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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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CSC MEETING DATES

Full Council Meetings:
October 26-28, 2007 - Fresno, CA
January 25-27, 2007 - Fresno, CA
April 25-27, 2007 - Fresno, CA
2008 State Convention - June 4-8, 2008 - Fresno, CA

The National Convention is over, Summer is over, and Fall is on the horizon. Now it is time for the California State Council to get back to work. We have been "off work" since February - come join everyone in Fresno in October and help us get back to business. We have a lot to do!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

VVA CONVENTION REPORT

The 13th biannual VVA national convention began with the annual golf tournament, which supports the VVA scholarship program. The team of which Robert Rosenberger, Chapter 547, was a member, took first place. My team, with Darrol Brown, Bill Messer and Lionel Sanchez, held up the course in last place with a respectable 85. During our golf outing we had a two hour rain delay. Remember rain????

I later found out that Arlo Guthrie was staying in the hotel and Wes Guidry, meeting and special events planner for VVA, talked him into signing autographs and he preformed Alice's Restaurant for those lucky enough to be in the area.

The official opening was on Wednesday with Big and Rich opening the show with their song "the Eighth of November" and the story of how it came about. We then had a song "Proud to be an American" preformed by Lee Greenwood. Clarence Page was the keynote speaker. He spoke about being in the media branch of the army during the Vietnam War. I had a chance to speak with him and he told me he was really impressed to find out how well informed Vietnam Veterans are and that a lot of us watch programs that he speaks on.

All in all this was a quiet convention. I sit on the constitution committee so there were plenty of members on hand to quiz us on our amendments. I think we did a disservice to the committee with the way we handled one amendment but the members set us on the proper course when the time came. There were no real hot button issues on the agenda this year. We had some changes to the constitution that passed easily and one that was brought up that the committee should not have brought out. This amendment would have opened the membership to any veteran. The problem the committee had was the amendment was not worded properly. This issue could come up again in the future but more research needs to be done by the parties involved. I would choose not to assist unless ordered to by my state but if I am reappointed by the constitution committee chair I would take direction from her.

The resolutions brought out were as we received them. There were other issues brought to our attention but with our rules and constitution we could not discuss them. This you can ask at a CSC meeting and it can be explained there. We only had one person running for each of the four officer positions, but had enough members who ran from the floor for the At-Large positions to have 20 on the ballot. We had the opportunity to hear all candidates in our two caucuses and ample time to talk one on one with all of them. I think we will have a good team this term. There were changes that were unexpected and only four incumbent at large board members were returned to the board. This puts the state presidents in a position to keep the board on the course the members choose. I think an important task of the state presidents is to make sure

the board does keep on track. I also think they, the state presidents, need to remain impartial as to their positions to who was supporting whom and ensure that the board gets the backing, support and encouragement to complete the mission given by the members.

Dick Southern was elected as our Region 9 director this year. This was his third time running for this position and his fourth attempt to be elected to the national board. I think he will have his work cut out for him with trying to re-start the state council in Colorado and finding out what is needed in New Mexico. He will need our assistance but I think he is up to the task.

I also attended the first national board meeting to see who would be getting the chairs of the national committees. Bob Johnston has lost his position as national POW chair but I am sure he will remain active on the committee. Leslie DeLong was named chair of the constitution committee and I asked her to consider me as a member of the committee. At the October board meeting the committees will be approved by the national board. The process that President Rowan instituted last term is to fax vote the committees unless there is a question regarding placing a member on a committee. If there is concern regarding a member then the question will be brought up at the board meeting. He also moved some of the committees and task forces to subcommittees or programs. His reasoning makes good sense. These are ideas that we can use in California to help improve our structure. The banquet was good. We had steak and crab cake. I sat between Sonja and Elayne Mackey and one does not eat meat and one does not eat fish and neither eats crab cake. They did enjoy the chocolate cake so the evening was not a total loss. The program at the banquet started with the Ding-a-Lings, Nancy Sinatra was presented the Presidential Award for the Arts, and the band called "Endless Summer" played for the evening, they were pretty good but you needed to be there to hear them. This banquet is a VVA class act, every one is welcome. It was stated by many that they know of no other place where you can come as you please. Dress for dinner can be shorts and tee shirts or a tux if that is your desire. It seems to be getting a little more casual lately but we enjoy dressing up just to show that we know how. The dance lasted way longer than I did. We had an eight o'clock train to catch so we retired early. I enjoyed the three day ride home but wish I could have had some time to see the sights in Springfield. With the early recesses and being able to end on Friday evening some of our members were able to visit the veteran's memorials and the Lincoln Library. This is a real plus for the members since many will not have an opportunity to do this again. In past conventions there was never time to see what is in the towns that host the conventions so the opportunity should not be passed up when it arises. I would encourage all members to ask the members who attended to share their experiences of the convention. I do believe it is still a worthwhile experience.

During the convention John Rowan introduced

Steven Cook, Alan Cook's (former CSC Treasurer) youngest son, who was discharged two weeks earlier from the 101st Airborne Division US Army. He mentioned that this was Steve's third convention that he has attended. Steve grew up with VVA and said we were the people that inspired him to serve his country. Alan told us that our time with Steve was probably some of the best therapy he could get and thanked everyone for spending time with him. Steve's older brother Dan will be getting out of the service next year. Steve served one tour in Iraq and Dan spent two tours. They both served in the 101st airborne in Iraq with both of them there during Dan's second tour.

For me this was an educational convention. I learned a lot about our members. the members from California as well as Region 9. I see some things we need to work on especially in the question and answer parts. We were the only region, however, that all delegates voted for the regional director. We were also the only region that did not use block voting. Some think this shows that we do not know the candidates; I think it is because we have very independent delegates that are looking at the candidates through their own eyes. Sometimes it is good to vote as a block but in personal elections every delegate needs to be able to vote independently. I would like to thank all of the candidates and all of the members for sending members with open minds.

CALIFORNIA CHAPTERS

In the past year I have had to send out letters to the members of two chapters informing them that their chapters were in suspension, I had not heard from any person in leadership from the chapter to correct this. Closing chapters is not a task I relish but it is a part of our job. I have not been able to find anyone who has the time or energy to try to save Chapters 536 Bakersfield and 713 Los Angeles, therefore I am obligated to send in the paperwork to start the closing process. Chapter 464 has gotten themselves off the suspension list and now needs to get involved with the state council.

On another note; we have a new chapter. Chapter 982 in Santa Maria has all of their paperwork in. The tough part of this is now we are waiting for the charter. There is a new rule that no one has any idea where it came from. In order to charter a chapter in a state, the powers that be, chose a chapter to give permission to use the name and number to the new chapter. In this case it is Chapter 702 in Yountville that needs to give permission to charter a new chapter. I do not agree with this new rule but I have nothing to say. We all have to work together to establish new chapters and now we need the permission of one of our own chapters to do this. In the future if you are asked to submit a letter on chapter letterhead signed by an officer for a chapter to start in the state, it is true...and please act on it.

WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS?

Next June we will be holding our state convention. At that time we will be electing a new board or reelecting the old one. What do you expect from the board members? Here are some of my

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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.

thoughts. These are the simple streamlined job descriptions. Check in the constitution for the complete job descriptions.

The President chairs the meetings and appoints the chairs of the committees. This is the simple description. The president also brings his/her own ideas and agenda to the board. The president is the spokesperson for the membership and either attends functions and meetings or sends a representative. During my term we have began a new relationship with the CDVA and the state commanders' council. This will be an asset in the years to come and has kept members of the board very busy with our new involvement in the legislative area.

The Vice President serves to assist the President. This term I have been fortunate to have a

VP who is able and willing to serve on the state commanders' council as a member, vice chair and chair. He has also spent hours on the phone and did not hesitate to tell me what needed to be said even if I did not want to hear it. The VP should be ready to step up to the presidency if necessary and should always be able to say what needs said. Good communication skills are a real plus in this position.

The Second Vice President is our finance VP. Some of the duties are to keep the household goods chapters informed of changes, oversee any fundraising the CSC is involved in and whatever comes up in finance. Good communication skills are a must in this position. The 2nd VP is also in line to chair meetings and should be available to assist the president whenever necessary.

