

February 2006



NORTHLAND VIETNAM VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

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



"Dignity Thru Unity"

Meetings 4th. Monday of month at the Depot 6:30 PM 4th. floor

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NVVA Party Time

By **Rose Hanson**

The annual NVVA dinner dance will be held on Saturday, March 11th. This years entertainment is the ever popular group, Rock-A-Billy Revue.

Your invitations will be in the mail on about February 14, and must be returned by March 1st.

At past dinner events we have mentioned the problems we are having with people who either accept this invite, don't take the time to send them in, and just show up, or ask to bring new members by getting them to join this organization just that evening.

With the support of the board, this committee will not accept any last minute phone calls, with requests to bring a last minute guest, the "I forgot" to mail my invite in, but I am here now, or new members joining that evening just to get a night out. Your RSVP must be postmarked by march 1st, and if you turn out to be a no show, you won't be put on next years guest list.

We apologize for any inconvenience, but this event takes planning, and stops being fun for the people working on this party when we go through Late mailings, no-shows, and or numerous last minute changes.

Last year we had to pay for several no-shows to the tune of Three hundred dollars that we promised the catering staff would show, and did not.

Thank you
Event Planning Committee

Navy Ball October 7, 2005.

the following excerpt from **Lance Reasor**

After six months of preparation and many meetings laying down plans for the 230th celebration of the Navy Ball, Donna Stone put together a successful group which was instrumental in raising \$2,000 in seed money for this year's Navy Ball. After an impressive Flag Ceremony carried out by the Sea Cadets and a memorable presentation of the table set for the POW/MIA Ceremony, the evening meal was set. The ceremony began at 1700 hours, dinner at 1800 hours, with welcoming remarks by president of the mess, Lieutenant Commander Erik Isaacson. After dinner, the cake cutting ceremony was impressive, dinner music was provided by East High School orchestra, the Strolling Strings, and they provided constant music during the entire meal. The Two Bells ceremony was also impressive and the presentation of the "Sailor of the Year" plaque by the Navy League was carried out at 2000 hours followed by a speaker and the traditional "Toasting" procedure. Lance took the opportunity to toast..."the United States Submarine Service, the Botton Gun Navy, and to remind all present that there were only two kinds of ships, Submarines and Targets. Here! Here!"

Thank you!
Respectfully,
Lance G. Reasor
218-723-1156d the will of the American people to be sustained for the long haul

To add an article to this newsletter contact

Mike Hanson 624 4474
Noisyguy@chartermi.net

NVA Memberships
176 Members
130 Associates

Don't Forget Party **BlackWoods Proctor**

March 11, 2006

Rockabilly Revue

Happy Hour 6:00 P.M.
Dinner @ 7:00 P.M.
Prizes and Fun for all

To All:

This was the last address given by a Navel Commandeer in Duluth. After 107 years of a Navy presence there will be no Navel unit in Duluth. So it made Commanders Isacson's speech even more important. It was my pleasure to be part of the NVVA Color Guard at the program. Transcript from CDR Erik Isaacson's speech at Paulucci Hall, Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center Speech 11:00, December 7, 2005. There is good history here and worth the read

Ladies and Gentlemen, Veterans, distinguished sailors and Pearl Harbor Survivors,
Good morning.

As a west coast sailor, I consider it a distinct honor and privilege to speak today about our nations history. As a Navy pilot, my travels have taken me to the far reaches of the pacific to the hallowed battlegrounds of Iwo Jima, Guam, Midway, the coral beaches of Wake Island and the oily waters above the final resting place of the 1177 crewmembers of the USS Arizona.

Public Law 308 of the 103rd congress Designates December 7 of each year as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day- Today marks the 64th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and one of the most important days in the 20th century. It is a day to remember Citizens and veterans alike. It is a day for my generation to honor the lessons learned two generations ago and remember. It is a day not unlike our generation's Sept 11. To quote President Roosevelt's address to congress on Dec. 8, 1941 - 'It is a date that will live in Infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.'

