nd Sunday is their Sunday to attend the protest. With this effort it spreads the burden.

All of you need to be aware that the Veterans Park Conservancy, is working hard with a lot of their wealthy friends, the media, politicians and wealthy neighbors of the V.A. to take over the property. If we do not keep our eyes on the West Los Angeles property it will be gone before you know it.

I suggest that you take a look at the Veterans Park Conservancy web site, reading that should send a cold chill down your spine.



[www.veteransparkconservancy.org](http://www.veteransparkconservancy.org)

Please contact Robert Rosebrock and let him know that you will be supplying people to participate in the weekly protest; [RRosebrock1@aol.com](mailto:RRosebrock1@aol.com)

## SDIT - FATHER'S DAY 2010

The 2010 Fathers Day Planning Committee has been hard at work coordinating SDIT's 20th Anniversary gathering in Washington DC next June.

In the coming months, we will be providing registration instructions that you will use to register for SDIT FD 2010. You will be able to register either online or through the postal mail. This registration will serve as payment for the event and the banquet and will be separate from the booking of your hotel accommodations. To book your hotel, you will have the option of either booking online, via the 800#, or by calling the hotel directly. Please look for details on how to book your accommodations in the next e-Update.

If you know anyone who is not online but would like to attend, please send us their address so we can include them in the postal mailing of the registration packet. E-mail - [Patty@sdit.org](mailto:Patty@sdit.org) Tony Cordero Sons and Daughters in Touch

### SDIT 20th Anniversary & VVMF Call For Photos

SDIT Program Book deadline for submission of photos is April 30, 2010 Father's Day 2010 – SDIT 20th Anniversary Reunion: As part of SDIT's 20th anniversary, a souvenir program book will be distributed at the June 2010 convention. Photographs of SDIT fathers and families will be included in the book. The photos are separate from the VVMF photo project. To submit your favorite photo for the program book, please follow the instructions below:

1. You may submit one photo only – it may be a photo of your father or a favorite family photo of your choice
2. Recommended photo size is no larger than 2" x 3"
3. Please include the following information with your photo: your name and contact information, father's name, branch of service (USA, USMC, etc.), panel number and line number on the Wall
4. If you are scanning your photo, please make sure the scan is at least 300dpi; please save the file as either .jpg, .tif or .pdf formats. If possible, please save your file to a CD.



If you are scanning your photo, and are using the same photo for the VVMF project, you may save the file to a CD at your local

FedEx and send the CD to SDIT member: Melanie Danna, 3504 Sagemore Drive, Marlton, NJ 08053. If you prefer to e-mail your photo, e-mail to Melanie at melaniej068@comcast.net.

5. If you cannot create an electronic file of your photo, you may send a hard copy (NOT a photocopy) of your photo by U. S. mail to SDIT member: Stacy Swenck, 30455 Deer Meadow Road, Temecula, CA 92591. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope and label the back of your photo with your name, your father's name, branch of service, panel number and line number on the Wall

SDIT Program Book deadline for submission of photos is April 30, 2010

**Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's Call for Photos**



As many of you know, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is currently collecting photographs for the new Educational Center at the Wall. The VVMF would like to have a photograph of every person on the Wall. For instructions on how to submit a photograph of your father for the VVMF project, please see: <http://www.buildthecenter.org/their-stories.html>



USDVA Extends "Agent Orange" Benefits to More Veterans Parkinson's Disease, Two Other Illnesses Recognized

Relying on an independent study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki decided to establish a service-connection for Vietnam veterans with three specific illnesses based on the latest evidence of an association with the herbicides referred to Agent Orange.

The illnesses affected by the recent decision are B cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease.

"We welcome the addition of these illnesses to the list of those already associated with Agent Orange," said Roger Brautigam, Acting Secretary for the California Department of Veterans Affairs. "It is only right that veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, and are now suffering from these illnesses be provided an easier path to obtaining their benefits and needed healthcare."

Used in Vietnam to defoliate trees and remove concealment for the enemy, Agent Orange left a legacy of suffering and disability that continues to the present. Between

January 1965 and April 1970, an estimated 2.6 million military personnel who served in Vietnam were potentially exposed to sprayed Agent Orange.

In practical terms, veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness don't have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service. This "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits.

The Secretary's decision brings to 15 the number of presumed illnesses recognized by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).

"We must do better reviews of illnesses that may be connected to service, and we will," Shinseki added. "Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence."

Additional information about Agent Orange and USDVA's services and programs for veterans exposed to the chemical are available at [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange).

**VA ADDS AGENT ORANGE DISEASE CONNECTIONS VA To Add Parkinson's, Ischemic Heart Disease, And B Cell Leukemias To List Of Agent Orange-related Diseases**

Relying on a recent report from an independent organization (the Institute of Medicine), Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced on October 13, 2009, that the VA will add three new diseases to its list of 12 illnesses associated with exposure to Agent Orange. The three newly recognized diseases are:

- . Ischemic heart disease (including coronary artery disease) ;. Parkinson's disease; and. B cell leukemias (such as hairy cell leukemia).