The Secretary sets the agenda with the president. The secretary keeps the minutes and prepares the packets for the meetings. Other tasks of the secretary are preparing letters and reports for the president.

The Treasurer is responsible for keeping the books, writing checks, keeping the membership informed of any chang-

es reporting requirements.

The At Large Director represents the at large members as well as all others at the board. This director should communicate with the at large members on a regular basis. The director also assists the board where possible by being able to make visits to chapters or other functions when needed.

The District Directors are the link between the board and the chapters. Their duties include a mandatory visit to each chapter. They should keep in contact with the chapter officers and CSC representative and keep the chapter informed of any changes in the meeting times or location. They should assist the chapters with helping direct inquiries and have links to all officers. They are also the contact for the new chapters. Under the newest membership guidelines any new chapter must have a liaison or mentor to assist them. This is vital to new chapters and new members to make sure they are informed of what is expected of them from all levels of VVA. The district director position is probably one of the most important positions in our state since we have over 30 chapters spread over the state. The district director is the link between the chapters and the board. Without a director that communicates both ways the entire organization has a void. The district director also should be available to attend other functions at the request of the board or the president.

These are just some of the things to think about in the next few months. I am not trying to scare anyone away who is interested in running for the board, but putting information out that lets you know what to expect as a board member. The job is very rewarding and also has its difficult parts. Serving our members is not always an easy task but the people you meet will stay with you forever.

Some of the meetings we attend are, in no particular order, state commanders council (quarterly), national board meetings (January, April and October) state presidents meeting (January, October, April with elections at the leadership conference in even numbered years), commanders meeting with Secretary of CDVA (first Friday April and October), VISN 21, VISN 22, Memorial Day services, Veteran's Day services. Along with these we attend meetings we are invited to by chapters, states, national or other organizations. We know that one person cannot attend all functions so keeping each other informed on all issues is vital. There are probably a lot of other meetings you all know about that our committees try to cover.

Ken Holybee, President, VVA CA State Council

FROM THE 1ST VICE PRESIDENT

...just bits and pieces from here and there.

I want to share some Veteran health care information from the Last VISN 21 MAC Meeting or Veterans Integrated Service Network Management Advisory Committee.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has developed special programs to serve the nation's newest veterans – the men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan – by assisting them with a smooth transition from active duty to civilian life. VA's goal is to ensure that every seriously injured or ill serviceman and woman returning from combat receives easy access to benefits and world-class service. Combat veterans have special health care eligibility. Their contact with VA often begins with priority scheduling for care and, for the most seriously wounded, VA counselors visiting their bedside in military wards before separation to ensure their VA disability payment coverage will be ready the moment they leave active duty. Through enhanced programs and new policies, VA is striving to ensure it holds open the doors to a seamless transition from soldier to citizen.

POLYTRAUMA CENTERS PROVIDE SPECIALIZED

CARE

Improvised explosive devices and rocket-propelled grenades often result in devastating injuries, including amputations, sensory loss and brain injury. Modern body armor and advances in front-line trauma care have enabled combat veterans to survive severe attacks that in prior wars were fatal. In response to the demand for specialized services, VA expanded its four traumatic brain injury centers in Minneapolis, Palo Alto, Richmond and Tampa to become polytrauma centers encompassing additional specialties to treat patients for multiple complex injuries. This is being expanded into a network of 21 polytrauma network sites and polytrauma clinic support teams around the country providing state-of-the-art treatment close to injured veterans' homes.

These centers treat traumatic brain injury alone or in combination with amputation, blindness, or other visual impairment, complex orthopedic injuries, auditory and vestibular disorders, and mental health concerns. VA has added clinical expertise to address the special problems that the multi-trauma combat injured patient may face. This can include intensive psychological support treatment for both patient and family, intensive case management, improvements in the treatment of vision problems, and rehabilitation using the latest high-tech specialty prostheses. Polytrauma teams bring together experts to provide innovative, personalized treatment to help the injured service member or veteran achieve optimal function and independence.

Because brain injury is being recognized as the signature injury of the current conflict, VA launched an educational initiative to provide its clinicians a broad base of knowledge with which to identify potential traumatic brain injury patients, mechanisms for effective care, and a better understanding of patients who experience this condition. VA has made training mandatory for physicians and other key staff in primary care, mental health and rehabilitation programs.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND POST-TRAUMATIC

STRESS DISORDER

About one-third of the combat veterans who seek care from VA have a possible diagnosis of a mental disorder, and VA has significantly expanded its counseling and mental health services. VA has launched new programs, including dozens of new mental health teams based in VA medical centers focused on early identification and management of stress-related disorders, as well as the recruitment of about 100 combat veterans into its Readjustment Counseling Service to provide briefings to transitioning servicemen and women regarding military-related readjustment needs.

Many of the challenges facing the soldiers returning from Afghanistan and Iraq are stressors that have been identified and studied in veterans of previous wars. VA has developed world class expertise in treating chronic mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Post-Traumatic stress involves a normal set of reactions to a trauma, such as war. Sometimes it becomes a disorder with the passage of time when feelings or issues related to the trauma are not dealt with and are suppressed by the individual. This can result in problems readjusting to community life following the trauma. Since the war began, VA has activated dozens of new PTSD programs around the country to assist veterans in dealing with the emotional toll of combat. In addition, 207 readjustment counseling "vet centers" provide easy access in consumer-friendly facilities apart from traditional VA medical centers.

One early scientific study indicate the estimated risk for PTSD from service in the Iraq war was 18 percent, while the estimated risk for PTSD from the Afghanistan mission was 11 percent. Data from multiple sources now indicate that approximately 10 to 15 percent of soldiers develop PTSD after deployment to Iraq and another 10 percent have significant symptoms of PTSD, depression or anxiety and may benefit from care. Alcohol misuse and relationship problems add to these rates. Combat veterans are at higher risk for psychiatric problems than military personnel serving in noncombat locations, and more frequent and more intensive combat is associated with higher risk. With military pre- and post-deployment health assessment programs seeking to destigmatize mental health treatment, coupled with simplified access to VA care for combat veterans after discharge, experts believe initial high rates likely will decrease.

Studies of PTSD patients in general have suggested as many as half may enjoy complete remission and the majority of the remainder will improve. Research has led to scientifically developed treatment guidelines covering a variety of modern therapies with which clinicians have had success. Treatments range from psychological first aid to cognitive behavioral therapy. Psychopharmacology may include drugs such as Zoloft or Paxil – with newer drugs under studies now in progress. More information about VA's PTSD programs is available at <http://www.va.gov/opa/fact/docs/ptsd.doc> and <http://www.ncptsd.va.gov>.

CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE REPORT

September 2007

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 8 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 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.

SB630 Veterans Homes – (Samuel Aanestad, Nevada City). To appropriate additional state funds for construction of the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Home project and authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to borrow state funds pending receipt of the federal share of the construction costs. Also appropriate \$30 million for construction of the veterans homes in Fresno and in Shasta County. The bill has now been passed by the Assembly but will have to return to the Senate for concurrence in a relatively minor amendment that was added by the Assembly Committee on Appropriations. It is conceivable that the Senate may continue with some regular business while the struggle over the Budget continues which would provide an opportunity to move this bill. However, if the Senate goes into recess, as the Assembly has done, then the bill could be held up past the deadline that has been set by USDVA for the CDVA to certify availability of funds.

The Legislature did manage to take action on some of the pending veterans bills recently.

AB257 Parks: Veterans: park passes – (Joel Anderson, La Mesa). Existing law requires that a veteran who has a disability rating of 50 percent or higher, or who is a former POW, upon payment of a fee of \$3.50, be issued a pass entitling the bearer to the use of all facilities, including boat launching facilities, 1 units of the state park system. This bill would eliminate the fee requirement for these part passes, and would additionally make a veteran who is a recipient of the Medal of Honor eligible for a pass. The bill has now been passed by the Legislature and is ready for enrollment and to be sent to the Governor.

