



# The California Zephyr®

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



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 12 - SPRING 2006

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- PTSD News & Info
- Legislative News
- Committee Reports
- Reader's Opinions & Stories
- And more...

## CSC MEETING DATES

**MAY 12, 2007, BOARD MEETING, FRESNO, CA**  
**JUNE 8-10, 2007, CONVENTION CONFERENCE, FRESNO, CA**  
**JULY 17-22, 2007, NATIONAL CONVENTION, SPRINGFIELD, IL**

National Convention July 17-22, Springfield, IL. Don't wait, get your hotel and travel registrations, file your Election and Financial Reports, and register your delegates. All necessary forms and information are at: [http://vva.org/national\\_convention.html](http://vva.org/national_convention.html)

**MELANIE TROXEL**  
THE WORLD'S FASTEST AND QUICKEST FEMALE

**VIETNAM VETERANS/POW-MIA DRAGSTER T-SHIRTS AND HATS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE**

**SALUTING THOSE WHO SERVED AND THOSE STILL MISSING** April 3, 2007



DECATUR, MI. - Fans of the Vietnam Veterans/POW-MIA Dragster presented by Torco Race Fuels and Lucas Oil Products may now purchase t-shirts online at [www.torco.com](http://www.torco.com). One hundred-percent of the proceeds related to Evan Knoll's memorial tribute, driven by Melanie Troxel will be donated to approved Vietnam Veterans and POW-MIA groups.

The direct link to purchase the shirts - [BUY YOUR T-SHIRT TODAY.](http://www.torco.com/cart.php?m=product_list&c=10)

[http://www.torco.com/cart.php?m=product\\_list&c=10](http://www.torco.com/cart.php?m=product_list&c=10)



## TROXEL TO DRIVE VIETNAM VETERANS

### POW-MIA TOP FUELER

DECATUR, MI. - Drag racing philanthropist Evan Knoll will deliver a long overdue salute to America's military veterans during the 2007 NHRA POWERade Series season using an 8,000-horsepower Top Fuel dragster as his billboard. Knoll will honor all Vietnam Veterans with the entry driven by popular Melanie Troxel, which will compete in all 23 NHRA POWERade Series races this season.

Knoll has dedicated this car to the memory of the 58,195 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who gave their lives in the line of duty in the Southeast Asia theatre along with the 304,704 who were wounded in action. All told, almost 1.6 million members of the United States military saw combat action during the conflict. The highest troop concentrations reached 543,482 during April of 1968.

"And they got anything but a hero's welcome when they returned home," Knoll said. "In fact, it sickens me to think of the ways these brave

soldiers were treated when they arrived back in the United States. They did what their country asked of them and regardless of what anyone's political beliefs are. It's high time these men and women got the due respect they deserve. That is what this car is. It's a high-horsepower 'welcome wagon.'

"Many of these soldiers were only kids who'd traveled tens of thousands of miles from the only homes they knew into hostile actions that were no-win situations. From what I understand, there are still over 1,750 members of the military still missing and unaccounted for."

Knoll hopes to bring awareness to the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, D.C., and to the half-scale version of the black marble wall that was created in 1996 and designed to travel the U.S. His objective is to grow support for the preservation of this crucial monument through the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

The Vietnam Veterans Wall was dedicated in 1982 and was conceived with the purpose of bringing long overdue honor and recognition to the men and women who served and sacrificed their lives in Vietnam. Many of those who survived were met with ridicule and contempt when they returned home. The Wall was created to right those wrongs and for the most part, has served as a positive healing experience. The memorial sends a message to those who served in the war as well as those impacted by it and also serves as a symbol of reconciliation and stands as a valuable history lesson. More than 100,000 items associated with those who served in Vietnam have been left at the Wall by visitors since its dedication in 1982, all of which have been collected and preserved by the National Park Service.

Troxel is excited about the opportunity to honor those brave soldiers who served. "I wasn't old enough to understand what was going on then, in Vietnam, but I feel privileged to be able to honor our soldiers now," Troxel said. "So many gave of themselves, gave their lives for our country and they deserve a hero's welcome and all our thanks."

The car will draw attention to other worthwhile entities such as the POW/MIA Families ([www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)) and Vietnam Veterans of America ([www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org)).

Troxel brings high caliber driving credentials to the table. She finished Number 4 in the final NHRA POWERade Series standings for 2006, making a total of seven final round appearances while winning twice. Off the track she was named Sportswoman of the Year by the Women's Sports Foundation and was also nominated for two ESPY Awards.

The inspirational dragster will also feature sponsorship from Torco Race Fuels, Inc., Knoll Gas Motorsports and Lucas Oil.

Dateline March 31, 2007 - Houston, Texas.....at O'dark-thirty (heavy rain & with overcast skies) our small recon patrol (Suzie & Bill Meeks) ar-



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THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR

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

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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.



**You Save - We Benefit!**

1. Shop online at hundreds of popular stores at ClubShop.com
2. You earn Reward Points and Cash Back when you shop
3. We receive a donation from your purchases



<http://www.clubshop.com/cgi-bin/rd/4,,refid=3711189>

rived at the perimeter of the Houston Raceway Park and parked on the once grass, now mud parking lot about three clicks it seemed from the main gate. I had a flashback that we were wading through the paddies as the monsoon rains poured from the dark skies and thank-goodness I found



no leeches after this soggy trek. We were soon reinforced by Jim & Marilyn Rose as we saddled-up for our search for the Lucas Oil Products hospitality HQ in the "Pits" and we soon found a smiling face in the person of Bobby Bennett at Melanie Troxel's pit location.



Now, Bobby's track credentials stated "Media", but let me tell you, he is a "Jack-of-All-Trades" as far as we are concerned and here is why. An official greeter, connoisseur on NHRA racing, very complaisant to VVA/AVVA members and he knows almost everyone involved in NHRA racing or it sure seemed that



way, since we met Melanie Troxel, Mike Ashley, Morgan Lucas and Tony Schumacher during our visit. The Lucas Oil hospitality’s cuisine was down-home to say the least as we had BBQ ribs, sausage, chicken and the mud-bugs were just right. Suzie gave out about two dozen AVVA/ VVA (logo) pins with the POW/MIA emblem in the shape of Texas to the drivers, Melanie’s pit crew and of course one for Bobby. Jim & Marilyn gave a set of VVA Chapter # 685 prints to Melanie and they will bring a dozen or more POW/MIA shirts tomorrow for the gang to wear.

Now, since the racing was canceled Saturday, Angelo from the “Ashley Team” gave us passes for the Sunday racing and that includes the hospitality HQ again. We had a great time, met new friends and were very proud to represent VVA & AVVA at this event. Special thanks to Evan Knoll and Forrest Lucas for their sponsorship, plus Bobby Bennett’s efforts for a remarkable experience that we won’t soon forget.

Bill Meeks, Jr.  
Chair, VVA Membership Affairs

Upcoming California NHRA EVENT Events:

Northern California:  
July 27-29 - Fram Autolite NHRA Nationals - Sonoma, CA

Southern California:  
November 1-4 Automobile Club of Southern California NHRA Finals - Pomona, CA

PRESIDENTS REPORT

We did not put out a newsletter in February. I felt that with the short time between meetings it would not be practical, in hindsight, I think I was wrong. It has become evident to us that the information relevant to our upcoming meetings is an important part of the newsletter. I apologize to the members for this, although, we have learned a valuable lesson.

We held a legislative workshop in Sacramento in conjunction with our meeting in March; although I was not able to stay for the entire workshop I have heard that it was very successful. I would like to thank not only our National office, but Rick Weidman, John Miterko, and Tom Insley. Rick, Tom and John did an outstanding job presenting this workshop. I would also like to thank Carl Jensen for putting this workshop on for the State Council. Special thanks go also to Bernie Edelman and Sharon Hodge for the work they did on the workbooks for the workshop. Hopefully, the information that was received will benefit any other state wishing to hold a workshop, and allow others to realize the value of this.

Our next meeting will be held, June 9 thru 11, in Fresno. This meeting was originally set up as our state conference; it is now set up as a Region 9 meeting. I chose to do this for the benefit of the members of California to receive first hand information regarding the upcoming convention. In the past we have held a region 8 and 9 combined conference in Reno, NV, which has been a good source of information for all. This has, however, been very costly for our membership and I cannot see the advantage of this combined meeting, at this time. At the last Region 9 meeting I stated my concerns to the other members of the region and informed them that my intentions were to hold a conference in California. I invited all members to join us and hold our conference here for Region 9. With the consent of the presidents we turned the meeting into a Region 9 pre-convention conference. Darrol Brown, our Region 9 Director, agreed that this was an acceptable alternative to going to Reno. With all of this being done I invited the candidates for National offices to come to California and speak to the members. The one thing I neglected to do in this was to communicate with the members of Region 8 and inform them of our plans. For this I am sorry and hope that they will not be upset for too long.

In preparation for the National Convention there are things that will be different this year. All chapters and state councils must have the proper paperwork in to allow their delegates to be seated. All chapters must send an Election Report to National Membership department and to the state council secretary within 60 days of the chapter elections. On this years Election Report it asks for the chapter's delegates to the National Convention. This is an important part, to be sure that your chapter chooses its delegates. If you are not sending delegates to the convention please send a letter to the CSC president releasing your delegates to the president. Doing this you give the president the authority to put someone in as your delegate. This letter must be signed by two chapter officers. Remember that all delegate registration forms must be signed by two chapter officers; these officers must be listed on the chapter election report as current officers. If anyone is planning on being in Springfield, IL, in July and wishes to attend the convention, feel free to stop in. There is no charge to come and see what is going on. If you want to be a delegate or get the delegate information packet this will, however, cost you.

In addition to the election reports the chapters must also file their Annual Finance Report. These are due by July 15th, but I would suggest not waiting until the last minute. My preference is to get the annual reports done and sent in before the chapter elections in April. The only chapters that should need more time are the ones making over \$25,000.00 per year and having complicated tax returns to fill out. I wish we all had that problem. If anyone has any questions on this feel free to contact any state officer or board member for assistance.

I am hoping that the chapters will be sending their convention delegates, as well as their state council representatives, to the June meeting. I have a feeling there will be a lot of issues coming up at the convention. Hopefully we can discuss most of these at this meeting. If you have any questions regarding any of this please contact your state council members, hopefully we will have the right answers.  
Ken

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Vietnam Veterans of America has earned a well-deserved reputation as the premier advocate for our nation’s veterans – for recognition of the debilitating effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, the health consequences of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides liberally sprayed in Vietnam and Korea, assistance to disabled veteran small business owners, the need for additional funding for veterans health-care services along with accountability of those charged with structuring and managing these services, and a host of other issues.

The Veterans Advocacy Training Workshop was a huge success and well exceeded my expectations. I am so appreciative to all who worked so hard to make this event possible for us to experience. Special “Thanks” to Rick Weidman, John Miterko, Tom Insley, Sharon Hodges, Dick Southern, Ken Holybee, Pete Conaty, Jerry Yamamoto, William Manes and many others.

Our next challenge is to take this learning experience and put it to good use building a solid state wide legislative network.

