



The California Zephyr®



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

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 16-1

SPRING 2010

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day 2010

GOV. SCHWARZENEGGER CELEBRATES FIRST ANNUAL "WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY"



Gov. Schwarzenegger announces March 30th as annual Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

Continuing his commitment to honor our nation's men and women in uniform, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today attended the Vietnam Veterans of America recognition ceremony and presented his proclamation for the inaugural "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" in California.

Last year, the Governor signed AB 717 by Assemblymember Paul Cook (R-Yucca Valley) to establish an annual "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day." AB 717 encourages all public schools in California to observe the day and conduct exercises recognizing the contributions of all those involved in the Vietnam War on March 30th of every year.

The text of the Governor's proclamation for March 30, 2010 is below:

PROCLAMATION

Many years have passed since the Vietnam War was waged, and despite the divisions that existed in our country, our troops continuously demonstrated the best of the American spirit by performing amazing acts of heroism. Our Vietnam veterans deserve our respect and recognition for everything they did to defend freedom, which is why I am proud to proclaim March 30 as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

This day of appreciation, like the Vietnam Veterans' Memorials in Washington and in Sacramento, is a tribute to the sacrifices of all the American veterans who served in Vietnam. It is a time for us to reflect on our past, and March 30 represents our continued dedication to honoring and supporting our veterans as we offer all of them a heartfelt "welcome home."

I encourage every Californian to take a moment this day to remember the brave veterans of the Vietnam War. It is never too late to recognize the selfless actions of these courageous men and women who answered duty's call and served our nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim March 30, 2010, as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 24th day of March 2010.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor of California

ATTEST:
DEBRA BOWEN
Secretary of State

VVA ENDORSES "WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY"

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - "When most veterans of the Vietnam War returned to what we called 'The World,' we were not welcomed into the bosom of a grateful nation," said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA).

"For far too long, we were blamed for the failings of a war that was waged under four different administrations. We were all too often considered losers, baby-killers, and pariahs of a war that divided the nation and reverberates till this day," Rowan said. "While many in our nation have come



Back row, from left to right: Ken Holybee (1st VP of Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council), Dick Southern (2nd VP of Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council), Robert Johnston (President of Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council), Tom Moran (California Veterans Board), Jerry Yamamoto (Chair of Minority Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council), Roger Brautigam (CalVet Secretary).

Front, from left to right: Silvia Ramos and Jose Ramos (Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans team coordinator)

State Council Officer	Address	Phone/Cell	E-mail
President - Bob Johnston, Sr.	PO Box 666 San Martin, CA 95046-0666	408-847-1195	bobj201@yahoo.com president@vvacalsc.com
1st Vice President - Ken Holybee	10311 Woodside Dr. Forestville, CA 95436	707-887-8891	holybee@comcast.net vp1@vvacalsc.com
2nd Vice President - Dick Southern	PO Box 68 Tuolumne, CA 95379	209-928-3848	southern@lodelink.com vp2@vvacalsc.com
Secretary - Tom Hohmann	PO Box 3007 Riverside, CA 92519-3007	951-683-7251	tomh47@aol.com secretary@vvacalsc.com
Treasurer - Tim Forrest	2776 White Sage Dr. Henderson, NV 89052	702-641-1946	treesforever@embarqmail.com treasurer@vvacalsc.com
District Vice Presidents	Address	Phone	E-mail
North District - Henry Iasiello	1290 Tuck Rd. Willits, CA 95490-8827	707-459-8601	shiningraven@earthlink.net north_district@vvacalsc.com
Central District - Dennis Croucher	3684 Highway 140 Catheys Valley, CA 95306	209-966-2292 209-769-3757	orland123@yahoo.com central_district@vvacalsc.com
South District - Steve Mackey	7401 Candlelight Dr. Riverside, CA 92509	951-681-9531 951-231-7268	nebhuskfan@aol.com south_district@vvacalsc.com
Director - Gary Colletti	2861 Park Vista Ct. Fullerton, CA 92835	714-990-1436	gmcolletti@aol.com director@vvacalsc.com
Committee	Chair	Co-Chair	E-mail
Membership	Steve Mackey		nebhuskfan@aol.com membership@vvacalsc.com
Public Affairs	George Eldridge		george@eldridge.net public_affairs@vvacalsc.com
Government Affairs	Ken Holybee		holybee@comcast.net government@vvacalsc.com
Legislative Lobbyist	Pete Conaty		pconaty@sbcglobal.net legislative@vvacalsc.com
Minority Affairs	Jerry Yamamoto		n9140y@ca.rr.com minority@vvacalsc.com
Constitution	Mike Kennedy		mike3sps@verizon.net constitution@vvacalsc.com
Finance	Barry Schoffel		bshowful@att.net finance@vvacalsc.com
Women Veterans	Kate O'Hare Palmer		koharepalmer@gmail.com women_veterans@vvacalsc.com
Meeting Planner	Dick Southern		southern@lodelink.net
POW/MIA	Vacant		powmia@vvacalsc.com
Zephyr	Tom Hohmann		tomh47@aol.com zephyr@vvacalsc.com
SDIT Liaison	Mike McCoy		mikebmccoy@netscape.com sdit_liaison@vvacalsc.com
PTSD	Henry Iasiello		shiningraven@earthlink.net ptsd@vvacalsc.com
Incarcerated Veterans	Bob Chaney		bkrbob@charter.net incarcerated@vvacalsc.com
AVVA Liaison	Elayne Mackey		cysticfib@aol.com avva_liaison@vvacalsc.com
Agent Orange	Bill Hodges		fdrdocent@comcast.net agent_orange@vvacalsc.com
Veteran Benefits	John Weaver		vscjweav@vba.va.gov veteran_benefits@vvacalsc.com
Convention Planning	Dick Southern		southern@lodelink.com convention@vvacalsc.com
Veterans Life Initiative (VLI)	Bob Parker		bobpark333@aol.com vli@vvacalsc.com
ETABO	Gary Colletti		gmcolletti@aol.com etabo@vvacalsc.com

THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR
PUBLISHER
 Bob Johnston, Sr.
EDITOR
 Tom Hohmann

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

Contact us at:
 VVA CSC
 PO Box 3007
 Riverside, CA 92519
<http://www.vvacalsc.com>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



to embrace those who served in that war, and while there are memorials to those who served and those who paid the ultimate price, there has never been a nationally recognized day for a belated 'Welcome Home' to all those who served.

"This is why VVA endorses the resolution introduced in the Senate by Senator Richard Burr (R-North Carolina), Ranking Member on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Com-

mittee, which would establish March 30th as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day." March 30th marks the anniversary date of the completion in 1973 of the withdrawal of U. S. combat units and combat support units from the former South Vietnam.

"We know that several states and localities already designate a date, usually at the end of March, to honor their Vietnam veterans," Rowan said. "Having a single, na-

tionally recognized day, to borrow from Senator Burr's resolution, can go a long way to 'provide the appreciation Vietnam War veterans deserve, but did not receive upon returning home; demonstrate the resolve

that never again shall the nation disregard and denigrate a generation of veterans; and promote awareness of the faithful service and contributions of such veterans during their military service as well as to their communities since returning home. ”

“VVA would hope that all members of the Senate might endorse and co-sponsor Senator Burr’s resolution.”

CHAPTER WHVVD EVENTS

CHAPTER 472 - SAN DIEGO



Chapter 472 celebrated Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans with a picnic held on March 27th at the Adm. Baker Recreational Center. The high light of the day was the presentation of a beret to the newest and youngest member of the AVVA, Miss Ariana Francisco, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Francisco of Las Vegas, Nevada. Looking on is Ariana's great grandfather, a World War II and Vietnam Veteran and Chapter member, Charles Saberton, age 89. His great grand daughter is three years old. She is seen here assisting in the cutting of a VVA theme cake with the assistance of her grand father and VVA 472 President Sal Pellerito. Ariana joins the San Diego AVVA membership that has doubled in size in the past year.

CHAPTER 933 - FRESNO

Fresno Chapter 933 co-hosted a WHVVD event with the VA Medical Center on March 28th, 2010. The event was held on the front steps of the VAMC with our Vietnam Veteran's Monument as a backdrop. Proclamations were presented from the County of Fresno Board of Supervisors and a proclamation from the City was presented by Council Chairman Larry Westerlund, Lt. Comdr., US Navy Reserves. Music was provided by the Silver and Gold Barbershop Quartet, composed of 4 singers...3 who are veterans. MC and Chapter President Steve Doak made some comments about the occasion and the event culminated with snacks in the Medical Center lobby.

