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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 11 - SUMMER 2006

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- Veteran Benefit Issue stories
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CSC MEETING DATES

AUGUST 25-26, 2006, CSC MEETING, FRESNO, CA

OCTOBER 27-29, 2006, CSC MEETING, FRESNO, CA

JANUARY 12-14, 2007, CSC MEETING, FRESNO, CA

A heads up on the next Full State Council meeting at the Quality Inn in Fresno on August 25-27. Any reservations made for any other date in August with the hotel have been cancelled. Everyone will have to call to reserve a room for that weekend. The reservation number is 559-275-2727.

PRESIDENTS REPORT JUNE 5, 2006

I would like to start by thanking everyone for their vote of confidence. I would like to thank our speakers, General Roger Brautigan, Undersecretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs; John Rowan, VVA National President; Mary Miller, AVVA National President; Darrol Brown, VVA Region 9 Director; a special thanks to Pete Conaty, our lobbyist in Sacramento, and 11th District Congressman Pombo.

We received proclamations from the Santa Clara Board of Directors, the City of San Jose and the Mayor of Santa Clara.

We received letters from Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, from the 16th Congressional District, Governor Schwarzenegger and California Department of Veteran Affairs Secretary Tom Johnson.

We also had comments from Councilman Chuck Reed, San Jose City Council and Javier Gonzalez from the office of Madison P. Nguyen, San Jose City Council.

I would like to give special thank you, to Michele Sunstrom, who sang our National Anthem, and gave our opening benediction. Chapter 201 presented the colors and had an ample crew to assist with anything we needed. The closing benediction was given by chapter 201 member Earl Edwards.

I would like to remind everyone what I said at the convention. 1) We will be celebrating the twenty year anniversary of our Vietnam Memorial in Sacramento on December 10 2008. 2) We need to create and present our own legislative agenda to the California legislation. 3) We need to complete the service officer program. These are all projects we can accomplish by working together.

December 10th is on a Wednesday, and hopefully it will not be raining. I would like to have the board members involved in the planning of this. We also need to involve the other Veterans Organizations as well as the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our Legislative Agenda comes from our resolutions as well as the work of our committees. The committees need to find more people that have the ideas and passion that was expressed at the convention. I am looking for committee chairs and members that are willing and able to do the job of putting these ideas into our agenda and resolutions. We need people with financial backgrounds and a knowledge of budgets and excel spreadsheets would be helpful. Our treasure has said he will not serve another term and we need to use the committee to fill the position. The finance committee should also be able to do a review of the State Council books as well as any chapter that asks us to review theirs.

We are looking for a new place to hold our meetings. This will probably cost us a little more for rooms, but we need meeting rooms. We were supposed to have breakout rooms at the hotel we are using now. As you are aware they never appeared.

Ken Holybee, President
VVA CA State Council

A VIEW TO A CONVENTION

Dick Southern
CSC Meeting Planner

Since we have just had our State convention in June, I thought that you might like to have a short history of how it came about. We started looking for a place to have the convention in 2004. Since we had been in Ontario in 2004, it was decided that we would go North for the 2006 convention. Requests for proposals went out to various locations and the best proposals came from the San Jose Area. The proposals really came about because of a meeting that I had with the Washington, DC, representative from the San Jose Visitors and Convention Bureau that Wes Guidry introduced me to in Silver Spring, MD. As a result of that meeting, I had three good locations for the convention. After a visit to all three in one day in September, the choice was made to present two properties to the CSC BOD for their consideration. One of the properties had a change of management and their proposal was changed to a higher room rate and that left us with the best deal at the Doubletree in San Jose. The contract was signed in November of 2004. The convention report was made, according to the By Laws of CSC, in June of 2005 as to the date and location of Cal Con 10.

We can now fast forward to December of 2005, when CSC President, Ken Holybee, appointed the Convention planning committee for the event. Work then began in earnest in planning for the convention. With a target date of the middle of January for release of the information packet for the Chapters, e-mailing was the order of the day. The behind the scenes work was finished in late January and the convention packets were sent out to the chapters in early February with a May 10 deadline for early registration. Plans were then made for a couple of meetings to occur at the Doubletree in the next few months. One was scheduled for the Convention Planning Committee in April and one for a CSC BOD meeting in May. These meetings were necessary to acquaint the leadership involved in the convention with the property and make them comfortable with the surroundings. The management at the property could not have been more gracious in their welcome to us for both meetings and went out of their way to make our stay very pleasant.

By the time the May 10 deadline for registration came, we had surpassed the number of rooms that we had in the proposal and that was a good thing. By making the required number of rooms, we didn't have to pay for any of the meeting or break out rooms for the convention. This helped to keep the cost down in the bottom line for the

convention. Between the meeting that the planning committee had in April and the end of May, there were many e-mails and phone calls with our convention planning manager Kelli Hopp. These exchanges resulted in 31 Banquet and Event orders. BEOs are an agenda or itinerary for the events at the convention and cover everything from the arrival of the planning committee at the property on the Tuesday before the convention to the meeting of the new BOD on Sunday morning. They all have to be checked, signed and sent back to the hotel for everything to go as planned.

The convention planning committee arrived at the hotel on Tuesday May 30 and began to set up the office space and get everything ready for the delegates. On Thursday, the golf tournament was held and a welcome reception featuring pizza was held that afternoon for those delegates arriving for early registration. The convention opened on Friday morning and we had the pleasure of listening to both the VVA National President, John Rowan and AVVA National President, Mary Miller. We were also welcomed to San Jose by a number of local dignitaries and also received a number of letters and proclamations from others. The final speaker for the morning was U. S. Congressman Richard Pombo of Stockton. The AVVA luncheon was followed by an afternoon of committee hearings and the day was finished up with the POW/MIA ceremony and the candidate's forum. On Saturday morning, the convention reconvened with 58 delegates registered and, after lunch, the workshops were held. Of particular interest to the delegates was the workshop on PC basics that was taught by a college professor from the San Jose area on lap tops provided by a mentoring company in San Jose. The CSC elections were held during the afternoon with the results to be announced during the banquet. The banquet was attended by 74 people and the various awards that were earned since the last convention were handed out. The Images of Bravery presentation was held and we were treated to a slide presentation of twenty years of history of the CSC. Everyone had a great time at the banquet and all went well.

On Sunday morning, the new CSC BOD met and made plans for the next two years. That brings us to Requests for Proposals to go out for Cal Con 11. If you have a site that you want to be considered for the next convention, please let me know and I will get a Proposal out to that area. This convention was a success because of the hard work of the planning committee and the attendance of the delegates. Thanks to all of you and see you at the next meeting.

FROM THE 1ST VICE PRESIDENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank those convention delegates who voted for and elected me First Vice President. I will support the collective needs of this state and its individual chapters.

I am currently working closely with the North District Chairman, Henry Iasiello in following the Redding Chapter 357 difficulty with their

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

If there is ever a need for my support, I am available by phone/fax at (415) 454-2737 or phone (415) 457-5261 or the Vet Resource line (415) 454-8823.

Respectfully Yours,

Carl J. Jensen

REDDING REPORT

Henry Iasiello

On Saturday (6/10/06) I attended a meeting at the Veterans Hall on Yuba St. in Redding at the request of Redding Chapter #357 and the CSC President. There had been serious allegations that the Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Redding was lacking in both funding and staffing and, unable to meet it's obligations to the veteran community.

Although this is a widespread and chronic prob-

lem it has quickly become acute in Redding. Attached please find letters by Chapter #357 member Barry Clausen. I met with Barry and several other Chapter members and attended a strategy session hosted by the "Northern-California Organized Veterans Advocates (NOVA). Chairman Don Boardman outlined the complaints (also in a detailed letter attached) and further illustrated the hardships endured in this rural community ... a three hour drive from the nearest VAMC. The Redding CBOC was created to serve many veterans for whom such travel is an extreme hardship.

NOVA is apparently trying to mount a public demonstration and claims to have exhausted attempts to resolve the issues through administrative means. As VVA's Northern CA District Director I was invited to comment and offer suggestions. I suggested that a more fruitful course of action would be to emulate the efforts of VVA Chapter #223 (Sonoma) who had similar problems and, who created a detailed complaint format that could be used to identify the extent

of the problems and apply political leverage.. This 'how to' format has been Distributed to both the Redding Chapter and to NOVA.

There is disagreement about exact numbers but it seems pretty plain that the Redding CBOC is cutting services, particularly fee-basis and PTSD services, to the point of creating significant hardship.

Although the Redding VVA Chapter supports the effort they have already re-

ported resistance to more "letter writing." Apparently the NOVA people are going ahead with plans for a demonstration and I hope to convince them to include a letter writing booth with materials and assistants. Although many veteran advocates in leadership positions have written strongly about the issues here, I haven't seen evidence of an organized local effort to collect detailed and signed complaints.

I think VVA CSC should encourage and support the Redding Chapter in such an effort.

Henry Iasiello
VVA, CSC BOD
Northern District Director
PTSD Committee, Chair

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VA CUTS VETERANS BENEFITS

By Barry R. Clausen - June 2006

In a release from the Department of Veterans Affairs on May 4, 2006 the following statement was made.

"The Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced a special outreach campaign to inform Veterans about the VA's disability compensation program. During the month of May, VA conducted outreach efforts in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan Ohio, New Jersey and Connecticut to reach those Veterans who may have had a disability related to their military service but are not currently receiving VA benefits for their disabilities."

This statement at face value would appear that the VA is trying to help Veterans but the Mental Health Department at Redding, California VA Clinic appears to be contradicting not only this statement but also the words of the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs when he stated, "Our goal is to ensure that all Veterans receive the benefits they have earned through their service to our nation," He went on to state, "This effort reaffirms our commitment to provide full fair and equitable compensation for Veterans."

Recently numerous military veterans who have been diagnosed by the VA as Service-Connected for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for Combat, Non-Combat and Military Sexual Trauma (MST) incidents have been receiving denials of authorization for their ongoing and continuing individual psychotherapeutic sessions.

The local VA Out-Patient Clinic does not currently have sufficient staff to provide for the ongoing management of the individual psychotherapeutic requirements for PTSD and MST service-connected veterans who are now receiving mental health care at that facility let alone an influx of the additional 283 veterans who are now successfully cared for by private contracted therapists.