Carl Jensen, 2nd Vice President  
Government Affairs Committee Chair

CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE REPORT...

APRIL 2007

The State Legislature started their Spring Break at the close of business on March 29th . Some of the committees have started the review process of the bills which were introduced for this session. The Members will return to Sacramento on

California State Council - 2007 Legislative Platform -Draft-
Support Legislation to:
California State Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that all veterans have equal access to all federal, stte and local mental health (AB599 &amp; AB2844).</li><li>• Bring more Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) to rural California. Establish a Benefits and Welfare Commisssion for California military and benefits (AB2750).</li><li>• Increase state funding for County Veterans Service Of- ficers for increased outreach to California veterans popula- tion and veterans service organizations.</li><li>• Require each community college, CSU college and UC col- lege to appoint a military and veterans benefit representa- tive and establish a military veteran’s benefit office.</li><li>• To determine how many veterans are in state prisons and county jails, in what wars did they serve, types of crimes and length of sentences. Would want special emphasis on re- turning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. (Information needed)</li><li>• To provide educational assistance to nursing students who commit to serve a specific number of years in California Veterans Homes.</li><li>• Exempt certain Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises from specific state licensing or certification fees.</li></ul>
Federal Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authorize and finance additional Community Based Outpa- tient Clinics (CBOC) to rural areas and areas identified as underserved.</li><li>• Create a federal - state - local government partnership to reduce the UDDVA veterans Claims backlog and expand outreach services to veterans. (HR 616)</li><li>• Eliminate the Means Test for veterans to qualify for VA medical care.</li><li>• Revise the IRS code relative to the CAL-VET Home Loan Program by removing the limitation of service before 1 Janu- ary 1977. (HR 2952)</li><li>• Grant Presumptive Service Connection for Hepatitis C, “blast injuries,” and acoustic trauma.</li><li>• Provide increased access for CVSO’s to USDVA informa- tion systems for use in developing monitoring claims submit- ted on behalf of veterans.</li><li>• Support a Resolution opposing any adverse changes to 38 USC regarding disability compensation benefits.</li></ul>

April 9th and continue the committee hearings on a rapid pace. They are faced with their self-imposed schedule which requires that all bills that involve funding must be passed by the policy committee in the house of origin by April 27th. Two weeks later brings up a similar deadline for those bills which do not involve funding.

The following are some of the significant actions of the committees so far:

AB 279 – Unlawful demonstrations: military funerals (Bob Huff, City of Industry). Would make it an infraction, punishable by a fine not exceeding \$250, for a person to engage in disruptive activity at a funeral of a member or former member of the Armed Forces during the time period beginning one hour prior to the funeral and ending one hour after the conclusion of the funeral. The bill was scheduled for a hearing in the Assembly Committee on Judiciary March 27th, but was postponed by the author. This may signify that a major amendment is in the process. The bill was severely criticized by the committee analyst and would probably have faced a difficult time if the hearing were held as scheduled.

Action Recommended: At the present time, the bill has eight coauthors (or sponsors): Assemblymembers Bill Maze, Visaila; Joel Anderson, El Cajon; John Benoit, Riverside; Paul Cook, Yucaipa; Michael Duvall, Brea; Jean Fuller, Bakersfield; and Martin Garrick, Carlsbad; and Senator Jim Battin, Palm Desert. Organizations should request that their members try to make contact during the Spring Recess and ask for Members of the State Assembly, they are listed at: <http://www.califveterans.com/State%20Assembly.htm>. Information provided on this page includes both the mail address and e-mail, or other electronic mail addresses.



**AB11 Vehicles:** special license plates (National Guard) – (Chuck Devore, Irvine). Provides for the issuance of special license plates by the department for an active member of the California National Guard and exempts the license plates from the payment of a \$40 application fee and a \$30 transfer fee. Passed by Assembly Committee on Transportation 3/26/07.

**AB418 Vehicles:** fees, deployed National Guard member – (Lori Saldana, San Diego). Provides an exemption for a vehicle owned by a member of the National Guard who has been deployed to a location outside of the state from certain fees, including vehicle license fees, as is currently provided for a disabled veteran, a former American prisoner of war, or a veteran who is a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. Passed by Assembly Committee on Transportation 3/26/07.

**AB1485 Property tax exemption:** spouses of deceased members of the United States Armed Forces – (Kevin Jeffries, Temecula). To provide full exemption from property taxation on the principal residence of a veteran who is totally disabled, or is blind or has lost the use of two or more limbs, as a result of injury or disease incurred in the military service, and to provide the same benefit to the unmarried surviving spouse of a member of the United States Armed Forces that died as a result of a service-connected disease or injury. Scheduled for a hearing by the Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation on 5/7/07.

**SB630 Veterans Homes** – (Samuel Aanestad, Nevada City). Appropriates \$30,000,000 from the Public Buildings Construction Fund to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Home project. The funds are needed due to increased estimates for construction of the homes in West Los Angeles, Saticoy, and Lancaster, and because of delays in the Congressional appropriations of federal funds. Scheduled for a hearing by the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs on 4/10/07.

#### KEY BILLS PENDING IN THE 110TH CONGRESS

##### **Social Security:**

**H.R.82** - (199 Co-Sponsors). Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA), 1/4/07 – Referred to House Committee on Ways and Means. It is to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions. Companion Bill: **S.206** – (14 Co-Sponsors), Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-CA) Referred to Senate Committee on Finance.

**H.R.93** – (Co-Sponsors – none). Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL), 1/4/07 – Referred to House Committees on Rules and Budget. To protect Social Security beneficiaries against any reduction in benefits.

##### **Veterans:**

**H.R.67** – (Co-Sponsors – None), Rep. Mike McIntyre (D-NC), 1/4/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs. To improve the outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**H.R.92** – (7 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL) 1/4/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans affairs. To establish standards of access to care for veterans seeking health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**H.R.207** – (13 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY), 1/5/07 - Referred to House Committee on Armed Services. To provide for identification of members of the Armed Forces exposed during military service to depleted uranium, to provide for health testing of such members.

**\*H.R.339** – (Co-Sponsors – None), Rep. John Duncan (R-TN), 1/9/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs. To improve access to medical services for veterans seeking treatment at Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinics with exceptionally long waiting periods.

**H.R.463** – (30 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Steven Roth-

man (D-NJ), 1/12/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs. To terminate the administrative freeze on the enrollment into the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs of veterans in the lowest priority category for enrollment (referred to as “Priority 8”).

**H.R.612** – (Co-Sponsors – None), Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA), 1/22/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs. To extend the period of eligibility for health care for combat service in the Persian Gulf War or future hostilities from two years to five years after discharge or release. Companion Bill **S.383** – (1 Co-Sponsor), Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI), 1/24/07 – Referred to Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

**S.67** – (2 Co-Sponsors), Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), 1/4/07 – Referred to Senate Committee on Armed Services. To permit former members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated as total to travel on military aircraft in the same manner and to the same extent as retired members of the Armed Forces are entitled to travel on such aircraft.

##### **Pay and Compensation:**

**H.R.89** – (10 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), 1/4/07 – Referred to House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Military Personnel. To extend eligibility for Combat-Related Special Compensation paid to certain uniformed services retirees who are retired under chapter 61 of such title with fewer than 20 years of creditable service.

**\*H.R.243** – (Co-Sponsors – None), Rep. Jerry Weller, (R-IL), 1/5/07 – Referred to House Committee on Armed Services. To provide for the payment of Combat-Related Special Compensation to members of the Armed Forces retired for disability with less than 20 years of active military service who were awarded the Purple Heart.

**H.R.303** – (49 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), 1/5/07 – Referred to House Committees on Armed Services and Veterans Affairs. To permit certain additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation and to eliminate the phase-in period under current law with respect to such concurrent receipt.

**H.R.333** – (14 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Jim Marshall (D-GA), 1/9/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs. To permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans’ disability compensation, to eliminate the phase-in period for concurrent receipt, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt and Combat-Related Special Compensation to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service.

#### USEFUL WEB SITES FOR VETERANS ADVOCACY

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Governmental Relations  
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Sacramento, CA 95814  
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March 2007

To find California bill information: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html>

To find California Military and Veterans Code: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?code=section=mvc&codebody=&hits=20>

To find your state and local legislator:

1. You must first find your 9 digit zip code. To do this go to <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp> and type in your address. This will tell you your 9 digit zip code.

2. Next, go to this web site: <http://www.vote-smart.org/index.htm> - enter the 9 digit zip code and it will tell you who your U.S. Congress and State Legislators are.

To find information on the US House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/>

To find info on the US Senate: <http://www.senate.gov/>

To access all portals of California State Government (Assembly, Senate, Governor, CDVA, National Guard, CA law, Committees, Agencies, Departments, etc): <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/>

All of these bills passed out of the two vets committees April 10, 2007.

**ASSEMBLY VETERANS AFFAIRS, SALAS, Chair, 4 p. m. — Room 126**

**A. B. No. 59 Soto.** California State Military Museum and Resource Center.

**A. B. No. 103 Soto.** State military reservists: service awards. (Urgency)

**A. B. No. 187 Nakanishi.** Veterans.

**A. B. No. 257 Anderson.** Parks: veterans: park passes.

**A. B. No. 389 Salas.** County veteran service officers: funding.

**A. B. No. 392 Lieu.** Military service: benefits.

**A. B. No. 696 Hernandez.** State employees: military benefits.

**A. B. No. 1712 Committee on Veterans Affairs.** State militia: armories.

**SENATE VETERANS AFFAIRS, 1:30 p. m. — Rose Ann Vuich Hearing Room (2040)**

**S. B. No. 159 Wyland.** California Prompt Payment Act: disabled veteran business enterprises.

**S. B. No. 599 Negrete McLeod.** California Mexican American Veterans’ Memorial

**S. B. No. 630 Aanestad.** Veterans’ homes. (Urgency)

**S. B. No. 983 Correa.** National Guard: education benefits.

**S. B. No. 1041 Committee on Veterans Affairs.** State militia.

## “RECONSIDERING TRAUMA”

On March 23 & 24th I attended a two day workshop for mental health professionals in San Francisco titled “Re-Considering Trauma.” It was given by John Briere PhD, Director of the Trauma Clinic at the Los Angeles County and University of Southern California Medical Center. Dr. Briere is also a past president of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS). It was sponsored by the Institute for Advancement of Human Behavior (IAHB) to provide continuing education units to Licensing Boards for Practicing Professionals. There were some two hundred in attendance - therapists, psychiatrists/psychologists, alcohol and substance abuse counselors, physicians and nurses.

I attended as a Veterans Advocate and not a Mental Health Professional. My purpose was to familiarize myself with the latest advances in the private sector regarding trauma and trauma recovery. This was an intensive workshop covering all aspects of trauma. The announcement read as follows:

“Those familiar with Dr. Briere’s work know him to combine compassion and sensitivity with the newest information on empirically and phenomenologically-informed treatment approaches to psychological trauma. Based on his latest book, Principles of Trauma Therapy(2006), co-authored with Catherine Scott, MD, this new workshop provides cutting-edge, directly-applicable information on the integration of cognitive-behavioral, attachment, relational, and physiological approaches to trauma.”