STATE CAPITOL PHOTO EVENT PHOTOS (PG 11-12)

VIETNAM VETS LOBBY FOR A DAY OF HONOR



Veteran Mario Morrone of Philadelphia pays his respects to friends who died while serving in Vietnam, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Philadelphia on Nov. 11. By Matt Rourke, AP

By Judy Keen, USA TODAY - Some Vietnam War veterans are fighting for a day of their own. They have persuaded several state legislatures and dozens of cities to designate Vietnam Veterans Day and are lobbying others for a symbol of the gratitude and respect they believe they were denied when they came home from an unpopular war. "We served with honor and we want people to know that," says Bill Albracht, 61, secretary of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) chapter in the Quad Cities area of Iowa and Illinois. "We were ridiculed and defamed ... and we took it. Now we're trying to set the record straight." The U. S. honors all of its war veterans on Nov. 11. Several area cities passed proclamations making March 30 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, and on Tuesday, Albracht will ask the Rock Island County (Ill.) Board for support. VIETNAM MEMORIAL: Family perseveres to get vet's name on wall REPAIRS: Vietnam Veterans Memorial gets a facelift Some advocates say the last U. S. troops left Vietnam on March 30, 1973; others say the correct date is March 29 and support recognizing Vietnam War veterans on that day. Neither group is seeking a national holiday that gives federal workers the day off. "People really just want some recognition," says John Rowan, national VVA president. In September, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation making March 30 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. "They're still a lost generation out there in many ways," says Assemblyman Paul Cook, a Republican and Vietnam War veteran. José Ramos, 60, a Vietnam veteran in Whittier, Calif., helped lead the effort in his state. Working for appreciation for vets helps him cope with the war's still-vivid scars, he says. "I'm really proud, but my nightmares are my nightmares," he says. Dann Dunham, 60, a Vietnam veteran in Crossville, Tenn., who organizes efforts to commemorate Vietnam War vets on March 29, says at least eight states have passed proclamations and there are active campaigns in others. Veterans in Ohio are working for passage of legislation there. "It doesn't cost anything, it's so simple — how could anyone be against it?" says Paul Hauke, 61, a Vietnam War veteran from Sandusky, Ohio. He will be in Columbus this week to make the case. Donald Lanthorn, with the Ohio American Legion, testified in a legislative committee against the proposed March 29 holiday there, in part because William Calley, the Army officer who led the 1968 My Lai massacre in Vietnam, was convicted on that date in 1971. "We're not convinced," Lanthorn says, that a separate day of recognition for Vietnam War vets is needed, but "we're not attempting to demean their service." Diane Finnemann will mark the third Vietnam veterans observance next month in Minnesota, where her lobbying helped win passage in 2008. Her brother Wallace Schmidt, a Vietnam War vet who had post-traumatic stress disorder, committed suicide in 1972. "I feel," she says, "as though I have extended my brother's life's work."

VVA CSC LEGISLATIVE REPORT

March 31, 2010

Pete Conaty, Legislative Advocate for VVA-CSC

The State Council's March 25, 1st Annual Capitol Legislative Day was a great success! Details on the day's events can be read in Ken Holybee's column. The turnout for this event was great with about 40 VVA and AVVA members in attendance. Please plan on attending next year's event and pass the word to your chapters.

It is important for groups such as the VVA to constantly remind legislators and their staff that we take an active roll in advocating for causes important to Vietnam Veterans and their families as well as veterans of past, present, and future eras. Being at the Capitol and walking the halls raises the organization's visibility. VVA members dropping in to see their local legislators and educating them and their staffs on veterans issues is an invaluable way to get our word out to those who craft public policy.

As part of the Legislative Day event, VVA members circulated talking points about the 4 bills sponsored by the State Council. Those talking points are included below. Please feel free to contact your local State Senator and State Assemblymember in their district office and ask them to support these bills when they come up for a vote.

To find your local legislator you need to know your 9 digit

zip code number in order to accurately pinpoint your home and/or business in the correct legislative district.

To do this, go to: <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp> - Type in your address. This will tell you your 9 digit zip code. Next, go to this web site: <http://www.vote-smart.org/index.htm> Enter the 9 digit zip code and it will tell you who your State Legislators are.

To find out their contact info, for Assembly: <http://www.assembly.ca.gov/acs/acframeset7/text.htm> For Senate: <http://www.senate.ca.gov/~newsen/senators/senators.htm>

VVA CSC 2010 LEGISLATION

Talking Points on bills sponsored by VVA-CSC

AB 674 Author: Assemblymember Mary Salas (Chula Vista) Title: Criminal procedure: veterans Status: In Senate Public Safety Committee

What the Bill Does: Makes changes to existing law addressing the treatment of veterans convicted of criminal offenses as a result of PTSD. Adds sexual trauma, traumatic brain injury, and mental health problems to the service-related conditions (PTSD) that may result in a post-conviction referral to a treatment program. Would require the court and assigned treatment program to coordinate with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Veterans Administration in order to maximize the benefits and services

Why the Bill is Needed: Helps keep veterans who have PTSD or other mental health issues get the treatment they need and help them keep from going to prison With the ongoing War on Terror, many service members are returning from military service suffering from these disorders and are often being misdiagnosed.

AB 1925 Author: Assemblymember Mary Salas (Chula Vista) Title: Diversion: veterans Status: In Assembly Public Safety Committee

What the Bill Does: Would authorize superior courts to create a veteran's court for eligible veterans Provides a court-supervised veterans program that places mentally ill veteran offenders in treatment Develops a treatment system for those with PTSD, TBI, military sexual trauma, substance abuse, or any mental health problem stemming from military service

Why the Bill is Needed: Helps reduce the number of veterans suffering from mental health issues from being incarcerated and instead seeks appropriate treatment for the mental health issues. Provides veterans a court-supervised mental health program or system. Helps increase cooperation between the courts, criminal justice, veterans, and substance abuse programs to help mentally ill veterans get treatment.

AB 1644 Author: Assemblymember Jim Nielsen (Redding) Title: Veterans' remains Status: In Assembly Judiciary Committee (Set for hearing, March 23)

What the Bill Does: Requires entities in possession of cremated remains of a veteran to release the remains to a veteran's service origination under specified conditions. Exempts an entity from civil liability for releasing the remains. Would exempt a veterans' service organization that receives and interments the remains, from charges of negligence

Why the Bill is Needed: To ensure the cremated remains of any unclaimed veteran will be identified, claimed, and interred in a timely manner. Currently, about 75% of medical examiners and coroners do not verify cremains for veterans status. It is estimated that the cremains of over 1,000 veteran's are still lying of shelves in California waiting to be identified. Provides honor and respect to our heroes who have served this country by securing a final resting place.

AB 1829 Author: Assemblymember Paul Cook (Yucaipa) Title: Military decorations: fraud Status: In Assembly Appropriations Committee

What the Bill Does: Would make any person who falsely represents himself or herself by wearing any military decoration guilty of a misdemeanor.

Why the Bill is Needed: Protects the reputation and meaning of military heroism awards and medals. Strengthens

existing law by making this crime a misdemeanor. The crime of fraudulently misrepresenting one's military record to defraud others is reprehensible and needs appropriate punishment.

CSC STATE ELECTIONS

Saturday June 5, 2010 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

The CSC Elections Committee has been receiving Candidate Declaration Forms from those interested in seeking a position with the CA State Council (CSC).

Positions open for candidacy are:

- President – 1st Vice President – 2nd Vice President – Secretary – Treasurer (or) Secretary/Treasurer.
- Three (3) District Vice Presidents & one (1) Vice President At Large
- Northern - Central – Southern Districts shall vote for their own District Vice President.

The deadline for receiving these forms was:

- Thursday, April 1, 2010 for Declaration of Candidacy
- The Candidate Biography will be accepted during and no later than the April CSC meeting to be held April 24-25, 2010.

Each candidate must provide the Elections Committee with a:

- Typed Candidate biography

The Elections Committee will provide a:

- A ballot will be provided and Delegates will be advised of the proper procedures during the 2010 Convention.
- Campaign Area
- A Campaign Board for the distribution of and posting of campaign material.

Delegate Verification: Your chapter should have been notified of your Delegate Count.

If you have not received this, contact Steve Mackey Credentials Chair at: nebuskfan@aol.com or 951) 231-7268.