This announcement means that veterans who suffer from one of these diseases will become entitled to service-connected disability compensation from the VA as long as they stepped foot on land in Vietnam during active duty at any time between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975. Other veterans who suffer from one of these diseases will become entitled to these benefits if they can show that they were exposed to Agent Orange during active duty.

To qualify, it will not matter when the disease first appeared. Thus, a Vietnam veteran who is first diagnosed with ischemic heart disease 50 years after discharge from service will become entitled to VA disability compensation benefits.

The announcement also opens the door to death benefits. Qualifying surviving family members of Vietnam veterans who have died, or who die in the future, from one of the three diseases will become entitled to service-connected death benefits known as Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

**NVLSP's Advice on What to Do Now**

The VA will not begin to pay benefits for any of these diseases until it amends its Agent Orange regulations. This process usually takes months. But if you are a Vietnam veteran who suffers from one of these diseases, or a qualifying surviving family member of a Vietnam veteran who died from one of these diseases, we advise you to take the action described below.

If you are a Vietnam veteran who suffers (or a survivor of a veteran who died) from one of the three diseases and you never previously filed a VA disability or death compensation claim for the disease: We advise you to immediately file with the VA a claim for service-connected disability compensation (or DIC) for the disease. As a result of the court order NVLSP obtained in its Agent Orange class action, the VA will be required to pay you, if your claim is successful, benefits retroactive to the date the VA first receives your claim. In general, this means that for every month you delay in filing your claim, you will not be entitled to VA compensation for that month.

If you are a Vietnam veteran who suffers (or a survivor of a veteran who died) from one of the three diseases and you did previously file a VA disability or death compensation claim for the disease: We advise you to take two steps:

- (1) Immediately file with the VA another claim for service-connected disability compensation (or DIC) for the disease. This will help protect you from the possibility

that the VA will interpret your previous claim as a pension claim instead of a compensation claim, or as being for a disease other than one of the three new diseases;

- (2) Send e-mail us at [agentorange@nvlsp.org](mailto:agentorange@nvlsp.org) and provide the following information:

- . your full name; your current address; your current phone number; if you are a surviving family member, the full name of the deceased veteran; your VA claims file number; the approximate year in which you first filed a disability or DIC claim for Ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease, or a B cell leukemia; identify which of the three diseases was the subject of the claim. Why NVLSP Requests An E-mail If You Previously Filed A Disability Compensation or DIC Claim For One Of The Three Diseases:

NVLSP requests this e-mail to help us protect your right to the proper amount of retroactive benefits if the VA grants your claim. As a result of the court order NVLSP obtained in its Agent Orange class action, the VA will be required in the future to go through its records and identify all Vietnam veterans and survivors of Vietnam veterans who filed a compensation claim in the past for one of the three diseases. Then, the VA will redecide each of these prior claims under its new rules. If the claim is granted, the VA will generally be required to pay you benefits retroactive to the date the VA received your first disability compensation or DIC claim for the disease.

NVLSP wants to make sure that the VA identifies your case as one it needs to review under the court order NVLSP obtained in its Agent Orange class action. NVLSP will compare the list that we ultimately get from the VA with the emails we receive to ensure that the VA reviews the case of every Vietnam veteran or survivor it is required by law to review.

**VA TO SHORT-CUT SOME A.O RULINGS.**

By Donna Miles American Forces Press Service

A new Department of Veterans Affairs ruling will soon relieve Vietnam veterans suffering from three specific illnesses from the burden of proving their ailments are linked to Agent Orange exposure to receive VA health care and disability payments.

Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki's decision, announced today, establishes a service connection for Vietnam vets stricken with hairy-cell leukemia and other B-cell leukemias, Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease, VA chief of staff John Gingrich told American Forces Press Service.

Shinseki made the decision based on a recent report by the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine. The report cited new scientific studies pointing to a strong connection between the illnesses and Agent Orange exposure.

Shinseki determined that evidence was compelling enough to establish a presumption that affected veterans' illnesses are service-related, Gingrich said.

This determination will short-cut the process for them to receive services through what Shinseki called "a world-class health care system," as well as monthly disability payments.

But before the ruling takes effect, it must be published in the Federal Register and opened for final comment, Gingrich explained. He predicted that the process would be completed early next year.

It's unclear exactly how many of the 2.1 million Vietnam veterans the ruling will affect, Gingrich said. If 10 percent have the presumed illnesses, that could result in some 200,000 new VA claims.