It was my hope to learn new information that I could pass onto the membership for a greater understanding of ourselves, our relationships, our society, trends in the field and how well we



are being treated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). I was not disappointed. Since there is too much to cover in one article I will endeavor to write a series. This may be considered an introduction. I would very much appreciate comments, discussions and questions, that I may respond.

The workshop outline included: The Impacts of Trauma, Philosophy of Trauma, Assessment of Trauma, Distress Reduction and Affect Regulation, Cognitive Interventions, Emotional Processing, Increasing Identity and Relational Functioning, Psychiatric Medications and Therapist Issues in Treatment.

The workshop opened with a good deal of talk about Vietnam War veterans and the Vietnam Generation as the origins of the diagnosis. Previously, what we now call PTSD was dealt with under the category of Generalized Anxiety Disorders. Since then, a large body of research has been accumulated regarding the causes, impact and treatment of PTSD.

This is, of course, a multi-layered topic ranging from ‘simple’ (single incident) PTSD to ‘complex combat related’ PTSD. What is clear, however, is that trauma is cumulative. This explains why many veterans who survived and managed to cope with the trauma of war would seem to suffer more from the trauma of homecoming. Whatever the presenting complaint (the issue of the day) it is supported by a history of trauma which had accumulated to the point where it became a physical health problem or, one of individual and/or social functioning.

Who is most vulnerable to PTSD and why depends largely on cultural background and accumulated stress. Perception and experience of trauma is influenced by cultural expectations and one’s ability to meet those expectations. What is a major trauma to one person may not affect another. Current information is that disaster related trauma results in less PTSD than human inflicted trauma (i.e. combat, torture, domestic violence etc). These traumas severely affect and restrict relational and interpersonal capacities.

Another factor in vulnerability is emotional self-regulation skills and resiliency. Lacking role models who demonstrate the ability to self-regulate emotional balance leaves one defenseless in the face of overwhelming stress.

Not surprisingly, those who have suffered childhood trauma and neglect have their capacity for attachment disrupted and impaired. This is quite common among the disadvantaged from which the military normally recruits, and is also present among upwardly mobile overachievers. Not processing through those traumas to re-attachment activates the cumulative effect and makes one increasingly vulnerable to future trauma. Thus the added trauma of combat and homecoming can tip the scales into severe symptoms for many veterans.

Even for those without significant childhood trauma, repeated exposure during combat service can be cumulative enough to elicit symptoms. For many the problem is compounded by avoidance (coping) strategies, some promoted by military culture itself. These are: Substance Abuse, Dissociation and Tension Reduction Behaviors. Substance abuse of course includes alcohol, tobacco, and all sorts of drugs. Dissociation can be experienced as entering a dreamlike state in which one is not really present or participating in what is actually happening to them (emotional distancing and numbing). It can also be experienced as a ‘splitting off’ or compartmentalizing of thought and feeling sensations, selective memory, and the inability to connect thinking and feeling. Tension Reduction Techniques can be as obvious as overworking but also overeating, substance abuse, binge and purging, compulsive sexual behavior, self-mutilation and suicidality.

Post-traumatic stress accumulates in three main

clusters; Intrusive Re-experiencing (e.g. intrusive thoughts and memories, flashbacks, and nightmares), Avoidance (e.g. emotional numbing or efforts to avoid traumatic reminders) and Autonomic Hyper arousal (e.g. heightened startle responses or insomnia). It may be viewed as a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving some combination of these symptoms that (somewhat arbitrarily) reaches a disorder status when certain numbers of symptoms per cluster are reported at certain levels.

What was surprising is the problem the private sector has with defining PTSD as arising exclusively from a “life-threatening” experience, as described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). There are apparently many different ways to get there, some of which are assault, rape, domestic violence and torture. Problems arise also in distinguishing whether an experience was life threatening, even if the subject believed it was life threatening. A distinction was made between explicit and implicit memory. Some (implicit) memories are difficult to picture or verbalize but manifest as persistent background feelings and attitudes.

We see this in the veteran community where individuals may live for many years coping with post-traumatic stress symptoms they didn’t know they had until, some seemingly unrelated event activates an implicit memory or triggers an inappropriate reaction. The subject may have no idea the source of this response is rooted in his or her wartime experiences.

Obviously the DVA has adopted a rather narrow view of PTSD causes, impact and treatment.

Further complicating the experience and treatment of post-traumatic stress is the issue of social stigma. This is nowhere more acute than in military culture. The emphasis placed on “Combat Stress Control” and Unit Cohesion creates a culture of denial in which loss of (emotional) control is viewed as weakness of character and failure.

All these issues will surface again, in more detail, as I address Assessment, Treatment, Medication and Therapist Issues in Trauma Treatment.

Henry Iasiello  
PTSD Committee Chair

## 2ND VICE PRESIDENT REPORT

March 31, 2007

By Dick Southern

Since the State Council meeting in January, I attended the winter meeting of the VVA National Board of Directors meeting in Silver Spring, MD. I attended the National Membership Affairs, Public Affairs, Veterans Benefits and Veterans Health committees as a sitting member. Membership in VVA continues to climb over the 56,000 mark. In Public Affairs, we had the announcement of a Top Fuel Dragster that is known as the Vietnam Veterans - POW/MIA dragster and will be on a 23 city tour on the NHRA trail. CA was able to experience the dragster first hand at the Winter-nationals in Pomona in February. An advertising rate schedule for the Veteran and a new media kit was announced. In the Veterans Benefits committee, it was approved to change the name

The Holiday Inn Fresno-Airport affords us an ample meeting room for our use during the Region 9 conference. The Holiday Inn Fresno-Airport also has the following amenities:

Complimentary High Speed Wireless Internet Access  
Complimentary airport shuttle  
Complimentary parking  
Skyline Cafe: a full service restaurant  
Room service from 6am-10pm  
Spacious Lounge: King Tut’s is a full service bar  
Indoor heated pool with waterfall and spa  
Outdoor pool with sun deck  
Fitness facility  
Valet laundry and self-serve laundry facilities  
Complimentary shuttle service within a 5-mile radius of the hotel

Our meeting room is 1244 sq feet and holds 70 people. Our lunch area is 1378 sq ft and is pool side and just a few steps from the meeting room. We are ready for you!

Here is the reservation information that you will need to get there. The reservation phone number to call for our group is 559-252-3611 and the reservation code will be VV4. Please use only that phone number and code to assure your correct pricing and that Region 9 gets proper credit towards our room guarantee. We will have a block of 50 sleeping rooms put aside for the weekend. If you have people that have always wanted to attend a Region 9 meeting, this would be a good time to have them attend. National Convention delegates are especially urged to attend to get a feel for what the convention will be like. Our reservation cut off date is May 22, so you need to act immediately and phone for your reservation at the Holiday Inn Fresno-Airport. If you are not a Priority Club member with the Holiday Inn, I suggest that you go to [www.priorityclub.com](http://www.priorityclub.com) and register for a card. It means, at this hotel, you will get a free drink at King Tut’s Lounge everyday that you stay at the property. It also means that you can get a late check out if you need it.

The easiest way to get to the Hotel, if you are traveling by car, is on Hwy 180 East to the Peach Ave off ramp and go north. After crossing E. McKinley Ave, proceed on Clinton and you will find the Holiday Inn Fresno-Airport on your left. It is directly across from the airport. From the airport, just call for the shuttle. We are right across the street.

[www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/hi/1/en/hotel/FATAP/welcome](http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/hi/1/en/hotel/FATAP/welcome)

Start dialing for that reservation and if you have any questions, please let me know. The reservation date is a firm one, so don’t be late!

Dick Southern  
CSC Meeting Planner  
209-768-9841

of Service Representatives to Service Officers. Also proposed and approved, was a condition for Service Officers that they could not serve if they had a 51% or better rating from the VA for a mental condition. The Veterans Health committee to work with the VVA Government Relation department to address veteran’s health issues through active advocacy aimed at Congress.

During the first quarter of the year, I have worked in my home chapter on the finance, Cinco de Mayo Fiesta, and golf tournament committees. I also planned our February dinner/meeting. In March the chapter did membership outreach and memorabilia sales at the Jamestown Harley Davidson shop on two successive weekends for their annual swap meet and chili cook off. We had over \$400 in sales and took in 5 new members.

I continue to moderate the VVA Talk List, the Membership Chairs Talk List, the State Presidents Talk List and the Government Affairs Talk List and to e-mail information to YOU.

### MEETING PLANNER’S REPORT

Our January meeting in Fresno was the second time we have met at the Holiday Inn Fresno Airport property and they showed their versatility by having us meet in a new set of rooms that worked out quite nicely for us all. The meeting rooms in the main building instead of in the Valley Center seemed to be a better fit for all of us. The Holiday Inn fits our needs and wants to keep earning our business. We are booked at the Holiday Inn for October of this year and for January and April of 2008.

When I was in Silver Spring in January, the Advocacy Workshop principals had a luncheon meeting to work on the plans for the workshop in Sacramento in March and held in conjunction with the quarterly CSC meeting on the same weekend. You saw an early draft of the weekend agenda in the last issue of the Zephyr. The Holiday Inn Capitol Plaza in Sacramento was selected as the meeting place for both events. The property turned out to be a very nice hotel located between Old town Sacramento and the State Capitol. The hotel turned out to be a very nice upscale hotel for us with a very busy lobby and a restaurant that had good food at reasonable prices. The CSC meeting was held Saturday on the 16th floor on Saturday with a spectacular view of the River City. The Advocacy Workshop was held on Sunday through Tuesday in a couple of the meeting rooms at the Holiday Inn and at the California Department of Veteran Affairs.