Many of these service-connected military veterans suffer from very specific conditions that do not lend themselves to sudden and/or dramatic changes in their mental health treatment. This includes changes to their mental health care provider with whom the veteran has developed a sound and trusting relationship.

As nearly all mental health clinicians agree that providing psychotherapeutic services is unique, in that, a therapeutic alliance is established between the patient and their counselor, as briefly referenced above. In most cases the veteran has made disclosures that he or she has not shared with another human being. This is particularly typical in the PTSD and MST afflicted military veteran; and because this is the case, this is why all psychotherapists' licensing and professional boards deem it an ethical violation to abandon a patient. To withdraw ongoing, stable and successful counseling from a patient

would additionally constitute ethical violations of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and California Psychiatric Association. Most alarming, however, would be the sudden and potentially violent reactions from military veterans suffering from PTSD and MST.

The PTSD and or MST afflicted veterans' lives have already been seriously impacted by rage, night terrors, sweats, flashbacks, depression, self loathing and suicidal ideation. Subsequently the PTSD and MST veterans lives are further impacted in their personal and professional relationships. Examples of such impacts would include multiple marriages, estranged children, inability to obtain or maintain employment, self-medicating behaviors such as alcohol or drug abuse, etc.

On the VA Web site there is a statement that also contradicts what is happening in the VA Health Care System in Northern California. "VA wants to be sure that all veterans receiving VA Compensation know how to apply for increased benefits if their disabilities have worsened or they have additional disabilities related their service."

The VA Clinic in Redding serves most of the veterans in the 16 Northern California counties and many of those veterans are angry with Dr. Greg Nelson for his actions against the Veterans he is charged with serving. According to Nelson he has been order by Brian O'Neill, Chief of Staff for VA Health Care system in Northern California to "cut back" on benefits.

During conversations with VA staff members on this issue there have been numerous statements claiming that the issue will be taken care of. I was told that the cases in question will be reviewed but so far no decisions or announcements other than "Politically Correct" public relations statements have been made.

The veterans affected with O'Neill's decisions have seriously discussed a demonstration at the Redding Clinic to convey their message to the VA. However, according to Don Boardman of Northern-California Organized Veterans Advocates (NOVA) he was informed if a demonstration was to be held the VA expected it to be held on the city sidewalk in front of the VA Clinic. Armed VA Police will be present and if any veteran came on VA property they could/would be arrested. Barry Clausen can be reached at: Northern-California Organized Veteran Advocates (NOVA)
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Redding, California 96003
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6/12/6

Robert L. Wiebe
Network Director
201 Walnut Ave
Mare Island, Ca. 94592

Dear Dr. Wieb,
NOVA wishes to make it clear that the following does not reflect on the performance and outstanding efforts of the Doctors, Nurses, Technicians and support staff at the Redding/Chico VA OPC who daily give their best service to the Veterans.

NOVA for years has sat at the table with VA Staff both at the VANCHCS, VISN 21 and National level trying to get equal services for the veterans of the Shasta/Butte catch with those of the other facilities in VANCHCS/VISN. We have received the continued attitude from management level personal consistently thru three Site Managers and three VANCHCS Directors that we need to give examples of cases, which in fact is a HIPPA violation without a POA and only has resulted in helping the veteran who is most aggressive leaving the balance of the veteran population unassisted. We are also told that the VA shall look into it, for example you have been looking into a Chemo Chair at the Redding VA OPC for 3 years. Management continues to want us to at-

tend Town Hall meetings in which continuance un-kept promises are made by the VA. We are forced to listen to how wonderful the Sacramento VA Hospital is when in fact more surgeries for Shasta/Butte veterans are done at SF VA Hospital.

Those veterans who NOVA represent and other VSO/Advocates feel that the current methods of expression are without measurable results and a new format of presentation is need in order to get the message across.

We once again based on the premises that on the battlefield a Distinction between geographic area of enlistment and level of harms way was not and never shall be a foundation for quality of VA medical services, with that fact, all veterans earned that Medical service equally with those most severely injured being a priority.

The fact is that within VANCHCS as of 3/20/6 the following is a break down of Unique Veterans by facility: Shasta/Butte 15,650; Sacramento 14,794; Martinez 8892; Oakland 6287; McCellan 5232; Fairfield 2015; Mare Island 1940.

As shown above SHASTA/BUTTE has more that any other facility as well as the second highest annual number of visits in VANCHCS therefore bring into the system more money than any other facility.

THE VA BEGINS TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THE SHASTA/BUTTE CATCH BY ENROLMENT ELIGIBILITY IN THAT A Veteran CAN AT ANY OTHER FACILITY WITH IN VANCHCS EARN UP TO 30 THOUSAND DOLLARS A YEAR MORE THAN A SHASTA/BUTTE Veteran AND STILL BE ENTITLED TO ENROLEMENT WHERE THE SHASTA/BUTTE Veteran IS NOT.

The most damaging application of bias and discrimination is in the approval of FEE SERVICES. For the purpose of this letter NOVA has divided those services into 4 prime categories, Mental Health, Dental, Cancer treatment and 24/7.

The VA has begun to restrict and discontinue Fee Service Mental Health counseling to outside vendors by reducing the existing number of visits per year by 50% and forcing Veterans thru canceling of their FEE SERVICES consults to outside vendors. In addition disallowing 100% SERVICE CONNECTED Veterans travel pay to come from Chico to Redding for Mental Health Services. The response to this action by the VA via public news media has been based on the premises that the Veteran can get equal services with in the VA system thus justifying this budget saving action. Also via public news media by the VA on more than one occasion the numbers of veterans affected by these changes varies so that it is unknown actually how many are really being affected. It was further stated that the Redding VA OPC had 8 qualified and licensed Psychologist staff members on board to provide Mental Health services when in fact counting soon to retire staff the number of total including support staff and Social Workers is 7. Our fellow veteran brothers are currently trying to show that the VA cannot handle the increase of veterans being forced back into the VA System and that a veteran SERVICE CONNECTED for PTSD should and has earned the right to have an option of treatment plans. The greatest concern of NOVA is that the money saved by this action shall NOT BE USED in the SHASTA/BUTTE Catch but else where with in VANCHCS, once again depriving SHASTA/BUTTE veterans of services.

Dental:
For the record in order to be eligible for Dental a Veteran must be 100% Service Connected, Service Connected for a Dental issue or attending a program as a part of retraining.

At the Redding VA OPC a new patient waits 2 to 3 weeks for a 20 minute appointment to verify a treatment plan. It then takes 5 or more months to get their first appointment to implement that plan.

The 1400 Redding OPC slot has been used both for emergency needs and one way to double/triple book therefore effecting positive numbers to confirm responses to inquiries by outside agencies. This along with the infamous method through out the system of booking SERVICE CONNECTED veterans every 30 days then canceling their appointments when in actuality there never was an available appointment and therefore the VA would not be in compliance to National Directive to provide SERVICE CONNECTED Veterans a 30 day appointment. Dental patients are still being sent over 200 miles for extractions at VA Facilities no matter what their age maybe. New Dentures or replacement take from 9 to 12 months, a long time to go without teeth. Having talked to Veterans and Veteran representatives in other VANCHCS our lead times are unbelievable.

Cancer Treatment:

STILL Shasta/Butte veterans must travel to the VA Hospital in Sacramento and/or UC Davis for Chemo treatments and to make the return trip of up to 350 miles in pain and vomiting. Some even must take radiation on Monday in Redding at a private facility and Chemo on Tuesday at the VA Sacramento this is not acceptable nor is spending 3 years looking into a Chemo chair for the Redding OPC. The VA has put a high price tag on death with dignity for Shasta/Butte Veterans by not providing both Chemo and Radiation in the Redding area via FEE SERVICE.

General Fee Services:

A feasibility study was done by VA Staff and found necessary to provide local Sleep disorder studies and treatment locally and this was disapproved by upper Management and now Shasta/Butte Veterans must wait up to a year to have the same services at the VA Hospital Sacramento.

24/7:

In new patient orientation in the Redding VA OPC the veterans are told that they must have private insurance if they have medical issues when the OPC is closed. This is very clear that the VA has no intention of addressing the most severe problem with FEE SERVICES application, no 24/7. A Veteran in an EMERGENCY situation must travel to the SACRAMENTO VA HOSPITAL to ensure that his services shall be paid by the VA, when the Redding/Chico VA OPC is closed.

Currently NOVA has requested Congressman Herger to investigate a possible violation of CFR regulations in approving random Notice of Disagreements for Non VA medical services by the Fee Service Department with in your VISN.

Requests for payment of Non VA Medical services rendered when the VA Clinic is closed have been refused on the grounds a VA was available (300 Miles one way), the veteran should have known it was not a life threatening condition, they had un-measurable pain 3 days before and did not go to the clinic, the VA refuses to transport when stable saying there are no openings so the Shasta/Butte veteran is responsible for the bills. Often the VA will pay for one day but the veteran was there longer because they were not stable to release to home and the VA refused to transport, often the VA will pay only for some services, it was an accident and the VA does not pay and it was not related to your Service Connection even though you are 100% Service Connected. This list is even longer and there are several hundred cases available to confirm the above statements.

Do the veterans at other VANCHCS facilities have these problems? NO they do not they have 5 VA Hospitals to choose from. The end result has been that Shasta/Butte Veterans because of non-payment of these services have had in most cases their credit destroyed, lost their homes and in the 4 years of NOVA presence had 3 veterans commit suicide.

The NOVA Ombudsman is receiving 5 or more requests for NOD representation a week. We

have veterans requesting representation because the VA has referred them to a Non VA Medical provider and now the VA is refusing to pay the bill.

Doctor Wiebe, the veteran took the responsibility to serve, fight and die now there is no excuses why those who came home cannot have equal MEDICAL SERVICES. We do not want to hear numbers manipulation to justify hard calls, Congress who does not have veterans as a priority, WE WANT EQUALITY OF MEDICAL SERVICES NOW.

Donald J. Boardman
Chairman

CONVENTION REPORT

Northern District

I have to say I was very pleased to see such a great turnout from the Northern CA Chapters. I also wish to thank our Northern CA Delegates for re-electing me as District Director.

I feel I've learned quite a lot these last two years, we've had some wonderful successes and the Northern District is growing, getting stronger and more articulate about our special needs. I've had a wonderful time getting to know all of you and learning about all the different aspects of our veteran community ... so many different points of view, all converging on advocacy for veterans.