- Each CSC Chapter is allowed one (1) Delegate for the first twenty five (25) members, two (2) for fifty members, then one (1) delegate for every fifty (50) members thereafter.

Your Chapter's Delegate will be voting for the position of:

- President – 1st Vice President – 2nd Vice President
- Secretary, Treasurer (or) Secretary/Treasurer
- Your District Vice President (one vote)
- At large Vice President (one vote)

A member may Petition for Candidacy at the State Convention by:

- Obtaining and filing the Candidate Declaration Form with the Election Committee.

In doing so:

- The Candidate must collect 25% of the registered and checked-in delegates at the Convention, at the time of their declaration.

The Candidate must turn in all required paperwork:

- To the Election Committee

No later than:

- Friday, June 4, 2010 5 p.m.

That Candidate will then be certified and if certified their name will be added to the ballot.

Anyone "running from the floor" shall not:

- Campaign or distribute materials
- Prior to: His/her Candidate Verification

A Candidate Forum will be offered at a date and place to be determined. This will be announced during the Convention.

Each Candidate is afforded the right to:

- Challenge a ballot, in writing, by:
- Sunday, June 6, 2010 no later than: 9 a.m.
- The absence of this formal challenge constitutes a final waiver of rights to a later contest of the election process.
- A "run-off" election, if necessary, will be announced at the Convention.

Any questions may be sent to:

Elections Chair Ken Holybee: holybee@comcast.net

VET RECOGNITION LUNCHEON

Set aside June 23rd for the 3rd Annual Veterans Recognition Luncheon in Sacramento, California at the Sacramento Convention Center.

- The luncheon will be held at the Sacramento Convention

Center from 12:30 to 2:30.

- We will also have a guest speaker at lunch.
- Meal choices will be similar to last year and will need to be in by a yet to be determined date.
- Sponsorships opportunities are available for this event and we will be sending out the information for this very soon. We encourage you to participate.
- This year we are hoping to have a change in the presentation format. Presentations will tentatively be made in the Assembly chambers from approximately 9 a.m. to 12 p.m..

Please contact Mary Grundman at 916-747-5994 or Dana Nichol at 916-492-0550 if you have any questions.

MINORITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Committee wishes to congratulate Pedro "Pete" Molina upon his appointment as the Assistant Secretary for Native American Veterans with the California Department of Veteran Affairs. Pete is the first American Indian to hold such a post in the United States.

Jerry Yamamoto, Chair.

Pedro "Pete" Molina Sworn In As Assistant Secretary for Native American Veterans Affairs

Nearly 200 people, most from various tribes throughout California, today braved the cold and wet weather to witness the swearing-in of Pedro "Pete" Molina as the first-in-the-nation Assistant Secretary for Native American Veterans Affairs.

"We are very happy that Governor Schwarzenegger has appointed Pete as Assistant Secretary for Native American Veterans Affairs," said Roger Brautigan, Secretary for Veterans Affairs. "His long history of working for the rights and recognition due to Native American veterans make Pete an excellent choice to assist the California Department of Veterans Affairs in its efforts to reach this important population."

"I am honored to have been appointed to this very important position within the California Department of Veterans Affairs," said Molina. "Native Americans make up a very large proportion of our nation's veterans. Today I am honored to have present such important dignitaries such as Joey Strickland, Director for the Arizona Department of Veterans Affairs; David Rambo, National Council of Urban Indian Health; Don Loudner, National Commander of the National American Indian Veterans and representatives for several California-based tribes."



Pete Molina receives a native blessing



Johnny Coronado and family traditional dancers.

Molina, of Fresno, was appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger as the first in the nation Assistant Secretary for Native American Veterans Affairs in the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). Molina has served the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs as American Indian program manager and marketing and community relations representative since 1998 and previously held the positions of minority veterans program manager from 1995 to 1997 and Hispanic veteran program manager from 1975 to 1995. Molina is a member of the Yaqui Nation from Tucson, Arizona. He served in the U. S. Army from 1970 to 1973.

PTSD COMMITTEE

Henry Iasiello, Chair

I'm trying to work with NAMI here in CA supporting their efforts to work with the stigma of mental health, support training for families and caregivers and opposing the further "raiding" of MHSA funds (Mental Health Service Act -Prop 63) by Gov. Arnold' ...

Many, many of our veterans and their families first point of contact is the County Mental Health Services, which have been gutted. CA voters supported Proposition 63 but now the Governor want's to put it back on the ballot and make more cuts to CA Mental Health Services.

My 'take' on this situation is that PTSD and other mental health issues among veterans is not just an individual problem but a community problem and we need County Mental Health Services.

NAMI is already enrolling veterans here in their 'caregivers support trainings' (I should shortly have a copy of their training manual for review). Obviously such private efforts and State/County services are more 'user-friendly' than what the DoD or the DVA offers (please see story below). Attn.: Govt. Affairs

As you all know, I've been following events in the mental health field and particularly the drying up of State/County Mental Health Services. This has significant impact on our veterans community (families especially) as County Mental Health agencies are often the first place problems show up.

We now have the opportunity to influence this trend as State Law now mandates that a Veterans Advocate be seated on County Mental Health Advisory Boards. Below is an example (Santa Cruz) of what's happening statewide and I suggest we consider ways to support and perhaps partner with NAMI to counter these trends.

I suggest we oppose any further 'raiding' of MHSA funds (Mental Health Service Act – Proposition 63).

My letter: Dear NAMI Santa Cruz,

1. First, a reminder of the Speaker Meeting tomorrow night, Monday, 25th, 7:00, at Sutter Hospital Conference room, featuring speakers Mark Pensler from The Camp and David McBryde from County Mental Health & Substance Abuse Dept., regarding addictions and mental health. Hope to see you there at 7:00.

2. As you probably know, our state is in a dire financial crisis. Last year, the state's voters rejected a raid on MHSA funds (Mental Health Service Act – Proposition 63), but the Governor has proposed again to raid the MHSA to patch up the state budget. NAMI California is actively working to keep this from getting to the ballot, in order to preserve the important and critical local mental health programs funded through the MHSA. Please take a few moments to look at this information from NAMI CA, below, and in the attachments, and then please use the draft letter and/or talking points to communicate IMMEDIATELY with your state representatives. Their phone numbers, and mailing address are included at the end of this e-mail. Even if you've never done this before, be assured that just a simple call to a legislator's office can make a big difference, and it's easy to do. If you can add a personal family story that really helps too. On behalf of our family members who rely on local MHSA services - Thank You. Carol Williamson NAMI-SCC President 831 229 2675

Dear NAMI Affiliate Presidents, Executive Directors, and Leaders, At this time, we have a matter of great urgency. The Governor's budget proposal is to put Proposition 63 on the ballot again in June in order to allow for the supplantation of funds from the Mental Health Services Act to cover existing mental health services. In doing so, he

would move \$452.23 million into EPSDT and \$61.2 million into Medi-Cal managed care. In addition, he has proposed to take an additional \$847 million from MHSA – permanently – if he is unable to obtain an additional 6.9 billion dollars in assistance from the federal government. In effect, if both the \$452 million and \$847 million were taken from the annual MHSA funds, this would wipe out MHSA. Senator Darrell Steinberg and Assemblyman John Perez are against the Governor's proposal, but they need public support as backing. We must not let the legislature vote in favor of putting the Governor's proposals on the June ballot. We have until March 1 when the legislature's special session ends. The State Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, chaired by Sen. Denise Ducheny (Democrat – San Diego) released a schedule of public hearings through early February that will focus on the Governor's budget spending reduction proposals that need early action from the Legislature by March 1, 2010. Brief public testimony and comments will be taken at the Senate budget hearings – though persons can submit written comments and testimony before, during and after the hearings. The Assembly Budget Committee or its budget subcommittees, have not yet released a schedule of hearings, though that is expected soon. Most of the major budget cutting proposals impacting health services, including proposals for major reductions to Medi-Cal, Mental Health, Healthy Families, and developmental services (regional centers and developmental centers) will be heard on January 26, Tuesday afternoon at 1:00 to 4:00 PM at the State Capitol in Room 4203. Brief public testimony will be taken in addition to written comments and letters submitted to the committee. You may be able to listen to the hearing at www.calchannel.com. For your consideration: 1. A sample letter to send to legislative representatives. Re-write however you wish to, perhaps tell a personal story. 2. Talking points about MHSA and mental health cuts that have already occurred from NAMI CA 3. Position paper from California Coalition for Mental Health. Thank you all for your dedication to advocacy. I look forward to working with you and getting to know you. Sincerely, Trula Trula M. LaCalle, Ph. D., Executive Director NAMI California 1010 Hurley Way, suite 195 Sacramento, CA 95825 phone: 916-567-0163 www.NAMICalifornia.org

Your California State Representatives are:

- Senate (Dist. 11 - Dem) Senator S. Joseph Simitian. Capitol Address State Capitol Room 2080 Sacramento, CA 94248-0001 (916) 651-4011 District Address 160 Town & Country Village Palo Alto, CA 94301 (650) 688-6384
- Senate (Dist. 15 - Rep) Senator Abel Maldonado. Capitol Address State Capitol Room 4082 Sacramento, CA 94248-0001 (916) 651-4015 District Address 1356 Marsh Street San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 (805) 549-3784
- Assembly (Dist. 27 - Dem) Assembly Member William W. Monning. Capitol Address State Capitol Room 5150 Sacramento, CA 94249-0027 (916) 319-2027 District Address 701 Ocean Street Room 318-B Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (831) 425-1503

To send e-mails to these representatives, you can go to their web sites through <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/your-leg.html>, also through the search on the sample letter.