The next event on the planning calendar will be a CSC Finance Committee meeting on May 11 and

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC., CALIFORNIA STATE COUNCIL - SPRING 2006

Chapter	Address/Phone	E-Mail/ Web Site	Primary Contact	Meeting Information	Activities
47	PO Box 3007 Riverside 92514-4277 951-781-6137	nebhuskfan@aol.com www.vva47.com	Steve Mackey	3rd Saturday, 10 am at Lifespring Social Hall located at the corner of Columbia and Main St. in Riverside. Board meets prior to the meeting (check web site for special meeting locations & times)	Vietnam Wall project at Riverside National Cemetery; veteran assistance; hospitalized veterans; Moving Wall - Redlands assistance; membership recruitment; speakers bureau; POW/MIA-VVA Dragster unveiling; Salute To Veterans parade
53	PO Box 7000-185 Redondo Beach 90277 310-540-8820	n9140y@comcast.net www.vva53.us	Jerry Yamamoto	Billy's Restaurant, 5160 W. 190th St., Torrance, 4th Wednesday, monthly at 7 p.m.	PH ceremony at LBVAMC; Iraq KIA funeral; booth at west coast JROTC contest; deployment ceremonies
201	PO Box 26203 San Jose 95159-6203 408-246-2288	poka513@comcast.net www.nichecom.com/vva	Robert Beresford	Board meets on 3rd Monday at 8 pm; chapter social on 3rd Monday at 70 pm. Both held at VFW Post 3982, 1313 Franklin St., Santa Clara	Change of command ceremony; assisting deployed troops' families
218	PO Box 2241 Santa Barbara 93120 805-682-0550	vva218@vvachapter218.org www.vvachapter218.org	Keith Perkins	Meetings on 2nd Tuesday at 6:15 pm at Veterans Memorial Building, 112 West Cabrillo Blvd., Santa Barbara	PTSD group formed; preparations for chapter electons
223	1352 Maple Ave. Santa Rosa 95402 707-521-4218	vets@vva223.org www.vva223.org	Richard Jones	2nd Tuesday 7 pm. Board; General Meeting 3rd Tuesday 7 pm. Vets Building, 1315 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa. 3rd Saturday is a chapter breakfast.	Motorcycle poker run & BBQ; homeless outreach; booth at air show, membership recruitment; visit returning wounded troops
355	PO Box 2986 Canyon Country 91386-2986 818-508-9626	lostpatrol@msn.com	Frank LaRosa	3rd Sunday of each month, 11 am, at a local restaurant	Work with other agencies on stand downs; Patriot Guard Riders involvement
357	PO Box 4021 Redding 96099 530-275-8912 or 530-242-1596	coonradt@snowcrest.net	Rocky Cantrell		highway cleanup; Color Guard activities; sponsor local boxer; fundraising for Salvation Army
368	PO Box 1566 Mariposa 95338 209-966-4039	rainbow@sti.net	Larry Coan	1st Thursday, 7 pm at the VFW Hall in Mariposa	Summer cooking events; work with Sheriff as first responders when vets involved, or incarcerated
391	PO Box 5391 Sonora 95370 209-928-3848	chap391@lodelink.com www.vietnamveterans391.org	Dick Southern	1st Tuesday, 7 pm. Board - 2nd Tuesday 7 pm, at Sonora Veterans Hall, 9 N. Washington St, Sonora, CA	Golf tourney planning; Cinco de Mayo celebration planning; planning for All Veteran Information Fair; scholarship recipient identifying; membership drive planning
400	200 Grand Ave., # 208 Oakland 94610 510-444-5235	fdrdocent@comcast.net	Bill Hodges	3rd Tuesday, 7 pm, Oakland Vets Bldg, 200 Grand Ave.	Memorial Day event planning with other organizations, Veterans Park in Alameda
441	782 N. Brundage Farmersville 93223 559-594-5710	rod6768@mindSpring.com	Rod Hughes	2nd & 4th Mondays, 7:30 pm	work with local legislator; veterans health care day; Gold Star Mothers ceremony; donations to community groups; Veterans Day events
446	87 N. Raymond Ave., Suite 210 Pasadena 91103 626-795-8141	vva446@earthlink.net	James Maddox	2nd Tuesday, 7:30 pm, Senior Center, 85 E. Holly St., Pasadena	Working with returning troops, providing point of contact for families; local legislator involvement; West LA VA project - Citizens For Veterans Rights
464	PO Box 747 San Carlos 94070-0747 650-513-5586	vva464@yahoo.com theveteran.net/vva464	Ponce Gonzalez	1st Wednesday, 7:30 pm at American Legion Post 666, 757 San Mateo Ave., San Bruno 94066	
472	2115 Park Blvd. San Diego 92101-4792 619-239-5977	vva472@hotmail.com www.vva472.com	John Weaver	Member meeting held quarterly, announced on Web site; Board meets 4th Wednesday 7 pm at Veterans Memorial Center, 2115 Park Blvd., San Diego	Memorial Day preparations; Vet Village Stand Down preparations
500	PO Box 255484 Sacramento 95868 916-481-6020	vva500@sbcglobal.net www.norcaltravel/vva500.html	Ted Adams	3rd Tuesday, 7 pm; Board - 1st Tuesday, 7 pm. Veterans Memorial Hall, 110 Park Drive, Roseville (Royer Park)	Guest speakers at meetings; Vietnamese New Year parade participation; planning stand down; "Reading Of Names" planning; membership recruitment
526	PO Box 2222 Culver City 90232 310-260-6910	wmctaggart@pmcos.com	John Hamilton	1st Tuesday, 7:30 pm	
535	PO Box 37 Grass Valley 95945 530-470-8507	wreddekopp@sbcglobal.net http://www.nccn.net/%7evvanc/	Harold Graves	1st Thursday, 7 pm. Grass Valley Veterans Memorial Bldg., 255 South Auburn, Grass Valley	Support Friends of Montagnard Ophanages, donated \$1500; Friends of Nevada County Military, sending packages to troops; air show booth, membership recruitment
536	1120 Golden State Ave. Bakersfield 93301 661-868-7313		Don Waak	2nd Wednesday	
547	PO Box 884 Kentfield 94914 415-454-8823	cijjens@hotmail.com http://www.vietnamveteransmarin.org/	Carl Jensen	3rd Wednesday, 7:30 pm. American Legion, Post 313 12 Ward St., Larkspur	Vietnam education program; working on Women Veterans Committee issues (Robert Rosenberger - chair)
563	PO Box 751284 Petaluma 94975-1284 707-762-9078	johnc85393@aol.com	John Chaney	Veterans Memorial Bldg., Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma, 4th Thursday each month except Nov. & Dec.	November 11 parade
582	1017 5th Ave. Corning 96021-3004 530-824-2100 (10 am to 2 pm only)	kencorning@sbcglobal.net members.fortunecity.com/vva582	Ken Correlle	2nd Saturday each month at Scotty's Landing on River Road (outside of Chico on the Sacramento River), board meets at noon, members' meeting 1 pm	car show; sponsor Iraq veteran; Flag etiquette training; veteran parade
643	PO Box 745 Dinuba 93618 559-591-0566	nafw@softcom.net	Peter McManus	2nd Wednesday, 7 pm at Dinuba Memorial Building, 249 S. Alta Ave., Dinuba	Walk For Life sponsor - cancer; preparations for Cinco de Mayo event; sponsoring Dinuba Little League team
691	PO Box 2226 Merced 95344-0226 209-356-1938	csc_vvaed@sbcglobal.net www.mymerced.com/0704k163.html	Ed Mentz	3rd Monday, 7 pm, Citi Bank, 19th & M, Merced - 6:30 pm for potluck dinner. Board - 1st Monday, 7 pm Community Center in Castle Vista	CSC Delegate Jerry Peterson hospitalized; selling veterans collectibles
702	PO Box 525 Yountville 94599 707-252-7537	rossisvva@aol.com	Ross Hall	1st Tuesday, 7 pm at Yountville Veterans Home in the Lee Lounge (second floor of main building). Board meets 3rd Saturday, 8 am in the cafeteria	Yountville Vets Home memorial services; co-sponsoring Moving Wall; membership recruitment at vet home, sponsor ones in need
713	Contact So. District Director Gary Colletti	gmcolletti@aol.com			
756	PO Box 90994 Long Beach 90809 562-596-5170	stumpfires@verizon.net	Dave Stumpf	1st Wednesday, 7 pm at VFW Post 8615, 2805 South St., Long Beach	Long Beach VAMC movie presentation; hospice ward volunteer; Thanksgiving dinner for Gold Star Moms; donation to Marines' ceremony for KIAs; VSO training
781	1100 Main St. PO Box 102 Ferndale 95536	carlhandup@suddenlink.net www.vva781.org	Carl Young	2nd Tuesday each month, 7 pm, Ferndale Veterans Memorial Hall, 1100 Main Street, Ferndale	Christmas dinner planning; collecting informaton for list of local area services available
785	2345 Barraca Parkway Irvine 92606 714-777-3918	gunnymims@aol.com www.vva785.org	Bill Mimiaga	1st Wednesday, 6 pm (social hour prior), at US Army Reserve Training Center Armory, 2345 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, CA	Participation in Run For The Wall; LBVAMC involvement & July BBQ planning there; POW/MIA-VVA Dragster unveiling; transporting vets to hospital; PH ceremony
880	508 Riddle Court Modesto 95356 209-523-3880	emg@msn.com	Errol Green	3rd Tuesday, 6 pm at American Legion Lodge, 1001 S. Santa Cruz, Modesto	Food drive for needy vets; potluck at chapter meetings; Moving Wall assistance
933	1851 E. Muncie Fresno 93720 559-297-5253	sdoak@sbcglobal.net	Steve Doak	1st Tuesday at American Legion Post 509, 3509 N. 1st Street, Fresno	Vietnam Memorial project at VAMC
951	PO Box 1313 Lakeport 95453 707-262-5651	barnett@tgaxpro.net vva951.org	Dean Gotham	Board - 1st Tuesday at 290 N. Main St. 7 p.m.; General Meeting - 2nd Tuesday at 801 N. Main St. 6 p.m. (St. Mary's Hall), Lakeport	Sending boxes to deployed troops; donation to church where chapter meets (chairs); support A.L. Post 437; wounded troops assistance at Travis AFB



a CSC BOD meeting on May 12 at the Holiday Inn Fresno Airport. That meeting will be followed by the Region 9 Pre-Convention Conference at the same venue.

Requests for Proposals for the CSC Convention in May of 2008 have gone out and we are waiting for the proposals to come so they can be presented for the consideration of the CSC BOD for a site to be contracted.

## TREASURER REPORT

All accounts are within budget and Balance Sheets plus P & L's were provided to all board members at the last board meeting. All accounting is kept on a Quicken program and our books are up to date.

All HGSP funds received thru February 28, 2007 have been distributed as appropriate and we are current with all billings.

I continue being a member of the National's Finance Committee. I attended a National Board meeting January 18 – 20th and will be going to Silver Spring, MD again March 22 thru the 25th. I will be visiting with the wounded troops at Walter Reed Hospital on this trip, and will continue with the distribution of Mac Donald food vouchers.

As a reminder once again if anyone wishes to make a visit to Walter Reed Hospital they need to make much advance scheduling and the person to talk to is Sandra Halmon – Visitors Bureau Coordinator. Her number is (202) 782-8399.

### TRAVEL VOUCHER REIMBURSEMENT REMINDERS:

- If you are sharing a room or traveling to CSC meetings with other individuals, who are eligible to submit travel vouchers, then in order to conserve your budgets be sure that you include their names and appropriate budgeted positions with your reimbursement request. If you provide this information I will automatically allocate to each persons budget. Note if one person pays for room and or drives they will get reimbursement for the full amount and I will allocate to other individual budgets if appropriate.

- The reimbursement policy has been clarified to set the time for submission to be within 60 days. Meaning that you should submit your request within 60 days of the incurrence of the charge or the date of the event giving raise to the voucher. If requests are submitted late (meaning more than 60 day after the travel event) then it will be considered to be for non-budgeted items and you will need to have the finance committee approve and submit to the board, before I will be able to make payment.

- For the current fiscal year the board has approved an \$800 cap for chapter delegate meeting reimbursements. Our mileage rate is \$.40 per mile.