Pearl Harbor was the culmination of a decade of deteriorating relations between Japan and the United States over the status of China and the security of SE Asia. The attack on Pearl Harbor was part of Japan's grand strategy of conquest of the western pacific. Their objective was to immobilize the US pacific fleet so the US would not interfere with the invasion plans. Japans Admiral Yamamoto knew that Japan's only hope of success against America's superior economic and industrial might was to achieve a quick and decisive victory.

Early winter 1941, tensions between the US and Japan were heated. Late in November 1941, the US government dispatched a warning to the force commanders in the Hawaiian and Philippine Island areas to be on the alert for possible Japanese hostile action.

Although an older model destroyer, DD-139, the USS Ward was stationed in Hawaii. On December 6, it had been tasked by the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, Admiral Kimmel, with a short fused routine patrol just outside Pearl Harbor within a two-mile radius of the channel-entrance buoys. As the USS Ward continued on its patrol on the early hours of December 7, lookouts on the destroyer's bridge noticed a small feather wake astern of another US ship, the USS Antares (AKS-14) .

Within moments, Ward sprang into action-the general quarters alarm routed

the men from their bunks and sent them on the double to their action stations. LT Outerbridge, the Captain, had retired to a makeshift bunk rigged up in the charthouse, and was on the bridge in seconds, pulling a life jacket on over a kimono and pajamas, and a World War I style "tin helmet" on his head.

Ward charged at the submarine; and, for a moment, Outerbridge thought his ship was going to overrun the intruder. The Number one four-inch Gun mount trained around, and her gunners tried to draw on the elusive target.

America's first shot of the Pacific war barked from Ward's gun at 0645 and splashed harmlessly beyond the small conning tower. As Ward pounded past at 25 knots, number three gun atop the galley deckhouse amidships commenced fire-its round passed squarely through the submersible's conning tower.

As the Japanese midget sub wallowed lower in the water and started to sink, the destroyer swiftly dropped four depth charges-signaled by four blasts on the ship's whistle. Black water gushed upwards in the ship's boiling wake as the bombs went off-sealing the submarine's doom.

On that Sunday morning, The USS Ward had the distinction of firing the first American shot in WW2.

What is little publicized from this story is that the crew of USS Ward contained Naval reservists from Minnesota. Specifically, this crew had trained on the USS Paducah. Depending on your seniority, you may remember the Paducah docked right behind this building, in these familiar waters of western Lake Superior.

Subsequently, as the day dawned upon the hillsides of Oahu, Ward headed for home-. Nearing the harbor entrance around 0800, those on deck heard the sound of gunfire and explosions, as smoke began to boil into the skies over Pearl Harbor. Strafing Japanese planes convinced the crew that there indeed was a war on.

The first wave of Japanese aircraft had arrived over Oahu shortly before 7:55 am targeting Battleship Row - home of battleships such as the USS Arizona. A second wave attacked at approximately 8:40, targeting Hickam and Kaneohe airfields; destroying the US capability to retaliate.

By mid-day, the two wave attack had killed 2388 Americans, destroyed 21 ships and 323 aircraft. The attack was great, but not a total success. The U.S Pacific fleet was shattered, although its aircraft carriers were not in port at the time of the attack and remained untouched.

More importantly, the American people, previously divided over the issue of US involvement in WW2, rallied together with a total commitment to victory over Japan and the Axis powers.

In World War II there were over 1 million American casualties, including 417,200 deaths. This equates to 6,600 Americans dying in combat for each month of the war. Today we remember this price, this sacrifice.

If there are any members of the 'First Shot' Association or any Pearl Harbor

Survivors in the audience today, I hope that I was able to capture just a fraction of your honor, your commitment and your courage. Pearl Harbor highlights one moment in time where Minnesotans did their part, for country and nation.

On this DEC 7, Let us all remember that generation, our predecessors; their sacrifices, and their patriotism. We remember Pearl Harbor. Thank you.

Erik Isaacson
CDR USNR(FTS)
Commanding Officer

Navy Operational Support Center Duluth
WK: (218) 722-3454/ Toll Free 1(866) 638-6645
Cell: (218) 310-9521

January 23, 2006

Greetings: from Ward Wallin, Volunteer Program Administrator, and Mike Bond, Administrator - Minnesota Veterans Home - Silver Bay.

Our census is currently 79 residents.