WOMEN VETERANS COMMITTEE:

Kate O'Hare-Palmer, Chair

ARMY NURSE CORPS IN VIETNAM

Kara Dixon Vuic

"I never got a chance to be a girl," Kate O'Hare Palmer lamented, thirty—four years after her tour as an army nurse in Vietnam. Although proud of having served, she felt that the war she never understood had robbed her of her innocence and forced her to grow up too quickly. As depicted in a photograph taken late in her tour, long hours in the operating room exhausted her both physically and mentally. Her tired eyes and gaunt face reflected the weariness she felt after treating countless patients, some dying, some maimed, all, like her, forever changed. Still, she learned to work harder and faster than she thought she could, to trust her nursing skills, and to live independently. She developed a way to balance the dangers and benefits of being a woman in the army and in the war. Only fourteen months long, her tour in Vietnam profoundly affected her life and her beliefs."

Such vivid personal accounts abound in historian Kara Dixon Vuic's compelling look at the experiences of army nurses in the Vietnam War. Drawing on more than 100 interviews, Vuic allows the nurses to tell their own captivating stories, from their reasons for joining the military to the physical and emotional demands of a horrific war and

postwar debates about how to commemorate their service.

Vuic also explores the gender issues that arose when a male-dominated army actively recruited and employed the services of 5,000 women nurses in the midst of a growing feminist movement and a changing nursing profession. Women drawn to the army's patriotic promise faced disturbing realities in the virtually all—male hospitals of South Vietnam. Men who joined the nurse corps ran headlong into the army's belief that women should nurse and men should fight.

Officer, Nurse, Woman brings to light the nearly forgotten contributions of brave nurses who risked their lives to bring medical care to soldiers during a terrible – and divisive – war.

"Solid, engaging, insightful scholarship. To see the effective mixing of gender history and social history with military history is refreshing and welcome. Vuic addresses a deep hole in the scholarship on the Vietnam War." -- William T. Allison, Georgia Southern University
"Officer, Nurse, Woman contributes mightily to the historiography of military nurses, of women in the military, and women in the paid work force after World War II."

Elizabeth Hillman,
University of California Hastings College of the Law
(Kara Dixon Vuic is an assistant professor of history at Bridgewater College)

The code for a 30% discount at John Hopkins University press is HA9F @ www.press.jhu. It is also listed at Amazon and Barnes and Nobles.

My name is Janet Tanner and I am a graduate student at California State University, Fullerton. I am writing my master's thesis on female Army nurses who served in Vietnam during the war. My interest in this topic stems, in part, from my own personal recollection of the war and its aftermath. As a historian, I would like to explore the war from the perspective of women, while also placing them in the historiography of the Vietnam War, since women's voices are mostly missing from scholarship on the War. I am currently looking for women who served in Vietnam as Army nurses who would be willing to do an oral history with me for my thesis. I live in Fullerton, and would like to find interviewees in the Southern California area if possible. However, I would be grateful to be able to talk with anyone willing to share their experiences with me. I can be reached at janet@tannersoft.com or cell# 714-323-5415, home# 714-870-5668.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT TO PRESERVE MILITARY HERITAGE FOR GREAT PARK

Irvine – Voices of former El Toro Marine Corps Air Station veterans will now be preserved through a unique project at California State University – Fullerton's Center for Oral and Public History. The Oral History Project, part of the Great Park History Program, aims to preserve the history of El Toro Marine Corps Air Station and its transition to the Orange County Great Park by conducting and recording a series of oral interviews. Phase one of the Oral History Project will be financed by the Orange County Great Park Corporation.

This first phase of the Oral History Project will capture seventy-five histories from veterans of World War II and the Korean War. Veterans from the Cold War, Vietnam War, and Desert Storm will be interviewed in subsequent phases of the project. Each interview will be digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. One quarter of all interviews will be videotaped. Interviews will be featured at the Orange County Great Park and the Center for Oral and Public History so that future generations can learn about El Toro's rich fifty-six year military history and the people who served there.

Under the direction of Dr. Natalie Fousekis, Associate Director of California State University – Fullerton's Center for Oral and Public History, eight students who have been through the University's oral history training program will conduct the oral interviews.

"The Oral History Project reflects one of the Great Park Board Corporation's core values – to honor the men and women who served at El Toro," said Larry Agran, Chair of the Great Park Corporation. "This program will bridge the past, present, and future of the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station as it transitions to the Great Park and will me-

morialize both the base and those who served there for generations to come."

In addition to capturing oral histories from those who served on the base during wartime, oral histories will be taken from people who lived or worked on the base as well as those who lived on the Irvine Ranch prior to the military base's construction, and those who have been involved in the transition of the military base to the Orange County Great Park.

The Orange County Great Park, which is almost twice the size of New York's Central Park, will be a major metropolitan park and the focal point of the redevelopment of the 4,700-acre former Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro. The Great Park will include extensive natural areas and open space in addition to recreational and cultural uses.

For more information about the Orange County Great Park, please go to www.ocgp.org. If you were stationed at or have memories of the El Toro Marine Air Station and would like to participate in the Oral History Project please call (657) 278-8415 or send your contact information to coph-eltoro@fullerton.edu. Information is also available on the web site at <http://coph.fullerton.edu/>.

NURSE FINDS PTSD HEALING

By Elaine Wilson
American Forces Press Service

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md., Jan. 28, 2010 – As a critical care nurse, Air Force Lt. Col. Mary Carlisle's focus always has been on helping others. It wasn't until a harrowing deployment to Iraq that the tables turned, and she became the one in need of aid.

Air Force Lt. Col. Mary Carlisle, a critical care nurse, speaks with a colleague at the 2010 Military Health System Conference at the National Harbor in Prince George's County, Md., Jan. 26, 2010. Carlisle spoke at the conference of her battle with post-traumatic stress disorder and her eventual healing. DoD photo by Elaine Wilson (Click photo for screen-resolution image); high-resolution image available. Carlisle described her battle with post-traumatic stress disorder and the healing she eventually found at the 2010 Military Health System Conference held at the National Harbor here.

Carlisle, then a major, deployed to the Air Force theater hospital at Balad Air Base in 2007. She worked the night shift, when most of the casualties seemed to come in, she said, and took care of U. S. servicemembers, as well as Iraqi soldiers, women and children.

"I knew from Day 2 that this was going to be stressful -- the combination of heat, sleep deprivation, noise ... [and the] inundation of helicopters coming in one right after another," she said Jan. 26 during an interview at the conference. "And you just knew that they had casualties on them."

The wounds were like nothing the seasoned critical care nurse had ever seen. "These were just horrific," Carlisle said. "People with no arms, no legs, people that by all rights shouldn't even be alive, and they were."

The health care team did everything they could to save each patient, but often all they could do was provide comfort in the inevitability of death, she said.

While they saved many lives, Carlisle said, she could focus only on the lives that were lost. "I thought I failed -- that I didn't do enough," she said.

In the midst of the chaotic everyday pace in Balad, one incident remains a sharp memory, she said. A young Marine had suffered a gunshot wound to the back of his head, and he wasn't expected to survive.

"When you at looked at his young, 20-something-year-old, angelic face, you just thought he was sleeping," she said.