The one thing I regret is that I did not get out to visit all the Chapters in my last term. Your Delegates will remember that I made this a priority in my campaign speech this time. We have some Chapters that are very strong and doing an outstanding job in their communities and they tend to get overlooked. However the Northern Chapters picked up their share of awards during the Convention.

We have other Chapters that are struggling and I'm going to ask that the stronger Chapters lend a hand. We'll be talking more about this in the near future. We all know that the individual Chapters are very individual, with very different communities and different priorities. Preserving benefits and doing outreach to local veterans is important work but too often Chapters get isolated, leadership gets isolated and, people get burned out.

I'll be attending the National Leadership Conference July 10-16 and on my return you'll be hearing from me (don't worry, I believe more in encouragement than criticism). So I'll thank all the Chapter Officers for their efforts and successes and promise to bring you more support. I am always glad to hear from you so please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, suggestions or, complaints.

With the addition of Carl Jensen (#547 Marin) and Rick Jones (#223 Sonoma) to the CA State Council (CSC) we have very strong representation on the CSC Board of Directors. I'll be working closely with them and the various committees to ensure that the Northern Chapters get the support they need. These are tough times, and we have many needs. Don't be discouraged. It's difficult enough for some of our Chapters just to keep it all together and send delegates to the CA State Council and for this I thank you...your support is much appreciated.

Attendance at our regular CSC meetings is very important and I'll tell you our meeting planner, Dick Southern, is doing an excellent job of making sure we have attractive and comfortable meeting places. If you have never attended you're missing out on all the support you can get and a good time.

Healthcare is still a top priority but community building is also essential. In fact I'd say it's critical. So, much of what I'll be bringing you is support and encouragement for bringing your communities together. I have again been appointed

to Chair the PTSD Committee and we all know that mental health is becoming increasingly important. Strengthening our communities will help our members with mental health issues. Remember, I'll be talking a lot about promoting mental health ... as well as addressing mental illness.

I look forward to a very productive term and with your help we will persevere.

Henry Iasiello
CSC, BOD
Northern District Director
PTSD Committee, Chair

PTSD COMMITTEE REPORT

Where to start? The PTSD Committee Hearing at the Convention was well attended and boisterous. What was brought up again and again was the need for more education. Those members who attended last years Symposium asked that more be done on the Chapter level to educate our membership not only in identifying PTSD, as it presents so very differently in different veterans, but also in how to manage it on the Chapter level.

We all know how disruptive and frustrating it can be when PTSD appears at Chapter meetings and events and, there is still much we have to learn about understanding and supporting each other. One thing we know helps is to bring our best attention and listening skills to meetings, and to make time to discuss and share problems.

PTSD is still a major problem for our community but now we're seeing it in a different form. As our community ages veterans who for years have been coping suddenly find themselves with symptoms. Certainly the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan have re-stimulated and distracted many but also such things as early retirement, death in the family (we are losing the WWII generation) and the sudden onset of serious physical illness for the first time in their lives are just a few of the triggers that are bringing more Vietnam veterans to counseling.

We discussed at length whether we needed a new resolution to encompass this need but decided in the end that the resolutions we have in place are enough. What the Chapter delegates brought up was the need to help members develop communication skills. This has been coming up more and more recently and one outcome was the PTSD Committee's strong support and assistance in providing a computer lab during the Convention. Again we have Dick Southern, our meeting planner, to thank for working out the details. This workshop was also well attended and many delegates took advantage of the opportunity for individual tutoring. This is something we will continue to promote as Internet communication is probably what will keep us together in the future.

I am looking for members who want to serve on the CSC PTSD Committee and every Chapter should have it's own PTSD Committee, charged with collecting and disseminating information to the Chapter members. There is a lot of information to process.

As you may know the DoD and the DVA are trying to re-define the issue of PTSD ... and not particularly to our benefit. There are too few legislators who are veterans themselves and too few who understand PTSD. The CA State Council PTSD Committee continues to support a diversion program that would allow eligible veterans to get treatment instead of jail time and we will be making an effort to provide educational presentations for legislators in California. We will also continue to support outreach efforts to County Mental Health Services and First Responders who may encounter veterans in District.

The biggest barrier we have still is the stigma of mental illness and for this reason the CSC PTSD

Committees will be focusing more on mental health. The biggest obstacle to veterans with PTSD is isolation and social mistrust ... this is why community building is so important, whatever we can do to improve the mental health of our communities will help.

What the CSC PTSD Committee will be doing is encouraging people to see PTSD more as a community problem than an individual problem.

Henry Iasiello
CSC, BOD
Northern District Director
PTSD Committee, Chair

CAL CON 10

JUNE 2ND 3RD AND 4TH 2006

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Richard Jones, Director at large.

The experience at this convention was very different than the last few conventions I have attended. There was in my mind a more positive feeling among the attendees, to me it felt as if there was finally a purpose and a positive attitude. With some of the new programs such as the Veterans benefits and the VSO program that's being put together I feel the State Council is moving in a positive direction and with a purpose.

I also felt very humble as did my wife Pat on being honored with the awards we received. Her receiving the AVVA Member of the Year and myself the Images of Bravery. We both feel the awards we received belong to all the homeless brothers and sisters that Pat and I have worked with over the years. To me they show exemplary bravery when they continue to struggle with their situation and not give up. They want nothing more than to be treated with respect and dignity the same as we do. Being the FNG on the Board I look forward to helping make positive things happen. VVA as an organization has made great strides in the last few years we are being recognized with a growing presence at our State Capitol dealing with Veterans Affairs. All of this would not be possible if it were not for the positive attitudes of the board members, that you as members elected to lead in the last and the coming term.

This is why we have conventions it is a time to share ideas among ourselves and our chapters and come together as one with a purpose and a direction.

As our motto states: "Never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another." This also applies to us as members of this organization not to abandon each other.

Richard Jones
CSC Director at Large

FRIENDS OF THE NEVADA COUNTY MILITARY

Harold Graves presented the California State Council's award for "Outstanding Veteran Community Support Organization" to "Friends" at the convention. Thank you very much. That was very thoughtful of you.

It's been awhile since we've spoken about "Friends." We have grown to almost 300 members. Over the past eighteen months we shipped 600 boxes to our troops from Nevada County serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. We are also actively supporting wounded soldiers recovering in Walter Reed hospital. In fact, Noah Bailey, a double amputee, arrived last week for his first convalescence leave home. A large group from "Friends" together with a military bag piper from the 91st Division went to the Airport to welcome Noah home. When Margie and I visited Noah at Walter Reed in February, he told us he would come home this summer, walking.



True to his word, he walked off the escalator last week! To the delight of everyone in "Friends" Noah also joined us at our meeting. It is good to have him home.

Chapter 535 has been an active supporter of "Friends" since our formation in late 2004. We are grateful for their support.

Thanks again.
Fred

VA TO PROVIDE FREE CREDIT MONITORING

WASHINGTON (June 21, 2006) - As part of the continuing efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to protect and assist those potentially affected by the recent data theft that occurred at an employee's Maryland home, Secretary of Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson today announced that VA will provide one year of free credit monitoring to people whose sensitive personal information may have been stolen in the incident.

"VA continues to take aggressive steps to protect and assist people who may be potentially affected by this data theft," said Nicholson. "VA has conducted extensive market research on available credit monitoring solutions, and has been working diligently to determine how VA can best serve those whose information was stolen.

"Free credit monitoring will help safeguard those who may be affected, and will provide them with the peace of mind they deserve," he added.

The Secretary said VA has no reason to believe the perpetrators who committed this burglary were targeting the data, and Federal investigators believe that it is unlikely that identity theft has resulted from the data theft.

This week, VA will solicit bids from qualified companies to provide a comprehensive credit monitoring solution. VA will ask these companies to provide expedited proposals and to be prepared to implement them rapidly once they are under contract.

After VA hires a credit monitoring company, the Department will send a detailed letter to people whose sensitive personal information may have been included in the stolen data. This letter will explain credit monitoring and how eligible people can enroll or "opt-in" for the services. The Department expects to have the services in place and the letters mailed by mid-August.

Secretary Nicholson also announced VA is soliciting bids to hire a company that provides data-breach analysis, which will look for possible misuse of the stolen VA data. The analysis would help measure the risk of the data loss, identify suspicious misuse of identity information and expedite full assistance to affected people.

As part of VA's efforts to prevent such an incident from happening again, Secretary Nicholson previously announced a series of personnel changes in the Office of Policy and Planning, where the breach occurred; the hiring of former Maricopa County (Ariz.) prosecutor Richard

Romley as a Special Advisor for Information Security; the expedited completion of Cyber Security Awareness Training and Privacy Awareness Training for all VA employees; that an inventory be taken of all positions requiring access to sensitive VA data by June 30, 2006, to ensure that only those employees who need such access to do their jobs have it; that every laptop in VA undergo a security review to ensure that all security and virus software is current, including the immediate removal of any unauthorized information or software; and that VA facilities across the country - every hospital, Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), regional office, national cemetery, field office and VA's Central Office - observe Security Awareness Week beginning June 26.

People who believe they may be affected by the data theft can go to www.firstgov.gov for more information. VA also continues to operate a call center that people can contact to get information about this incident and learn more about consumer-identity protections. That toll free number is 1-800-FED INFO (1-800-333-4636). The call center is operating from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm (EDT), Monday-Saturday as long as it is needed.

VA ADDS MAPS TO ONLINE GRAVESITE LOCATOR

WASHINGTON (June 20, 2006)- The grave locations of more than three million veterans and dependents buried in national cemeteries can be found more easily now because the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has added maps of burial sections online that can be printed from home computers and at national cemetery kiosks.

The latest improvement builds upon a service begun two years ago, in which a VA online feature permits family members to find the cemetery in which their loved one is buried.

"This new map feature makes it easier for families, friends and researchers to find the exact location of a veteran's grave in all national cemeteries and some state veterans cemeteries," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "It enhances VA's service at national cemeteries, already highly regarded, and our commitment to them as national shrines and historical treasures."

The gravesite locator (<http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov> <<http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/>>), online since April 2004, helps veterans' families, former comrades-in-arms and others find the cemeteries where veterans are buried. With the new online feature, people enter a veteran's name to search, click on the "Buried At" (burial location) link and a map of the national cemetery is displayed, showing the section where the grave is located.