March 22 - 25, 2007, I attended the National Finance Committee meeting in Silver Spring, MD. By taking a red eye flight I got in early Thursday which gave me the opportunity to visit the wounded solders at Walter Reed, as I try to do each time I go to the DC area. This time I had an added goal of locating Tatiana Reyes an army reservist from the El Monte area who had just recently been wounded. When Larry Frazee, another VVA member from Ohio and I got to the hospital on Thursday afternoon we learned she was in surgery and that no other information was available. We decided to visit with some of the other wounded solders and went to the normal ward I visit #57. This is one of the orthopedic wards and most have lost limbs or they have some very traumatic limb wounds that require some truly remarkable reconstruction surgery. A couple of our goals are to thank them for their service (both verbally and by passing out Mac-Donald gift certificates) and to see if they might have any questions regarding education, long term care (medical) and limb replacements and

so on. Most of the time I find that the parents and/or other loved ones are the individuals most in need of getting their questions answered. As our day ended we decided to check on Specialist Reyes again, but she was still in surgery. We decided to leave and figured we would return on Saturday and perhaps she would be able to take visitors.

To our surprise on Saturday afternoon when we returned we were once again notified that she was in surgery. So again we decided to visit with some on the other soldiers we had not seen the prior Thursday. Later in the day we were finally able to locate Specialist Reyes in ICU and were able to visit briefly with her and members of her family. We got to meet her father, sister and grandmother. Her dad and I had some difficulty communicating because he didn't speak much English and I don't do very well with Spanish, but having a young daughter in the military I certainly could relate to his grief. He told me that he had originally only planned to be there a week and when he returned home his wife would come to be with Tatiana. However because of her current condition he said he could not leave just yet and would probably be staying another couple of weeks.

For those of you who have heard the stories of poor treatment and bad conditions at Walter Reed, let me assure you that from my take we can be proud of the care and treatment of the solders and their family members. On the hospital grounds is a structure called the Malone House which is basically a hotel for the family members of the hospitalized service men and women. The facility is made available at no charge the entire time the patient is hospitalized. The hospital itself is very nice and rather than wards with rows of bed setting next to one another, as many Vietnam Veterans experienced, these wards are like current hospitals with some private rooms and some rooms with two to four roomies. Many of the soldiers have their own TV's and some have their own laptop computers. Surprisingly they stay in contact with their own units and share e-mails. I am not saying that the conditions are desirable, but under the circumstances we need not be over reactive to some of the media information being exploited. Sure a condemned building should not have been opened for outpatients without proper maintenance, but my take is that most of the outpatients were well enough to do some of the clean up and maintenance themselves. And to blame all their problems on the leaders is just not accurate. Again as stated this is just my take of the situation being exploited.

Tim Forrest,  
CSC Treasurer

## CENTRAL DISTRICT REPORT

We all are aware that things happen and changes are made from time to time between chapter elections. However, it is vital that chapters review and keep their contact information up-to-date on the CSC web page. When information is outdated or changes, please send a correction to your district directors as well as the CSC web master. E-mail and the Internet is the most expedient means to keep everyone current of issues affecting our membership and other veteran issues. That way we can either call or e-mail you on coming events, such as the advocacy training we had, or keep you posted on important issues needing immediate attention, and or action.

I attended the CSC meeting and Advocacy Workshop for 2007 in Sacramento in March. I can vouch that advocacy works and we need to have our voices heard if we want to make a difference in this World and receive our hard earned promised, but not always kept, benefits. Thanks to Ken Holybee for informing me of current events with our OIF and OEF veterans, and with the help of our local congressional office. I was able to make a difference in my Grandson's life, by being informed and following up on the facts.

On April 5th, I attended a Bar-B-Q and installation dinner for Chapter 368, in Mariposa.

Ed Mentz, Sr. Central Dist. Dir.

## AT LARGE DIRECTOR

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

Richard Jones  
Director At Large, CSC

## AGENT ORANGE COMMITTEE

When I was a lot younger I learned the old adage of "never under estimate your enemy". To share with you now the effects of Agent Orange (AO) are that at least three out of five patients with diabetes suffer from at least one other significant complication such as strokes, heart disease, eye damage, chronic kidney disease or foot problems leading to amputation. One out of every 10 diabetics has two complications, one out of 14 have four or more. Bad health and bad sugar monitoring is YOUR enemy! The prime responsibility of taking care of you are on the guy or gal in the mirror. The above complications did not list depression, which is usually always present if you really think about it. Obesity and lack of exercise are primary risk factors as well as your exposure to AO. YOU are not alone. More statistics to wake you up, hopefully, are that heart attacks occur in 9.8% of diabetics compared to 1.8% of others. Chronic kidney disease 27.8% versus 6.1%. Strokes 6.8% compared to 1.8%, and lastly foot problems, such as amputations and numbness, occur in 22.8 % versus 10% of others. Reason enough to handle your blood glucose levels? I think so. We must play the cards we are dealt and in the game of life there is no bluffing so stay tough, educate yourselves and if any questions you know who you can contact from the VVA or CSC. Good health to you all.



Dave Sanders VVA 201  
AO Chair 2007  
amddave@aol.com

## VETERANS BENEFITS COMMITTEE

At the present time we have two paid positions working for the state council, one in Long Beach at the Long Beach VA Hospital, along with two other individuals - one an accredited VVA Service Officer and one soon to be accredited. At present they are very busy, getting approximately 20 to 25 vets a day through the office. The other service officer is in the Northern part of the state, although not quite as busy as the Southern California, none the less busy also.

Our program is still in its infant stage but, as expected it is growing slowly. As more funds come in we can then expand. What is really needed is for all chapters in the state to have one of your members or several members take the online course and become accredited. Each chapter or individual would be responsible for the method of payment. The cost is in the range of \$150.00 for the online course. If you're interested please contact me.



The end result would be, with that many service officers working throughout the state the ability to raise funds for the program could eventually result in greater payment to individuals. Most organizations that fund or donate to these types of projects are more apt to do so when they can see that the program is up and running and the individuals and the program committee is committed to making the program work. Not only through financial recovery to veterans, but the numbers of veterans being served throughout the state by Vietnam Veterans Service Officers.

This last statement is where you as individual members come in. Whether you know it or not you have the power to change another veteran's life by being a Vietnam Veteran Service Officer. As the old saying goes "Been there, done that," you have the unique ability to relate to your brother and sister vet's in a way no one else can. Being a Service Officer will give you the opportunity to make that difference. This is about Veterans helping Veterans.

As you read this give it careful consideration and remember it's true, that this is not for every one and that's fine. You know yourself and what you can do. But, if you have a heart for veterans, and I know a lot of you, do please contact me. This also applies to AVVA Members as well. The one restriction to becoming accredited would be if you are rated Service Connected disabled 50% or more for PTSD, you cannot be accredited. But you can sure help in other ways.

Richard Jones  
Veterans Benefits Committee Chair  
amphibvete6@sbcglobal.net  
(707)-537-6871

## AVVA REPORT

California AVVA is as busy as ever, out there working hard and really putting their hearts into it. They recently paid the membership for all IVA Associates on their roster. I do believe this is a good example for us all to follow, if we are financially able to do so. AVVA members are also collecting items for a homeless project, plus gathering sweat pants and t-shirts for wounded soldiers returning home from Iraq.

California is also having state elections during the June conference. Our election chair is Erma Hibbler. If you wish to run your declaration needs to be sent to her at tweedie01@aol.com.

Remember also that Chapter Associate Liaisons are elected by the associate members of the chapter; this is not an appointed position.

Rosters have been cleaned up for mailing purposes so there will not be duplicate The VVA Veteran publication mailings, unless requested.

AVVA Policy and Procedure Manual for state and chapter elections can be found on page 11. (Editor: they have been condensed for space purposes)

Sonja Holybee, President  
California AVVA

## CHAPTER NOTES

### CHAPTER 500

March 17, 2007 was a busy day for VVA 500. Several organizations that day participated in events at the Capital and the CA Vietnam Veterans Memorial showed support for those active duty personnel serving in the current Iraq/Afghanistan Wars. The events were part of the nationwide "Gathering of the Eagles." Organizations such as the Rebels with a Cause, Operation Homefront, Patriot Watch, Warrior Brothers MC, Marines M.C., Vietnam Vets/Legacy, M.C., Warrior Brothers M.C., and Soldiers Angel all had a hand in making the event a success. VVA 500 took the lead in planning the programs that took place at

Noon on the Capital steps, and later at the Memorial. Chapter President Ted Adams spoke at the Capital; Secretary Gregory McNeill spoke at the Memorial.

Board Member and Legislative Chair Don Harper, did a fine job of keeping both programs altogether by being the Master of Ceremonies. The VVA 500 sponsored Nor Cal Young Marines provided Color Guard duties. We were pleased to have CSC President Ken Holybee and CSC Benefits Chair Richard Jones also in attendance.

Later in the evening VVA 500 participated in the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Old Town Sacramento. The chapter is always warmly received at this parade and it is emotionally rewarding for those members who participate. Every year, a real "Welcome Home" is expressed by the crowd.

Plans have begun for the chapter's most important event of every year, "The Reading of Names." Attendance at the "Reading" grows each year. The day long event takes place this year on May 27, at the CA Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Capitol Park, downtown Sacramento. Readers begin reading names in 15 minute intervals after a short opening ceremony at 7:00AM. While it is a special day to honor each of those fallen heroes on the California Wall, it has become a day for one on one contact between the Vietnam brotherhood and their families. All service members from all wars and those who have given the ultimate sacrifice are remembered during a Memorial Ceremony at Noon. No one is forgotten. Special mention has been made in the last four years of those who have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan and words of support for the active duty personnel who are still fighting. The "Reading" is always held the day before Memorial Day. This scheduling eliminates much of the competition for attendance due to all of the activities held on Memorial Day itself.

The chapter is pleased to announce that Ted Adams, as President for Chapter 500, will be presented with the "Best Support to American Veterans" award at the Home Front Heroes Gala to be held on May 4th. The "Gala" is a fund raiser to support Operation Homefront Sacramento, and the Rebels with a Cause Capital to Capital - Coast to Coast National Military Appreciation Month activities.

### CHAPTER 446

Living the motto of VVA

Chapter 446 in Pasadena, like many chapters, attends the funerals of the men and women who are dying in Iraq and Afghanistan. In February Chapter 446 members attended the funeral for Specialist Carla Stewart a member of the 250th Transportation Company located in El Monte, CA.

At the funeral they met Colonel Wendy McGuire, the Commanding Officer of the 1367th Transportation Brigade. The discussion drifted towards how the troops were doing and any needs that were going unmet. Colonel McGuire talked about the festivities that were being planned for the returning members of the 250th Transportation Company. While at the funeral Colonel McGuire



introduced the chapter members to Sgt. Daniel Estrella the person in charge of the 250th in El Monte.

After a short discussion Chapter 446 agreed to help support the "Welcome Home" dinner that was being planned in El Monte.

Colonel McGuire and Chapter 446 President James Maddox continued talking about the needs and it became clear, that with Colonel McGuire's state wide responsibility, the California State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America could be a valuable source of assistance.