Past events:

November 18: Christmas Parade - Duluth
December 16: Christmas Party

Coming events:

January 25: Annual Cootie Venison Dinner
February 12: Cootie Supreme Visitation

Current Fundraising Project:

We recently completed the fundraising for a six passenger Surrey. We have a trail system adjacent to our facility and this will be a great asset to our recreation department. We plan on purchasing this vehicle next spring.

We are in the process of fundraising for a three season building. We already have \$11,000 in the fund which has a target goal of \$36,000.

Activities:

We offer many on-going activities such as bingo, luncheons, and birthday parties. We are enjoying the winter season as we have an ice house ready on Lax Lake. We have also been active in programming with our various military partners to have some programs in the Duluth/Superior area, the Christmas City of the North Parade (with the DAV) is a great example.

We want to thank the NVVA for their ongoing support of the Home.

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.

Subject: General Abizaid - Commander, US Central Command (Middle East less Israel and Turkey)

General Abizaid spoke to the Naval War College last week. The audience was made up primarily of War College students who are mid-grade/senior military officers. The majority of these officers have served in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, so there was a real understanding of dynamics of the region. BS would not sell to this audience. Here is a short summary of General Abizaid's comments.

He is amazed as he goes around the country and testifies before the Congress how many of our countrymen do not know or understand what we are doing or how we are doing. There are very few members of Congress who have ever worn the uniform (of our armed forces). He said that the questions he gets from some in Congress convince him that they have the idea that we are about to be pushed out of Iraq and Afghanistan. There is no relation between this and the reality on the ground.

As he goes around the region and talks to troops and junior officers he is very impressed by their morale and their achievements. They are confident that they are capable of defeating the enemy.

You will never see a headline in this country about a school opening or a power station being built and coming on line, or a community doing well. Only the negative things will get coverage in the media. He told the mid-grade/senior officers to go to their local Lyons Clubs when they go home and tell the people what they are doing. If they don't get the word out, the American people will not know what is really happening.

The insurgency is in four of 18 provinces in Iraq, not all 18. You do not hear about the 14 provinces where there is no insurgency and where things are going well. The insurgency in Afghanistan is primarily in Kandahar Province (home of the Taliban) and in the mountain region on the Pakistani border. The rest of the country is doing well.

Iraq now has over 200,000 soldiers/police under arms and growing. They are starting to eclipse the US/coalition forces. Their casualty rate is more than double that of the US. There are more than 70,000 soldiers under the moderate government in Afghanistan and growing.

He predicted that the insurgencies in the four Sunni provinces in northern/central Iraq and in Southwestern Afghanistan will be there for the foreseeable future, but they will be stabilized and become small enough so the moderate governments will be able to keep them under control.

2006 will be a transition year in Iraq and that will see the Iraqi forces take much more of the mission from the US forces. This is necessary to bring stability to Iraq. We need to be less in numbers and less in the midst of the people for the moderate Iraqi government to succeed.

Our primary enemy is not the insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is Al Qaida and their ideology. We are at a period now that is similar to the 1920s where Communism and Nazism had not taken hold in Russia and Germany. The ideology of Al Qaida is out there and it has not taken hold in any country in the middle east. We need to make sure that it does not and we are doing that, but it will be a long problem with a long commitment.

He said that we are focused on the things that we (Americans) have done wrong, like Abu Ghraib, and not talking about this enemy. We need to talk about this enemy. Al Qaida is all over the world. Their goal is to get the US out of the region and come to power in the Islamic countries of the region. From there their goal is to establish a Caliphate (under a single Islamic ruler) that goes from the Atlantic in North Africa to Indonesia in the Pacific. Fifty years after this happens their goal is to rule the rest of the world.

Since Desert Storm in 1991 US forces have not lost any combat engagement in the region at the platoon level or above. Al Qaida has no beliefs that they can defeat us militarily. They see our center of gravity as being the will of the American People. That is influenced by the media and they are playing to that.

They don't need to win any battles. Their plan is keep the casualties in front of the American people in the media for long enough that we become convinced that we can not win and leave the region. This would be tragic for our country.