In a related development, VA recently added to its database the cemeteries in which 1.9 million veterans were buried with VA grave markers. These are mostly private cemeteries. This addition brings the number of graves recorded in the locator to approximately five million. Those with maps are in VA national cemeteries and in state veterans cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery if burials were since 1999.

Beyond the five million records now available, VA continues to add approximately 1,000 new records to the database each day. VA also plans to add to its online database the exact locations of veterans' gravesites in the remaining state veterans cemeteries.

In the midst of the largest cemetery expansion since the Civil War, VA operates 123 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than three million Americans, including veterans of every war and conflict - from the Revolutionary War to the Global War on Terror - are buried in VA's national cemeteries on more than 16,000

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

Chapter	Address/Phone	E-Mail/ Web Site	Primary Contact	Meeting Information	Activities
47	PO Box 3007 Riverside 92514-4277 951-781-6137	nebhuskfan@aol.com www.vva47.com	Steve Mackey	3rd Saturday, 10 am at Calvary Temple 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 RNC; veteran assistance; hospitalized veterans visits and items; Ronald McDonald House donations; product sales and membership recruitment; speaker's bureau; community service donations
53	PO Box 7000-185 Redondo Beach 90277 310-540-8820	n9140y@comcast.net www.vva53.us	Jerry Yamamoto	Billy's Restaurant, 5160 W. 190th St., Torrance, 4th Wednesday, monthly at 7 p.m.	Minority vets panel; Toys for Tots; Walter Reed visit; Hermosa Beach memorial donation; burial service for MIA returned; legislation support; vet highway signs
201	PO Box 26203 San Jose 95159-6203 408-246-2288	mayday55@pacbell.net www.nichecom.com/~vfw/vva.html	Robert Beresford	Board meets on 3rd Monday at 8 pm; chapter social on 3rd Monday at 7 pm. Both held at VFW Post 3982, 1313 Franklin St., Santa Clara	Christmas social; vet center donation; Darwin's Kids toys; BRAC meeting; color guard at 4 Chaplains ceremony; Vietnamese flag raising; Convention host chapter planning
218	PO Box 2241 Santa Barbara 93120 805-965-2161	vva218@vva218.org www.vva218.org	Dennis Hartman	Meetings on 2nd Tuesday at 6:30 pm	
223	1352 Maple Ave. Santa Rosa 95402 707-521-4218	vets@vva223.org www.vva223.org	Richard Jones	2nd Tuesday 7 pm. Board; General Meeting 3rd Tuesday 7 pm. Vets Building, 1315 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa. 3rd Saturday is a chapter breakfast.	Christmas party; silent auction; Texas Holdem tourney; homeless outreach; vet claim assistance; poker run planning; state commander's meeting
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	Freedom Flight POW Balloon involvement; new methods of communication;
357	PO Box 4021 Redding 96099 530-275-8912 or 530-242-1596	coonrad@snowcrest.net	Rocky Cantrell		highway cleanup; Color Guard activities; sponsor local boxer; fundraising for Salvation Army; MLK event participation; sponsor beauty contestant
368	PO Box 1566 Mariposa 95338 209-966-4039	rainbow@sti.net	Larry Coan	1st Thursday, 7 pm at the VFW Hall in Mariposa	
391	PO Box 5391 Sonora 95370 209-928-3848	chap391@lodelink.com www.vietnamveterans391.org	Dick Southern	1st Tuesday, 7 pm. Board - 2nd Tuesday 7 pm, at Sonora Veterans Hall, 9 N. Washington St, Sonora, CA	New member info packets; Thanksgiving/Christmas baskets for needy; canned food drive; hospitalized vet program; Christmas party; monthly dinner; wood for needy
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.	Veteran Forum participation - homeless veterans shelter and healthcare; membership recruitment;
441	782 Grundage Farmersville 93223 559-594-5710	rod6768@mindsummer.com	Rod Hughes	2nd & 4th Mondays, 7:30 pm	
446	87 N. Raymond Ave., Suite 210 Pasadena 91103 626-795-8141	vva446@earthlink.net	James Maddox	2nd Tuesday, 7:30 pm, Senior Center, 85 E. Holly St., Pasadena	Vietnam vet oral history project work with University of Houston.
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	Holiday party; adopted family - helped with clothing, toys, etc.; traveling Wall coming in May to veteran museum, good response from local
500	PO Box 255484 Sacramento 95868 916-481-6020	vva500@sbcglobal.net www.norcaltravel/vva500.html	Ted Adams	3rd Tuesday, 7 pm; Board - 1st Tuesday, 7 pm. Veterans Memorial Hall, 110 Park Drive, Roseville (Royer Park)	Christmas parties; Veterans Day trophy; planning stand down; vet service at hospital; Hands Across the World project; Incarcerated Vet program; meeting guest speakers
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	Fundraising; parades; color guard events; Memorial Day events; veteran assistance; scholarships; info booth with Friends of Nevada County Military
536	1120 Golden State Ave. Bakersfield 93301 661-868-7313		Don Waak	2nd Wednesday	
547	PO Box 884 Kentfield 94914 415-454-8823	cjjens@hotmail.com http://www.vietnamveteransmarin.org/	Carl Jensen	3rd Wednesday, 7:30 pm. American Legion, Post 313 12 Ward St., Larkspur	Working with 2150 Military Intelligence Brigade; working with local high schools about Vietnam Era, making members available for interviews
563	PO Box 751284 Petaluma 94975-1284 707-762-9078	johnc85393@aol.com	John Chaney	Veterans Memorial Bldg., Petaluma Blvd., Petaluma, 4th Thursday each month except Nov. & Dec.	Christmas party with Chapter 223; San Quentin vets doing well; working on meeting attendance; newsletter and phone tree
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	Annual dinner in February; annual campout/flag retiring ceremony upcoming; working on upcoming car show
643	PO Box 745 Dinuba 93618 559-591-0566	nafw@softcom.net	Peter McManus	2nd Wednesday, 7 pm at Dinuba Memorial Building, 249 S. Alta Ave., Dinuba	Held elections; Sweethearts Dinner; member passed away, did military honors, helped family; April Cancer Society event.
691	PO Box 2226 Merced 95344-0226 209-356-1938	csc_vvaed@sbcglobal.net www.mymerced.com/0704k163.html	Ed Mentz	3rd Monday, 7 pm, Citi Bank, 19th & M, Merced - 6:30 pm for potluck dinner. Board - 1st Monday, 7 pm Community Center in Castle Vista	Christmas dinner & gifts; VA hospital donation; Welcome Home for returning Iraq vet; two members passed, to hold services soon.
702	PO Box 525 Yountville 94599 707-252-7537	rossisvva@aol.com	Ross Hall	1st Tuesday, 7 pm at Yountville Veterans Home in the Lee Lounge (second floor of main building). Board meets 3rd Saturday, 8 am in the cafeteria	Yountville Vets Home memorial service for those who have passed, chapter does Taps; recruiting veterans, program for those without funds; Wall planning
713	Contact So. District Director Gary Colletti	gmcolletti@aol.com			
756	PO Box 90994 Long Beach 90809 562-433-6756	stewamf@bp.com	Max Stewart	1st Wednesday, 7 pm at VFW Post 8615, 2804 South St., Long Beach	Office at VA is main project, received note about help being given; new fence around memorial; vet toy run; dinners for holidays; Valentines Day, local schools; RFTW support; Lakewood memorial rededication help
781	1100 Main St. PO Box 102 Ferndale 95536	bugland@aol.com	Mike Pratt		
785	2345 Barranca Parkway Irvine 92606 714-777-3918	gunnymims@aol.com www.vva785.org	Bill Mimiaga	1st Wednesday, 6 pm (social hour prior), at US Army Reserve Training Center Armory, 2345 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, CA	Operation Lift Off main chapter project, two large vans to transport vets and Camp Pendleton Marines for treatments; Operation Jump Start, wounded Marine Luncheons, help with benefit info, LB VAMC involvement
880	1618 Woolston Court Modesto 95355 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	508 Riddle Court Modesto 95356 559-297-5253	sdoak@sbcglobal.net	Steve Doak	1st Tuesday at American Legion Post 509, 3509 N. 1st Street, Fresno	VAMC visits, Christmas and Valentines Day; Christmas party; Lao-American vet memorial; CalVet meeting; sponsor room at VA; working on new Vietnam vet memorial; POW balloon for festival in Sept.; weekly radio spot; Operation Purple, summer camp for kids of deployed
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	Christmas party; local family assistance, money-food-etc.; Christmas food baskets; Run For The Wall fundraising; helping vets get to meetings; donations to Lake Co. Vet Council; Avenue of Flags; VFW Poppy sales



“READING OF THE NAMES”

VVA500 hosted the annual “Reading of the Names” and a ceremony remembering all Veterans. Veterans of all wars and services as well as family, friends, community leaders and members of the public gathered on May 30 at the CA Vietnam Veterans Memorial to honor those who gave their lives for country and freedom.

The “Reading” is the largest annual event held in the Sacramento area for Vietnam Veterans. It is a time for healing and bonding among all Veterans.

acres of land.

Veterans with a discharge other than dishonorable, their spouses, and eligible dependent children may be buried in a national cemetery. Other burial benefits include a burial flag, Presidential Memorial Certificate, and a government headstone or marker - even if they are not buried in a national cemetery. Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at <http://www.cem.va.gov> or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1 800-827-1000.

SONGS OF WAR

NAM VETS SAY CERTAIN TUNES EVOKE COMBAT EXPERIENCES

For Cary King, now a 64-year-old Atlanta lawyer, it was “Where Have All the Flowers Gone.”

When Danny Boston, a 58-year-old economics professor at Georgia Tech, hears “Heard It Through the Grapevine,” he’s suddenly back in Vietnam, feeling the pain from wounds suffered in late September 1969.

John Sours, 61, of Smyrna, also a lawyer now, hears “I’m Leaving on a Jet Plane” and is a captain again, sitting in an open-air bar in Saigon, watching “that freedom bird” fly away.

Vietnam veterans associate a dozen or so songs with their experiences in that war, hits that still resonate strongly when they are heard today. They dredge up positive and negative emotions for the veterans, and sometimes seem to help many control demons.