Carlisle gave him pain medication and stayed by his side until he took his last breath. After preparations for his departure, Carlisle, as the highest-ranking officer in the room, called the room to attention as the body was wheeled out, a custom referred to as a Fallen Angel ceremony.

All activity in the bustling intensive care unit came to a halt as every servicemember in the room snapped to attention and saluted until the body left the room.

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

Chapter	Address/Phone	E-Mail/ Web Site	Primary Contact	Meeting Information
47	PO Box 4277 Riverside 92514-4277 951-781-6137	nebuskfan@aol.com www.vva47.com	Steve Mackey	3rd Saturday, 10 am at LifeFall church Social Hall located at the corner of Columbia and Main St. in Riverside. Board meets prior to the meeting (check web site for special meeting locations & times)
53	PO Box 7000-185 Redondo Beach 90277 310-540-8820; FAX:310-257-9053	n9140y@ca.rr.com www.vva53.org	Jerry Yamamoto	Monthly at 7 p.m., 4th Wednesday at Billy's Restaurant, 5160 W. 190th St., Torrance, CA 90503 (except in December)
201	PO Box 26203 San Jose 95159-6203 408-847-5477	vva201@aol.com www.nichecom.com/vva	Robert Beresford	3rd Monday, 7:30 pm, American Legion Post 564, 2120 Walsh Ave., Santa Clara, CA 95050
218	PO Box 2214 Santa Barbara 93120-2241 805-455-3365	ksperk@verizon.net www.vvachapter218.org	Keith Perkins	Meetings on 2nd Tuesday at 6:15 pm at Veterans Memorial Building, 112 West Cabrillo Blvd., Santa Barbara, 93101
223	PO Box 1583 Santa Rosa 95402-1583 707-526-4218	vets@vva223.org www.vva223.org	John Crooker	3rd Tuesday 7 pm, Santa Rosa Veterans Building, 1315 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa.
355	PO Box 2986 Canyon Country 91386-2986 818-508-9626 or 661-212-4377	vietnam6970@msn.com the51504sure@yahoo.com	Frank LaRosa Nick Callas	3rd Sunday of each month, 11 am, at one of two local restaurants
357	PO Box 4021 Redding 96099 530-242-1596	coonradt@snowcrest.net	Dennis Hipley	2nd Tuesday each month, 7 pm at Shasta County Veterans Memorial Hall
368	PO Box 1566 Mariposa 95306 209-966-2292	orland123@yahoo.com	Dennis Croucher	1st Wednesday, 5:30 pm at the American Legion Hall on Bullion St., Mariposa
391	PO Box 5391 Sonora 95370 209-928-3848 - Fax same #	southern@lodelink.com www.vietnamveterans391.org	Dick Southern	General Meeting, 2nd Tuesday, 7 pm.; Board, 1st Tuesday 7 pm. Both meetings held at Sonora Veterans Hall, 9 N. Washington St. Sonora, 92370
400	200 Grand Ave., Oakland 94610 510.444.5235	fdrdocent@comcast.net	Bill Hodges	3rd Tuesday, 6:30 pm; alternate between Oakland Vets Bldg, 200 Grand Ave. (upstairs), and Fremont Veterans Memorial Bldg.
441	782 N. Brundage Farmersville 93223 559-594-5710	rod6768@mindfall.com	Rod Hughes	2nd & 4th Mondays, 7:30 pm
446	1000 E. Walnut St. Pasadena 91106 626-795-8141 (also Fax)	vva446@att.net	James Maddox	Board meets 1st Friday each month, 7:30; General Meeting 2nd Tuesday, 7 pm, at chapter office conference room
464	PO Box 25540 San Mateo 94402 650-303-2725	leomcardle@hotmail.com	Leo McArdle	Veterans Memorial Senior Center, 1455 Madison Ave., Redwood City (Goldstar Room) on the fourth Saturday each month at 10 a.m.
472	2115 Park Blvd. San Diego 92101-4792 619-239-5977	vva472@yahoo.com www.vva472.org	Sal Pellerito	Combined membership and board meeting on second Saturday each month, 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Veterans Museum and Memorial Center, lower level, 2115 Park Blvd, San Diego, 92101
500	4441 Auburn Blvd., Suite J Sacramento, CA 916-481-6020; Fax: 916-481-2609	vva500@sbcglobal.net www.norcaltravel/vva500.html	Mary Lou McNeill	General Meeting, 3rd Tuesday, 7 pm; Board - 1st Tuesday, 7 pm. Both meetings held at: VVA 500 Veterans Hall, 4441 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento, CA - corner of Auburn Blvd. and Orange Grove Ave.
526	PO Box 1442 Culver City, CA 90232 310-260-6910	wmctaggart@pmcos.com	John Hamilton	American Legion Hall, 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City; First Thursday each month at 7:30 p.m.
535	PO Box 37 Grass Valley 95945 530-798-9967	http://www.nccn.net/%7evvanc/	Joseph Sanders	1st Thursday, 7 pm. Grass Valley Veterans Memorial Bldg., 255 South Auburn, Grass Valley (in Remembrance Room)
547	PO Box 745 Corte Madera, CA 94976-0745 415-457-8005; Fax: 415-454-2737	webmaster@vietnamveteransmarin.org http://www.vietnamveteransmarin.org/	Pat Williams	3rd Wednesday, 7 pm. American Legion, Post 313, Club Room, 12 Ward St., Larkspur, CA 94939
563	PO Box 751284 Petaluma 94975-1284 707-762-9078	johnc85393@aol.com	John Cheney	Veterans Memorial Bldg., Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma, 4th Thursday each month at 6:30 p.m.
582	PO Box 3070 Paradise, CA 95967 530-893-8435	hinz582@att.net	Art Hinz	3rd Wednesday each month, Veterans' Memorial Hall, 554 Rio Lindo Ave., Chico, CA 95928
643	PO Box 745 Dinuba 93618 559-528-2811 / Fax: 559-528-2384	geodrid@sbcglobal.net	Peter McManus	2nd Wednesday, 7 pm at Dinuba Memorial Building, 249 S. Alta Ave., Dinuba, CA 93618
691	PO Box 2226 Merced 95344-0226 209-388-9729	rgrisby@sbcglobal.net www.mymerced.com/0704k163.html	Ron Grisby	3rd Monday, 7 pm, Citi Bank, 19th & M, Merced. Board - 1st Monday, 7 pm
702	PO Box 525 Yountville 94599 707-252-7537 / Fax:707-944-0955	rossivva@aol.com	Ross Hall	1st Tuesday, 7 pm at Yountville Veterans Home in conference room B. Board meets 3rd Saturday, 8 am in temporary canteen, building D.
756	PO Box 90994 Long Beach 90809 562-433-6756	aircop72@gmail.com www.vva756.org	Max Stewart	1st Wednesday, 7 pm at VFW Post 8615, 2805 South St., Long Beach
781	1100 Main St. PO Box 102 Ferndale 95536 707-726-7842	digitaldan@suddenlink.net www.vva781.org	Daniel Lawrence	2nd Tuesday each month, 7 pm, Ferndale Veterans Memorial Hall, 1100 Main Street, Ferndale, 95536
785	2345 Barraca Parkway Irvine 92606 714-932-2014	kenbartend@yahoo.com www.vva785.org	Ken Porizak	1st Wednesday, 6 pm (social hour prior), at US Army Reserve Training Center Armory, 2345 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, CA
880	508 Riddle Court Modesto 95356 209-416-0200	emg@msn.com	Errol Green	3rd Tuesday, 6:30 pm at American Legion Hall, 1001 S. Santa Cruz, Modesto
933	PO Box 26256 Fresno 93720-6256 559-297-5253	sdoak@unwireddb.com	Stephen Doak	1st Tuesday, 6 pm, at Clovis Veterans Memorial Bldg., 453 Hughes Ave., Clovis 93612
951	PO Box 1313 Lakeport 95453 707-262-5651	deanvva951@hotmail.com vva951.org	Dean Gotham	2nd Tuesday at 801 N. Main St. 6 p.m. (St. Mary Immaculate Hall Parish Hall), Lakeport, 95453; potluck 6 pm, General Meeting 7 pm
982	PO Box 1002 Guadalupe, CA 92434 805-233-2201	halfaro12000@yahoo.com	Henry Alfaro	American Legion Post 371, 1025 Guadalupe St., Guadalupe, CA; last Saturday each month at 11 a.m.
1024	735 South Brea Blvd. Brea, CA	gmcolletti@aol.com vva1024.org	Gary Colletti	Meetings second Wednesday each month, 7 p.m., Brea Veterans Club, 735 South Brea Blvd., Brea CA
1031	PO Box 2742 Escondido, CA 92033-2742 760-666-9806 / Fax: 760-598-9184	webmaster@vva1031.org vva1031.org	Scott Wolf	Meetings first Tuesday each month at Mose Lodge #1874, 25721 Jesmond Dene Rd., Escondido

"That will follow him wherever he goes," Carlisle said, "all the way down to his trip ... when he is removed from the plane at Dover [Air Force Base, Del.]. From the moment of his death, I was the first one to do that. I will always remember that."