Agent Orange, named for the orange-colored barrels in which it was stored, was sprayed widely during the Vietnam War to defoliate trees and remove concealment for the enemy. Veterans have long blamed the herbicide for causing a variety of illnesses, but until now, there's been no official recognition of a link. That put the burden on veterans to prove an association - a process Shinseki conceded too often has created an adversarial relationship between the VA and veterans.

Shinseki, a retired Army general and a Vietnam veteran himself, lamented this situation this summer at a medical symposium in San Antonio.



"I have asked why, 40 years after Agent Orange was last used in Vietnam, this secretary is still adjudicating claims for presumption of service-connected disabilities tied to its toxic effects," he told attendees at the Association of the U.S. Army's Institute of Land Warfare Army Medical Symposium.

Shinseki also questioned why the debilitating effects of Gulf War illnesses still are being debated 20 years after Operation Desert Storm.

"Why weren't conclusive studies conducted by [the Department of Defense] and VA to render presumption of service-connected disability resulting from exposure to toxic environments associated with these operations?" Shinseki asked. "Such findings would have facilitated VA's settling of service-connected disability claims in far less time. The scientific method, and the failure to advocate for the veteran, got in the way of our processes."

Veterans deserve better, he said.

"We must do better reviews of illnesses that may be connected to service, and we will," he said. "Veterans who endure health problems deserve timely decisions based on solid evidence."

#### SHINSEKI PLEDGES BETTER SUPPORT FOR VETES By Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Oct. 14, 2009 - The Veterans Affairs Department continues its efforts to provide the best support possible to the nation's military veterans, VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki told a House committee here today.

"We have been busy putting into place the foundation for our pursuit of the president's two goals for this department: transform VA into a 21st-century organization, and ensure that we provide timely access to benefits and high quality care to our veterans over their lifetimes -- from the day they first take their oaths of allegiance until the day they are laid to rest," Shinseki said in his written statement provided to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Shinseki's previous "State of the VA" report to Congress was in February. Today, Shinseki pledged he would "continue working to craft a shared vision for the department, one that will be enduring."

"We remain guided by our determination to be people-centric -- veterans and the work force count in this department; results-driven -- we will not be graded on our promises, but by our accomplishments; and forward-looking -- we strive to be the model for governance in the 21st century," the secretary said.

The VA's nearly 300,000 employees all share one mission, Shinseki said, which is "to care for our nation's veterans, wherever they live, by providing them the highest quality benefits and services possible."

Among the nation's 23.4 million living veterans, nearly 8 million choose to access Veterans Affairs-provided services and benefits, the secretary said. The department, he added, will work diligently every day to provide those services "faster, better, and more equitably."

The nation's veterans "put themselves at risk to assure our safety as a people and the preservation of our way of life," Shinseki said. Not all are combat veterans, he said, but all were prepared to be.

VA's mission, Shinseki said, is to care for veterans who endure physical and mental hardships acquired during their military duty. He cited the "cruel misfortunes that often accompany difficult operational missions, and the reality of what risk taking really means to people in the operational environment."

VA health care, services and benefits are in great demand, Shinseki said, noting that demand increases each year. More than 4 million new veterans have been added to the VA's health care rolls since 2001, he said.

Some of today's youngest veterans are dealing with the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and other multiple-trauma injuries from service in Iraq and Afghanistan, he said.

"We will provide them the care they deserve," the secretary pledged. He also promised to improve the quality of

care delivered to veterans of World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Desert Storm and other operational deployments.

A 2003 policy change that's based on where a veteran lives and relaxed income thresholds has enabled many more veterans to access VA care, Shinseki reported, but it also has increased VA's workload. Still, he said, VA is prepared to accommodate up to 500,000 new enrollees, to be phased in over the next four years.

Expanded benefits have increased VA's workload in other areas as well. While the post 9/11 GI Bill expanded educational opportunities, Shinseki noted, it also has challenged paper-bound processes. Therefore, he said, aggressive efforts are under way to transfer paper documents to computers to provide more, better and faster decisions in disability claims and educational benefits.

Additionally, "the honor of providing final resting places for our veterans remains a source of immense professional pride for the National Cemeteries Administration, and indeed, the rest of VA," Shinseki stated. The NCA, he wrote, consistently meets the demographic standards associated with veteran burials and exceeds expectations with regard to care and compassion for heroes' families.

The NCA over the past year has interred about 107,000 veterans at 130 national cemeteries, Shinseki said. Five new national cemeteries have been opened, he added, and 16 cemetery projects have been funded for expansion.

"Our veterans have earned and deserve our respect and appreciation for their sacrifices and the sacrifices of their families," Shinseki wrote, adding that VA is "privileged to have the mission of demonstrating the thanks of a grateful nation."