ACR 22 Armed Forces Freeway – (John Benoit, Riverside; Paul Cook, Yucaipa). To designate a portion of State Highway Route 215 in Riverside County between the intersection of State Highway Route 60 and the Ramona Expressway as the Armed Forces Freeway. Adopted by the legislature. (Does not require Governor's signature.)

HB551 Home Ownership for America's Veterans Act of 2007 – (Susan Davis and Wally Herger) To help newly discharged service members take advantage of the Cal-Vet home loan program administered by the California Department of Veterans Affairs. This program is supported by bonds issued by the federal government and only allows veterans who signed up for military duty prior to 1977 to take advantage of federal financing. The Davis-Herger legislation removes the date-of-service requirement opening up the home loan program to newly discharged veterans in California and Texas. The legislation also indexes federal bond financing to a national housing measure to ensure funding remains compatible with the cost of housing. Alaska, Wisconsin, and Oregon are the other three states that utilize the federal home loan bonds for veterans. This bill has been referred to the House Committed on Ways and Means.

KEY BILLS PENDING IN THE 110TH CONGRESS

Defense:

H.R. 1538 – (28 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Ike Skelton (D-MO), 3/29/07 passed in House – Referred to

Senate Committee on Armed Services. Amend title 10, United States Code, to improve the management of medical care, personnel actions, and quality of life issues for members of the Armed Forces who are receiving medical care in an outpatient status.

S.986 – (1 Co-Sponsor), Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV), 3/26/07 – Referred to Senate Committee on Armed Services. Expand eligibility for Combat-Related Special Compensation paid by the uniformed services in order to permit certain additional retired members who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for that disability and Combat-Related Special Compensation by reason of that disability.

American Flag:

H.R.692 – (12 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Bart Stupak (D-MI), 1/24/07 – Would order that the National flag be flown at half-staff in a State, territory, or possession in the event of the death of a member of the Armed Forces from that State, territory or possession who dies while serving on active duty.

Health Care and Medicare:

H.R.4 – (198 Co-Sponsors), Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), 1/12/07, Passed House referred to Senate Committee on Finance. The Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007 – Amend part D of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate lower covered part D drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries.

H.R.1222 – (50 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), 2/28/07 - Referred to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel. To restore health care coverage to retired members of the uniformed services, and for other purposes. (Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act).

Social Security:

H.R.82 - (276 Co-Sponsors). Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA), 1/4/07 – Referred to House Committee on Ways and Means. Amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions. Companion Bill: S.206 – (21 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. Amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R.92 – (8 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 – (2 Co-Sponsors), 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.402 – (25 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Joe (R-MI), 1/11/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs. To provide for annual cost-

of-living adjustments to be made automatically by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans. Companion Bill: S.161 – (1 Co-Sponsor), Sen. John Thune (R-SD) – Referred to Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

H.R.463 – (36 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Steven Rothman (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 – (5 Co-Sponsors), 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.

H.R.1273 – (Co-Sponsors – none), Rep. Shelly Berkley (D-NV), 3/1/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs. To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to restore plot allowance eligibility for veterans of any war and to restore the headstone or marker allowance for eligible persons.

H.R.1307 – (22 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Heather Wilson (R-NM), 3/1/07 – Referred to House Committee on Judiciary. To establish the Office of Veterans Identity Protection Claims to reimburse injured person for injuries suffered as a result of the unauthorized use, disclosure or dissemination of identifying information stolen from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R.1426 – (5 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Tom Latham (R-IA), 3/9/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs. To provide veterans enrolled in the health system of the Department of Veterans Affairs the option of receiving covered health services through facilities other than those of the Department.

S.67 – (3 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.

S.815 – (2 Co-Sponsors), Sen. Larry Craig (R-ID), 3/28/07 – Referred to Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. To provide health care benefits to veterans with a service-connected disability at non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities that receive payments under the Medicare program or the TRICARE program.

Pay and Compensation:

H.R.89 – (22 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 – (9 Co-Sponsors), 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 – (102 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 – (32 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.

H.R.1272 – (7 Co-Sponsors), Rep. Shelly Berkeley (D-NV), 3/1/07 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs. To improve the pension program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Carl Jensen, CSC Government Affairs

CENTRAL DISTRICT REPORT

Since attending the CSC Legislative Workshop in March and my last report. I have been very active in this area including attending a retirement party for our County VSO and attending monthly meetings with the new County VSO and our Merced County Veterans Council.

In May I met twice with the Veterans coordinator for Congressmen Cardoza and we discussed Veterans issues. I attended the CSC BOD meeting in Fresno in May. I helped with the dedication of a new flag pole in honor of a Vietnam Veteran at the Castle Vista Community Center in Atwater. Later on I took part in a folding of the Flag ceremony at Castle Vista representing the VVA. In May I also traveled to Sonora Chapter 391 and swore in their new officers, enjoyed a good meal and coordinated with John Mendiola on Veterans Incarcerated at the Sierra Conservation Camp. I heard Charles Wiley speak about Vietnam and our news coverage being slanted as in the present War in Iraq. Mr. Wiley is an international correspondent who has covered several wars. He mentioned that New York City had a big Welcome Home Parade honoring Vietnam Veterans on Sunday, April 1, 1973, which made the front page of the New York Times, however, it was never mentioned by any of the National TV networks, except one with a few seconds of coverage late at night, and none of the Nations' Newspapers covered the parade. Of course I attended Memorial Day ceremonies in Merced and helped Chapter 691 with their information booth at Farmers Market during May and June.

Speaking of June, I assisted Chapter 691 with their information booth at the Merced Antique Fly In, 25th Anniversary and visited Chapter 880 in Modesto helping them with their organizational planning. July started off with the 4th being celebrated in Atwater.

I attended the Merced County Veterans Advisory Council monthly meetings for July, and August and traveled to Modesto Chapter 880 to attend their first pot-luck meeting and presented them with a POW-MIA lamp for a fund raiser. I also attended the Fresno Chapter 933 BOD meeting on Thursday, 23rd of August and assisted them with their reorganization.

I am presently networking with Stacy Studebaker, Veterans Outreach Northern Coordinator for VA from Palo Alto, on providing VA Medical Care for Incarcerated Veterans. She is also helping me stay in contact with the other VA districts. On the 24th of October Stacy and her staff are scheduled to visit the Sierra Conservation facil-

ity and I hope to visit at the same time. I am looking forward to attending the Sonora Chapter 391 Bar-B.Q. at Historic Jamestown Rail Town on Saturday, September 15th. On Friday, September 21st, I will be conducting a POW-MIA candle light ceremony at the Merced County Courthouse Park Veterans Memorials.

Just a reminder, to all Chapters to be sure and notify your District Directors and State Council on any changes in your Officers or Board of Directors. Please feel free to contact me at any time, and hope to see you in Fresno.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Hello to everyone,
We are preparing for our next CSC meeting, October 26-28, Fresno, CA. As the CSC Membership chair, I would like to invite you to share any questions or concerns that you may have regarding your chapter's membership.

I am hoping to have a committee meeting in Fresno. If you plan on attending the CSC meeting, please, bring any questions that you may have to the membership meeting. If not, please feel free to e-mail me at...Nebhuskan@aol.com.

Thank you,
Steve Mackey, CSC Membership Committee

CA. State Council Summary Membership Report (as of 6/15/2007)

CA VVA Membership:

IND	1567	Individual member, 1 or 3 years
LMP	1613	Life member, paid in full
LMT	22	Life member, time payment
IVI	30	Incarcerated member
PHV	2	Permanently hospitalized

3234 members

"RECONSIDERING TRAUMA"

ASSESSMENT

This is a big topic. In keeping with my previous report, I'm going to try and spare you the detailed clinical jargon and simplify this towards relevancy to veterans. When you look at the controversy surrounding the prevalence of post traumatic stress in the military and, among veterans, it's easy to see why assessment becomes such an important issue.

Exposure to traumatic events does not always lead to post traumatic stress disorder. However, those clinically affected often present with some degree of intrusive re-experiencing (e.g. flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive memories), avoidance (e.g. emotional numbing or efforts to avoid traumatic reminders), or autonomic hyperarousal (e.g. heightened startle responses, insomnia, thought blocking mechanisms ... 'spacing out').