A series of e-mails was exchanged between the Executive Board of the California State Council and Chapter 446. As would be the case the State Council meeting was scheduled for the early part of March in Sacramento, which coincided with the Political Advocacy training. Colonel McGuire was scheduled to be in Northern California for training and was interested in meeting with the members of the state council.

Colonel McGuire met with a number of people who represent many of the faces of VVA and AVVA.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors Colonel McGuire talked about the needs of the soldiers and veterans. She spoke about the needs and how VVA might be able to help. The questions were direct and she responded forthrightly and with passion. At the end of Colonel McGuire's presentation the Board of Directors were clear on their desire to become involved with returning soldiers who are part of the 1367th Transportation Brigade.

After the initial meeting, dinner and finally the presentation to the Board of Directors. It became clear that members of VVA in California live our motto. "Never will one generation of veterans abandoned another."

### CHAPTER 472

Chapter 472 supplies items for resale to the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center (VMMC) throughout the year. This provides merchandise for the museum, as a fund raising enterprise for them, and as a fund raising enterprise for the chapter.

The chapter has donated funds, during the year, to the All-American Airborne Association. This organization provides final 'Honors' to veterans at sites around the San Diego area. These sites include cemeteries and the monthly Memorial Service held at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center, for recently deceased veterans. They do so at their own expense, and it was an honor for the chapter to provide some small means of support to these men, many of whom are prevented from employment by disabilities.

Chapter members initiated a Sunday docent program which features guided tours around the VMMC. This has enabled the Museum to open to visitors on a sixth day, each week. A small but committed group of members has been in attendance each week since Spring.

The chapter has maintained a web site, vva472.com, which carries news, contacts, and some historical information, in addition to facts about members and events.

Chapter 472 honors Memorial Day not with just a day, but with an entire weekend. At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial site, relocated from the historic Old Town area to the VMMC, the names of those lost to us from the San Diego area are read and remembered, continuously each day. We hold candlelight spiritual services in the evenings. On the Nationally recognized holiday, Chapter 472 leads the community by starting the Memorial events early that morning, followed by other events that are scheduled all over San Diego County. The remarkable facet of this shows in the cooperation of the several veterans organizations involved; events are scheduled to



# THE VIETNAM MOVING WALL



**May 31st - June 4th, 2007**

Open 24 Hours a Day  
Located at Sylvan Park  
in Redlands

Sponsored by American Legion Post 106



The chapter closed out the year with our annual Christmas Party, which featured an excellent pot-luck dinner (each meal gets better!) followed by a gift exchange that we have adopted – each subsequent gift opener can steal from a previous gift recipient. The laughter and camaraderie was a bright demonstration of the enjoyment everyone had that evening.

The year 2007 has started well, and we intend to see even better results from our next endeavors.

## CHAPTER 785

Donations for Run For The Wall (RFTW) 2007 - the Chapter is still seeking donations. Mahalo for all your support!

Chapter 785 will once again be supporting "Run For The Wall" 2007. This is a 10 day pilgrimage and ride for those who can't, remembering our POW/MIA's. This ten day cross country trip to "the Wall" in DC brings to the Country's attention and reminds them of our Missing in Action and Prisoners of War. We will depart in May and arrive at "the Wall" on Memorial Day.

We are asking for donations for fuel for our Operation Lift-Off Van which pulls the support trailer carrying water, food and snacks for the hundreds of the veteran bikers making

this pilgrimage. All funds will be used for the Central Route that we are supporting. Please send your contributions/donations to our Treasurer and put in the check memo RFTW 2007 Support. Mahalo and please look at the web site for RFTW to better understand the mission for Run For The Wall ([www.rftw.org](http://www.rftw.org)). To date, the Monsoon, Jerry "Stretch" Nostdadt, Jim and Joyce Huggins, Tom Nostdadt, Bruce Pilch, Chris and Millie, will be going "all the way" with the Van and Trailer supporting "our boys." Lew "the Embalmer" Elliott, "Big Bo" Bob Hatcher and Pegleg along with Mike Casillas will be accompanying us part or "all the way" lending their assistance.



Please mail all checks to our Treasurer and mark in memo: for RFTW.

Pete Sandro  
Chapter 785 Treasurer  
601 Aldean Place  
Newport Beach, California 92663

## AUSSIE VIETNAM VETS VISIT US

Greetings from the Diamond Valley Vietnam Veterans Subbranch, Melbourne, Australia.

Attached is a picture of the logo we will be wearing on our shirts during our visit to the USA in May-June 2007. We are keen to meet up with our US brothers during our time in the USA.



Our itinerary takes us to NY, Washington and then LA. While in Washington we will be participating in ceremonies at the Wall during Rolling Thunder 2007, visiting the White House and meeting VP Dick Cheney.

The key reason for our visit to the USA is to pay

our tributes and respects at 9/11 ground zero, Arlington and the Wall.

I am wondering if I may be able to seek some assistance on our arrival in LA on our way through to NY, 22 May.

Having experienced LAX once before, I have some concerns with moving a group of 30 with any sort of efficiency, and I am likely to get lost.

We need to get from the international arrivals lounge to the American Airlines departure lounge for the flight to NY and I would be very grateful for any assistance in the form of a guide to lead us through the airport, or advice on how to manage the move.

On our return to LA after Washington we will be in town for four days and would welcome the chance to link up with any vets for a beer or two.

Regards, and best wishes - Bob Elworthy

Save the Date: November 10, 2007  
25th Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

We will be organizing a MAJOR event on November 10, 2007, to recognize the 25th Anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., November 9-12, 2007.

This is an open invitation for everyone, especially all members of Vietnam Veterans of America, to show support for our fallen brothers and sisters by representing them in Washington, D.C. If you, your chapter, or state council are planning to do anything in conjunction with this event, we want that information.

For your convenience, we will be offering travel arrangements, to include hotel reservations, transportation, and more, making it easy and affordable to march together, again.

By filling out this form you will be giving us valuable planning information. We want to make this a memorable visit to Washington, D.C., for you, your family, and your friends.

Thank you.  
Keith King  
Chair, Public Affairs Committee



**THE WALL** 25 YEARS  
ANNIVERSARY PARADE • NOVEMBER 10, 2007

Vietnam Veterans of America is presenting the 25th Anniversary Parade in celebration of the dedication of "The Wall" on Saturday, November 10, 2007. If you were there in 1982, you know why you should be back for the 25th. If you weren't there in '82, then this is the one to attend, because it is being held by us, for us.

**Come feel the healing power of "The Wall" and show our fallen brothers and sisters the honor and respect they deserve.**

If you have a group, or as an individual are interested in joining the parade, then you must fill out an application form. To download a form, please visit [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org) or call toll free: 1-800-VVA-1316 x151.

### THE SCHEDULE: NOVEMBER 10, 2007

**The Opening Ceremony on the Mall**  
10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.

The opening ceremony will start at 10:00 a.m. and will take place on the Mall at 3rd Street, between Jefferson and Madison Drives.

**The Parade**  
11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Immediately following the opening ceremony the parade with thousands of participants, military vehicles, floats, veteran motorcycles, and marching bands steps off. Along side the reviewing stand will be limited bleacher seating for those veterans and members of the general public who wish to view the parade.

**Washington Monument Grounds**  
12 noon until 6:00 p.m.

Parade participants and the general public can enjoy a variety of activities and street vendors.

Need accommodations? You can book your rooms and make your travel arrangements at [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org). Just look for the 25th anniversary tab on the home page or call toll free: 866-489-4888

## Vietnam Veterans Memorial 25th Anniversary Parade

Saturday, November 10th, 2007  
**Parade Participant Application Form**

Opening Ceremony: (10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.)  
The Parade (11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.)

Full name of organization \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Person to contact \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Home number \_\_\_\_\_ Work number \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe group (Veterans, Active Duty, Uniformed services, Color Guard, Veterans, Civic/Corporate) \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle type(s) & quantity \_\_\_\_\_

Number of participants \_\_\_\_\_

Any transportation needed for those unable to march? ☐ Yes ☐ No How many? \_\_\_\_\_

Does your organization request a float in the parade? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If your group, or you as an individual require travel and/or room accommodations, please contact:  
Diversity Travel Planners, a division of On The Town Tours, Inc.  
1560 Broadway, Suite 1103 • New York, NY 10036  
Cell phone 866-489-4888 • Fax: 212-956-0272  
[www.diversitytravelplanners.com](http://www.diversitytravelplanners.com) info@diversitytravelplanners.com

**GROUP**  
I, the undersigned, do hereby affirm that I am an authorized representative of the above organization with regards to its participation and placement in the 2007 Vietnam Veterans Memorial 25th Anniversary Parade. I understand that submission of this application does not guarantee my group's participation in the parade, and that the parade organizers will determine our participation upon review of this application. I also affirm that I and my group understand that the purpose of the 2007 Vietnam Veterans Memorial 25th Anniversary Parade is to recognize military service, not to endorse or support any political agenda, and that any individual or group that attempts to use the Parade as a forum for this purpose will be denied participation, and will forfeit any expenses incurred.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUAL**  
I, the undersigned, do hereby affirm that I understand that the purpose of the 2007 Vietnam Veterans Memorial 25th Anniversary Parade is to recognize military service, not to endorse or support any political agenda, and that any individual or group that attempts to use the Parade as a forum for this purpose will be denied participation, and will forfeit any expenses incurred.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Important note:** Send in this form as soon as possible by fax 212-956-1475, or mail to 346 Broadway, Suite 807, New York, NY 10013. Call the Parade Hotline at (877) PARADES (877-721-2355) for updates or visit [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org) and look for the 25th Anniversary tab. The exact line of March and important information will be forwarded to you by October 20, 2007.

**THE WALL** 25 YEARS



# Opinions, Information and Reminiscences

## SURGE NEEDED IN AMERICA

With one-third of adult homeless men, and nearly one-quarter of all homeless adults, having served in the armed forces (which includes recently discharged Iraq and Afghanistan veterans), why is our governor proposing to stop the funding of our Counties Homeless Mentally Ill and substance abuse outreach program.

These are some of our “front line” warriors in addressing those who are suffering from co-occurring disorders which underlines their current status of homelessness. Nearly 40% of our veterans living on our streets suffer both psychiatric and substance abuse disorders. These public servants and community service volunteers provide outreach, and information on “life line” programs for many folks. This program is getting these people off the streets, out of emergency rooms and jails, therefore saving us money.

The Department of Veterans Affairs roughly estimates, there is no nationwide homeless census taken, that 200,000 veterans may be homeless on any given night and that twice as many veterans experience homelessness during a year. Many other veterans are considered at risk because of poverty, lack of support from family and friends and precarious living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing. Ninety-seven percent of these veterans are male and the vast majority are single. About half of all those veterans suffer from mental illness and more than two-thirds suffer from alcohol or drug abuse problems.

Military personnel on multiple and extended tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan are being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder at rates that probably will match or exceed the rate among Vietnam veterans. The war in Iraq, with often-hidden enemies and explosives, has left many service members particularly vulnerable to combat stress and is driving the abuse of drugs and alcohol both in Iraq and at home.