“Music is where memory lives,” says Craig Werner, 54, of the University of Wisconsin. He and colleague Doug Bradley, a 58-year-old Vietnam veteran, have interviewed hundreds of Vietnam vets about the music that affected them and has remained with them.

“The intention is to explore ways that music and experience shed some light on people’s memories,” Bradley said.

“What is constantly so astounding is how discussing music makes it so much easier to talk about what it was like there,” says Bradley. “Thousands of vets have still locked it down, have nev-

er talked about their experience. This has facilitated a discussion with some people who have never opened up before.”

Werner, chair of Wisconsin’s Afro-American studies department, says the power of song can fill the void where words simply fail.

They’ve even come up with a Top 10 list of songs that resonate with Vietnam vets, led by “We Gotta Get Out of This Place,” by the Animals; “Chain of Fools,” by Aretha Franklin; and “Fortunate Son,” by Creedence Clearwater Revival.

It’s true, the researchers say, that everyone — not just vets — has a song or two that evoke strong memories, “but for those of us who grew up with rock ‘n’ roll and Top 20 AM radio, this re-

ally resonates,” Bradley said. “We think it has something to do with the way we’re wired as humans.”

He added: “Music connects us in ways we can’t explain, but we feel. It can be the same for people any place, anywhere, especially when they’re under stressful situations. There’s nothing more stressful than war, and there was nothing more Districturbing than Vietnam.”

More than 3 million Americans were deployed in Southeast Asia during the war, and 58,249 died.

David Ready, psychologist and specialist in post-traumatic stress disorder at the Atlanta Veterans Affairs Medical Center, said songs of the era for many vets are hard to bear.

“For those with PTSD, it could be negative,” he said. “But we know that working with memories in the right way can be helpful. For some, songs evoke a moment of peace and calm. For a lot, it was an adventure, and they’re nostalgic for those times.”

As Vietnam vets enter their late 50s and 60s, “more and more are trying to make sense of it all, and it’s a healthy thing to do that,” he said.

Dr. Doug Bremner, an Emory University psychiatrist and expert on PTSD, said most vets likely have songs burned into their minds that take them back to Vietnam.

“There may be sadness, or happiness, or fear. And listening to songs could be cathartic — an act of reprocessing. Cathartic implies a positive outcome.”

King recalls Vietnam when he hears “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” by Peter, Paul and Mary. “I wasn’t anti-war, but their song, the line, ‘Where have all the soldiers gone, gone to flowers every one,’ brings it all back.”

Boston said “Heard It Through the Grapevine” reminds him of slogging through rice paddies, then getting seriously wounded by a booby-trap.

“I was into Motown, rhythm and blues, and when I hear those old songs now, I’m back, back,” he said.

But can songs really be cathartic — soothing and healing?

“We’re not asking whether people hated the war, but whether the songs spoke to them,” Bradley said. “Some are songs veterans are not going to want to hear, it’s just too hard to listen. But for some, these songs of the era still conjure up pleasant sensations of nostalgia, camaraderie, friends.”

TOP 10 SONGS FOR VIETNAM VETS

Song, artist and comments by the researchers

1. “We Gotta Get Out of This Place,” by the Animals.
Comment: “Why this resonates still is obvious.”

2. “Chain of Fools,” by Aretha Franklin.
Comment: “This song frequently represented the growing disenfranchisement between the ‘grunts’ and the chain of command.” It’s been mentioned more by African-American vets than others.

3. “Fortunate Son,” by Creedence Clearwater Revival.
Comment: The piercing lyrics about sacrifice made the song powerful. [NOTE: This is the title of Chesty Puller’s son’s autobiography]

4. “(Sitting on) The Dock of the Bay,” by Otis Redding.
Comment: Desperate and defiant lyrics, made many vets lonely but also evoked images of serene scenes back home.

5. “These Boots Are Made for Walkin’,” by Nancy Sinatra.
Comment: “We wanted to walk out of there.” “It’s amazing how many vets are Nancy Sinatra supporters.”

6. “The Fightin’ Side of Me,” by Merle Haggard.
Comment: This song wasn’t an anti-war song as much as an “anti-anti-war song.”

7. “What’s Going On,” by Marvin Gaye.
Comment: Much of it relates the experiences of Gaye’s brother in Vietnam.

8. “Nowhere to Run,” by Martha Reeves and the Vandellas.
Comment: “The GI’s plight.”

9. “I Feel Like I’m Fixin’ to Die Rag,” by Country Joe and the Fish.
Comment: “Vets of different political leanings like some things about this. It spoke truth to power and ‘told it like it was.’”

10. “Purple Haze,” by Jimi Hendrix.
Comment: The experience of tunnel rats, who crawled through Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army tunnels after dropping smoke grenades. Resonates with vets who smoked marijuana.

— Bill Hendrick

Source: Doug Bradley and Craig Werner, University of Wisconsin

Personally “We Gotta Get Out of This Place” brings back memories because it was popular with so many guys.

The there’s “It Must Be Him”; which was a big hit by Leslie Gore,

I believe, in late ‘68 – early ‘69. Grew to hate it. The lead female singer with every Filipino rock band that came through always sang it., and it was the last thing the infantry guys needed to hear.

Opinion and Reminiscences

VIETNAM, AFTER ALL?

FORMULAIC WARFARE.

By Victor Davis Hanson

As with the formulaic type scenes of Homeric epic, there now arises a sense of familiarity with the current outcries over Haditha.

We do not really know yet what happened in that terrorist-infected hellhole, but it seems not to matter. Those who customarily decry the supposed loss of civil liberties are now the first to rush to judgment--reminding us that it is not always principle per se that they embrace, but a partisanship to be advanced at all costs.

Like Abu Ghraib, the killings will be used to vilify the military, and, ultimately, to curtail the American effort in Iraq--despite the good news of the recent appointment of the remaining three Iraqi cabinet officials and the demise of the mass-murdering Zarqawi. Just as the public was bombarded with scenes of a few dozen naked Iraqis and dog leashes in 2004, or cries of mythical flushed Korans in 2005--never the mass graves of Saddam--so too we now hear only of a new My Lai.

Vietnam, My Lai, pullout, deadline, cutoff--all the old remembrances are returning, as the graying antiwar generation of the 1960s will not go quietly into the night. Abu Ghraib and Haditha are the new Tiger Cages and napalm; George Bush is the Johnson or Nixon of our age; and "no blood for oil" is similar to the old mythical conspiracies of why we were in Vietnam.

Yes, we know the wished-for script. As the drumbeat of hysterical criticism continues, domestic support erodes to almost nothing. The enemy becomes emboldened, taking much of its triumphant rhetoric right from the antiwar Western left. Funds will be cut-off and deadlines for withdrawal imposed.

But wait, stop! Do we really wish to continue the tired formula, since we know what follows and where it ends?

Once we leave, the killing starts in earnest, not 20 or 30 per day, but wholesale slaughter of any Iraqis who taught school, or were clean shaven and wore Western dress, or fought to save Iraq. Millions of refugees flee to the West. Those who stay are killed or "reeducated." Islamism, like Communism, is empowered with the American defeat. We can expect, as in the past, new aggression in peripheral theaters like Afghanistan or Israel. Twenty years from now expect revisionist books reminding us that the battles for Iraq, like Tet, were American victories and the enemy was almost beaten when we quit. Envision one of the late al-Zarqawi's henchmen, like General Giap, in his dotage thanking the antiwar movement.

Americans abroad will be ripe targets, since, like the Iranian hostage taking of 1979, there will be an unspoken assurance that the United States would not dare risk another Iraq/Vietnam. Here at home, we will enter an endless cycle of mutual recrimination, lose confidence in the U.S. military, and return to a neo-isolationism--punctuated by the occasional liberal call "to do something" as we watch the usual associated horrors unfold around the world.

The Left will see defeat in Iraq, as it did in Vietnam, as welcomed confirmation of its own moral superiority. And in response perhaps we will soon get another Jimmy Carter, who each year assures us that not one American soldier has died under his watch as the entire nation is imperiled. Forget that despite such smugness an embassy was stormed; Khomeinism was birthed; Afghanistan was invaded; a holocaust continued full-bore in Cambodia; Central America was in the midst of a

Communist insurrection; and we were reduced to boycotting the Olympics.

So the odd thing is that the more the reality on the ground in Iraq does not resemble Vietnam, the more the opposition to it does. Note how almost all the facts concerning Iraq at one time or another have been twisted to resemble Vietnam. The trumped up Gulf of Tonkin resolution as a *casus belli* is supposedly similar to the faulty intelligence about weapons of mass destruction--except that the U.S. Senate this time around voted for 22 additional counts of action as well, and almost every foreign intelligence service confirmed the CIA's assessment. George Bush is supposedly like Lyndon Johnson, destroyed by a counter-insurgency war--except he got re-elected rather than forgoing a nomination for a second term.

The enemy has no uniformed army, as was true of the North Vietnamese. The terrorist insurgents are reactionary, not a Communist movement that so appeals to the naive on the Left. Iraq is not, as was Vietnam, a proxy war between two nuclear superpowers. There are not tens of thousands of hardcore Chinese and Russian advisors manning missile sites and training Iraqis. And the present government in Iraq, after three democratic elections, is far more legitimate than was any South Vietnamese regime.

For our own part, we field a professional army of volunteers, not reluctant draftees. The campuses are quiet. And despite the screaming pundits and politicians, there are not mass protests in the streets demanding an end to the war. While 2,400 dead constitute a grievous loss, as of now that is just a fraction of those killed in Vietnam, about 2 a day compared to almost 20.

So why are we determined to make Haditha emblematic of a failed Vietnam-like effort to save Iraq?

Ignorance in part. We have forgotten the horrific nature of war that leaves no good choices. Current sanctimonious critics who have already tried and convicted the Marines at Haditha should go back and read, say, E. B. Sledge's *With the Old Breed*, his humane but terrifying memoir of Okinawa, or recall American actions at the Bulge or on Sicily.

When tens of thousands of young men are asked to win the dirty fighting against savage enemies or terrorists, and threatened with daily extinction, in Iraq or any American war, a few can break or transgress the American code of military conduct. The only difference between Haditha--if it proves that some Marines violated standards of military behavior--and the shooting of Japanese prisoners and occasional Okinawan civilians is that today's military, to its everlasting credit, considers an assault on non-combatants an abject crime, not, as in past wars of survival, an occasional occurrence to be seen in light of the inevitable stresses and horrors of war, and excused by the fact it was far less commonplace than was true of the daily conduct of the Nazi, Soviet, or Japanese soldiers.