Post traumatic stress may be viewed as multi-dimensional, involving some combination of these three separate but moderately correlated symptom clusters that (somewhat arbitrarily) reaches disorder status when certain numbers of symptoms per cluster are reported at specified levels. The basic problem here is that given the wide range of potential post traumatic stress outcomes it's unlikely that a psychological assessment can be accomplished by the administration of a single test.

Adding to the problem is the fact that there is little normative data on the general population. Without normative data a clinician is unable to compare an individual's score on a measure with the average person's score and so cannot determine the extent to which a score indicates dysfunction or disorder. In the case of diagnostic screening instruments the lack of normative data is generally not an issue though, because the primary issue is whether a given set of symptoms are present.

Symptoms may not readily be associated with military service and therefore the initial approach to assessment is critical. In most cases a clinician must make an educated guess as to what areas are likely to be relevant to a given client. Usually a determination is made during the initial interview, when a traumatic event history and presenting complaints are elicited and overall presentation is considered. Studies have shown however, that psychotherapy clients and others often fail to reveal significant traumatic experiences if not specifically asked.

This is exactly where we, as veterans, run into problems. Avoidance behaviors which protect us from intrusive re-experiencing of traumatic events often mask the true extent of post traumatic stress, we overlook the obvious. What may seem simple and relatively minor complaints may be indications of deeper symptoms. Avoidance behaviors and autonomic hyperarousal can lead then to serious health problems (i.e. end stage PTSD can manifest as heart disease). We're good at hiding our problems, especially from ourselves.

The Vet Centers in particular have tried to address this problem by hiring veterans as counselors but this has proved a mixed bag. Being familiar with military culture they generally are in a better position to ask the 'right' questions in a sensitive manner, using behavioral descriptions rather than merely asking about "combat" or "death related" experiences. Unfortunately, many are also protective of military culture and unwilling to take into account a client's life history of traumatic events, in particular the many biological, social, cultural and psychological variables that may moderate or exacerbate the impact of trauma.

The commonly held belief that repeated trauma (if it doesn't kill you) makes you stronger, is thinking entirely in the wrong direction.

Clearly, one can have post traumatic symptoms that do not meet the DVA's stringent criteria for a single, combat related, stressor. As mentioned previously, complex and chronic post traumatic stress is often the result of cumulative traumas ... some reaching back to childhood, some more associated with homecoming. With each traumatic experience one becomes more vulnerable and eventually a seemingly simple event can then 'trigger' a very complex reaction. Obviously, accumulated trauma can be exacerbated by war zone experiences and 'triggered' long afterwards by seemingly ordinary stress (ordinary maybe for others).

In this context, the notion of a "one size fits all" diagnosis is often unrealistic. PTSD presents differently in different people at different times and for different reasons.

Tests of post traumatic stress can be divided into two categories; Those that tap symptoms without reference to a specific trauma, yielding scores representing the overall 'amount' of symptoms currently experienced, and those that examine responses to a specific traumatic event and typically provide a provisional diagnosis of PTSD. Among standardized tests only one is available for the evaluation of overall post traumatic disturbance, several can be used to determine the possible diagnosis of trauma-specific PTSD.

"In the last decade we have seen the development of a growing number of psychometrically valid tests and interviews that evaluate trauma related outcomes. As clinicians become more aware of the range and potential complexity of at least some post traumatic psychological disturbance, the importance of such psychological assessment becomes clear. With greater quantitative focus and clinical specificity, the full range of trauma outcomes can be more clearly delineated and, as a result, more directly addressed in treatment." - John Briere, PhD (LA County and USC Medical Center)

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

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

In other words, the private sector has been exploring and broadening the diagnosis, assessment tools and treatment modalities.

What is now recommended in the private sector is at least two broadband screening tests; one for general psychological symptomology and one for general trauma related disturbances. These then should be followed by diagnostic tests and interviews related to findings and relative to the individual. Assessment approaches that examine the full range of potential trauma responses may then highlight treatment targets that might otherwise be overlooked. While dissociative symptoms (depersonalization, memory disturbance, emotional constriction, identity dissociation) may be the primary issue for one individual, cognitive distortions (self-criticism, self-blame, helplessness/hopelessness, and pre-occupation with danger) may be primary for another.

What we see by contrast in the DVA is an abbreviated initial interview and incomplete testing, resulting in poor assessment and treatment options ... often frustrating and re-traumatizing to the veteran. Even if a clinician does diagnose post traumatic stress it is then a DVA 'rater' (an administrative non-clinician) who decides its severity and if it's Service Connected and, compensable.

Given the complexity of post traumatic outcomes, assessments in this area must address a wide range of symptom clusters in addition to classic post traumatic stress disorder. These can be organized under the following intrinsically overlapping headings:

Altered Self-Capacities: the literature on the effects of severe or extended child abuse and neglect, especially when such maltreatment involves disruption of early parent-child attachment, often emphasizes dysfunctions in identity, affect regulation and interpersonal relatedness. Problems here have been implicated in the development of dysfunctional behaviors seen in complex post traumatic outcomes, including suicidality, impulse control problems, substance abuse and "tension reduction" behaviors (e.g. self-mutilation).

Cognitive Disturbance: interpersonal victimization (e.g. child abuse or adult assault) has been associated with subsequent low self-esteem, self-blame, hopelessness, expectations of rejection and loss, and an overestimation of danger in the world. When these are developed early in life, whether in the context of abuse or neglect or internal working models involving negative self-perceptions and expectations of maltreatment or abandonment ... these, in turn, are easily evoked by later stimuli that are somehow reminiscent of the original abusive experience (e.g. perceived or real rejection or criticism), leading to reactivated experiences of, for example, self-hatred, anger, or abandonment fears.

Mood Disturbance: studies indicate that exposure to interpersonal traumas can result in symptoms or disorders involving anxiety, depression, and anger or aggression which are commonly co-morbid with post traumatic stress. These may arise from the enduring physiological effects of some traumatic experience and trauma-related cognitive distortions or, may reflect conditioned emotional responses to activated trauma memories.

Overdeveloped Avoidance Responses: exposure to traumatic events, especially when experienced early in life and sustained over time, can lead to overdeveloped avoidance activities that appear to reduce trauma-related anxiety and discomfort. Examples are dissociation (alterations in conscious awareness that arise, in part, from defensive changes in otherwise integrated thoughts, feelings, memories and behavior), substance abuse (to anesthetize negative affect or subsequent memories but which can lead to further victimization), and tension reduction activities (such as compulsive sexual behavior,

binging and purging, self-mutilation and, suicidality). Along with substance abuse tension reduction activities are thought to work by providing temporary distraction.

Somatoform Distress: refers to bodily distress or dysfunction that arises from (or is intensified by) psychological phenomena. Somatic symptoms may serve as an expression of post traumatic stress in cultures, or sub-cultures, that deny or reinterpret psychological dysfunction.

As you can see, complex PTSD can indeed be very complex, with a layering effect that can make assessment and treatment problematic. All of these very complex and distressing responses are however normal human reactions. PTSD does not mean you're crazy ... it means you're human and, with the help of new assessment tools better, and more individualized, treatment modalities should also be available.

VISN 21 MAC REPORT

I attended the VISN 21 MAC on July 9,2007 at Mare Island with Carl Jensen. It was well attended by both VA Sierra Pacific Network representatives and Veterans Service Organization representatives.

There was a facility update on the VAMC-SF which indicated construction projects (seismic retrofits) will soon be completed. There will also be upgrades to the emergency department, outreach and OIF/OEF integrated health care clinic, PTSD clinic and, the Santa Rosa and Ukiah Clinics.

VAMC-SF now has state of the art robotic microsurgery for cardiac and prostrate surgery. They are the first and only CA facility to offer such service.

Ann Thrailkill, N.P, Lead Women Veterans Program Manager gave a report on expanding services to Women Veterans. This appears to be a comprehensive and ambitious program to provide women's clinics, staffing, services, facilities, educational programs, etc.