Our county's outreach folks continue to win the trust of many of our less fortunate citizens and are succeeding in assisting them in going into substance abuse and mental health treatment programs.

Perhaps its time for a surge of “like minded people” to assist in providing these types of services and requiring federal, state and local agencies to focus their collective efforts on treating all illnesses at the same time. Mental health professionals who treat both get a better result," in addressing these types of illnesses.

Co-occurring disorders are no stranger to returning war veterans, and it certainly hasn't escaped many of our troops returning now. I would like to thank Assemblywomen Berg for her support with her efforts to address the potential down falls of the Governor's purposed budget. This lifeline program should never be cut.

I have a few thoughts on some programs that could be included. Number one, we have more and new homeless veterans on the streets today. These guys are coming back home, have become unable in dealing with family matters and are hitting the road. Much like many of our fellow Vietnam veterans who represent 46% of the homeless veteran population. One of our greatest needs in this area are the mental health policies and resources to develop co-occurring disorder residential treatment programs. We continue to see veterans suffering from substance abuse and mental health problems aka PTSD and depression. These folks need some direct positive intervention, from a fellow veteran that has experienced and moved on from that life-style.

I'm involved with the North Coast Stand Down and I meet with these new veterans, and it isn't

pretty. They are feeling that their country has betrayed them (sound familiar)? We need funding to do outreach and we need to attack this situation now. We could recommend VA Social Workers (who need more funding) from every VA Clinic work directly with all levels of government that offer mental and homeless programs and ensure information about the VA's resources is shared with all concerned.

I could go on and on with this subject... We need money for stand downs, more excess property access at all DoD and GSA areas, better cooperation and information sharing with state, federal and local agency and non-profit providers of what are out there, and getting that information to all concerned. Outreach to all veterans should be funded now.

Thank you - Carl Young - Chapter 781

PS: Lets not forget about the requiring the VA to openly market information to all veterans and families about the Special Registry Programs, aka, Agent Orange, Ionizing radiation, SHAD, and the other associated programs, keep the pressure on to ensure we keep what we already have.

## A PENDING EPIDEMIC

By Ed Mentz Sr.

Developing from the Eye of the PTSD Storm (ref; article on page 17, in the May/June, 2006 issue of the VVA Veteran) is an epidemic of extreme consequences. As it appears that our Government has found a way to reduce the cost for diagnosing, treating and paying benefits for PTSD, without cutting the budget. Therefore, making it appear that on the surface everything is being taken care of and adequate funding is available for Health Care.

It is very interesting that the statistics for combat related PTSD bounce back and forth like a yo-yo depending upon the current economic, social and political environments. In a recent text book for health for community colleges, was an article on PTSD in which, as I recall reading, a paragraph about auto accident victims. What caught my eye was approximately 18% of those who have been in an accident involving serious injury or death to a child or family member, were likely to develop PTSD. That this was a normal human response to witnessing or experiencing violence and feeling intense fear, horror, or helplessness. I believe the article mentioned that the statistics came from the National Auto Safety Board research and if this is true, how about being exposed to these feelings for months or years?

I also recall reading about Senator Salazar who was concerned with the duration of our ongoing military efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and believe he was quoted as saying “PTSD is a national problem.” In that same time period an Army study may have found that one in three veterans returning from combat experience had readjustment problems. In addition, a Government Accountability Office investigation found that only 22 percent of service members were identified as at risk for PTSD. Senator Salazar also made a statement to the effect that failure to treat mental illness in its early stages has lasting repercussions. Herein lays the crust of the pending epidemic, in my humble opinion.

There have been numerous reports lately that those who have been exposed to combat are not adequately diagnosed and treated for PTSD. Instead they are booted out of the service for personality disorders under other than honorable conditions. This reduces any future and present health care and earned benefits expenditures for our Government and the Veterans Administration. Consistently governmental figures pertaining to this have always been lower than the actual facts. When you talk to the veterans who

have returned and those who have been discharged, one finds that the one out of three, or about 35%, of those who have been exposed to combat is a more realistic figure for those at risk with PTSD and other mental disorders.

I understand that the Pentagon stated that only about one percent of those booted out of the Army involve “personality disorders,” but CBS News chief investigative correspondent Armen Keteyian, reported at one Army base it was 18%, a three fold increase since the war started. CBS News also reported on “Stressed-Out Soldiers” and “Pattern of Misconduct” on July, 21, 2006, by Michael de Yoanna.

On December 7, 2006, National Public Radio (NPR) aired a report by Daniel Zwerdling, NPR Correspondent, presented two reports looking at the difficulties some soldiers face getting treatment for mental health issues in the military. He discusses his reports, and Dr. Wiliam Winkenwerder, head of the military health system, talks about military efforts to try to take care of the mental health of soldiers. Subject of these reports where “Do Soldiers Receive Adequate Mental Heath Care?” and “Soldiers Say Army Ignores, Punishes Mental Anguish”. A twenty page listener response and story can be downloaded from: [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org). In this report it was also mentioned that this is happening at other large military installations. It has been reported that one of the active duty soldiers who talked on NPR in December, may now be facing a Court Martial for his remarks. For more information and other related reports on NPR, check out these web sites:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7738485>  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7747557>

In all fairness here may be one of the contributing factors leading to this pending epidemic:

Due to the pressure put on recruiters to meet their goals, budget cuts and time restraints to train recruits for combat. Waivers are being granted to enlistees who would not normally be mentally or other wised qualified for active duty. In matter of fact I understand that waivers for that group have increased by 70 percent since 2001, according to one report.

We are all aware of the consequences when PTSD and mental health issues are not addressed or treated. So, what can we do as veterans to help prevent or slow down this pending epidemic? I am not an expert in this field or a doctor, however I believe a solution may be to open our hearts and care, honoring our National Motto. When ever we hear of an OIF or OEF veteran coming home, listen to their story and please advise them to get registered in the VA system for medical care. Hear their cry for help, and speak up for their benefits, by advocating for their rights with your local representative. Share the information with others, to expose the truth. It is time for all veterans, from the greatest generation to the present generation to speak out with one voice.

From experience, I know that advocacy works, and your voice will be heard. Make sure you have gathered the facts and are knowledgeable about the issue. If we do not care now, we will pay later. Just imagine all the broken homes, homelessness, and an ever over crowded judicial system, if we let the current situation continue, the pending epidemic will surely follow. Doing so, would be a greater injustice then when we returned from Vietnam, remember, Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another." With that said, I know VVA will not let them down.

### NEW CALIFORNIA LAW

On March 22, 2007, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law the country's first





**The Region 9 Pre-Convention Conference**  
Announcement  
**June 8 - 10, 2007**  
**At the**  
Holiday Inn Fresno-Airport  
5090 E Clinton  
Fresno, CA 95372

VVA Registration Fee \_\_\_\_\_ \$35.00  
AVVA and/or spouses Fee \_\_\_\_\_ \$25.00  
Children 16 & under \_\_\_\_\_ Free (no meal)

**REGISTRATION FEE INCLUDES LUNCH**  
**Registration received after June 1 will be charged**  
**a \$5.00 Late FEE**

**For reservations:**  
**Call the Holiday Inn Fresno Airport**  
**1-559-252-3611**  
**Reservation code: VV4**  
**Room Rate: \$ 90.00 plus Tax**  
**Room Reservation Deadline is May 22, 2007**  
**This is a firm cut off date. Get your room**  
**early.**

The Region 9 Pre-Convention Conference  
2007  
Registration Form  
Please one person per registration form

VVA Membership #: \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter/State Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

AVVA Membership # \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter/State Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Check \_\_\_\_\_ (Payable to Region 9) Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Money Order \_\_\_\_\_ (Payable to Region 9) Money Order Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out the information below, as you want your Name Badge to appear:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter/State  
Council: \_\_\_\_\_

City & State: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Please one person per registration form

Complete and mail this form to: **Dick Southern**  
P. O. Box 68  
Tulumne, CA. 95379 or email to: [southern@haclink.com](mailto:southern@haclink.com)

The Holiday Inn Fresno-Airport affords us an ample meeting room for our use during the Region 9 conference. The Holiday Inn Fresno-Airport also has the following amenities:

Complimentary High Speed Wireless Internet Access  
Complimentary airport shuttle  
Complimentary parking  
Skyline Cafe: a full service restaurant  
Room service from 6am-10pm  
Spacious Lounge: King Tut's is a full service bar  
Indoor heated pool with waterfall and spa  
Outdoor pool with sun deck  
Fitness facility  
Valet laundry and self-serve laundry facilities  
Complimentary shuttle service within a 5-mile radius of the hotel

Our meeting room is 1244 sq feet and holds 70 people. Our lunch area is 1378 sq ft and is pool side and just a few steps from the meeting room. We are ready for you!

Here is the reservation information that you will need to get there. The reservation phone number to call for our group is 559-252-3611 and the reservation code will be VV4. Please use only that phone number and code to assure your correct pricing and that Region 9 gets proper credit towards our room guarantee. We will have a block of 50 sleeping rooms put aside for the weekend. If you have people that have always wanted to attend a Region 9 meeting, this would be a good time to have them attend. National Convention delegates are especially urged to attend to get a feel for what the convention will be like. **Our reservation cut off date is May 22**, so you need to act immediately and phone for your reservation at the Holiday Inn Fresno-Airport. If you are not a Priority Club member with the Holiday Inn, I suggest that you go to [www.priorityclub.com](http://www.priorityclub.com) and register for a card. It means, at this hotel, you will get a free drink at King Tut's Lounge everyday that you stay at the property. It also means that you can get a late check out if you need it.

The easiest way to get to the Hotel, if you are traveling by car, is on Hwy 180 East to the Peach Ave off ramp and go north. After crossing E. McKinley Ave, proceed on Clinton and you will find the Holiday Inn Fresno-Airport on your left. It is directly across from the airport. From the airport, just call for the shuttle. We are right across the street.  
<http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/hil/en/hotel/EATAI/welcome>  
Start dialing for that reservation and if you have any questions, please let me know. **The reservations close is a first come, so don't be late!**

Dick Southern  
CSC Meeting Planner  
209-768-9841

state alternative sentencing program for war on terror veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Taking effect January it provides judges the option of alternative sentencing for veterans diagnosed with PTSD, substance abuse or other psychological problems stemming from a combat tour. A similar law took effect in 2000 for alcohol or drug abuse, which has been successful and have saved the state millions of dollars. As these types of programs cost 60% less than imprisonment. Originally identified as shell shock in World War I and then combat fatigue later, PTSD was finally recognized as an illness by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980.

### PTSD STATISTICS

Confirming what the OIF and OEF troops are telling me when they return home, one third have mental health difficulties. Researchers at the UCSF and the SF VA Medical Center collected data on 103,788 veterans, half of whom were National Guard and Reserves. Using the international statistical classification of diseases and related health problem, and clinical modification system designed by the World Health Organization (WHO). They found that 32,010 (31%) had some form of measurable "mental health problem." Covering the period 2001 to 2005, 25,658 OIF and OEF veterans treated by the VA, 25 % had at least one mental health diagnosis and of the 25,658 vets over half had two or more mental health problems. The most common mental health problem was PTSD affecting 13,305 OIF and OEF veterans. The younger vets, between 18 and 24, were five times more likely to have PTSD than those over 40. For more information visit the Iraq Veterans web site at: [www.iraqwarveterans.org](http://www.iraqwarveterans.org). An OIF vet, Jason (USMC) told me that 35% of his unit had mental health problems after coming back from Iraq. For more intimation visit this web site: [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7738485](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7738485) or 7747557 (ref: Mental Health News, 13 Mar 2007 and related articles on NPR).