The battle against Al Qaida will not be primarily military. It will be political, economic, and ideological. It will require the international community to fight too. We must not let Al Qaida get hold in any country. It will result in our worst nightmare. Picture life in Afghanistan under the Taliban, that is what Al Qaida's ideology has as a goal.

If you look at the geography (of Al Qaida) there is no place to put a military solution. They are networked and

they are all over the world. They are a virtual organization connected by the internet. They use it to prosletize, recruit, raise money, educate and organize. They have many pieces that we must focus on: the propaganda battle in the media, safe houses, front companies, sympathetic members of legitimate governments, human capital, fighters and leaders, technical expertise, weapons suppliers, ideologically sympathetic non-government organizations (charities), financiers, smugglers, and facilitators. A lot of their money comes from drugs.

We are winning but we have got to maintain constant pressure over time with the international community and across the US government agencies. No one is afraid that we can't defeat the enemy. Our troops have the confidence, the courage, and the competence. We need

2006 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

The Northland Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation was established in 1994 with twofold purpose. First, maintaining the condition of the Northland Vietnam Veterans Memorial located on the Lake Superior Lake Walk and second, promoting the memory and commitment of those who served during the Vietnam War. **Our organization offers a minimum of three scholarships to qualified candidates residing in six (6) Minnesota counties of St. Louis, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching and Lake and two (2) Wisconsin counties of Douglas and Bayfield.** The scholarship is based solely upon the paper written on the subject listed on application. The award categories and qualifications are listed below.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

A verifiable relative child, grandchild, sibling, niece/nephew of a Vietnam era veteran (including step family)

Graduating senior

Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0

Verifiable acceptance to an accredited university or technical college within the United States

COLLEGE STUDENT

A verifiable Vietnam veteran or relative of a Vietnam veteran (including step family)

Completed at least 26 academic credits in an accredited program maintaining a cumulative GPA of 2.0

Verifiable, full time, registered student at a college within the United States

TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

A verifiable Vietnam era veteran or a relative of a Vietnam era veteran (including step family)

Completed at least 26 academic credits in an accredited program, maintaining a GPA of 2.0

Verifiable, full time, registered student in an accredited technical/vocational school within the United States

Each scholarship awarded is in a minimum amount of \$700. The award will be sent directly to their educational institution when fall registration is verified. Recipients are eligible to reapply annually. Awards given on May 30, 2005 at the Vietnam Memorial on the Lake Walk.

2006 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

D.O.B. _____

SOCIAL SECURITY # _____

PARENT(S) _____

QUALIFICATIONS

VETERAN NAME _____

RELATIONSHIP TO APPLICANT _____

DD214 or Honorable Discharge included Yes No

BRANCH OF SERVICE _____

DATE OF SERVICE _____

PLEASE ATTACH THE FOLLOWING THREE ITEMS:

Current Transcript

Military Verification (DD214 or Discharge Document)

Brief Essay (typed-500 words or less):

After interviewing a Vietnam veteran along with other research about the Vietnam Memorial Wall, in Washington D.C.; What have been it's effects on society?

Application Deadline May 1, 2006 (postmarked on or prior to)

Mail to: Northland Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation

c/o 2423 Chambersburg Avenue
Duluth, Minnesota 55811

Vietnam Veterans True Legacy

Durbin M. Keeney

As the WWII and Korean War veterans die off, we are quickly becoming the older generation of soldiers. This has left us as the largest group and that is only natural. Our legacy that is developing, because of the current war, has a twist that is unexpected one that we need to understand.

We all know that when we returned for our war what occurred for most of us was less than a desirable experience. Many of the events left permanent scars. The antiwar movement has had life-long effects on us that reached to the lives of our families, friends, communities and the nation. This reality for us has been a hard one. We do not want any other soldiers to face, in the future, the experiences the way we did in the past. That is why the Vietnam veteran was the first to support the troops that returned from Gulf War I and have been so actively involved with the returning troops today. We did not want our past to become their future and that has had a positive effect on the Nation.