#### MENTAL HEALTH PROS CONSIDER TREATMENTS By Jim Garamone American Forces Press Service

NORFOLK, Va., Nov. 3, 2009 - Improving mental health care for service members and veterans requires a coordinated effort beyond health care providers and the military community, the Pentagon's top mental health expert said here today. Opening the second Warrior Resilience Conference, Army Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Loree K. Sutton, director of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, asked the more than 400 attendees to learn from each other and the presenters as the military looks for the best way to build psychological resilience in the force.

The conference brings together line supervisors, clinicians, care providers and experts from around the United States to deal with the signature psychological injuries of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq: post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

The general set the tone early about the scope of the problem. "As a nation, we have never asked so much from so few on behalf of so many," Sutton said. "Failure is not an option. The needs of our warriors, our veterans, their family members, must come first."

Candor, transparency, speed, and accountability are non-negotiable virtues for treating those in the field. Results -- real, measurable results -- must guide the effort as it moves forward, she said.

"And we must work as a team," she added. "This is not about competition."

Sutton joked that her office, which serves as a clearinghouse for treatments, steals the good ideas of others. "Yes. Of course we do!" she said. "We exist so we can look over the horizon and we can dig into the other agencies."

"It is our privilege to leave no stone unturned in finding leading practices and promising principles ... so we can catalyze new knowledge and action and we can accelerate positive change," Sutton said as she called for a Manhattan Project-type of national unity and effort to help those most affected.

The invisible wounds of war are a public health challenge, Sutton said, and the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are not the sole owners of the effort. People and communities across the United States have to participate as well, said the general added.

And the movement in support of psychological health is

not limited to mental health professionals, Sutton said. Members of faith communities, business communities, schools and employers also must be involved with treatment and must work together to ensure that service members and their families get the help they need, she told the conferees.

The use of the reserve components in the fights in Iraq and Afghanistan means that men and women from almost every community in the United States are doing their part, the general said. But because they don't live on or near a military installation, they may not be getting the support they need. She asked that all at the conference look for ways to reach out to these people.

U. S. troops and their families understand resilience in a way that most Americans don't, Sutton said. "They know what's important: relationships, families, connections," she said. The conference mission is to help troops and families strengthen that resilience, she said, adding that the effort will require a new outlook for the military.

"If we fail to transform our culture, we will have missed the boat," Sutton said. "This 'suck-it-up' [military] culture yields a vulnerability that places our health, our safety, our security, our families and our futures at risk. To prevail, leaders at all levels must work together to build strength through nurturing, connection, trust, courage and resilience."

## VA HEALTHCARE CHANGES

By Rick Maze, Staff writer Navy Times

The Obama administration's nominee to run the VA health care system says he is looking to shake things up in the nation's largest integrated medical system. Dr. Robert Petzel, who has 35 years of experience in VA, told a Senate committee that he would bring an "innovative and creative approach" to veterans health programs if confirmed as VA undersecretary for health. That means, he said, realigning the Veterans Health Administration to be "more patient-centered," more team-oriented and more standardized across the U. S. in its medical care, organization and business practices. "I understand health care systems and I know the VA system very well," Petzel, now VA's acting deputy undersecretary for health, said Wednesday in testimony before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. "I know its strengths, its weaknesses and its challenges." Strengths include a clear mission, dedicated work force, and good reputation for quality and safety; a working electronic medical records system; a broad array of programs; and a high degree of integration, Petzel said. Weaknesses include the need for a vision of the future veterans health care system; significant regional variations in programs and medical centers because of decentralized management; and an inability to reach all of its potential patients. "We have the largest integrated mental health system in the country, but we still do not reach many veterans who need these services," he said. The veterans' committee, chaired by Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, seems completely aligned in favor of having Petzel take VA's top medical post. Committee members made it clear they have high expectations that Petzel will fight for adequate funding of health programs and smooth over the many speed bumps that raise complaints, such as long waits for appointments and continued problems getting treatment for veterans in rural areas. Akaka said Petzel will be in charge of what appears to be a top-heavy organization. In the mid-1990s, when VA set its current health care structure, each network was expected to have less than a dozen employees overseeing programs, Akaka said. "Today, VA's networks employ at least 1,000 individuals, many in positions without any direct responsibility for the delivery of health care services," he said. And, while VA budgets have been increasing, Akaka predicted that money will be tight and that VA will have to fight within the administration and with Congress to get enough money. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., said Congress needs Petzel "to be candid" if he believes VA's health care budgets are inadequate. "I have a reputation for candor," Petzel replied, promising to speak up within the administration if he felt medical budgets were too low and also be blunt with Congress about his personal assessment of funding.