Lisa Freeman, Director, VA Palo Alto HCS, reported on enhancements to the Palo Alto Polytrauma Program. This is to include diagnosis and treatment of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST). Construction is underway on a state-of-the-art 36,000 GSF Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center to accommodate 18 all private patient rooms and associated rehabilitation PT/OT/RT programs.

Robert Wiebe M.D., Network Director, reported

on mental health enhancements, new clinics and the 2008 budget which will determine how much VISN 21 will be able to accomplish. VISN 21 is hiring additional staff at all facilities.

An open discussion period revealed that all the Veteran Service Organizations were concerned that older veterans not be "left behind" and that services to older veterans must keep pace with their needs. Dr. Wiebe indicated he was cautious about supporting the legislative efforts for "assured funding" as he feared it might result in a cap on spending.

Henry Iasiello
VVA, CA State Council BOD
Northern CA Dist. Director
PTSD Committee, Chair

REGION 9 / 1ST VP REPORT
September 2007

This is the first of a series of continuing informational news briefs for Region 9. I intend for the briefs to keep you informed of what is happening in the region and as a line of communication for all of us to use.

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

Speaking of events...I am planning on a Region 9 meeting in February or March. Which date would be better for you? February 15-17 or March 14-16? The city would be Phoenix, AZ and the hotel we are looking at is here <http://www.graceinn.com/> Check your calendars and let me know the better date for you.

VVA NATIONAL BOD MEETING

As you may know, there is a Conference of State Council Presidents meeting on October 4 and a VVA National Board of Directors meeting being held October 5 & 6 in Silver Spring, MD. If you have any questions or concerns that you need brought to National. Please let me know.

Keep good thoughts for Nevada State Council President, Virgie Hibbler, as he undergoes surgery on September 13. He expects a 4-5 week recovery period. Get well quick, Virgie!

EVENTS COMING UP

9/22 - AZ State Council meeting in Kingman, AZ.
10/4 - Conference of State Council Presidents in

2008 Leadership Conference Seminar Topic Suggestions

TIT LE	REQ UES TOR
Grant Seeking	Ed Chow, MDSC President
Email Communication	Dick Southern, Re gion 9 Director
Chapter/Council Management	Bruce Whitaker, ET Al
Advocacy	Dick Southern, Re gion 9 Director
Fundraising 101	Dick Southern & C. Schetrompf Reg. Dir 's
How to Keep Members Mo tivated	Carol Schetrompf, Region 4 Director
Comm unications	Carol Schetrompf, Region 4 Director
IRS Reporting for Chapters/Councils	Darrel Martin, KYSC President
Agent Orange	Billie Culin, CTSC President
Credentialing - Convention D elegates	Jim Blount, Creden tials Chair
Public Affairs, press kits, etc.	Pat Welch, At-Large Director
Duties of BOD's	Leadership Conferen ce Comm ittee
Duties of President's	LC Committee
Duties of Secretaries	LC Committee
Duties of Treasurers	LC Committee
Parliamentary Procedures	LC Committee
Hep C & Traumatic Brain Injury	Health Care Co mmittee
Benefits - In-Depth	Andy Clark, WV
Path to Successful Recruit & Re tention	Membership Affai rs Committee
PTSD	Tom Berger
Management & Leadership (how differ and	John Neuman Region 8 Director

Silver Spring, MD.
 10/5&6 – VVA National Board of Directors meeting in Silver Spring, MD.
 10/20 – NV State Council meeting in Tonopah, NV.
 10/20 – NM State Council meeting possibly in Ruidoso Downs NM.
 10/20 – Nam Jam in Phoenix, AZ. http://www.tucsonnamvets.org/namjam_07.htm
 10/27 – CA State Council meeting in Fresno, CA.
 11/10 – 25th Anniversary of the Wall in Washington, D.C.

THE WALL THAT HEALS

Chapter 961 is raising money to bring the Wall That Heals to St. George, UT on December 6th thru 10th. They have a pencil sketch on canvas by Mr. John Denny of the Wall with a couple of vets comforting each other in front of the Wall.



These are a limited edition. The Chapter owns numbers 1 thru 50. These are original prints signed and numbered by the artist. Selling price for an original signed and numbered print, entitled "Comfort," framed and shipped is \$250.00. On December 1st Chapter 961 will

be having a drawing for the last two prints. The tickets are \$5.00 each or you may purchase a book of five tickets for twenty dollars. Contact Mike Gale at mgale4007@msn.com

2008 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Plans are now underway for the 2008 VVA membership directory. The directory is published at no cost to National and is a fundraiser by the Membership Affairs Department to fund their mission. Look for information to be available on the directory soon.

Chapter 993 of Mesquite, NV.
 Chapter 993 has a web site <http://vvamesquite.org/default.aspx> Check it out.

See the suggested seminars for Leadership Conference 2008 (on page 7). Are there any other seminars you would like to see? Let me know if you think of any.

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

**CA VIETNAM MEMORIAL 2008
 20TH ANNIVERSARY**

Legislation has been introduced to mark the 20th Anniversary of the dedication of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Sacramento, CA.

ACR 64 that Assembly person Ted Lieu introduced on July 3rd, 2007 for the 20th Anniversary of the California Vietnam Veteran Memorial as I had requested of him when we met several weeks ago.

Jerry Yamamoto

Bill Number: ACR 64 Introduced Bill Text
 Introduced By Assembly Member Lieu

JULY 3, 2007

Relative to the 20-year anniversary of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 64, as introduced, Lieu. California Vietnam

Veterans Memorial: 20-year anniversary. This measure which would commemorate 2008 as the 20-year anniversary of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial, encourages all Californians to take part in the ceremonies commemorating the 20-year anniversary, on December 10, 2008, and urges that all steps necessary to inform all Californians of the date of these ceremonies and locations of these events be taken, so that all Californians may have the opportunity to remember and honor the service, efforts, and sacrifices of Vietnam veterans, and to pay homage to those veterans who are still alive. Fiscal committee: no.

WHEREAS, California has the largest United States veterans' population in the nation, comprising some 3.3 million armed services veterans, which is 12.3 percent of the nationwide veteran population of nearly 27 million veterans, who represent an impressive one-fifth of California's total population; and WHEREAS, More than 350,000 California veterans served in Vietnam, that resulted in 40,000 of them being wounded and 5,822 being killed or missing in action, which comprised more than 10 percent of the nation's total; and WHEREAS, More California residents died in Vietnam than residents of any other state, and California veterans received more Medals of Honor, Bronze Stars, and Purple Hearts than veterans of any other state; and WHEREAS, The history of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial began when Herman Woods, a double amputee who served in the 1st Air Cavalry Division, United States Army (1970), returned to California from the dedication of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C.; and WHEREAS, Assembly Member Richard Floyd subsequently held a rally on the steps of the State Capitol to confirm community support for the measure, and when 800 people attended, he was convinced that construction of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial was the will of the people; and WHEREAS, Assembly Member Richard Floyd introduced Assembly Bill 650, which created the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Capitol Park, that was signed into law by Governor Deukmejian in September, 1983; and WHEREAS, The California Vietnam Veterans Memorial is located in the north-east section of the Capitol Park grounds of the State Capitol and is a standing tribute to the 5,822 servicemen and servicewomen killed and missing in action; and WHEREAS, The 3,750 square foot structure lies near the World Peace Rose Garden, a new historic landmark, and is surrounded by lush greenery and other points of historical interest; and WHEREAS, The California Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated on December 10, 1988, in Capitol Park; and WHEREAS, There were hundreds in attendance at the dedication ceremonies; and WHEREAS, Events surrounding the dedication were spread out over a two-day period, commencing with "Buddy Search" registrations, reunions, open houses, and concluding with the dedication ceremony in Capitol Park; and WHEREAS, Additional activities included a five-hour reading of the Memorial names at Westminster Chapel near the park, a showing of "Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam" at the nearby Crest Theater, and a march from Capitol Mall to the Memorial, where Brigadier General George B. Price was the keynote speaker at the dedication and Kelvin H. Hunter, Jr., a retired army colonel, was the dedication coordinator; and WHEREAS, The newly formed Vietnam Veterans Memorial Commission was comprised of nine veterans, eight of whom served in Vietnam, including, Linda J. McClenahan, Chairperson, Leo K. Thorsness, Congressional Medal of Honor winner and Vice Chairperson, Gregory C. Green, Treasurer, Abel A. Cota, Secretary, B.T. Collins, member, Don A. Drumheller, member, Jesse G. Ugalde, member, Senator Jim Ellis, member, Assembly Member Richard E. Floyd, member and author of Assembly Bill 650, and Jerri L. Dale, Executive Officer, which led to the creation of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the theme of which reflects the overwhelming majority of those who were killed in Vietnam, including 19-year old in-

