

December 2002



NORTHLAND VIETNAM VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 16975
Duluth Mn. 55816
WWW.NVVA.US



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HERO'S

I shake my head with sadness and disbelief that today's heroes are often sport's figures. I can understand why sports are important to some people, but to refer these overpaid individuals as heroes – no! Here are some of my heroes.

FRITZ, HAROLD A.

Rank and organization: Captain, U.S. Army, Troop A, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Place and date: Binh Long Province, Republic of Vietnam, 11 January 1969. Entered service at: Milwaukee, Wis. Born: 21 February 1944, Chicago, 111. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Capt. (then 1st Lt.) Fritz, Armor, U.S. Army, distinguished himself while serving as a platoon leader with Troop A, near Quan Loi. Capt. Fritz was leading his 7-vehicle armored column along Highway 13 to meet and escort a truck convoy when the column suddenly came under intense crossfire from a reinforced enemy company deployed in ambush positions. In the initial attack, Capt. Fritz' vehicle was hit and he was seriously wounded. Realizing that his platoon was completely surrounded, vastly outnumbered, and in danger of being overrun, Capt. Fritz leaped to the top of his burning vehicle and directed the positioning of his remaining vehicles and men. With complete disregard for his wounds and safety, he ran from vehicle to vehicle in complete view of the enemy gunners in order to reposition his men, to improve the defenses, to assist the wounded, to distribute ammunition, to direct fire, and to provide encouragement to his men. When a strong enemy force assaulted the position and attempted to overrun the platoon, Capt. Fritz manned a machine gun and through his exemplary action inspired his men to deliver intense and deadly fire which broke the assault and routed the attackers. Moments later a second enemy force advanced to within 2 meters of the position and threatened to overwhelm the defenders. Capt. Fritz, armed only with a pistol and bayonet, led a small group of his men in a fierce and daring charge which routed the attackers and inflicted heavy casualties. When a relief force arrived, Capt. Fritz saw that it was not deploying effectively against the enemy positions, and he moved through the heavy enemy fire to direct its deployment against the hostile positions. This deployment forced the enemy to abandon the ambush site and withdraw. Despite his wounds, Capt. Fritz returned to his position, assisted his men, and refused medical attention until all of his wounded comrades had been treated and evacuated. The extraordinary courage and selflessness displayed by Capt. Fritz, at the repeated risk of his own life above and beyond the call of duty, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect the greatest credit upon himself, his unit, and the Armed Forces.

To add a article to this newsletter contact

Mike Hanson 624 4474
Noisyguy@chartermi.net

Kevin Pederson 724 1944
Kevin.pederson@excite.com

NVA Memberships

158 Members
83 Associates

Don't Forget Party

March 15, 2003
Blackwoods Proctor
Entertainment
Rock-Billy-Review
Happy Hour 6:00 P.M.
Dinner @ 7:00 P.M.
Prizes and Fun for all

MARM, WALTER JOSEPH, JR.

Rank and organization: First Lieutenant (then 2d Lt.), U.S. Army, Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). place and date: Vicinity of Ia Drang Valley, Republic of Vietnam, 14 November 1965. Entered service at: Pittsburgh, pa. Born: 20 November 1941, Washington, pa. G.O. No.: 7, 15 February 1967. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. As a platoon leader in the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), 1st Lt. Marm demonstrated indomitable courage during a combat operation. His company was moving through the valley to relieve a friendly unit surrounded by an enemy force of estimated regimental size. 1st Lt. Marm led his platoon through withering fire until they were finally forced to take cover. Realizing that his platoon could not hold very long, and seeing four enemy soldiers moving into his position, he moved quickly under heavy fire and annihilated all 4. Then, seeing that his platoon was receiving intense fire from a concealed machine gun, he deliberately exposed himself to draw its fire. Thus locating its position, he attempted to destroy it with an antitank weapon. Although he inflicted casualties, the weapon did not silence the enemy fire. Quickly, disregarding the intense fire directed on him and his platoon, he charged 30 meters across open ground, and hurled grenades into the enemy position, killing some of the 8 insurgents manning it. Although severely wounded, when his grenades were expended, armed with only a rifle, he continued the momentum of his assault on the position and killed the remainder of the enemy. 1st Lt. Marm's selfless actions reduced the fire on his platoon, broke the enemy assault, and rallied his unit to continue toward the accomplishment of this mission. 1st Lt. Marm's gallantry on the battlefield and his extraordinary intrepidity at the risk of his life are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.

Now these are two of many of the real heroes and have the medal of honor to show for their actions, not some multi-million dollar contract.

Infantryman

The average age of the Infantryman is 19 years. He is a short haired, tight-muscled kid who, under normal circumstances is considered by society as half man, half boy. Not yet dry behind the ears, but old enough to die for his country. He never really cared much for work and he would rather wax his own car than wash his father's; but he has never collected unemployment either.

He's a recent High School graduate; he was probably an average student, pursued some form of sport activities, drives a ten year old jalopy, and has a steady girlfriend that either broke up with him when he left, or swears to be waiting when he returns from half a world away. He listens to rock and roll or jazz or swing and 155mm Howitzers. He is 10 or 15 pounds lighter now than when he was at home because he is working or fighting from before dawn to well after dusk.

He has trouble spelling, thus letter writing is a pain for him, but he can field strip a rifle in 30 seconds and reassemble it in less. He can recite to you the nomenclature of a machine gun or grenade launcher and use either one effectively if he must.

He digs foxholes and latrines and can apply first aid like a professional. He can march until he is told to stop or stop until he is told to march. He obeys orders instantly and without hesitation, but he is not without spirit or individual dignity.

He is self-sufficient. He has two sets of fatigues: he washes one and wears the other. He keeps his canteens full and his feet dry. He sometimes forgets to brush his teeth, but never to clean his rifle. He can cook his own meals, mend his own clothes, and fix his own hurts.

If you're thirsty, he'll share his water with you; if you are hungry, his food. He'll even split his ammunition with you in the midst of battle when you run low. He has learned to use his hands like weapons and his weapons like they were his hands. He can save your life -- or take it, because that is his job.

He will often do twice the work of a civilian, draw half the pay and still find ironic humor in it all. He has seen more suffering and death than he should have in his short lifetime.

He has stood atop mountains of dead bodies, and helped to create them. He has wept in public and in private, for friends who have fallen in combat and is unashamed. Just as did his Father, Grandfather, and Great-grandfather, he is paying the price for our freedom. Beardless or not, he is not a boy.

He is the American Fighting Man that has kept this country free for over 200 years. He has asked nothing in return, except our friendship and understanding. Remember him, always, for he has earned our respect and admiration with his blood.

He is an **INFANTRYMAN!**

Our Sponsored School in Viet Nam

About one year ago, NVVA gave \$4,500 to "East Meets West- International Relief Services in Vietnam" to build a school in Vietnam. The money was given in response to an appeal by Mayor Gary Doty on behalf of the Minnesota League of Cities. As you can see by the pictures, the school was built and is currently in use. Tim Dieffenbacher, one of our members, just returned from Vietnam. He visited the school and met with some of the parents and children in the community. He took some video footage of the school and the surrounding area. Now that Tim is back, several NVVA members are going to meet with representatives of the Duluth School District to pursue additional fund raising thru the Duluth schools. Our goal is to build at least one additional school in Vietnam with the money raised. This fund raising effort has the potential of creating an ongoing relationship between NVVA, students of the Duluth school system and the communities in Vietnam served by the schools we build. If you are interested in helping out call Fletcher Hinds at #724-0917.



Hi everyone:

Jon is very busy so he gave me permission to forward these e-mails that are chucked full of information. I know that you are all praying for his success in this project and I am glad for it!! I will continue to pass on bits of news when available. Please let him know what is up with you he does at least read his mail if he doesn't have time to respond right now. Regards

Pearl

from Jon:

Well we went to Saigon today and had the meeting with the group that wants to develop the hotel into a school. They don't own the property. It is currently owned by the bank. The bank wants \$1,300,000 for the hotel and property, and it will take about \$200,000 to finish it off. The group wants to make 30 classrooms to be used for vocational and academic studies. Depending on if I raise all of the money I will have control of the whole property. If the bank goes in as a joint investor then I will have control of 1/2 of the property. If the bank invests then 1/2 of the students will pay for the school and the 1/2 would be for charity. We are going to go look at the property on Wednesday. I have also met with an engineer contractor that said his company would do some of the work as charity. I just keep meeting good people, on the surface anyway. I know it is a lot of money, but I have really got excited again. After this meeting I went to meet with Gill Watts, the American that is working with the Amerasians. He has over 200 that he is working with trying to get them to the US. There is still an active program that gets them back to the US, but so much corruption in the US Consulate, they can't get them approved. I am going back to spend a day or two with him next week. Wall Street Journal is doing an article and he wants to mention our project and list our web site. I guess I need to get one. He has a man here that is developing one for him and said he is sure he would do one for us also. He told me that Amazon.com was a nobody until Wall Street Journal mentioned them in an article and over night they exploded. They are also doing a movie on Amerasians from Viet Nam. Nick Nolte is going to be the lead actor that is looking for his son in Viet Nam. I met Gil's wife and a lot of the Amerasians. His wife is from the Royal Family, from before 1975 from Hue. I showed her the business card of the man we had a meeting with this morning and she said this is a very good agency, and she knows the man who is the head of the department in Hanoi. she wanted to know if I wanted her to call him. I said not right now. If I agree to work on this project they will have a formal announcement at the Palace with a lot of top Government officials, TV, Newspapers, and interviews with me. They also talked about flying me to Hanoi to meet with people up there. The Government started this department as a non-government department (if such a thing exists) and has given them the authority and task to develop education throughout Viet Nam. The man I met with is in charge of Saigon and the southern part of Viet Nam. If we work this right we won't have to build a separate building for the orphanage. Some of the rooms can be used as living quarters.

There is so much to tell. This facility will provide rooms for "guest teachers" A working vacation...come over we will put you up on the ocean in the resort town of Vung Tau we just ask that you spend a few hours for a few days with the children...talking, sharing or what ever you want to offer. If this comes to fruition, I will be expected to bring a delegation to the ceremony...anyone interested?

Hope this finds all of you well. Jon

Jon Tinquist
jktinquer@yahoo.com

Description:

The Amerasian HOPE Network, is an organization created by a few concerned American Veterans and most importantly, by the Amerasian community. These children have begun to form their own unique community within Vietnam. Through that community they have found each other, and the listening ears and understanding hearts so essential to human healing and survival. It has been through this community that they have begun to understand many of the obstacles that they must face to advance their lives to the next level of existence. And it is through this community that they have found new possibilities and friends. This is for many, their first experience of belonging and empowerment. Because of this community they have managed to create relationships with Americans interested in helping them find a way home or a better life in Vietnam, and a fresh pool of resources and advice needed to develop new opportunities, so necessary in living full lives.

Most importantly AHOPE is an organization that, whenever possible, maintains a position of neutrality in regard to governmental policies of the US and Vietnam. Its primary focus is to create and maintain a Support Network that is based on a self help & model, facilitating Amerasian children in improving their lives and the lives of their families whether or not they may choose to immigrate to the US or stay in Vietnam. But the key and central focus of AHOPE is in maintaining this growing community of Amerasian children in Vietnam and overseas. AHOPE is currently developing a web-based Community Forum. By providing a means of sharing information and dialogue, participants get a comprehensive view of the landscape to guide them along their way. Until now, this opportunity to see so clearly and comprehensively has been impossible.

Through the AHOPE web-site (in development), critical Information and Communication will be shared. This will hopefully help in linking some children with their fathers through Personal Story Pages. The site will also provide procedural and legal information to children seeking immigration, and help in creating an informed community that will be less susceptible to the scam artists and arrangers who have profited from the plight of the Amerasians.

AHOPE also provides Fiscal Agency, acting as a clearinghouse for private and corporate funding and donations on behalf of Vietnam's Amerasian community. Through AHOPE, volunteer services from lawyers, educators, doctors, nurses, mental health professionals and others, can be directed to the aid of the Amerasian community. AHOPE also serves as a responsible agent, representing the Amerasian community to the US embassy, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and others.

The AHOPE also runs a unique Sponsorship Program, based on a relationship building, self-help model. This program is designed to link Amerasians and their families to funding organizations, corporate sponsors, individuals, and families worldwide, who want to offer not just traditional financial support, but morale and advisory support. This program seeks to offer Amerasians a sense of connection and belonging to an extended international family providing a variety of assistance, guidance and support on their behalf.

The primary tools of the organization:

1. The AHOPE Web-Site, a communications network critical for creating public awareness related to issues of importance to the Amerasian community and connecting the community to a worldwide audience and resources. This will also facilitate Amerasians in helping to tell their individual stories and perhaps locating their fathers. The web-site will also facilitate volunteer translation services, a sponsorship network, instructional and self-help info, and a forum for on-going discussion and communication between members of the Amerasian community and their supporters worldwide.
2. AHOPE Sponsorship Program, connecting Amerasian children and their families to a worldwide support system. This will be a key feature on the AHOPE web-site. Through this program one can customize ones support offering to one or more Amerasian children and their families. This could be as simple as establishing an on-going e-mail relationship, or volunteering services, offering advice, or providing financial support at a level of ones own choosing. The most important thing in this program is to join the community and participate in helping others to help themselves.
3. AHOPE Support Services Center, a Safe House in Vietnam. A bricks and mortar home base where Amerasians can meet and develop relationships with other members of their community; stay for short visits while completing immigration paperwork and immigration interviews in Ho Chi Minh City; and access legal, healthcare, and other practical and advisory services. This physical space is very important as a transitional facility to help move homeless Amerasians into job training, job placement, self-sustained housing, and preparation for immigration to the US. This center will also house the web-site management team and e-media training facilities.

What is remarkable about this effort is that these children, who have lead such difficult lives, have found the inspiration to gather together, organize, and empower themselves in creating a new future. They have somehow found a way to rise above impossible odds to form this organization, with very little financial help at this point. Now the AHOPE has a new challenge. AHOPE must find some very basic funding to start the organizations programs & Sponsors for the Sponsorship Program.

Participation in any of the three programs are highly appreciated. Your support and membership is needed. Thanks you for your attention to this cause.

Very truly yours,

Gil Watts & Ton Nu Diem Phuong - LiG1@fmail.vnn.vn

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Jon Tinquist
jktinqr@yahoo.com

Dear Durbin,

I just returned from Vietnam and I am trying to adjust to the difference in time again.. I thought I would just let you know what I have been doing. I met another Vietnam Vet and together we are doing this project. In December I will return and set up the Support Services Center. If you know of anyone or a group that might be interested in this project, please let me know. Thanks JON

The Amerasian Hope Network (AHOPE)

Background:

Throughout history, when there has been an occupying force of military servicemen in a foreign country, relationships inevitably develop between those servicemen and local women from the occupied territories. During the US occupation of Vietnam in the sixties and early seventies, some of these relationships resulted in children of mixed heritage, born to Vietnamese women and their American companions. What happened next is as complex and varied as the individual circumstances, twists of fate, and other political and nonpolitical factors.

Some of these children and their parents never parted, and later immigrated to the US. In other cases US servicemen who fathered these children died in battle or were severely injured at some point during the remainder of their tour of duty, and were never heard from again by the mothers. A few servicemen left for home and later returned to find their children and the mothers, to help them immigrate to the US. Others completely abandoned their children along with the mothers and never looked back. There are many different stories.

When a local girl found herself pregnant with the child of an American serviceman, she was often exiled from her family and community. This exile became particularly more acute after the final departure of US forces from Vietnam and repatriation of the South by the ruling North.

Eventually, years after the war, the existence of these children was acknowledged by the US government, yet, despite government programs designed to allow these Amerasian children quick entry into the United States, many are still living throughout Vietnam. Their lives have been difficult in the wake of the absence of their fathers, and the hard lives of their mothers. Because of their lack of basic family structure (mother, father and extended family relationships), in most cases, they do not have the same benefits of social and community support, common to the lives of the average Vietnamese citizen. They are often denied entry into the education system, and therefore, many of them are illiterate. A large number are homeless, living on the streets, making a living as beggars, or working in the lowest level of Vietnam's labor pool. They are for all practical purposes, indentured slaves, working for basic food, clothing, and shelter. In Vietnam these children can be found on the streets of any city, on farms, wandering the roads, or in small villages. Though some have been able to make connections within Vietnamese society, and many have benefited from the general kindness of Vietnamese people, and have found a survivable life in Vietnam, most of these Amerasians live in very poor conditions. The true measure of their numbers is unknown.

These children have a common heritage as descendants of American servicemen. As such, in accordance with US policy, each of them should have access to an easy immigration to the US, if this is what an individual should so desire. Yet this is far from the experience they live with. It has been documented that these children are routinely denied their opportunity for US citizenship, and there are many scams that seek to exploit these children for profit, based on the value of their immigrant status. Often, after paying fees to middlemen and arrangers the same children who are routinely denied are often approved for immigration. False family members are often attached to the immigrants case file, also becoming eligible for immigration along with the Amerasian child. These scams, while making small fortunes for some, have left many Amerasians caught up in false paperwork filing dilemmas, that have left them in a pool of applicants who are therefore routinely denied entry into the United States Amerasian immigration program.

These children have other issues to address as well. Like children anywhere they want to know their fathers. They desire to be known and acknowledged in the world. Many of them struggle with the pain of abandonment, and the hard lives lived by their mothers. They simply seek to connect with the fathers that gave them life or to just have a dialog about their struggles, their lives, with a person who can listen and understand. They also have issues related to day-to-day survival. These children are now grown adults, many of whom have children of their own. So, this legacy of poverty and lack of opportunity has bridged a generation, effecting the lives of a new group of young Amerasian descendants. These children and their families are working with very minimal resources. Money, education, legal services, job training, healthcare, and adequate housing, are all on-going issues that need to be addressed.

TRAVEL CHANNEL HONORS 20th ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C. IN VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL – WALL OF COURAGE PREMIERING NOVEMBER 4, 2002

--Fifth in Travel Channel's AMERICAN ICONS Series of Specials Visits The Wall with Glenn Teague, Vietnam Vet from California--

--Special Goes Behind the Scenes of Museum Archives to See Gifts Left at The Wall, Including Custom-built Harley Davidson from Wisconsin Veterans --

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL -- WALL OF COURAGE has its world premiere on the Travel Channel on Monday, November 4 from 9-10 PM ET/PT with an encore presentation on Sunday, November 10 from 8-9 PM ET/PT. Its airing honors Veterans' Day and the 20th anniversary of the Memorial. The program is the fifth in the AMERICAN ICONS series of quarterly specials, which celebrate some of this country's most revered historical destinations and places of interest.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, also referred to as "The Wall," commemorates the more than 58,000 soldiers who died in the war. Since its dedication in November 1982, the Wall has become a stark symbol of an unpopular war's tragic losses. With more than four million visitors annually, it is the most visited memorial in the nation's capital.

The special follows one Vietnam veteran, Glenn Teague, who has not seen the Memorial until now. Nervous with anticipation, he travels from his home in California to Washington D.C. to visit the Wall; once there, he faces his fears and pays tribute to a buddy of his who died in the war. He also meets his friend's sister for the first time in a heart-felt remembrance of the man they both knew and loved.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was the vision of veteran Jan Scruggs who saw half his company killed in action. He believed the best way to remember the men and women who died was to create a memorial that included the each person's name. But raising the \$8 million needed to create the Wall was difficult; Scruggs battled financial obstacles and opposition to the memorial before his idea finally became a reality.

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL: WALL OF COURAGE shares the story of the Wall's design and construction. Maya Lin, a 21-year old Yale architecture student, had a unique vision of a horizontal memorial as opposed to the traditional vertical memorials for which Washington is known. Her unconventional design of a low-lying, dark and modern monument met with much critical opposition. In fact, the project was almost halted until a separate, more conventional statue was added to the overall design.

Visitors to the Wall leave behind thousands of personal offerings, which are carefully preserved in a nearby museum. Travel Channel goes behind the scenes at the museum, which is off-limits to tourists, and talks with a curator about the many unique and touching tributes. One of the most famous is the custom-built Harley Davidson that was left at the Wall on Memorial Day, 1995. Known as the "Wisconsin Rolling Memorial," the motorcycle was hand-built by a group of Wisconsin veterans to pay tribute to those who died or are missing in action. The bike was lovingly crafted by many different hands, all contributing a portion of the bike. Even dog tags from 37 MIAs were included on the bike.

Also impacted by the Vietnam War are more than 20,000 children who either have only a vague memory of their fathers or none at all. VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL – WALL OF COURAGE shares the story of Tony Cordero, founder of "Sons and Daughters in Touch," which helps unite the children whose fathers didn't make it home from Vietnam. Each year they gather at the Wall to honor their lost fathers.

AMERICAN ICONS: VIETNAM MEMORIAL: WALL OF COURAGE is produced for the Travel Channel by LMNO Productions. Lisa Bourgoujian is the executive producer, Kathryn Kaycoff is the supervising producer. Kathleen Cromley is the executive producer for the Travel Channel.

The Travel Channel expects to launch their web site covering this event on 15 October 2002. Below are a few things you can expect to see:

Letters at the Wall: A special forum for people to share their stories about visiting the Wall. Visitors will see a large image of the Wall itself and post their experiences below.

Offerings at the Wall: A photo gallery of the objects people have left at the Wall over the years.

Voices of the Wall: A series of Flash-based mini documentaries from people who work at the Wall. They share stories and history of what the Wall means to people.

Our Heritage-Our Legacy

Durbin M. Keeney
VVA State Homeless & Veterans Affairs Chairman

It is Sunday Morning and I just came from Church where we took time to look at our Churches "rich heritage" and along with that our Christian legacy. As veterans we need to assess where we are as well and where we are going. We need to consider this in light of our rich heritage and what will be our legacy. I often think of what George Duggan's past National President has said at the VVA 1997 National Convention in Kansas City. After being let down by one of the veterans service organizations who did not respect us enough to show up for the opening of our convention he looked out over the hundreds of us and paused for a moment. Then he said, "The next twenty years are ours." The essence of what he said after that is that we have the future of all veterans in our hands. This was in no way disrespectful of those that had come before us, or are active with us, the reality that the torch had been passed and what are we going to do with it?

We all enjoy the fruits of the labor of those men and women that have gone before us. Many have answered the Great Commanders call and are standing shoulder to shoulder today and one day we will join them, but until then there is much to be done. Our time is limited by these mortal bodies that we have, and it is time for us to roll up our collective and individual sleeves and get to work. I once wrote a note to myself during a college religion class that "young men are about creating resumes, and old men are about creating obituaries." We are now somewhere in between those two distinct periods of our lives. The sudden and tragic death of our true champion for all veterans Senator Wellstone, his family, and those others on that plane has caused all of us to pause and reassess what we are to do with the time remaining that we are blessed to have on this earth. Someday veterans will look back to see what we have done with the heritage that we have and what will have been our legacy?

Now as we must roll up our sleeves, we must put turf issues and petty jealousies aside and get to work and there is a lot of work to do! At the end of the Civil War the veterans had to go to Washington D.C. to receive the meager benefits that they had coming. It was the process of finding the soldiers' individual records before they were approved that we find interesting today.

Their records were rapped with “red tape” and hence the term as stuck as it relates to government and the difficulties to try to cut through the “red tape” to meet the needs of all veterans and their families. Over the years it seem to get more difficult, but we must never give up. As an example the budget and appropriations for the operations of much of the government is currently being run on a continuing resolution. That means that services for veterans are being run at a 2002 level with 2003 costs. Goods and services for veterans are hurt by this lack of funding and we need to put our Congressmen and Senators on notice that this practice of adjourning with out their work being completed in inapposite and lets hold them accountable. Could you do that and keep you job?

Now let me be clear that I am not pessimistic about the process, quite the opposite. I believe that we in a place to make the greatest difference for our current veterans and veterans in the future since the G.I. Bill was signed into law. The American Legion, VFW, and DAV has come together to support H.R. 2903 /S2903 bill that would take the VA budget out of the political process and establish a base line for the VA Budget and then index the budget for years to come. While this may not be everything that we all want it would I believe save the VA and the services that many of our fellow veterans depend on for health care. The VA will serve 4.9 million veterans in 2003 that is up from 3.7 million veterans only one year ago according to an article in the VFW November magazine. The brilliance of that these three veteran’s organizations are speaking with one voice on this noble effort is very important at this time. We all need to join them as never before to support this very historic effort.

Along with those effort there needs to be an outcry to Senator Dayton to take up the fight left behind by the death of Senator Wellstone. We need to have a Minnesotan on the Veterans Affairs Committee. We need to educate Senator Coleman and encourage him to support issues that affect all veterans and their families. Each of you needs to meet with our Congressman representatives and respectfully voice your concerns.

Minnesota government provides even greater challenges to all of us. New Governor with budget concerns, and who will be on his leadership team? We need to let him know how we feel about our Commissioner Jeff Olson, and how important his budget is to all of us. It concerns me that we have still 3,412 veterans experiencing homelessness in our state and we need ongoing support to bring them all the way home.

We need to speak our support of the Veterans Home Board and how critical their budget is to all veterans and our veteran's families. Remember the success of failure of the future of veterans is up to us. ALL OF US!

As it appears that our country is moving toward war the needs for services for the veterans will increase and the services will either be there or not. It is our heritage and our legacy to see that the needs for the futures veterans be in place. This same article from the VFW quoted George Washington "The willingness which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."

Again our heritage is clear that is the past that we all enjoy. It is our legacy that we need to work toward. It is up to you, it is up to me, and it is up to all veterans.

May God bless you and yours in this holiday season and may God bless America

.Caption for flag picture: Student from a Twin Cities High School helped Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans staff create an American Flag made up of 3412 single flags to demonstrate the number of veterans that are experiencing homelessness



GREETINGS From SILVER BAY:

1. CENSUS:

89 Beds, 86 Residents, 20 Waiting Admission
Jeff Brown Leaving December 31– moving on, going back to school.

2. PROJECTS:

A. WORKING; ASSET PRESERVATION, Major Construction under Dept. of Administration:

1. Re-roof Architectural firm selected– bidding out December '02.
2. Space Needs– looking to VA Funding

B. COMPLETED:

1. Air duct cleaning/HVAC upgrade (filter system) - throughout building– now testing systems
2. 2002 Bonding issue: Assessment (cut– did not make Governor's list)

3. MAJOR SPONSORED EVENTS :

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| A. December 12 | ALA Annual Gift Shop |
| B. December 19 | Annual Holiday Party |

4. COMMANDERS/PRESIDENTS PROJECT:

Three Season Building- \$44,000.00, have \$8,000.00

5. NEEDS LIST:

Funding for - SEE NEEDS LIST at display table

The Administration has an open door policy for visitation of residents. We asked that arrangements be made in advance if individuals or groups desire a tour of the facility. We encourage group sponsorship of activities.



And Happy Holidays

From N V V A

Board Members