For those who now associate the crimes of a few with an entire war effort, do any think that women and children were not maimed and worse when Bill Clinton--with no Senate approval and no effort to go to the U.N.--bombed downtown Belgrade on the righteous logic that the risk of collateral damage (500-1000 charred Serbian civilians?) was worth taking to stop a genocide? Do we remember that NATO planes mistakenly hit passenger trains, buses, an embassy, a rest home, a hospital, and apartment buildings?

When we see pictures of horrific starvation in Somalia and hear the liberal mantra "do something," do we recall the hundreds of Somalis we killed to extract our soldiers from that Black-Hawk Down

nightmare? Does anyone really believe that Gen. Zinni's "Operation Desert Fox"--we were told that we killed several hundred--chewed up only Republican Guard troops busy in WMD labs?

And if we were to go to Darfur, as so many liberals now envision, to stop another holocaust, could that evil be excised without some death of innocents? After all, to fight in Darfur is not to prance in and declare victory, but to send these same now-demonized Marines into a disease-infested sinkhole, where "civilians" kill and there is no real way to distinguish friend from foe.

In truth, the good that the United States has achieved in successful wars usually has far overshadowed the horrific means used to achieve it. That is why formerly fascist German and Italian newspapers on the cheap can roast the United States today. And why upscale South Koreans are not, like their northern counterparts, eating grass; why there are not now Banzai marches in Tokyo; why there are Kosovars and Bosnians still left on the planet; why the odious Daniel Ortega is freely running for office; why Gen. Noriega is not clubbing his opponents on the streets of Panama City; and yes, why the Eastern Europeans wish to join the EU instead of being forced into the Warsaw Pact, and why the Russians use oil profits, not missiles, to get their way. In contrast, does anyone believe that Vietnam, or Haiti, or present-day Somalia is better off for our past failures?

So by all means investigate Haditha. Try and convict any who broke the rules of war, and sullied the honor of the U.S. Marine Corps.

But please spare us the scripted outrage that is simply cheap cover for wanting Iraq to end as Vietnam, as there appear ten stories on Haditha for every one about either an American victory over terrorists or help for Iraqi civilians. Any true moralist who cares for the Iraqi people should pray that this war doesn't devolve into helicopters on the embassy roof--followed by the old predictable liberal silence when the real killing begins.

URL: <http://article.nationalreview.com/print/>

"WHAT IS A VIETNAM VETERAN?"

A college student posted a request on an internet newsgroup asking for personal narratives from the likes of us addressing the question: "What is a Vietnam Veteran?" This is what I wrote back:

Vietnam veterans are men and women. We are dead or alive, whole or maimed, sane or haunted. We grew from our experiences or we were destroyed by them or we struggle to find some place in between. We lived through hell or we had a pleasant, if scary, adventure. We were Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Red Cross, and civilians of all sorts. Some of us enlisted to fight for God and Country, and some were drafted. Some were gung-ho, and some went kicking and screaming.

Like veterans of all wars, we lived a tad bit--or a great bit--closer to death than most people like to think about. If Vietnam vets differ from others, perhaps it is primarily in the fact that many of us never saw the enemy or recognized him or her. We heard gunfire and mortar fire but rarely looked into enemy eyes. Those who did, like folks who encounter close combat anywhere and anytime, are often haunted for life by those eyes, those sounds, those electric fears that ran between ourselves, our enemies, and the likelihood of death for one of us. Or we get hard, calloused, tough. All in a day's work. Life's a bitch then you die. But most of us remember and get twitchy, worried, sad.

We are crazies dressed in cammo, wide-eyed, wary, homeless, and drunk. We are Brooks Brothers suit wearers, doing deals downtown. We are housewives, grandmothers, and church deacons. We are college professors engaged in the rational pursuit of the truth about the history or politics or culture of the Vietnam experience. And we are sleepless. Often sleepless.

We pushed paper; we pushed shovels. We drove jeeps, operated bulldozers, built bridges; we toted machine guns through dense brush, deep paddy, and thorn scrub. We lived on buffalo milk, fish heads and rice. Or C-rations. Or steaks and Budweiser. We did our time in high mountains drenched by endless monsoon rains or on the dry plains or on muddy rivers or at the most beautiful beaches in the world.

We wore berets, bandanas, flop hats, and steel pots. Flak jackets, canvas, rash and rot. We ate cloroquine and got malaria anyway. We got shots constantly but have diseases nobody can diagnose. We spent our nights on cots or shivering in foxholes filled with waist-high water or lying still on cold wet ground, our eyes imagining Charlie behind every bamboo blade. Or we slept in hotel beds in Saigon or barracks in Thailand or in cramped ships' berths at sea.

We feared we would die or we feared we would kill. We simply feared, and often we still do. We hate the war or believe it was the best thing that ever happened to us. We blame Uncle Sam or Uncle Ho and their minions and secretaries and apologists for every wart or cough or tic of an eye. We wonder if Agent Orange got us.

Mostly--and this I believe with all my heart--mostly, we wish we had not been so alone. Some of us went with units; but many, probably most of us, were civilians one day, jerked up out of "the world," shaved, barked at, insulted, humiliated, de-egoized and taught to kill, to fix radios, to drive trucks. We went, put in our time, and were equally ungraciously plucked out of the morass and placed back in the real world. But now we smoked dope, shot skag, or drank heavily. Our wives or husbands seemed distant and strange. Our friends wanted to know if we shot anybody.

And life went on, had been going on, as if we hadn't been there, as if Vietnam was a topic of political conversation or college protest or news copy, not a matter of life and death for tens of thousands.

Vietnam vets are people just like you. We served our country, proudly or reluctantly or ambivalently. What makes us different--what makes us Vietnam vets--is something we understand, but we are afraid nobody else will. But we appreciate your asking.

Vietnam veterans are white, black, beige and shades of gray; but in comparison with our numbers in the "real world," we were more likely black. Our ancestors came from Africa, from Europe, and China. Or they crossed the Bering Sea Land Bridge in the last Ice Age and formed the nations of American Indians, built pyramids in Mexico, or farmed acres of corn on the banks of Chesapeake Bay. We had names like Rodriguez and Stein and Smith and Kowalski. We were Americans, Australians, Canadians, and Koreans; most Vietnam veterans are Vietnamese.

We were farmers, students, mechanics, steelworkers, nurses, and priests when the call came that changed us all forever. We had dreams and plans, and they all had to change...or wait. We were daughters and sons, lovers and poets, beatniks and philosophers, convicts and lawyers. We were rich and poor but mostly poor. We were educated or not, mostly not. We grew up in slums, in shacks, in duplexes, and bungalows and houseboats and hooches and ranchers. We were cowards and heroes. Sometimes we were cowards one moment and heroes the next.

Many of us have never seen Vietnam. We waited at home for those we loved. And for some of us,

our worst fears were realized. For others, our loved ones came back but never would be the same.

We came home and marched in protest marches, sucked in tear gas, and shrieked our anger and horror for all to hear. Or we sat alone in small rooms, in VA hospital wards, in places where only the crazy ever go. We are Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, and Confucians and Buddhists and Atheists--though as usually is the case, even the atheists among us sometimes prayed to get out of there alive.

We are hungry, and we are sated, full of life or clinging to death. We are injured, and we are curers, despairing and hopeful, loved or lost. We got too old too quickly, but some of us have never grown up. We want, desperately, to go back, to heal wounds, revisit the sites of our horror. Or we want never to see that place again, to bury it, its memories, its meaning. We want to forget, and we wish we could remember.

Despite our differences, we have so much in common. There are few of us who don't know how to cry, though we often do it alone when nobody will ask "what's wrong?" We're afraid we might have to answer.

Adam, if you want to know what a Vietnam veteran is, get in your car next weekend or cage a friend with a car to drive you. Go to Washington. Go to the Wall. It's going to be Veterans Day weekend. There will be hundreds there... no, thousands. Watch them. Listen to them. I'll be there. Come touch the Wall with us. Rejoice a bit. Cry a bit. No, cry a lot. I will. I'm a Vietnam Veteran; and, after 30 years, I think I am beginning to understand what that means.
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SITREP: IRAQ AND WHAT YOU ARE NOT HEARING.

This one came in via the retired Marine circuit.

Immediately below is an introductory paragraph written by the original sender. Below that is a self-explanatory conference report. For those who may wonder about a Naval Academy grad becoming an Air Force general officer, it is not all that uncommon. There was a time when the Naval Academy and West Point were required to send 25% of their graduates to the Air Force.

Even after the Air Force Academy began in 1959 graduating cadets, a small number of graduates of any of the academies were permitted to transfer to one of the other services.

The report provides an excellent summation of the Iraq situation as seen by recently returned officers.

The most striking (to me), observation concerned the Media and the home office editing of reports submitted by reporters in the field. This is just like Vietnam all over again. I recall talking to the Saigon Desk Chief of the US News & World Report one day at Con Thien. Info from Intelligence indicated that we were going to be attacked on 20 July 1968.

Enemy activity to our north and east indicated that there was something to the Intel. The Desk Chief (whose name I have long since forgotten), came to Con Thien to see the terrain, talk to the Marines and get a general feel for the position prior to the attack because he felt that, once it started, he would not be allowed or not be able to get into Con Thien to write the story. I told him that I mistrusted reporters because what I found in Vietnam was not what I'd been reading about in the States. His response to me was that what the reporters sent from the field was heavily edited in New York or elsewhere and that the final product often did not remotely resemble what the reporter had sent. Here we have Yogi's "deja vu all over again" and those who do such things

should be publicly hung.

During the night of 18 July, we had all of the Intel we needed and destroyed the attacking force with arty, mortars and several fixed wing flights (nape and snake...nothing like it). That was no small satisfaction, just as today's gunfighters have their own triumphs, irrespective of what the mainstream media says and does. Unfortunately, the media plays into the hands of the enemy, just as they did in Vietnam. There's nothing like a few agendas, especially political ones, to get a few more troops killed, is there?

JDL * * * * *

A Naval Academy classmate of mine who is a retired U.S. Air Force general officer recently attended a conference at Fort Carson which was a briefing on the Iraq War. This is the report he sent out about the conference. I thought you would be interested in reading Dick's report. Knowing the author of the report, I know it is factual. Regards.....