## PTSD - BRAIN CHEMICAL CHANGE

By Kelly Kennedy, Staff writer Army Times

Two new studies seem to provide more evidence that post-traumatic stress disorder is a chemical change in the brain caused by trauma -- and that it might be possible



to diagnose, treat and predict susceptibility to it based on brain scans or blood tests. In one study, Christine Marx, of the Duke University Medical Center and Durham Veterans Affairs Medical Center, wondered why PTSD, depression and pain often occur together. Researchers already knew that people with PTSD show changes in their neurosteroids, which are brain chemicals thought to play a role in how the body responds to stress. Previous animal studies showed that blood neurosteroid levels correlated to brain neurosteroid levels, so Marx measured the blood neurosteroid levels of 90 male Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. She found that the neurosteroid levels correlated to symptom severity in PTSD, depression and pain issues, and that those levels might be used to predict how a person reacts to therapy as well as to help develop new therapies. Marx is researching treatment for people with traumatic brain injuries using the same kind of brain chemical, and early results show that increasing a person's neurosteroid level decreases his PTSD symptoms. Marx's work was funded by the Veterans Affairs Department, National Institutes of Health, the Defense Department and NARSAD, an organization that funds brain and behavior researcher. A second study, conducted by Alexander Neumeister of Yale University School of Medicine, found that veterans diagnosed with PTSD along with another syndrome, such as depression, alcohol abuse, substance abuse or suicidal ideation, had different brain images on a CT scan than did those who had been diagnosed only with PTSD. Neumeister became curious after realizing that veterans dealing only with PTSD responded differently to treatment than did those with PTSD and another diagnosis. He said the finding is important for two reasons. First, these differences "can have huge implications for treatment," he said in a statement issued by the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, which released the two studies during its annual meeting this week. For example, he said, treating a person with antidepressants addresses only the depression diagnosis — not the PTSD or the substance abuse issues. All of the issues need to be addressed, he said. His second reason addresses the stigma behind seeking help for PTSD. Service members have said they fear being perceived as weak or cowardly, or their military careers will be hurt, if they seek help for mental health issues. "Once veterans see this is a neurobiological disorder in which their brain acts differently in terms of circuitry and chemical function, oftentimes it motivates them to seek treatment," he said. In his report, Neumeister also said that depression with trauma is "biologically distinct" from depression without a history of severe trauma. In other words, PTSD, depression and substance abuse can all be seen as a physical, chemical injury to the brain that occurs when the brain is exposed to trauma. As researchers work more with PTSD, they may be able to determine why some people are more susceptible to this chemical change than others, researchers said. Neumeister's work was funded by VA, NIH, NARSAD, the National Center for PTSD and the Patrick and Catherine Weldon Donaghue Medical Research Foundation.

## DONATE YOUR CAR

Proceeds benefit the Vietnam Veterans of America

## Vietnam Veterans Car Donation Program

your support. Please donate your car to the Vietnam Veterans of America. You get a tax deduction and your car donation will be helping those who have given us so much, our veterans. Vietnam Veterans of America is chartered by Congress and has been supporting our dedicated Veterans and their families for over 30 years.

The donation process is simple, fast and secure, and your car donation will help us to provide critical support services for our defenders of freedom in their time of need. Call toll free today at 1-800-Help-Vets or use our easy online donation form (<http://helpourveterans.org/>) to schedule your free towing and join the thousands of other satisfied

Our United States Veterans were there when we needed them the most. Now they need

car donors who have already helped our veterans.

## AGENT ORANGE ZONE BLOG

<http://agentorangezone.blogspot.com/>

TIME Magazine, December 19, 2009 Agent Orange Poisons New Generations in Vietnam By Martha Ann Overland / Danang Saturday, Dec. 19, 2009 This lonely section of the abandoned Danang air base was once crawling with U. S. airmen and machines. It was here where giant orange drums were stored and the herbicides they contained were mixed and loaded onto waiting planes. Whatever sloshed out soaked into the soil and eventually seeped into the water supply. Thirty years later, the rare visitor to the former U. S. air base is provided with rubber boots and protective clothing. Residue from Agent Orange, which was sprayed to deny enemy troops jungle cover, remains so toxic that this patch of land is considered one of the most contaminated pieces of real estate in the country. A recent study indicates that even three decades after the war ended, the cancer-causing dioxins are at levels 300 to 400 times higher than what is deemed to be safe.

After years of meetings, signings and photo ops, the U. S. held another ceremony in Vietnam on Dec. 16 to sign yet another memorandum of understanding as part of the continuing effort to manage Agent Orange's dark legacy. Yet there are grumblings that little — if anything — has been done to clean up the most contaminated sites. Since 2007, Congress has allocated a total of \$6 million to help address Agent Orange issues in Vietnam. Not only does the amount not begin to scratch the surface of the problem or get rid of the tons of toxic soil around the nation, but there are questions about how the money is being spent. And several parties have noted with growing frustration that the money is primarily going to study the issue and hire consultants rather than implementing measures to prevent new generations from being exposed.