After five months at Balad, Carlisle returned to her home station at the Royal Air Force base in Lakenheath, England, as the chief of a family practice clinic and an emergency room. Her staff often asked her questions about her deployment, questions she said she wasn't sure how to answer. She was angry at the world, she said, and that came across in her responses.

"Some things I said, I think, kind of shocked them," she said. "So I stopped talking about it."

Carlisle said she buried her feelings then and continued to do so after she was promoted to her current job as the chief nurse at the Bolling Air Force Base clinic in Washington, D.C. It wasn't until she attended some leadership conferences that her emotions threatened to get the best of her. At the conferences, videos were played showing the Balad hospital, and Carlisle immediately recognized the scenes.

"They were from my deployment," she said. "It just brought everything back, all of those emotions back."

Carlisle revealed her overwhelming stress, anger and depression to her friends, and they encouraged her to get help. She self-referred to behavioral health and finally faced the emotions she'd been squelching for so long.

Her counselor helped her to re-experience her deployment and to find the healing she so desperately needed. Even as she healed, ever the caregiver, Carlisle discovered a desire to help others battling the same issues.

She reached out to the Real Warriors campaign, which features stories of servicemembers who have sought treatment and continue to maintain successful military or civilian careers. This initiative, launched by the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, is aimed at combating the stigma associated with seeking psychological health care and treatment, according to the Real Warriors Web site.

Her video profile now is featured on the site, she said, and she has no regrets about going public with her story.

"I hope this inspires others to go and get treatment, and at the same time, inspires their leaders, their supervisors, to look them in the eye and really say, 'Are you OK?'"

Carlisle next is headed to a squadron commander job at Misawa Air Base, Japan. She's ready for the new position and for the other more difficult challenges that may lie ahead, she said.

"I feel so good now -- content, relieved and at peace," she said. "And I'm ready to deploy again."

CHAPTER 446

The last several months has seen an increased involvement of the chapter in national and local issues. In January I attended the National Board of Directors meeting where I was added as member of the Government Affairs Committee. I am currently a member of the Healthcare Committee. I have been member of the Public Affairs Committee since 2000.

At the Public Affairs Committee meeting It was discussed in great detail the fact that many members have asked for a workshop at the 2010 Leadership Conference, focused on public speaking and effective communications with Congressional Representatives. I was asked to work on the committee that will be presenting the workshop. The committee includes National Vice President Jack Devine.

As you may know the chapter participated in the Alzheimer Walk in November 2009. There is a correlation between brain trauma and Alzheimer. How it will affect the current troops is unknown. It was suggested during the Veterans Healthcare Committee meeting that we (VVA) suggest that research be started to determine the relationship between Traumatic Brain Injury and Alzheimers. Ultimately the objective is to establish that exposure is presumptive for Alzheimer. The research will take a long time but when these troops are in their late forties and begin to experience an increase in Alzheimers, they will receive the benefits they deserve.

We are continuing to participate in the protest at the West Los Angeles VA Facility. As you may have seen in the current issue of the The Veteran their is an article about the "Land Grab" Our own Al Biernesser is quoted in the article. We volunteer on the fourth Sunday of the month. If you are interested in participating call the office and we can arrange to car pool to West L. A.

The third Annual Welcome Vietnam Veterans Day was held at California High School, in Whittier on Sunday March 28, 2010 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. There was a significant Southern California VVA presence.

CHAPTER 368

The chapter recently installed new Officers and Board Members for 2010/11.

Pictured from L to R are:

Bob Cooper, Ken Kubichko, Glenn Root, Ron Wollak, Bob Love, Dennis "Doc" Croucher and Jackie Leard Sr. Not pictured Tommy Kinard.



Region 9 Director of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Dick Southern, was the officiating officer.

CHAPTER 47

We will be hosting the Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall this summer July 1, 2010 to July 5, 2010 at the AAA



Speedway in Fontana, CA. We have Stater Bros. Markets and KFROG radio station helping to sponsor the Moving Wall.



The Moving Wall will be at the Auto Club Speedway during KFROG's annual Red, White & Cruise event on July 4th. The Moving wall will be in a separate

part of the speedway for respect, but close enough that the attendees will be easily able to visit.

CHAPTER 785

A chartered bus left the Long Beach VA Hospital recently, escorted by Patriot Guard Riders (PGR), Legion Riders, Run For The Wall (RTFW) bikers and headed down the 605 Fwy to Rose Hills Cemetery where the Moving Vietnam Dignity wall had been set up for viewing. There were 56 Veterans who went on the bus, some riders were from Chapter 785 VVA OC, we spent several hours looking for



names of friends who didn't make it home and shared stories with those who did. It was obvious that many were



deeply touched to see names of old friends. This was a chance for those who can not make to DC to have a chance to see names on The Wall.

Ken Porizek, Director Hospital Activities

CA AVVA

We will hold an AVVA meeting on Saturday April 24, 2010 during the CA. State Council meeting. We have a full agenda for April with lots of discussion, so please join us.

We will be meeting from 10:45 AM - 12:00 Noon - in the Shaver Lake Room, 2nd. floor of the Holiday Inn, Downtown Fresno.

We look forward to seeing all the AVVA members and VVA members that would like to join in too. Yes, your opinion does count!

Thank you & Welcome Home
Elayne

CDVA REQUEST SURVEY HELP

Nearly 3,000 Individuals Have Responded to the CalVet Survey To Help Prioritize Services to California's Veterans

Sacramento - Nearly 3,000 individuals have responded to the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) online California Veterans Needs Assessment Survey to date. Though we are at the halfway mark for this survey, CalVet would still like to obtain input from many more veterans, military personnel, families and friends to help it prioritize its efforts in addressing the state's veterans' needs.

To participate in the survey, residents are asked to go to CalVet's web site at www.calvet.ca.gov or the California Veterans web site at www.veterans.ca.gov and click on the button that says, "Veterans Needs Assessment."

"We look forward to receiving input from many more California residents so we can better focus our efforts in assisting and serving the veterans of our Golden State," said Roger Brautigan, Secretary of CalVet. "Over the next month and a half we hope to receive numerous responses to our survey from veterans, their families, and friends."

"This survey will help CalVet to prioritize where the State of California focuses its efforts in addressing veteran needs," said Jack Kirwan, Deputy Secretary for Administration. "By participating in this survey, respondents will be telling CalVet and elected officials what policy areas they see as needing to be addressed. This will help CalVet to better serve veterans by bringing to our attention their first-hand knowledge of veteran needs and how to best address them."

The California Veterans Needs Assessment Survey will also give an opportunity to respondents to inform CalVet if they would like to receive additional information regarding veterans' benefits and other services for themselves or for veterans they know.

VA SECRETARY SEEKS FAST TRACK TO PROCESS AO CLAIMS

Focus on 200,000 Veterans Expected to File Claims under New Agent Orange Presumptives over Next Two Years

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today an aggressive new initiative to solicit private-sector input on a proposed "fast track" Veterans' claims process for service-connected presumptive illnesses due to Agent Orange exposure during the Vietnam War.

"This will be a new way of doing business and a major step forward in how we process the presumptive claims we expect to receive over the next two years," Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki said. "With the latest, fastest, and most reliable technology, VA hopes to migrate the manual processing of these claims to an automated process that meets the needs of today's Veterans in a more timely manner."

Over the next two years, about 200,000 Veterans are expected to file disability compensation claims under an historic expansion of three new presumptive illnesses announced last year by Secretary Shinseki. They affect Veterans who have Parkinson's disease, ischemic heart disease and B-cell leukemias.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have one of the illnesses covered by the "presumption of service connection" don't have to prove an association between their medical problems and military service. This "presumption" makes it easier for Vietnam Veterans to access disability compensation benefits. Vietnam Veterans are encouraged to submit their claims as soon as possible to begin the important process of compensation. Along with the publication of proposed regulations for the three new presumptives this spring, VA intends to publish a formal request in Federal Business Opportunities for private-sector corporations to propose automated solutions for the parts of the claims process that take the longest amount of time. VA believes these can be collected in a more streamlined and accurate way.