* * * * * Earlier this week I attended a retired general and flag officer conference at Fort Carson, hosted by M/Gen. Bob Mixon, the 7th Infantry Division Commander which calls the Fort its home.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Ft. Carson, it is a huge installation located to the south of Colorado Springs; it's in the process of becoming one of the larger Army installations in the country (26,000 soldiers); and it is the test location for the new "modular brigade" concept that will reflect the Army of tomorrow by 2008. It is also the home post of the largest number of troopers who have served multiple tours in Afghanistan and Iraq and, regrettably, the largest number of troopers who have died in combat there over the past three years. There are Ft. Carson units going to and returning from the combat area virtually on a monthly basis.

The conference was primarily organized to explain the modular brigade concept, and it featured a panel of officers who had either very recently returned from commands in the combat zone or were about to deploy therein the next two months. Three of the recent returnees were Colonel H.R. McMaster, Colonel Rick S., & Captain Walter Szpak.

McMaster is the commander of the 3rd Armored Calvary Regiment, the unit that, through very innovative and population-friendly tactics, rid the city of Tal Afar of insurgents. The mayor of Tal Afar came back to Carson two weeks ago to thank the troopers and their families personally for "freeing his people". (You say you didn't hear about that in the mainstream media?) McMaster is considered the foremost U.S. expert on modern insurgent warfare, has written a book on the subject which is widely circulated at the war colleges and staff colleges, and he was asked to testify before Congress when he returned from the 3rd ACR combat deployment. He is obviously one of the great combat leaders that has emerged from the war and is highly respected (some would say revered) by his troopers and his superiors alike.

Colonel S. is assigned to the 10th Special Forces Brigade and he headed up all of the 31 Special Forces A-teams that are integrated with the populace and the Iraqi Army and national police throughout the country. Many of these are the guys that you see occasionally on the news that have beards, dress in native regalia, usually speak Arabic and don't like to have their identities revealed for fear of retribution on their families (thus the Colonel S.) Captain Szpak was the head of all the Army explosive ordnance teams in Iraq. He and his troops had the job of disarming all the improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and explosive formed projectiles (EFPs) that were discovered before they were detonated. They also traveled around the country training the combat forces in recognizing and avoiding these devices in time to prevent death and injury. IEDs

and EFPs are responsible for the vast majority of casualties experienced by our forces.

Despite the objective of the conference (i.e., the modular brigade concept), it quickly devolved into a 3½ hour question and answer period between the panel and the 54 retired generals and admirals who attended. I wish I had a video of the whole session to share with you because the insights were especially eye opening and encouraging. I'll try to summarize the high points as best I can.

* All returnees agreed that "we are clearly winning the fight against the insurgents but we're losing the public relations battle both in the war zone and in the States". (I'll go into more detail on each topic below.)

* All agreed that it will be necessary for us to have forces in Iraq for at least ten more years, though by no means in the numbers that are there now.

* They opined that 80% to 90% of the Iraqi people want to have us there and do not want us to leave before "the job is done".

* The morale and combat capability of the troops is the highest that the senior officers have ever seen in the 20-30 years that each has served.

* The Iraqi armed forces and police are probably better trained right now than they were under Saddam, but our standards are much higher and they lack officer leadership.

* They don't need more troops in the combat zone but they need considerably more Arab linguists and civil affairs experts.

* The IEDs and EFPs continue to be the principal problem that they face and they are becoming more sophisticated as time passes.

Public Affairs: We are losing the public affairs battle for a variety of reasons. First, in Iraq, the terrorists provide Al Jazeera with footage of their more spectacular attacks and they're on TV to the whole Arab world within minutes of the event. By contrast it takes four to six days for a story generated by Army Public Affairs to gain clearance by Combined Forces Command, two or three more days to get Pentagon clearance, and after all that, the public media may or may not run the story.

Second, the U.S. mainstream media (MSM) who send reporters to the combat zone do not like to have their people embedded with our troops. They claim that the reporters get "less objective" when they live with the soldiers and marines - they come to see the world through the eyes of the troops. As a consequence, a majority of the reporters stay in hotels in the "Green Zone" and send out native stringers to call in stories to them by cell phone which they later write up and file. No effort is made to verify any of these stories or the credibility of the stringers. The recent injuries to Bob Woodruff of ABC and Kimberly Dozier of CBS make the likelihood of the use of local stringers even higher.

Third, the stories that are filed by reporters in the field very seldom reach the American public as written. An anecdote from Col. McMaster illustrates this dramatically. TIME magazine recently sent a reporter to spend six weeks with the 3rd ACR as they were in the battle of Tal Afar.

When the battle was over, the reporter filed his story and also included close to 100 pictures that the accompanying photographer took. TIME published a cover story on the battle a week later, allegedly using the story sent in by their reporter. When the issue came out, the guts had been edited out of their reporter's story and none of the pictures he submitted were used. Instead they showed a weeping child on the cover, taken from stock photos. When the reporter questioned why his story was eviscerated, his

editors in New York responded that the story and pictures were "too heroic". McMaster had read both and told me that the editors had completely changed the thrust and context of the material their reporter had submitted.

As a sidebar on the public affairs situation, Colonel Bob McRee, who was also on the panel and is bringing a Military Police Battalion to Iraq next month, invited the Colorado Springs Gazette to send a reporter with the battalion for six weeks to two months. He assured the Gazette, in writing one month ago, that he would provide full time bodyguards for the reporter, taking the manpower out of his own hide. The Gazette has yet to respond to his offer.

Ten More Years: The idea that we will have troops in Iraq for ten more years sounds rather grim, even though by contrast, President Clinton sent troops to Bosnia and Kosovo nearly ten years ago. And they're still there with no end in sight. While Iraq is clearly a different situation right now, the panelists believe that within a few years at the most, it will become very much the same - a peace keeping, nation building function among factions that have hated one another for centuries. There is factionalism and there was bitter fighting in the Balkans before NATO intervened and with peace keepers, the panelists believe that Iraq will be a parallel situation. This, by the way, is why they all believe that linguists and civil affairs military personnel are so necessary for the future.

Colonel S. went out on a limb by suggesting that if most of the troops in Iraq were deployed home "tomorrow" he could have the entire country "pacified" and the terrorist situation brought under control with just one brigade of Special Forces. Since these guys are linguists, civil affairs experts, among many other skills and talents, he may not be too far wrong.

Iraqi Attitudes: The panelists agreed that the public affairs problem manifests itself most significantly in the American public belief that the people of Iraq want us out of their country which we are occupying. They have served in different parts of the country but each agreed that we are wanted and needed there. I refer you to the anecdote from Col. McMaster and the thousands of pictures available on the internet of the U.S. forces shown in very cordial relations with the locals. Of course, our media's obsession with Abu Graib and, if the initial reports regarding the small group of Marines at Haditha prove to be true, then those attitudes will change somewhat. But, as one of the panelists pointed out, the atrocities suffered under Saddam were much worse and much more common.

Morale and Capabilities: Two weeks ago, the local TV channels showed a 3rd ACR re-enlistment ceremony held at Ft. Carson and officiated by Col. McMaster. Mind you, this unit has just returned from a one-year combat tour of hard and bloody fighting in Iraq and will likely return there again in eight to ten months. Of the 670 soldiers eligible for re-enlistment, 654 of them held up their right hands and signed on for another four years. Incredible!

The Army goal for re-enlistments for fiscal year 2006 was for 40,000 soldiers to extend their active duty commitments. With four months remaining in the fiscal year, they have already exceeded their goal of 40,000 and may have to go back to Congress for authorization to exceed their force structure manning limitations. Since Congress has been pontificating for the past couple of years that the Army is woefully under strength, that should not pose any difficulty.

Iraqi Forces: Every one of the returning commanders had experience in joint operations with the Iraqi soldiers - and in the case of some of them, with the local and national police. They all are supportive of the quality of the forces, but culturally, they believe that we may be expecting too much from them as a pre-condition for hand-

ing over greater responsibility for area control. McMaster said that he worked with the army and the police at Tal Afar and was not the least bit reluctant to assign major responsibilities to them in the operations that were conducted.

Col. S.'s, Green Berets, on the other hand, caught a national police lieutenant who was directing the emplacement of an IED by cell phone in order to disrupt a convoy - immediately after the lieutenant had been briefed on the convoy's route. The good news in this situation was that they were able to re-route the convoy, safely, and track the lieutenant's entire network through the use of the speed dial on his phone. Having terrorist infiltrators in both the army and the police force remains a problem. But by no means does that detract from the courage and determination of those who are loyal to the new Iraq.

Explosive Devices: The combined command in Iraq is becoming increasingly effective in countering the significant threat posed by the IEDs and EFPs. The frequency of attacks has decreased in large part through training to recognize the threat, the new technology (UAVs - unmanned aerial vehicles or drones, for example) which help to discover where the devices are in placed, the infiltration of some of the terrorist cells, etc. However, the technology being used by the terrorists is also improving measurably. In the past six weeks, two bomb making sites were found, raided and the bad guys arrested. In both cases, the head bomb makers were master's degree graduates (one in chemistry and one in physics) from American universities. That's a lot of brain power to bring into the fight, but we also have some pretty talented people in the military, industry and academia who are doing their best to even the odds.

Conclusion: This is more than I had intended to write on the subject -so what's new a lot of you might say - but it is a subject that doesn't get the proper balance from other sources, in my judgment at least. I trust the information that we received far more than anything that I have heard or seen in our usual news sources. The most disturbing thing that I heard was that our MSM is changing the stories filed by their own people on the scene because they sound "too heroic".

The overriding opinion that I came away from the conference with is that we have incredibly talented and professional leaders who are facing up to the challenges and are making inexorable progress toward the goals of our nation. We're fortunate to have courageous and valorous people on the combat front, even though there seems to be a serious dearth of these same types of people in Congress and the mainstream media.

IF YOU DON'T STAND BEHIND OUR TROOPS, PLEASE, FEEL FREE TO STAND IN FRONT OF THEM !!!

VETERANS OF MODERN WARFARE, INC.

The leadership of the National Gulf War Resource Center created a new veterans' service organization this week, Veterans of Modern Warfare, Inc. (VMW). "After years of serving veterans returning from Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Global War on Terror, in addition to Persian Gulf War veterans, we felt it was time to create a voice of, by, and for veterans of the current wartime era, which began in 1990 and continues to this day," said Julie Mock, President of the NGWRC, and newly elected President of VMW. Julie is a veteran of the 1991 Gulf War.

The Veterans of Modern Warfare, Inc. is a veterans' service organization. Any veteran or current active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States is eligible to join, as long as they have one or more days of active duty after August 2, 1990. "We needed a direct voice for veterans of the current generation, an organization accountable only to us," said Cheyne

Worley, Vice President of VMW and Gulf War Veteran. The VMW members will elect their own leadership, and the organization helps veterans assess their own situation with regard to medical or trauma-related conditions; obtain assistance for treatment, disability, and education benefits; navigate the federal bureaucracy; and advocate to their elected representatives in Government.

While the National Gulf War Resource Center will continue its mission of education and resources for veterans, the VMW will provide current active duty and recent veterans a more direct voice in such matters. Ms. Mock elaborates further: "In addition to supporting the recent lawsuit to protect veterans from identity theft, we're promoting better access to VA health care, prescriptions, and disability claims assistance for veterans affected by their distance from VA facilities or by mail delays, such as rural veterans and veterans who work for contractors in places like Kuwait and Iraq. We are further working to make sure that current active duty military personnel can get care for conditions like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder without fear of stigma or reprisal."

For further information, please contact:
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Julie Mock, President
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Veterans of Modern Warfare, Inc.
www.ngwrc.org

PUBLIC APPRECIATION

Yesterday Mike Midgett & I went to all four of the Orchard Supply Stores to pick up the turned-in unserviceable flags. As we were leaving their E. Champlain Store in Fresno and out in the parking lot, a wonderful lady started to go into the store, did a double face and went up to Mike, planted a nice kiss on his cheek and said "thank you." Mike was wearing his Vietnam Veteran Hat with three campaign stars and his POW-MIA shirt. What a wonderful way for this lady to express her appreciation. We sure never got this forty years ago when we returned. (BTW - Mike gave me permission to print this).

I'm in awe the way veterans are now being treated, especially those of our era. This is especially true here in the greater San Joaquin Valley. Wear your veteran affiliation colors proudly. You all are heroes and certainly have earned the public's respect.

Bruce Ames - Marketing Director - VVA 933
Bruce Ames (Colonel - Commemorative Air Force*) (* The new "politically correct" name for

CHAPTER 785 MEMBER DIES IN CAR CRASH

Aloha Members, Family and Friends.....it is with profound sadness that Chapter 785 reports the loss of one of our very own, our Chapter Sergeant at Arms and friend, Larry "Bear" Hughes. "Bear" was involved in a motor vehicle accident on his way home from his unit's Vietnam Veterans reunion in Missouri and died, along with his brother Tim, in this terrible mishap.

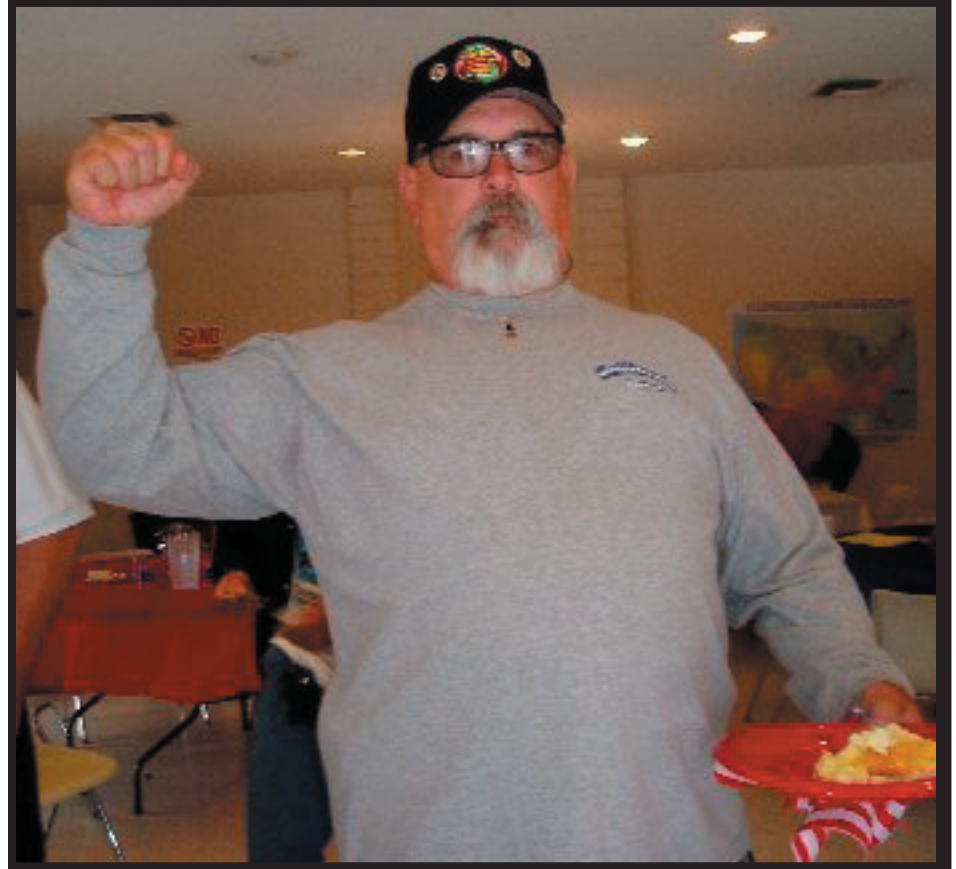
His death leaves an empty hole with his family and friends and his loveable nature, boisterous laugh and especially his "goodwill for all" will be terribly missed...Jeanette Chervony, a close friend of "Bears" and a Chapter Member has

created a Memorial website for "Bear" <http://vva785.org/Bear/> where his family, friends and his "Band of Brothers and Sisters" can post personal notes, antidotes and remembrances for this American "hero" and gentle giant. In addition, the Memorial page will keep everyone posted on the Memorial Service and funeral arrangements.

Larry "Bear" Hughes was a recipient of 3 Silver Stars, 5 Bronze Stars and 3 Purple Hearts for his two tours in Vietnam. He was humble about his service and sacrifice serving this great Nation that he so loved but he was also very protective of those Veterans that he served with and those that served. He was a Veterans Advocate in the true sense of the word and shared all that he had with those Veterans and their families in need. He was the epitome of an American Hero and that of a Mountain Man....with a passion for fishing and hunting, but never taking more than he needed. He was the outdoors man who was at home in "the bush" or on the back of his "Harley."

We all have viewed so many sides of "Bear," but all of us saw just the gentle and loving side of this American "giant." The following few pictures will remind us all of this "Bear" of a man and the wonderful friendship and memories that we will forever hold close to our hearts. To his wife Peggy and his beautiful family, we were blessed to have "Bear" in our lives, thank you so much for sharing your wonderful husband, father and grandpa with us. To Lew "Pitbull" Correra, also known as his "twin brother" and "bodyguard", your loss can never be replaced, but know that your Chapter 785 will forever be....your family.

Semper Fi "Bear", "Fair winds and following sea's be forever at your back.....you are missed!
Chapter 785 sends.....



the Confederate Air Force)
Aviation & Amateur Radio Writer
Naval Cryptologic Veterans Assn.
Assn. of Former Intelligence Officers
Vietnam Veterans of America - Life Member
American Legion

INTERNET E-MAIL SCAM

There have been increasing reports of users receiving e-mail from the address abuse@vba.va.gov, asking them to check an account by clicking on a link.

This e-mail is a phishing scam, an attempt to gain personal information. The e-mail address abuse@vba.va.gov is fake and the link in the e-mail is to a web site in Asia. Please notify all users of this phishing scam and instruct them to delete this e-mail if they receive it. DO NOT OPEN the e-mail.

STATE COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The president is still seeking members interested in chairing or participating in our committees. The August CSC meeting will be when the committees will begin their work, and before then the board of directors will be finalizing the committee chairs.

If you are interested in becoming a committee chair, please e-mail Ken Holybee at: holybee@comcast.net or phone him at: 707-877-8891.

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 _____

A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE

Your alarm goes off, you hit the snooze and sleep for another 10 minutes.
He stays up for days on end.

You take a warm shower to help you wake up.
He goes days or weeks without running water.

You complain of a "headache", and call in sick.
He gets shot at, as others are hit, and keeps moving forward.

You put on your anti war/don't support the troops shirt, and go meet up
with your friends.
He still fights for your right to wear that shirt.

You make sure you're cell phone is in your pocket.
He clutches the cross hanging on his chain next to his dog tags.

You talk trash on your "buddies" that aren't with you.
He knows he may not see some of his buddies again.

You walk down the beach, staring at all the pretty girls.
He walks the streets, searching for insurgents and terrorists.

You complain about how hot it is.
He wears his heavy gear, not daring to take off his helmet to wipe his
brow.

You go out to lunch, and complain because the restaurant got your order
wrong.
He does not get to eat today.

Your maid makes your bed and washes your clothes.
He wears the same things for months, but makes sure his weapons are
clean.

You go to the mall and get your hair redone.
He doesn't have time to brush his teeth today.

You are angry because your class ran 5 minutes over.
He is told he will be held an extra 2 months.

You call your girlfriend and set a date for that night.

He waits for the mail to see if there is a letter from home.

You hug and kiss your girlfriend, like you do everyday.
He holds his letter close and smells his love's perfume.

You roll your eyes as a baby cries.
He gets a letter with pictures of his new child, and wonders if
they'll ever meet.

You criticize your government, and say that war never solves
anything.
He sees the innocent tortured and killed by their own government
and remembers why he is fighting.

You hear the jokes about the war, and make fun of the men like
him.

He hears the gun fire and bombs.

You see only what the media wants you to see.
He sees the bodies lying around him.

You are asked to go to the store by your parents. You don't.
He does what he is told.

You stay at home and watch TV.
He takes whatever time he is given to call and write home, sleep,
and eat.

You crawl into your bed, with down pillows, and try to get com-
fortable.

He crawls under a tank for shade and a 5 minute nap, only to be
woken by gun fire.

You sit there and judge him, saying the world is a worse place
because of men like him.

If only there were more men like him

If you support your troops, send this on



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