"There is still risk to people living in those areas," says Thomas Boivin, president of the Vancouver-based Hatfield Consultants, an environmental firm that has been identifying and measuring Agent Orange contamination in Vietnam since 1994. The good news is that Hatfield's studies indicate that even though 10% of southern Vietnam was sprayed with dioxins, only a handful of hot spots — all former U. S. military installations where the herbicide was mixed and stored — pose a danger to humans. The bad news? "If those were in Canada or in the U. S., they would require immediate cleanup," Boivin says. Responding to complaints that America is dragging its feet, U.S. ambassador to Vietnam Michael Michalak said the \$1.7 million most recently allocated to conduct an environmental assessment of the Danang air base is being done to comply with both U. S. and Vietnamese law and is a necessary step toward cleanup. "We're investigating many promising techniques," Michalak said following the signing ceremony in Hanoi. Careful study is required if the job is to be done right, he added. "We know there is dioxin in the soil," he said. "But what method do we use to remove it? Where do we tell the diggers to dig? It's just another step on the road." But critics believe the U. S. is playing a grim waiting game: waiting for people to die in order to avoid potentially costly lawsuits. For a country currently engaged in two wars, accepting comprehensive responsibility for wartime damages could set an expensive precedent. "They know what the problem is and where it is," says Chuck Searcy, country representative of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. "Why do they now need an environmental impact assessment? They are studying this to death." Scientists have been raising the alarm about dioxins since the 1960s. After TCDD, the dioxin in Agent Orange, was found to cause cancer and birth defects, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) slapped an emergency ban on the herbicide in 1979. Dow and Monsanto, the chemical's largest manufacturers, eventually shelled out millions in damages to U. S. troops who were exposed to it while it was being used as a wartime defoliant from 1961 to 1971. The U. S. government still spends billions every year on disability payments to those who served in Vietnam — including their children, many of whom are suffering from dioxin-associated cancers and birth defects. In October, the Department of Veterans Affairs added leukemia, Parkinson's and a rare heart disease to the list of health problems associated with Agent Or-

ange. Yet U. S. official policy maintains that there is no conclusive evidence that the defoliant caused any health problems among the millions of exposed Vietnamese or their children. Meanwhile, private foundations and individuals have taken the lead. Early efforts to identify and measure dioxin levels at Agent Orange hot spots were undertaken by the U. S.-based Ford Foundation in the 1990s. Later, with technical assistance from the EPA, Ford "capped" the most contaminated section of what is now the Da Nang International Airport, installing a filtration system to stop dioxins from flowing into the city's water supply and building a wall to keep people from entering the area. At another abandoned U. S. air base in the Aluoi Valley, a Vietnamese botanist raised \$25,000 in donations to plant cactus-like bushes and thorn trees around contaminated areas to prevent villagers from entering to fish there. (Dioxins quickly accumulate in animal fat.) Though these are not long-term solutions, Hatfield found that after the simple barriers went up, dioxin levels in the blood and breast milk of nearby residents dropped dramatically.

Charities in Danang have voiced concerns about how U. S. money is being spent when it comes to providing care to the disabled in the region. A portion of the \$6 million allocated by Congress was awarded to humanitarian groups working with disabled residents around Danang. But it is difficult to find evidence of the money at work. Save the Children was given \$400,000 to help people with disabilities find employment. But the sole case the organization cited for a reporter was their work finding a job for a college graduate with a hair lip. Another chunk went to equip and refurbish a wing at Binh Dan Hospital in Danang, which sits largely empty. Because the American Rehabilitation Center has virtually no medical equipment, it has a difficult time attracting patients. Meanwhile, the U. S. embassy in Hanoi is spending \$500,000 for a health and remediation adviser.

Groups caring for children born with horrific deformities from Agent Orange — such as malformed limbs and no eyes — are wondering why they haven't seen any of that money. Bedridden and unable to feed themselves, many patients need round-the-clock care. As they age, and parents die, who is going to look after them? asks Nguyen Thi Hien, director of the Danang Association of Victims of Agent Orange. She says donations to her group, which cares for 300 children, are down 50% because there is a belief that local charities are flush with cash thanks to the U. S.'s latest allocation. "The \$1 million [being spent by the Americans] is not for care but mainly for conferences and training," said Hien. "This money should go to caring for the victims."

But determining who should benefit is a nightmare. Tests to establish dioxin levels in individuals run as high as \$1,000 per person — a price tag Vietnam says it can't afford. U.S. negotiators and scientists are frustrated that Vietnam seems to blame all the population's birth defects on the defoliants. Diplomats broke off talks several years ago complaining that Vietnam was unwilling to use accepted scientific methods because they might not support claims of widespread exposure and health damages. They have also complained that Vietnam could do more to help its own. No one is stopping the Vietnamese from erecting fences around contaminated spots, points out a U. S. diplomat, suggesting that the Vietnamese are exploiting the issue for more aid and sympathy. Still, the Vietnamese people (and the government, though more quietly) contend it's the U. S. that should be doing more — much more. Some point out that the U. S. spends only a fraction on Agent Orange cleanup compared to the \$50 million it spends every year on searching for the remains of American soldiers missing in action. Thao Griffiths, country director of Vietnam Veterans of America, which works on lingering war issues, points out that the legacy of each is equally painful. "The issue of MIAs for Americans holds the same importance that Agent Orange does for the Vietnamese," she says. And until the issue is resolved, the legacy of the war will continue to haunt both sides.