Development involves determining what additional infor-

mation is needed to adjudicate the claim, such as military and private medical records and the scheduling of medical examinations.

With this new approach, VA expects to shorten the time it takes to gather evidence, which now takes on average over 90 days. Once the claim is fully developed and all pertinent information is gathered, VA will be able to more quickly decide the claim and process the award, if granted.

The contract is expected to be awarded in April with proposed solutions offered to VA within 90 days. Implementation of the solution is expected within 150 days.

"Veterans whose health was harmed during their military service are entitled to the best this nation has to offer," added Secretary Shinseki. "We are undertaking an unprecedented modernization of our claims process to ensure timely and accurate delivery of that commitment."

Last year, VA received more than one million claims for disability compensation and pension. VA provides compensation and pension benefits to over 3.8 million Veterans and beneficiaries. Presently, the basic monthly rate of compensation ranges from \$123 to \$2,673 to Veterans without any dependents.

Disability compensation is a non-taxable, monthly monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are disabled as a result of an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service.

For more information about disability compensation, go to www.va.gov; Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services and programs for Veterans exposed are available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange.

AGENT ORANGE:

Its Effects in the Vietnam War and After

The Vietnam War, or also referred to as The Second Indochina War, started on September 26, 1959 and lasted until April 30, 1975. The war was between the communist North Vietnam and the government of South Vietnam, taking place in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In 1959, two US military advisors were killed by Viet Minh guerillas in South Vietnam, and were the first American deaths in the Second Indochina War, starting what we know today as the Vietnam War. The US entered this war along with other anti-communist nations supporting the South Vietnam government to help prevent the takeover of South Vietnam. The 16 year cold war killed over 58,000 Americans with over 153,000 wounded, leaving an estimated 1800 still unaccounted for today. Various war weapons were used in the Vietnam including herbicides. These herbicides were developed for the military to help reduce plant and vegetation in dense terrains, bringing the enemy out of hiding and protecting the American troops and their allies from ambush. They were also used to destroy any food crops that the Viet Cong relied on to feed their army of soldiers. Statistics show that over 20 million gallons were sprayed with 15 different herbicides, some being color coded arriving in barrels, and all supposedly with no harmful effects to humans. The spray was released from airplanes, helicopters, trucks, and soldiers carrying backpack sprayers. Little did anyone know at this time, that more tragic history surrounding the Vietnam war was about to unfold, and the name of the devil was Agent Orange. Agent Orange was a code name for the barrel with the orange colored steel band. Chemically, it is a 50/50 mixture of two different herbicides, 2, 4-D, and 2, 4, 5-T, and 11 million gallons of this toxic defoliant was used between 1965 through 1970. Over 6,000 missions, with 10% being over Vietnam, were sprayed with Agent Orange, and some in Cambodia and Laos to utilize the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which was a key supply route for the Viet Cong. Agent Orange killed vegetation of all types including the root systems, leaving barren trees and undergrowth blackened and foul smelling. One of the components of Agent Orange was a chemical called Dioxin, which today is considered to be one of the most dangerous substances in the world. Dioxin is also known as TCDD, which caused a variety of adverse health effects in lab animals, and has been linked to numerous potentially dangerous and deadly health problems. The World Health Organization has since classified the chemical Dioxin as a known human carcinogen which can damage sensitive parts of the body like the endocrine, immune, and nervous systems. Many Americans still continue to suffer from different health problems due to Agent Orange and Dioxin with some being passed

on down to their children with various complications. In 1978 the Veterans Administration set up a program to help veterans with their needs from being exposed to Agent Orange. Some of the effects from this devastating chemical are as follows: Skin irritation and some skin diseases like Chloracne Nerve disorders including peripheral neuropathy Type 2 diabetes Miscarriages in women Birth defects, some physical deformities and Spina Bifida Neurological disorders Cancers Lawsuits have been filed accusing the chemical companies of war crimes because they sold Agent Orange to the military and companies such as Monsanto, Hercules, Dow, and Diamond Shamrock knew about the dangers of the herbicide but did not reveal them. In 1984 a huge class-action lawsuit was settled in the U.S. courts, with seven U.S. companies agreeing to pay a total of 180 million dollars to 291,000 people, with most of them being Vietnam war veterans. The final settlement which included interest was around 240 million dollars. The tragedy surrounding Agent Orange with Dioxin still goes on today. From - <http://www.controllingdiabetesnow.com/general/veterans-diabetes/>

SANTA CRUZ VETERANS

MEMORIAL BUILDING

Veterans group to file lawsuit against Santa Cruz County By Kurtis Alexander - Santa Cruz Sentinel

SANTA CRUZ - A Santa Cruz veterans group is filing suit against the county for closing the Veterans Memorial Building downtown. The popular community center was shut abruptly in January after county officials deemed it structurally unsafe, an assertion many veterans say is unfounded. "There was no necessity to close it," said Bob Patton, a member of the Bill Motto Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5888, who helped arrange an independent engineer's report of the facility that cited only limited problems. The Veterans Council of Santa Cruz County, a coalition that advocates for nine local veteran groups, says it will file a lawsuit today, demanding that the county immediately reopen the building. The council is represented by attorney Ralph Boroff. County officials have so far denied requests to open the Vets Hall before a thorough analysis of the building can be done. Officials say the building, based on initial engineering reports, is likely to topple in the event of an earthquake. A more comprehensive report on the building's safety is due next week.

CSC FIRST ANNUAL LOBBY DAY

On March 25 2010, the Vietnam Veterans of America's (VVA) California State Council (CSC) held its first-ever Annual Lobby Day from 8 a. m. to 4 p. m. This was in conjunction with the March 30 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day (WHVVD) signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on September 29, 2009 at Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Base.

There were numerous events happening the week before the actual date and Lobby Day in Sacramento was one of those events. CSC lobbyists Pete Conaty and Dana Nichol opened the event at 9 a. m. right after the 8 a. m. breakfast in the State Capitol Basement Cafeteria Far West Room for all registered VVA and Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA).

There was a presentation of Joint Members Resolutions for the WHVVD on the assembly floor of the California Senate. The California Assembly will present their Joint Members Resolutions. Presentations were made to Jose Ramos who was the driving force behind WHVVD.

All Vietnam veterans were invited to attend the presentation of the governor's WHVVD proclamation. Roger Brautigan, secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs assisted along with actor Jon Voight.

During lunch, Assemblyman Ted Lieu will speak. Lieu is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force Reserve.

VVA California State Council made their presentation of their Legislator of the Year awards to Senator Darrell Steinberg and Assemblyman Paul Cook who is the author of the WHVVD bill.

Following the presentation, Brautigan and Ted Puntillo, deputy secretary of Veterans Services talked about the role and mission of California's Department of Veterans Affairs. Key legislators and staff members will visited with the veterans and they were able to visit the Legisla-

tive offices. Assembly Speaker John Perez, Jeff Denham, Assembly member Mary Salas, Assembly member Chuck DeVore, Assembly member Danny Gilmore, Chief Consultant Donald Wilson, and Chief Consultant Eric Worthen. All the Assembly members are also on the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

CSC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Council Leadership & Training Conference in Fresno success

"This conference was very successful and we're planning on doing it again. It was beyond expectation" said Bob Johnston of San Martin, CA, president of the California State Council (CSC) of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). Besides the CSC, there were 68 members from San Diego to Northern California attending. The conference for chapter presidents, secretaries, and treasurers took the place of the CSC's regular meeting held in Fresno at the Downtown Holiday Inn quarterly.

According to Johnston, "We held the conference because chapter elections are coming up in April and it's important that these two positions know what their responsibilities are." The CSC plans to have more conferences like this for other positions with the chapters. The general consensus



was to have them two or three times a year.

One of the more popular sessions was for training the treasurers in using Quicken. All the chapters attending received a copy of the new Quicken program. Central District Vice-President of the CSC, Dennis Croucher of Catheys Valley, CA said, "I think that the treasurers entering the digital age with their bookkeeping, is a giant leap into the future for the organization."

The class on using Quicken was given by CSC Finance Committee Chair Barry Schloffel of Chapter 391 in Sonora. Schloffel who plans to run for CSC treasurer at the June elections in Fresno. He is presently the treasurer for Chapter 391.

According to Dick Southern, CSC 2nd Vice-President, "I thought it was great that we had some women veterans at the conference and that at least two of them plan on running for office." Southern said that too few women join the VVA. Many women veterans think VVA is male-oriented.

At the board meeting on the day before the conference, according to CSC 1st Vice-President Ken Holybee of Forestville, the CSC named Bill Hodges of Oakland chairman of the Agent Orange Committee. Southern said that George Eldridge of Jamestown was named the Public Affairs Officer for CSC. He is also Public Affairs for Chapter 391 in Sonora.

VA LOCKS OUT VETERANS

Andres Chavez, Sun Staff Reporter

West LA VA locks out vets on Veteran Appreciation Day. Sunday saw another skirmish in the ongoing battle between protesting veterans and the West Los Angeles Veterans Administration when veterans arriving to celebrate "Veterans Appreciation Day" and discovered that they had been locked out of the VA grounds. The grounds had been



opened earlier in the day for a church service and the West L.A. VA had known about, and had approved, the use of the grounds by the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the sponsors of the event. "Aside from being stunned, my first reaction was 'do I have the wrong date or the wrong time'" said Veteran Activist Robert Rosebrock. "It didn't take long to sink in that this was the VA we're dealing with and this is a deliberate attempt to mess up this event." This



was the third year that the "Veterans Appreciation Day" has been held on the West L.A. grounds and for the past two years, the grounds have always been open. This year, the 35 to 40 people who arrived to celebrate were met by padlocked gates and two VA police squad cars with two officers who observed them. One of the DAV leaders, Valley resident Sam Cordova, an 80-year-old disabled Korean War Marine Combat Veteran, asked why the gates were locked. The VA police replied that the DAV did not request to have them open.

Vets and friends listen to speakers on the black top. On Friday, the Asset Management Office called the DAV and told them their insurance for the event was unsatisfactory and the event would have to be cancelled. However, the DAV was able to demonstrate that there was nothing wrong with the insurance and the event could go on as planned, except for the locked gate. The VA police finally opened a black top parking lot and Veteran Appreciation Day was held there. However, not all of the 60, 70 and 80 year old veterans were able to maneuver their wheel chairs into the parking lot and so they watched from afar. The vets were told that they couldn't use the VA toilet facilities either. The VA did manage to send staffer Blake Jeffries to keep an eye on things. When Jeffries was asked why he did not order VA police to open gate, he said he didn't have the authority. It may be a coincidence that the man who does have the authority, Ralph Tillman, Asset Manager for the VA, is one of the major targets of the veterans' protests. It could also just be irony that the land that was denied to vets for their event, the Grand Lawn, is the parcel that the VA wants developed into a public park which is the cause of the protests the vets have launched

against the VA. In a very angry letter sent to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki, on Monday, the vets wrote, "Your Department has worked overtime to try and destroy this event and they did a good job of it. Yesterday was a disgraceful display of intentional cruelty and injustice promoted and provoked by your LA VA bureaucrats." The vets are waiting for a response.

FILNER: VA NEEDS OVERHAUL

By Kenny Goldberg
(http://www.kpbs.org/staff/kenny-goldberg/)
April 9, 2010

SAN DIEGO — The non-profit Veterans for Common Sense says the Veterans Administration system is broken. The group joined Congressman Bob Filner in San Diego today to call for major changes in the VA.

Photo by Kenny Goldberg



Above: Congressman Bob Filner says the VA makes too many veterans wait too long to get their benefits. He says the system needs to be changed.

Veterans for Common Sense says the VA medical system generally provides good care. They say it's the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) that needs an overhaul.

The VBA determines eligibility for benefits. Critics say veterans currently have to wait an average of six months to get a claims decision.

San Diego Congressman Bob Filner chairs the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. He says it's time for a change.

"I'm gonna work with both the inside people who I think are ready for change, and the outside folks who have a perspective on it, and make the VA far more responsive than it is," Filner promised.

Filner says that too often the VBA acts as a barrier to veterans. He says some veterans have died waiting for their claims to be processed.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Name _____ Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ + _____
 Phone _____ e-mail _____

Individual membership or Associate membership Dues:

\$20 for Annual ___ / \$20 for Renewal ___ / \$50 for 3 Year Membership ___

Life Memberships:

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

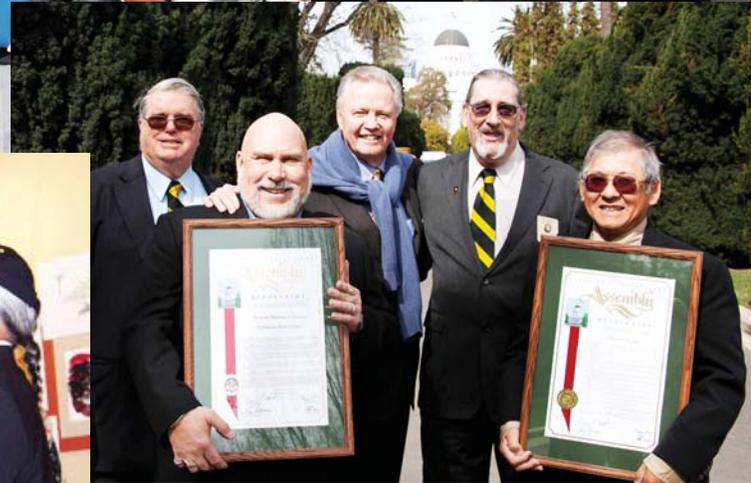
For individual membership a DD214 is required if not already on file.

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

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

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





the U.S. Armed Forces in Vietnam deserve the greatest honor and respect - honor and respect they were denied when they arrived home. I am proud to join my colleagues in support of this resolution to establish a day in honor of the return of all troops from the Vietnam War."

Forces began serving in an advisory role to the South Vietnamese in 1961, and in 1965, ground combat troops were sent into Vietnam. After many years of combat, all US troops were withdrawn from Vietnam on March 30, 1973, under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. Therefore, March 30, 2010, is an appropriate day to establish "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

More than 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces lost their lives and more than 300,000 were wounded in Vietnam. The establishment of a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" would serve as a small way to honor these men and women who served our country in Vietnam throughout the war.

BURR INTRODUCES "WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY" RESOLUTION

Legislation to honor service members who fought in Vietnam

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, introduced a resolution in support of the establishment of "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day." Designating March 30, 2010, as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" honors the return home of our armed service members after serving in Vietnam. "There's no question that our troops served our country bravely and faithfully during the Vietnam War, and these veterans deserve our recognition and gratitude," Burr said. "Unfortunately, when these service members returned home, they were caught in the crossfire of public debate about our nation's involvement in the Vietnam War. As a result, these brave men and women never received the welcome reception and recognition they deserved."

"On March 30, 1973, our United States Armed Forces completed the withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam," Senator Inhofe said. "Our veterans who served in

The United States became involved in Vietnam because policy-makers believed that if South Vietnam fell to a communist government, communism would spread throughout the rest of Southeast Asia. The US Armed

A LIVING MEMORIAL
WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY
 MARCH 30TH
 H.RES.189
 FOR ALL WHO SERVED
www.whvvd.org

U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
 Richard Burr
 Ranking Member
 825A Hart Senate Office Building
 • Washington, D.C. 20510
 (202) 224-2074 • FAX (202) 224-8908
<http://burr.senate.gov>



Assemblyman Paul Cook, author of the AB717 establishing Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, addresses the audience.



Governor Schwarzenegger, is requesting input from veterans to identify what they view their most critical needs are so that we can better serve them. This data will be used to help the department better address the unidentified needs.

Visit the CALVET web site: http://www.veterans.ca.gov/veterans_assessment.htm, review the Governor's message and complete the Veterans' Needs Assessment survey online.

In completing the survey, veterans are not required to identify themselves. As the survey indicates, e-mail addresses will not be shared with anyone outside of the department. The data received in for departmental use and will not be shared.



VVA Chapter 223 - Postal Permit
 PO Box 1583
 Santa Rosa, CA 95402

VVA CA State Council contact info inside - page 2

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

To:

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Agent Orange Information
- Legislative Information
- Veteran News
- Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Stories & Photos...
- And more...

VVA & CSC MEETING DATES & EVENTS

- April 23-25, 2010 - Fresno
- CSC State Convention - June 4-6, 2010 - Fresno
- August 27-29, 2010 - Fresno
- October 22-24, 2010 - Fresno
- January 28-30, 2011 - Fresno
- April 22-24, 2011 - Fresno