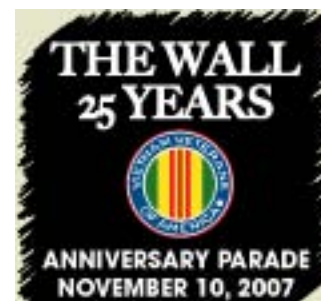
fantry soldiers, their youth, camaraderie, the fatigue of the war, and the American women who served, with the winning entry in the opening design competition awarded to Michael Larson, a Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, and Thomas Chytrowski; now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby commemorates 2008 as the 20-year anniversary of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial, encourages all Californians to take part in the ceremonies commemorating the 20-year anniversary, to be held on December 10, 2008, including opening ceremonies, and urges that all steps necessary to inform all Californians of the date of these ceremonies and locations of these events be taken, so that all Californians may have the opportunity to remember and honor the service, efforts, and sacrifices of Vietnam veterans, and to pay homage to those veterans who are still alive; and be it further Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly provide copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

Documents associated with ACR 64 in the Session - http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_0051-0100/acr_64_bill_20070705_status.html>Status

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_0051-0100/acr_64_bill_20070704_history.html

25TH WALL ANNIVERSARY

As you are all aware, we are in the midst of a major fund-raising effort to support the 25th Anniversary parade. With that in mind I want to ask each and every one of you to give us a hand. If you go to our web site, www.vva.org, and click on the 25th Anniversary button, you will find all



of the information regarding the parade. Please click on "sponsorship opportunities" for details on what we are looking for from corporate or other sponsors. I would like each of you to reach out through

your membership, contacts, friends, political leaders, whoever, to develop one contact. That is someone who can assist us in getting a donation. We are not even requiring you to do the asking. You can, if you want to, but you can also pass the contact on to Pat Gualtieri or Brian Foley at 1-877-PARADE3 (727-2333) and they will follow up. If you cannot find a significant contact then choose a significant corporation in your area, that you think may be veteran friendly. If you are well know by an elected official in your area, i.e. Governor, US Senator, US Representative, County Executive, ect., then consider going to them for a contact or two. They raise funds all the time and know who the players are.

John Rowan, President, Vietnam Veterans of America

NATIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

As you are aware, November 11th marks the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime event, and as part of our celebrations on November 10th, which feature the 25th Anniversary Vietnam Veterans Memorial Parade and a Veterans' Reunion Pavilion, VVA will distribute a special 25th anniversary commemorative magazine.

This magazine has been produced in collaboration with Boston Publishing Company, known to most of you as the publisher of the Pulitzer Prize-nominated book series, The Vietnam Experience (which Boston Publishing Company wrote and Time-Life Books distributed).

This is a major event for VVA, and we need your support, as this is a large and very important undertaking.

Working together, VVA and Boston Publishing have created a very special commemorative magazine, *The Wall*, that showcases many of the famous photographs previously published in the 26-volume book series, as well as special feature articles and photo essays documenting the history of *The Wall*, from its controversial inception in 1982 to its evolution as the most visited and venerated memorial in our nation's capital.

Other highlights in the magazine include reflections and essays on the Vietnam War, interviews with Medal of Honor recipients, letters and mementoes from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection, a message from Maya Lin, personal stories of extraordinary journeys to *The Wall*, and more.

Proceeds will go to assist VVA's honorable causes, including outreach programs, benefits assistance, and housing programs for Vietnam War, Gulf War, Afghan War, and Iraq War veterans.

Thus, I respectfully request your support in this endeavor, which has the potential to be very fruitful for both VVA and VVAF.

The magazine will have a limited press run, so I urge you to order 10 copies for your chapter members, children, grandchildren, local schools, and libraries where information about Vietnam is in great demand. Everyone who receives one will value this keepsake publication, and your financial support will be enormously helpful to this ambitious and very worthwhile VVA program.

In that vein, we recently received an e-mail from a student who was asked to prepare a school report comparing Vietnam to today's situation in the Middle East, unfortunately the student knows nothing about Vietnam and his library had very limited reference materials. I hope you will help us to correct this situation.

Click here to order your copies of *The Wall* keepsake publication.

I sincerely thank you for your support.

Keith King
Chair, Public Affairs Committee

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WALL PARADE

Dear Vietnam veterans:

Hello from the HQ of the upcoming 25th Anniversary of *The Wall* Parade, Saturday, November 10th, 2007.

I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on this historic series of events on our very spe-

cial day, and also forward to you the Parade Application link to fill out and route back to us as soon as possible.

Many of you wanted and update once your Memorial Day and July 4th festivities were concluded, and here it is:

The Opening Ceremony on the Mall: - 10:00am-11:00am

The ceremony takes place from the huge stage we are erecting on the Mall at 7th Street, between Jefferson and Madison Drives. Thousands of general public and veterans attend to Pledge Allegiance; hear the Invocation to those military now deceased and Armed Forces presently serving, a 21 Gun Salute, speeches from acclaimed present and former military (i.e., Medal of Honor Recipients), our VVA leadership, distinguished guests, and partake of the befitting musical pageantry. For those requiring it, seating is available.

The Parade - 11:00am until 3:00pm:

Immediately following the ceremony, the parade officially starts, with dignitaries and the Grand Marshal taking the lead. An exact Line of March is prepared well beforehand, with all participants gathered at their designated and reserved streets awaiting their Parade Marshals notice to begin marching along Constitution Avenue. A parade of 25,000 plus participants, military vehicles, floats, bands, motorcycles, etc., requires approximately 3 - 4 hours of time. Traditionally, various dignitaries walk in the parade up to the Reviewing Stand (in front of the IRS Building on Constitution Avenue), where they proceed to announce and acknowledge the thousands of participants. There will be bleacher seating for those veterans who wish to view the parade. The media sets up roving camera crews throughout the parade route.

Veterans Fair & Concert - Sylvan Theater 12:00noon until 6:00pm:

The prestigious outdoor Sylvan Theater, located close to the Washington Monument will host an afternoon of memorable entertainment and meeting place of friends past and present. Thousands of parade participants and their guests partake of the various booths in the area.

Parade Application Form: http://vva.org/25thEvent/Parade_App.pdf

Please fill out this form and return by fax (212-693-1475) or mail or email to HQ as soon as possible. For more information call toll free 1877-PARADE 3 (1-877-727-2333)

To those chapters already confirmed, we'll be getting back to you soonest with a new round of vital information to further plan your activities.

You'll all be forwarded the exact streets and locations where we will be forming/staging on the

morning of the Parade. Many Parade Marshals, in bright orange baseball caps will be on hand to further direct one and all as needed.

In patriotism,

Patrick Gualtieri
Chairman
25th Anniversary of The Wall Parade
Email: pgualtieri@vva.org or PatUWVC@aol.com

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL PASSES HOUSES

Whereas the Vietnam Veterans Memorial marks the 25th anniversary of its dedication in 2007; (Engrossed as Agreed to or Passed by House)

H. Res. 326

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

September 18, 2007.

Whereas the Vietnam Veterans Memorial marks the 25th anniversary of its dedication in 2007;

Whereas the Memorial commemorates the sacrifice of more than 58,000 men and women who lost their lives during the Vietnam War;

Whereas the Memorial honors the sacrifice of the 153,303 men and women who were wounded during the conflict;

Whereas the Memorial honors the more than 3,000,000 men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces in Southeast Asia;

Whereas the Memorial has served as a powerful force for national healing;

Whereas over four million people visit the Memorial each year to pay tribute to lost loved ones and remember the sacrifice of those who served the United States during the Vietnam War; and

Whereas the Memorial is a testament to the dedication of the private individuals and corporations that raised \$8,400,000 to build the Memorial: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives--

(1) honors the sacrifice of the men and women who lost their lives in service of the United States during the Vietnam War;

(2) recognizes the service of the men and women who were members of the United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War; and

(3) commemorates the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best: men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades... Such good men."