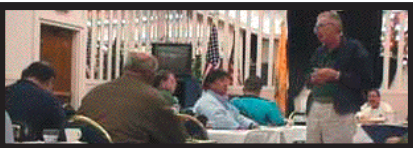
## COLON CANCER

### SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEM

By Beverley Atherton-Pierce, MHS  
Public Affairs/VA Northern California Health Care System

Thanks to: Joseph Leung, M.D., Chief of Gastroenterology at the VA Northern California Health Care System and Professor of Medicine at the University of California, Davis School of Medicine.

Although colon cancer is a serious health problem, the good news is that it is preventable, and even curable, when detected early. Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the nation with projections that over 153,000 new cases will be diagnosed in 2007 and one out of three patients will die as a result of the dis-



Steve Warren (r) at a CSC State Convention

Stephen Warren served VVA many years, as a state council and chapter officer, state and national convention delegate, and many "jobs" undertaken as a consummate volunteer.

Stephen J. Warren died in San Bruno March 23, 2007. Dear husband of Mai Khanh Le Warren; dear brother of the late Eleanor (Donald) Baird and Harold and Joseph Warren; dear brother-in-law of Bernadette and Carol Warren; dear stepfather of two and uncle of Katherine (Gus) Lotti, James (Julie) Baird, Susan (Brian) Warren-Finlayson, Laura Baird, Elizabeth (Chris) Sarlis and Noelle (Tyler) Nies; granduncle of 11 grandnieces and grandnephews.

Stephen was president and co-founder of Mission Peace, Inc., treasurer of Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #464 and past-president of Bellevue Home Owner's Association. Family and friends may visit Sunday after 2:30 PM at St. Brendan's Church, 29 Rockaway Ave., where a Prayer Service will be at 3:15 PM. Donations in Stephen's memory preferred to Mission Peace. ORG, P.O. BOX 320271, S.F., CA 94132 Attn: Stephen Warren Memorial.

ease.

Colon cancers usually develop in association with polyps, which are growths arising from the lining of the colon. Polyps are benign when they first occur but the adenomatous type may become cancerous over the course of the next 10 to 15 years. Timely screening and removal of the identified polyps can prevent colon cancer from occurring.

Different methods are available to detect the presence of colon polyps or even cancer. They include fecal occult blood test (FOBT), flexible sigmoidoscopy, barium x-ray studies and optical colonoscopy. Optical colonoscopy is becoming the most preferred screening method as the physician can remove all the polyps during the examination. Colonoscopy requires special preparation before the examination including consuming a low residue diet and drinking a cleansing solution to clean the colon. To alleviate anxiety and abdominal discomfort, colonoscopy is usually done under intravenous conscious sedation but successful colonoscopies have been performed without any sedation or discomfort in selected patients. Virtual colonoscopy (or CT colonography) offers only an image diagnosis of polyps but still requires a follow up colonoscopy to remove the suspected polyps.

March was national Colorectal Cancer Awareness month. However, any time is a good time to remind our friends to discuss colorectal cancer screening with their doctor. It is recommended to start screening for otherwise healthy individuals at the age of 50, and at the age of 45 for African Americans because they are more at risk for colon cancer. If the initial examination is normal, a repeat colonoscopy is recommended every ten years. Screening should start earlier if there are pre-existing risk factors such as a positive family history of colon cancer or special hereditary conditions. It is important to remember that colorectal cancer is preventable and timely screening can have lifesaving benefits.

VVA Constitution - SECTION 5: ELECTIONS

LOCAL ELECTIONS:

The majority of members of AVVA who are affiliated with a VVA Chapter may vote to hold an election for Affiliated Chapter Representative every year or every two years. This election will be held in April.

The Constitution of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. States, "After recommendation from the local members of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America in that state, the VVA Chapter should select a Liaison on the VVA Chapter Board of Directors, who shall serve as a non-voting Special Advisor to the VVA Chapter Board of Directors on matters of particular concern to AVVA members".

A vacancy in the position shall be filled, for the unexpired term by vote of the Regular AVVA Members affiliated with the VVA Chapter.

Local election ballots will remain confidential and will be sent within forty-five (45) days to the State Associate Representative or State President and be kept on file until the next election is held.

STATE LEVEL ELECTIONS

There will be an election of the State Associate Representative or President between January 1 and June 30 of each odd numbered year, who will be the Delegate of Honor to the National Biennial Meeting. At this election, all Affiliated Chapter Representatives, representing each VVA Chapter from their state, and where one exists, an At-Large Representative, shall cast one (1) vote for their prospective State Associate Representative or President, whose term shall be two (2) years. If there is no Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) State Council or State Level meeting scheduled between January and June, the AVVA Regional Director serving that state, shall contact each member residing in that state, and determine by consensus the manner in which their state should be represented, subject to the rules of this Policy and Procedure Manual.

The Constitution of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. States, "After written recommendation from the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. (AVVA) in the State, the State Council shall select a Liaison on the State Executive Committee/Board of Directors, who shall serve as a non-voting Special Advisor to the State Council Executive Committee/Board of Directors entitled to be heard on all matters".

State Election ballots shall be sent to the AVVA Regional Director forty-five (45) days after the election.

STATE ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVE ELECTIONS

National AVVA will provide to each state a generic ballot. If a state wishes to create their own ballot, it must be approved by the AVVA Regional Director. Regardless of how few or how many candidates for an election there are, ballots MUST be used. Example: Only one (1) prospective candidate has submitted a letter of intent to run, a ballot must be filled out by every delegate present and voting.

An election for State Associate Representative will be held between January 1 and June 30 of each odd numbered year.

There will be NO nominations from the floor on the day of the elections. There will be NO petitions signed or last minute decisions made to run from the floor for any elected position.

Each AVVA Affiliated Chapter Representative will cast one (1) vote representing the members of AVVA in his/her chapter.

In the event that a state has members of AVVA who are not affiliated with a VVA Chapter, then there may be an At-Large Delegate who will have one (1) vote for the At-Large membership in that State.

Three (3) individuals, not eligible to cast a vote, will serve as tellers in this election. These individuals will be chosen by the current State Election Chairperson and may or may not be members of the State Election Committee. These three tellers must be approved by the AVVA Regional Director.

After the election is completed, an AVVA National Officer, the AVVA Regional Director for that state, the VVA State Council President, or the State Council Chaplain for VVA can administer the oath of office.

After the election, all ballots will remain confidential and election tally sheets will be sent to the AVVA Regional Director within forty-five (45) days of the election. The AVVA Regional Director will keep these election documents until the next election is completed. In the event of a tie vote, there will be a second vote in the attempt to break the tie, should the vote still be tied, then the nine (9) Regional Directors of AVVA will be sent any biographies or lists of accomplishments for their review, then they will each cast one (1) vote to break the tie. There will be no abstentions in this vote. This tiebreaker vote will be final.

For State Elections Only, an absentee vote will be allowed. Absentee votes must be notarized with the original going to the AVVA Regional Director and a copy to the State Elections Chairperson. These are to be kept on file until the next elections have been completed and filed.

REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVE

1. Must be at least 21 years of age.
2. Must be either At-Large within the state that they wish to represent or affiliated with a VVA Chapter within the state that they wish to represent.
3. Must have been a member in good standing of AVVA for at least one (1) year prior to the election and have no pending disciplinary actions against them.
4. Must be actively involved with the VVA Chapter that they are affiliated with, or be able to provide verification that they are involved with veteran related issues in their state.

DUTIES

1. Must communicate with all Affiliated Chapter Representatives and the At-Large Representative in their state on a regular basis.
2. Must communicate with the AVVA Regional Director for their Region on a regular basis.

If the required number of members within a state should decide to incorporate as a non-profit organization within their state, then the elected State President is responsible for the following:

- A) Follow all guidelines required by the National National Organization
- B) File all forms, tax returns, documents, etc. required by the State and send copies of all these forms, etc. to the National Headquarters in a timely manner.
- C) The State President will be responsible for maintaining and/or overseeing all financial records and accounts.
- D) At the end of the State President's term, all records, documents, forms, files, etc. will be turned over to their successor within thirty (30) days.
- E) The members of AVVA who are affiliated with a VVA Chapter will decide to either hold elections every year or every two (2) years in April.
- F) Any Candidate for the position of Affiliated Chapter Representative shall file a letter of intent with the individual designated to run the election. Letters of intent must be received thirty (30) days before the election.
- G) Each AVVA regular member who is affiliated with the VVA Chapter shall have one vote.
- H) Ballots must be used even if only one (1) candidate is running for the position.
- I) All ballots and tally sheets shall remain confidential and will be sent along with the tally sheets, within forty-five (45) days to the State Associate Representative or State President to be kept on file until the next election is held.
- J) There shall be NO proxy voting or absentee ballots.

If no member wishes to run for the position of Affiliated Chapter Representative, then a point of contact name, address and phone number should be provided to the State Representative or State President and the members of AVVA who are affiliated with that VVA Chapter relinquish the right to vote and participate on a state level until the next election for Affiliated Chapter Representative.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America is an adjunct organization with VVA, Both Veterans and non-Veterans may join. If joining AVVA you are eligible to be a member of VVA Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_  
Print this page and fill out and mail with DD214 (if needed) to our address above.

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



# HUMOR - IN AND OUT OF UNIFORM

## A LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM TYPING THE WRONG E-MAIL ADDRESS!

A Minneapolis couple decided to go to Florida to thaw out during a particularly icy winter. They planned to stay at the same hotel where they spent their honeymoon 20 years earlier.

Because of hectic schedules, it was difficult to coordinate their travel schedules. So, the husband left Minnesota and flew to Florida on Thursday, with his wife flying down the following day.

The husband checked into the hotel. There was a computer in his room, so he decided to send an e-mail to his wife. However, he accidentally left out one letter in her e-mail address, and without realizing his error, sent the e-mail.

Meanwhile, somewhere in Houston, a widow had just returned home from her husband’s funeral. He was a minister who was called home to glory following a heart attack.

The widow decided to check her e-mail expecting messages from relatives and friends. After reading the first message, she screamed and fainted.

The widow’s son rushed into the room, found his mother on the floor, and saw the computer screen which read:

To: My Loving Wife

Subject: I’ve Arrived

Date: October 16, 2004

I know you’re surprised to hear from me. They have computers here now and you are allowed to send emails to your loved ones. I’ve just arrived and have been checked in. I see that everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Looking forward to seeing you then!

Hope your journey is as uneventful as mine was.

PS. Sure is freaking hot down here



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California State Council  
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NON PROFIT ORG  
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Permit # 679

To: