

July 2005



NORTHLAND VIETNAM VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

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Presidents Corner

By Kathy Camps

I'm back from my trip to D.C. My travel companion's were Durbin and Father John. We attended the annual conference of the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans. The first day we heard from the Department of Veterans Affairs secretary Jim Nicholson. At lunch time we had a box lunch and a group of us got together to prepare for our visits to Capital Hill the next day. The second day I went to a workshop on H homeless Women Veterans. It discussed what is being done to help. Some p laces have specific programs to help. The afternoon found us going up to the capital to meet with aides of Senator Coleman and Senator Dayton. We brought with us some recommendations on issues we wanted them to support. We then went across to meet With Senator Oberstars aide to fill her in on the same issues. Thursday night we had a real nice banquet and I met so many nice people. I ended up meeting a fellow who use to be our paperboy when I was growing up. What a small world it is. In the morning of the last day I attended a workshop with Father John on incarcerated homeless veterans. They talked about programs to help increase the vets success after release. The awards luncheon followed. We received a Outstanding Partner Award for our help with stand down and other programs. In the evenings we did some sightseeing ,and a lot of walking. I bet we walked 30 miles, but was assured by Durbin that it was only about 3 miles. We had a good time and accomplished a lot but it's good to be back home .

**To add an article to this
newsletter contact**

Mike Hanson 624 4474
Noisyguy@chartermi.net

NVA Memberships
179 Members
131 Associates

Don't Forget Party
BlackWoods Proctor
March 11, 2006

lots more to come

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

Blues fest 2005

The Bayfront Blues is upon us. The 11 through the 14th. of August. The blues committee has been meeting and everything is coming together. We will again have three tents plus the VIP tent, but something new has been added. In tent number 3 they will be serving wine. That means more volunteers will be needed, so let's get your volunteer sheets in. There will be lots of good music and fun. Let's hope for good weather and a nice turnout.

POW MIA

By Howard Peterson

34 Years to Find Peace

14 April, 2005

After 34 years, soldier's family finds some peace

ARLINGTON, Va. - A long blue line of soldiers wound its way through the sun-filled green fields of Arlington National Cemetery yesterday, passing stones that mark the resting places of those who fought and died in the nation's wars since the 1860s.

Behind the procession of the 3rd Infantry Division honor guard, a caisson drawn by six white horses carried the flag-draped coffin of U.S. Army Col. Sheldon Burnett, whose helicopter crashed 34 years ago in Laos.

25 April, 2005

NEWS RELEASE from the United States Department of Defense

No. 398-05

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Apr 25, 2005

Vietnam War Missing in Action Servicemen Identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of four U.S. servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are Marine 2nd Lt. Heinz Ahlmeyer Jr. of Pearl River, N.Y.; Marine Sgt. James N. Tycz of Milwaukee, Wis.; Marine Lance Cpl. Samuel A. Sharp Jr. of San Jose, Calif.; and Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Malcolm T. Miller of Tampa, Fla. Ahlmeyer, Tycz, and Miller will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery on May 10. Sharp was buried Saturday in San Jose and will be honored at the Arlington ceremony.

Missing Vietnam War pilot ID'd

31 May, 2005

By Associated Press

WILLITS, Calif. -- DNA tests on bone remnants have confirmed the identity of a fighter pilot missing in action since a plane crash during the Vietnam War.

Air Force 1st Lt. Lee Aaron "Larry" Adams, 27, of Willits guided his fighter jet into an attack dive on a Quang Binh province target on April 19, 1966. Fellow pilots reported that his Republic F-105 Thunderchief was hit by enemy fire, crashed and exploded.

His family had no closure until this weekend -- 39 years later.

Airman Identified

13 June, 2005

Airman missing from Vietnam War identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced that the remains of an Airman, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and were returned to his family for burial at Arlington National Cemetery on June 10.

He is Col. James Carter of Johnson City, Tenn.

On Feb. 3, 1966, Colonel Carter was the aircraft commander of a C-123 Provider aircraft which had taken off from Khe Sanh in South Vietnam on a supply mission to Dong Ha, South Vietnam. The plane was not seen again, and searches along the flight route did not find a crash site.

Soldier Finally Returns Home - 60 Years Later **16 June, 2005**

BRISTOL, Tenn. — After 60 years, Private Earnest Brown returned home last weekend, wrapped in the same type of Army blanket that kept him warm through two European winters during World War II.

Every time Brown's remains have been moved since 1992, he's been carefully shrouded in a blanket, the folds held together with clothespins.