What has occurred I believe was one large “mea culpa” from a nation that did not treat a generation of soldiers with the respect that they had earned. A generation that realized that the pain that was put on us was misplaced and did great harm. There is now an almost a desperate effort not to do that again. While I personally believe that the idea that one cannot “hate the war and not the warier” is a wonderful political correct way or rationalization to deal with past guilt. I am not sure that is really possible. You often hear it from those who do not support the war. It does point out guilt by many of those who are dealing with their own personal issues that relate back from how they treated us. That is O.K. if it makes it better for those who are servicing today and in the future.

What has occurred is what is often referred to as “lessons learned”. This fall I attended a training that was sponsored by MACV and the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans. The DOD and the VA spoke about what is being done better for the soldiers of this war verses what happened in our war. Milt Shown a CVSO from Ramsey County and I were sitting near each other and I noticed that he too was counting how many times statements were made that went something like; “we did not do what was right to the veterans from Vietnam,” what we learned and will do better to this generation than we did to those who served in Nam,” we made mistakes in how we treated the Vietnam veterans,” and on an on it went. I asked Milt how many times did he count what was said? Interesting enough and we both had fourteen times in one hour that there were “recognition statements.”

The Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Military as well as the VA have taken broad measures to make very positive changes. Efforts are made before soldiers are activated, while in the field and upon returning. Communities are doing so much better as well. Training is available for business and community leaders on how to do a better. Duluth’s Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee for example is having as it program at its annual luncheon with the topic of “Citizen Solider.” Speakers will address each of these needs and how the business community can do a better. The Chamber along with MACV will be doing follow-up training on this topic. The 88th Med unit outside of the Twin Cites reaches out to many states with professional help, the Vets Centers, and the VA as a whole has stepped up to the plate. This is a wonderful start.

Some may say it is because of guilt, pressure put on by veterans groups, and a sense to do better. In other words, learn from mistakes of the past, again life lessons, I don’t know. I really believe that it is all of the above.

This, I believe, is our legacy to the current and future soldiers. We paid a very big price and hopefully this will never happen again. It seems to be as if a big force of nature (I believe it is the Vietnam veteran) that these soldiers of today and veterans of the future are going to be better off. It is because of our organization and the support of other veterans organizations o never again allow others to do what was done to us. If that is our legacy it will be a good one. I believe it is legacy that we can point to with pride.

Homelessness Among our Veterans

Durbin M. Keeney

Outreach Chair

Nationally the number is down and that is good news according to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Down is not good enough! There was a study that showed a marked decrease in veterans experiencing homelessness. That on the surface seems to be good but is the numbers real? There are many factors that influence those numbers. Our veteran population is aging until this war began the average age of a homeless veteran was going up. The effects of this war on those numbers will largely not take effect for many years. Therefore, we will still see an incline in those numbers for the near foreseeable future.

Then what is happening? I would like to say is that we are doing a better job providing services and thus reducing the number of homeless veterans. That is true to a degree. But another factor is aging. More and more our generation, which is the largest population of veterans, is getting older. As we enter the sixties in large numbers we will see a decline in homelessness among our population. Social Security, and Medicare will make a difference, as well as the most venerable among this population will die off at a higher rate. To paraphrase "old soldiers never die; they just fade away" and having any veteran on our streets is still wrong. It is our job to do two things: for the current homeless veterans given them the dignity that they have earned, and do our best to prevent future generation of homeless veterans.

While the war may not be popular we are at the crest of the wave in public and governmental support. I know you can argue, and rightfully so, that our government is not doing enough and that is true. But now it seems that doors are opening to achieve many of the needs of our veterans and especially our homeless veterans. There will come a day when we will not be in the possession that we are in today. Lets take advantage of the crest of the wave.

Statewide, MACV continues to make an impact and can only continue to do so with the help of this organization, other veteran's organizations, and the community as a whole continue this important work. New housing is being built in Mankato to open this summer for eleven veterans. We in Duluth are looking to buy a building that will house our offices, programs, and a total of fifty transitional and permanent housing beds for veterans and their families, as well as a veteran's service center. The housing projects that will open this year in St. Cloud and Minneapolis will make a wonderful difference. It is a start. We need you, our fellow veterans, to help keep making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

I believe that it is wrong to have the number of homeless that we have in this country. I believe that it is a sin to have our veterans on the streets. We can do better and with your help we will.