--- Author Unknown---



ANNIVERSARY PARADE • NOVEMBER 10, 2007

Opinions, Information and Reminiscences

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HEALTH INSURANCE?

Most people I ask this question will answer, it costs too much or sometimes, confess, they are totally confused by it. Some will attempt to explain it based on the coverage they have, or should I say, they think they have. Few actually understand it beyond knowing they need it to get treatment at a hospital or doctor's office when treatment is needed. Did you know that it is not uncommon for hospitals and doctors to charge five or six times as much to people without insurance for the same service, as they charge insurance companies? Now, I'll ask again, what do you really know about health insurance?

Do you have health insurance? Even if you do, there are several reasons you might need to know more about health insurance. Do you have the right coverage for your needs? Are you paying too much for what you have? Did you know that as we grow older the price of insurance goes up? It really starts to go up faster after age 50. As you grow older it is easy to be priced out of your health insurance. If you don't have a group plan through your employer, or you lost your coverage because you left your job, or you're self-employed, or own a business, or you are medically uninsurable, you are uninsured.

You're not alone, 46 million Americans were without health insurance in 2006, but by the end of 2008, there will be almost 85 million Americans without health insurance. Because of this, more people are being forced to buy their own coverage today than at any other time in our history. The Federal government projects that an additional 30 million people will enter the individual health insurance market in the next 10 years. These huge numbers of uninsured are only part of the picture:

- Half a million Americans who file for bankruptcy each year do so because of medical bills and other problems arising from serious illness or injury.

Harvard School of Law Study (2000)

- The uninsured are up to 70% more likely to be hospitalized than people with insurance for conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, pneumonia, and bleeding ulcers.

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS/AMERICAN

More important to Veterans from the Vietnam era, is that between the ages of 42 and 65 the rate increase curve climbs sharply. These dramatic increases mean that you have no choice in many cases other than to drop your health insurance. Today many of the uninsured are 62 year olds who were forced to drop their insurance, taking huge risks, hoping they can make it. These are exactly the people who are most likely to need their health insurance. Many of these are Vietnam veterans.

When I was in Vietnam, I learned that sometimes you have to go outside the usual supply chain to find what you want, or need to complete the mission; you had to be a good scrounger. When it comes to the need for health insurance we veterans need to do the same thing. As veterans, our needs are not the same as everyone else's needs and at times we need to look further, outside the usual places, to find what we need. I had to do that; I had to scrounge around to find health insurance that I needed. I hope that you will find my experience helpful.

Before going on, I should discuss some health insurance terms. In insurance some of the words used are the same as those found in health insurance. Sometimes they have different meanings or more restrictive definitions. Below are some common health insurance terms you should be

familiar with:

Beneficiary:

A person who may become eligible to receive or is receiving benefits under an insurance policy other than a participant, named insured or insured.

Insured:

The party to an insurance agreement whom the insurer agrees to indemnify for losses, provide benefits for or render services to. This term is similar to but preferred to such terms as policyholder, policy owner or assured.

Deductible:

In health insurance a deductible is the amount you pay each calendar year before health insurance benefits are paid for covered medical expenses.

Coinsurance:

Coinsurance is the percentage of covered expense you are responsible for after you meet your deductible. For example, you can choose 20% coinsurance of \$5,000 (which equals \$1,000). That means you'll pay 20% and we pay 80% of the first \$5,000 (which equals \$4,000) of covered expenses. After that, we pay 100% of covered charges for the remainder of the year, up to the policy maximum.

Co-payment:

A co-payment is a set amount that you pay for a specific service, such as \$25 for an office visit. You are usually responsible for payment at the time of service.

Individual out-of-pocket expense:

Is the maximum amount in covered charges you'll pay — per person, per calendar year. The amount is determined by adding your deductible and coinsurance together. For instance, if you have a \$1,000 deductible and 20% coinsurance of the next \$5,000, the most you'll pay is \$2,000.

Preferred Provider Organization (PPO):

A PPO is a large group of doctors and hospitals (not insurance companies), who've agreed to provide their services to our customers at a discounted rate. Buy a PPO plan to reduce your premium and out-of-pocket costs.

Health Maintenance Organization (HMO):

An HMO is a prepaid medical service plan (not an insurance program), which provides medical service to subscribers. HMO plans commonly require subscribers to see a particular doctor or medical provider as a first. These "gatekeepers" control what medical service the subscriber receives.

While most people are somewhat familiar with the benefit plans offered by the best known, or major health insurers, they mistakenly believe them to be the only health insurance available and the only real alternative to being uninsured. These plans are expensive and they are primarily designed and priced to cover the worst possible case injuries and diseases, the "oh-my-God-what-if" situations; which is in part why they are so expensive.

Consider this, if everyone rode buses, because employers provided bus passes free and then the employers stopped providing the passes there would be few cars available to buy and most people wouldn't even consider buying them, because they would be used to riding busses. Today, with the cost of health care and health insurance rising rapidly, the Employer sponsored benefit plans are being cut back or disappearing. Most of the insurance industry is still trying to sell the same policies to the individual as it had sold through employers. To me that is like selling buses to people rather than cars.

Major medical and group insurance policies are priced on the assumption that everyone will have a major injury or disease. We know that not

everyone does, but did you know that less than 3% of all of the thousands treatments available or given for diseases or injury cost more than \$50,000? While I believe this is a conservative figure and even \$50,000 is a lot of money, it is a far cry from a million dollars.

If you have, or have had individual medical insurance, you are familiar with the cost and the need of health insurance. If you're new at purchasing individual medical health insurance, you should examine your needs and look for something that fits your needs. There are affordable alternatives for Individuals, Small Business Owners and the Self-Employed. So, do you really need the one-size-fits-all health insurance policy? Probably not but even if you don't need it, you may want it and that is OK. The point is there are options or alternatives to the one-size-fits-all policy.

What You Should Look For In Health Insurance:

Some people have mainly routine needs — doctor visits for minor illness and injury — and use low deductible co-pay plans to pay for them, which makes visits to the doctor's office feel affordable. You'll pay more for the convenience of knowing what you'll spend every time you visit the doctor or need a prescription.

If You're Interested More In Catastrophic Needs:

Some people use insurance to pay only for catastrophic events. They pay out of their pocket for the costs associated with everyday health care needs in exchange for the lower premium of a high deductible plan. When you have a significant medical expense, even in the worst case, you're still likely to save money with a high deductible plan.

The Trade-Offs:

With a Low-deductible Co-pay Plan;

You're paying a higher monthly premium for the convenience of a lower fixed cost for everyday needs.

With a High-deductible Plan;

You're paying a lower monthly premium for expenses you might incur.

Can you really find something other than a policy based on the employer-sponsored plans? Yes. Is insurance available to the individual at group rates? Yes. While you might have to go outside the usual supply chain to find these policies they are available.

One of the companies I represent offers individual health insurance, which I have found to be not only affordable but which also provides very good coverage to those in need because of medical history or financial constraints. Under this policy, the rates are locked and don't increase because you made a claim. Sometimes, when you use your insurance your rates go up. The policy rate is also based on your age when issued, meaning many happy birthdays without a rate increase. Every major medical insurance program in the state of California uses attained age pricing. What that means is that you get a birthday present in the form of a rate increase every year. The policy is guaranteed renewable, no matter how sick or how many claims, it can never be cancelled as long as premiums are paid on time. There are no lifetime maximums, although each illness or injury has coverage limited to the amount you select. Individual qualification is required and while acceptance is very generous, not all may qualify. This is individual protection, not a group plan.