## LIES, LIES, AND MORE LIES!

Now is the Time for TRUTH!

An article published in the December 19 issue of TIME Magazine titled, Agent Orange Poisons New Generations in Vietnam by Martha Ann Overland states: "The U.S.



government still spends billions every year on disability payments to those who served in Vietnam — including their children, many of whom are suffering from dioxin-associated cancers and birth defects.”

Those of you who suffer from Agent Orange related illnesses and your affected children know this is a lie.

The article closes with this quote: “Thao Griffiths, country director of Vietnam Veterans of America, which works on lingering war issues, points out that the legacy of each is equally painful. “The issue of MIAs for Americans holds the same importance that Agent Orange does for the Vietnamese,” she says.

Thao Griffiths is not a representative of Vietnam Veterans of America and she does not speak for Vietnam veterans of America.

Those of you who suffer from Agent Orange related illnesses and your affected children know this is a lie.

Don't Wait For An Army To Die, an article published in the September/October issue of The VVA Veteran described a plan announced on Tuesday, June 2, 2009 by the Ford Foundation that it is funding and launching a full-scale, public-relations campaign to win the sympathy of the American people for the plight of Agent Orange victims in Vietnam.

In his written testimony to The House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, Charles R. Bailey, Director, Special Initiative on Agent Orange/Dioxin, The Ford Foundation said, “Over the years the Ford Foundation in Vietnam has supported institutions and individuals with grants totaling \$100 million over the past 12 years.”

What has the Charles R. Bailey and The Ford Foundation done for American Vietnam Veterans and their families affected by Agent Orange? Nothing. Not one thin dime.

Conducted by the National Organization on Disability with funding from the Ford Foundation, "U.S. Vietnam Veterans and Agent Orange: Understanding the Impact 40 Years Later," the 17 page report states that it is “not too late to correct the lapses in the nation's treatment of veterans who were exposed to dioxin during the Vietnam War.”

It goes on to state that "One lesson of the Agent Orange experience has been that the consequences of such chemicals are rarely easy to predict, and that the burdens they impose may well be borne for generations."

Those of you who suffer from Agent Orange related illnesses and your affected children know this is the TRUTH.

In June it was unknown the extent of the Ford Foundation media campaign or when it would begin. It was expected that it would roll out in summer with a six figure budget, and use every resource the foundation has developed over the years, including Hollywood, the documentary film industry, the print media, radio, television, and celebrities.

The TIME Magazine article is part of this campaign and confuses the public and blurs the facts.

All victims of Agent Orange exposure and poisoning, both American Vietnam Veterans and their children and Viet-

namese are entitled to the truth.

Those of you who suffer from Agent Orange related illnesses and your affected children know this is the TRUTH.

The article also makes an effort to pit veteran's issue groups against each other, comparing the budget for locating the remains of Americans who remain unaccounted for in Southeast Asia and compensation for the tragic health effects of Agent Orange exposure.

Those of you who suffer from Agent Orange related illnesses and your affected children and those who are equally passionate about the fullest possible accounting of American servicemen know this is a lie.

If the Ford Foundation's publicity campaign is allowed to focus on the plight of Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange and exclude the American victims of Agent Orange, Vietnam Veterans and their families must use every resource at our disposal and educate Congress, American business, and the American people about the horrors of Agent Orange and its aftermath.

Those of you who suffer from Agent Orange related illnesses and your affected children know this is the TRUTH.

This is not about animosity toward Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange, but it is a response to the telling of only one side of the story by the Ford Foundation media campaign.

The pain and suffering of American Vietnam Veterans and their families cannot be allowed to continue without a full-throated response to a well-funded, one-sided disinformation campaign.

It is long past time for the lies to be confronted and for the truth to be placed on the table for all to see.

All Vietnam Veterans, whether you are affected by Agent Orange or not must write and e-mail TIME Magazine immediately to challenge the lies in the article.

Write Letters to The Editor of your local newspapers and contact your local television and radio stations and report the truth to them. Mobilize your local communities to stand for the truth.



**The California State Council has changed hotels for their meetings.**

The new hotel <http://tinyurl.com/yb994rf>

How to get there <http://tinyurl.com/vcigu4g>

**Holiday Inn Fresno Downtown  
1055 Van Ness Ave  
Fresno, CA. 93721**

The newest full service hotel in Fresno offers the following amenities:

- Professional and Courteous Staff ready to make your stay with us very enjoyable
- Four Blocks from the Fresno Convention Center
- 200 newly renovated Guestrooms equipped to make your stay most enjoyable
- Over 11,000 square feet of meeting space
- Café 1055 serves a wide variety of delicious menu options for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner. Hours of operation 6a.m.-2p.m. and 5p.m.-10p.m. Room Service will be available from 6a.m.-10p.m.
- Downtown Sports Bar has offerings that will please your palate and quench your thirst. While you visit us you will enjoy in season sports on our two 32" Flat Panel Televisions. Hours of Operation 11am-10pm.
- Club One Casino right next door with 24hr. food and beverage
- Complimentary Wireless and Wired Internet in all guest rooms and meeting rooms
- Coffee Maker/Coffee in all Guestrooms
- Iron/Ironing Board in all Guestrooms
- Laundry/Guest Operated

**CONDOLENCES TO EARP FAMILY**

We'd like to extend our deepest sympathies to Zack Earp and his family. Sadly, Zack's beloved mother passed away the first week of December. Then tragically, Zack's son, Seth, died Christmas Eve afternoon during a major seizure. Seth was 32 years old, and had suffered with epilepsy for many years.

Many longtime VVA members know Zack well, but some newer members may not. He was an important part of VVA CA's early years, so here are a few facts and a photo for those who have not met him.

Zack was one of the original members of VVA Chapter 47 Inland Empire, serving as Board Member, and President from 1983 to 1989. Several times after that, he stepped in to take a position for which there were no candidates. Zack also served on the VVA State Council as Board Member, and President, from 1986 through 1988.

Zack, a former U.S Marine, was severely wounded in Vietnam at Con Thien.

He is a mentor, and a friend, to many. May your loved ones rest peacefully, Zack.



**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 \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_



/author unknown/

"I didn't put it there," He said.

The lord looked very somber, as if seeing down eternity's distant shores.

"You're a genius," said the angel, casting a gaze at the tear.

"It's for bottled up emotions, for holding fallen soldiers as they die, for commitment to that funny piece of cloth called the American flag, for the terror of living with PTSD for decades after the war, alone with its demons with no one to care or help."

"What's the tear for?" asked the angel.

"That's not a leak", said the Lord. "That's a tear."

Finally, the angel slowly ran his finger across the vet's cheek, and said, "There's a leak...I told you that you were trying to put too much into this model."

The Lord gazed into the future and said, "He will also endure being vilified and spit on when he returns home, rejected and crucified by the very ones for which he fought."

"You bet," said the Lord. "I can quote much of the UCMJ, understands 'non sibi sed patriae', knows what 'de oppresso liber' means, recite all his general orders, and engage in a search and destroy mission in less time than it takes for his fellow Americans back home to discuss the morality of the War and all the while, keep his sense of humor."

The angel walked around the model and said, "Can it think?"

gnant's paycheck."

"I can't," said the Lord. "Not until I have a model that can carry a wounded soldier 1,000 meters during a fire fight, calm the fears of the latest FNG and feed a family of 4 on a

"Lord, rest, and work on this tomorrow."

bleeding, fellow soldier and say, "You'll make it"... when he knows he won't."

The Lord nodded, "One pair that sees through elephant grass, another pair here in the side of his head for his buddies, another pair here in front that can look reassuringly at his

"That's on the standard model?" asked the angel.

The Lord says, "It's not the hands that are causing me problems. It's the 3 pair of eyes a Nam Vet has to have."

The angel shook his head slowly and said, "6 pair of hands...no way."

very little rest. And he has to have 6 pairs of hands."

And God said, "Have you seen the specs on this order? A Nam Vet has to be able to run 5 clicks through the bush with a full pack on, endure with barely any sleep for days, enter tunnels full of rats, spiders and the enemy all the while keeping his weapons clean and operable. He has to be able to sit in his foxhole all night during an attack, hold his buddies as they die, walk point in unfamiliar territory known to be VC infested, and somehow keep his senses alert for danger. He has to be in top physical condition existing on c-rats and

The angel said to the Lord, "You're certainly doing a lot of fiddling around on this one."

When the Lord was creating Vietnam Veterans, He was into His 6th day of overtime working on the first fully operational model when an angel appeared.

## THE CREATION OF THE VIETNAM VETERAN



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VVA CA State Council contact info inside - page 2

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**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- Agent Orange Information
- Legislative Information
- Veteran News
- Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Info

And more...

**VVA & CSC MEETING DATES & EVENTS**

- January 29-31, 2010 - Fresno
- April 23-25, 2010 - Fresno
- Capitol Day - March 25, 2010 - Sacramento
- CSC State Convention - June 4-6, 2010 - Fresno
- August 27-29, 2010 - Fresno
- October 22-24, 2010 - Fresno