Another company I represent offers group coverage to individuals, the self-employed and small businesses. This fits the needs of independent contractors, sole proprietors and many others. Most businesses in America are small businesses, which can't afford to offer the benefits of large businesses. This program puts small business on the same level as large business. Normally, a business requires a large number

of employees to offer group insurance but this coverage, because it is actually sold to the individual, does not. Because "group" coverage requires that there is a group, this coverage brings the group with it. The policy is issued to the group, which is open to individuals to join for a nominal fee. The coverage under this is a major medical plan similar to those offered by large employers. It even offers options, which pay to the individual compensation for the deductible and the coinsurance amounts contained in the major medical portion of the policy.

These are just two examples. You should be aware there are many and should not assume that what is being offered is the only option for you. This is seldom the case. Did you know that just by joining a PPO, (which as I told you is not an insurance company), you can reduce what doctors and hospitals charge you? Did you know, you can join a PPO for less than \$20.00 a month and save hundreds of dollars? There are many things you can do to save money and get good health care and there are many healthcare insurance options.

For additional information please contact:
Raymond Holybee
(661) 373-4294
ray.holybee@sbcglobal.net
California Department of Insurance
License Number 0F27108

Note:
After more than 27 years working for insurance companies, the author found himself without a job, without insurance and with cancer, which is what left him very much un-insurable under any affordable health insurance plan he had been able to find. He found little known and seldom used options exist and now sells this health insurance to others in need. The author is an insurance consultant and agent.

"BABY KILLERS."

By Barnett Hoffman

The words are jarring, unsettling, ugly. But in the 1960s American soldiers prosecuting an unwinnable war in Vietnam heard themselves called that.

Barnett Hoffman, a member of the U.S. Army Special Forces, was one such soldier.

Being called a "baby killer" was one of many indignities suffered by Hoffman and his fellow GIs. They were soldiers who were demonized by the very people they fought for. Even with Vietnam four decades behind them, the harsh memories and the nightmares of what was flippantly called an "unpopular war" -- but is still claiming casualties today are vivid.

"Our own parents criticized us. Even our parents who had been in World War II," Hoffman recalled. "Television is what pointed the finger at

us. It put the war in everyone's face every day at dinner. In World War II and Korea you got it Saturday afternoon between the two movies at the theater. You got a little news reel and then a little something on the radio, but it wasn't graphic."

It remained a grim, disoriented world for the soldier who fought in Vietnam well after the fighting ended. Hoffman's life serves as an example.

Exposure to Agent Orange resulted in a weakened heart seven years later. He has had three heart valve transplants and since 1991 has needed blood thinners to ensure that his current heart valve stays open. If it collapses, he dies. For the past three years, he has worn a pacemaker.

Despite these circumstances, Hoffman is an active veteran. He has been the county's VFW commander for the past two years and with the late Terry Rose pioneered the creation of a Lake County Vietnam Veterans Association chapter, which is becoming the lead veterans' group in the county. He also chairs the Avenue of Flags commemoration.

Hoffman is among a cadre of Vietnam vets who have turned their anger into something more positive and are now leaders and organizers. Both state and national VFW boards are presently comprised of Vietnam vets, Hoffman noted, "... But we're talking 40 years down the road."

It is a strange turn of events, because, said Hoffman, "Any veteran who fought in a foreign war was welcome in VFW, but the Vietnam veterans when they first came home were not considered war veterans (allegedly because the Pentagon never declared war on Vietnam), so they were not welcomed into a lot of VFW posts. It made a lot of Vietnam veterans angry.

"They accepted Korean vets, I think because Korea wasn't seen," Hoffman added. "We were open to public opinion. We were labeled, not by just the (post) commander, but his wife, his daughter, his son, his whole family."

The nation had made the soldier who fought in Vietnam a virtual pariah. It seems hard to believe now, but Vietnam veterans were so reviled that they kept their past service secret.

"We were alone," Hoffman remembered. "We couldn't tell employers we were Vietnam vets; they'd be afraid of us. You'd go out with a woman on a date and you wouldn't tell her, because she'd automatically be afraid of you because of what she'd seen on TV."

He added, "It was sad. I had a young man who lived at my house with my wife and I for two years while he was going to the police academy. We did everything together -- bowled, played in pool tournaments and we were best friends. But we did not tell each other we were Vietnam vets.

His brother told me in 1978. I had been home for 15 years."

"Baby killers" was a term that may have grown up around the hyperbole created by the court martial of Army Lt. William Calley, accused of slaughtering 20 Vietnamese civilians. The truth, however, is that fighting men like Hoffman did much to aid Vietnamese children.

"Our group cleared beachheads for the 25th Infantry Division and then when we were finished with our job we would go up into the central highlands and inoculate Vietnamese kids for diphtheria and polio," said Hoffman. "We did a lot of good stuff over there."

Quite possibly, it was these inoculations that kept polio out of Vietnam.

Some young descendants of the "boat people" era from Vietnam and Laos, he added, still regard U.S. soldiers "like gods" for their role in rescuing their parents from the Communists.

"Vietnam to me was ... I don't really want to get into it. It was on and on confusion.

"Good and bad. Killing and saving lives," Hoffman concluded.

A soldier who knew what it was to fire and to be fired upon, Hoffman recalled setting up Claymore land mines to protect the perimeter of an encampment through the night "Charlie" (the GI's name for the Vietcong) "would come in and turn them around on us, then he'd make a lot of noise like he was attacking and we'd (trigger) the mines on ourselves."

Vietnam and U.S. relationships have changed dramatically but Hoffman said, "You don't get away from the war; none of us ever do."

Despite that, being a leader and organizer has necessitated that Hoffman maintain an emotionally stable persona. It has not been easy. Many from the era still "self-medicate" with marijuana and alcohol. Some will never be quite the person they were before Vietnam.

"I never could cry, I always had to be strong, I always had to work," said Hoffman. "But I went to the (Vietnam) wall in 2000. I took my therapist, who was also a Vietnam veteran, with me so that when I read the names on the wall I could break down and cry. This time would be different. This time was for me.

"But I ended up holding my therapist in my arms for two hours while he cried."

Vietnam Veterans of America
Lake County Chapter 951
P.O. Box 1313
Lakeport, CA 9545

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 _____

VetsBackToWarZone invite all to visit www.vetsbacktowarzone.org. (VBTWZ).

Our stated purposed is explained therein.

Many veterans' problems are what were once referred to as Shell Shocked (PTSD).

Past experience show that returnees to war zones are somewhat better able to reconcile with where they are in life and make more productive choices. However, many are financially unable to make the trip.

What VBTWZ propose is; that each VVA State Council (by their own choosing) join up with VBTWZ and each local chapter do likewise. Thereby selecting eligible candidates from their chapter and passing them on to VBTWZ for interviews and trip evaluation.

Criterion

Each candidate must;

1. Be willing to give verifiable testimonials of service during the war (DD-214)
2. Verify inability to sponsor trip
3. Be evaluated by tour psychoanalyst in relation to PTSD or other psychological problems
4. Physical examination for trip
5. Give a post trip assessment of present war zone
6. Stay in touch with program for follow-ups
7. Recruit similar veterans for interviews and trip evaluation.

VVA will be concerned with only VVA members if they so chose.

Contact: Herb Hightower: 321.525.0184cell / 661.299.1487Ph/ fax

HUMOR - IN AND OUT OF UNIFORM

AGE GRACEFULLY

Anyone can have the body of a 21-year-old as long as they buy them a few drinks first.

My memory's not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.

I've still got it, but nobody wants to see it.

I'm getting into swing dancing. Not on purpose. Some parts of my body are just prone to swinging.

It's scary when you start making the same noises as your coffeemaker.

I think I've reached my expiration date

These days about half the stuff in my shopping cart says, "For fast relief."

I've tried to find a suitable exercise video for people my age, but they haven't made one called "Buns of Putty."

Don't think of it as getting hot flashes. Think of it as your inner child playing with matches.

Don't let aging get you down. It's too hard to get back up.

Remember: You don't stop laughing because you grow old, You grow old because you stop laughing.

THE SENILITY PRAYER

Grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.

Now, I think you're supposed to tell this to 5 or 6, maybe 10 friends about this.

Oh heck, send it to a bunch of your friends if you can remember who they are.



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