POW-MIA Recognition Day Poster **19 June, 2005**

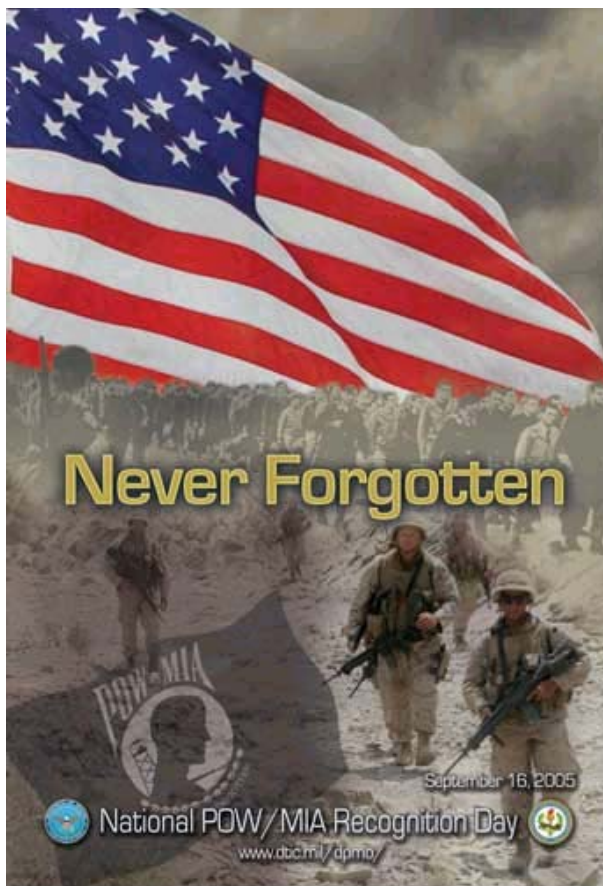
2005 POW/MIA Recognition Day Poster Unveiled

WASHINGTON, June 16, 2005 - The 2005 POW/MIA Recognition Day poster was unveiled here June 15 in honor of the sacrifices made by prisoners of war and service members still unaccounted for, spanning World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

By custom, POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed in Pentagon ceremonies on the third Friday of September, Sept. 16 this year.

This year's poster design "recognizes that we're a nation at war," said Larry Greer, spokesman for the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office. "On the poster you'll see young soldiers in combat - in Iraqi Freedom. You'll also see soldiers from World War II being held as POWs. With particular significance, that connection and the way it's designed, you see the current warriors emerging from a dark cloud where the guys from World War II are under captivity by the Germans.

"What this signifies is past and present, World War II all the way through today, the nation has an obligation to account for its missing," Greer noted. "For those who go in harm's way today, our obligation is to ensure that they come out - that they can be brought out - rescued, if necessary. To those who perished in years past, our obligation is to account for them by the recovery and identification of their remains. But there's a clear connection on the poster between World War II and today's current battlefields."



Thank You from Tina Kolojeski

Dear Scholarship Committee and Northland Vietnam Veterans Association,

Thank you so much for honoring me with the Vietnam Veterans Scholarship and for the wonderful reception at Grandma's. I would also like to thank all the Vietnam veterans for serving our country. I am forever grateful. Thanks again.

Sincerely, Trina Marie Kolojeski

reminder of the picnic
August 21 at Pike Lake noon-4
meal at 1 - RAIN or SHINE

VN Serviceman ID'd

26 June, 2005

Remains Of Vietnam Veteran Identified After 39 Years

MIAMI - The remains of an Air Force officer from Miami Beach have been identified, nearly four decades after his plane was shot down over Vietnam, officials said Wednesday.

Capt. David J. Phillips Jr. was attacking enemy targets over Kien Giang Province in South Vietnam on July 3, 1966, when his F-5 Freedom Fighter was hit by ground fire and crashed, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Korean War MIA Identified

27 June, 2005

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Korean War, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial in Fergus Falls, Minn. on Wednesday.

He is Corporal John O. Strom of Fergus Falls, Minn.

29 June, 2005

Air Force Officer MIA from Vietnam War is Identified

Jun 29, 2005

The Department of Defense POW/MIA Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial.

He is Air Force Lt. Col. Darel D. Leetun of Hettinger, N.D. Leetun will be buried with full military honors July 8 at Arlington National Cemetery.

WW II Sub Discovered in Gulf of Thailand - 86 MIA

30 June, 2005

Divers discover WWII U.S. sub in Gulf of Thailand

By Ed Copley

BANGKOK (Reuters) - A team of deep-sea divers has discovered the wreck of a U.S. submarine sunk by a Japanese minelayer 60 years ago in the Gulf of Thailand during the closing stages of World War II.

The U.S.S. Lagarto, a 1,500 ton "Balao class" submarine, disappeared without trace on May 4, 1945 after attacking a Japanese tanker and destroyer convoy around 100 miles off the southeast coast of Thailand.

All 86 men on board are still listed as missing in action.

"We've always known that since the end of the War there's been a submarine missing around there," said British wreck diver Jamie MacLeod, who discovered the 110 m (310-foot) submarine sitting in 70m (225 ft) of water in May.

NEWS RELEASE from the United States Department of Defense

01 July, 2005

Korean War Missing in Action Serviceman Identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. Army soldier, missing in action from the Korean War, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial in Schererville, Ind.

He is Pfc. Lowell W. Bellar of Gary, Ind. He is to be buried on July 15, the date of his birth in 1931.

Subject: Fwd: [3rd-Recon-Bn-RVN-USMC] Fwd: FW: MILINET: The 'Last Patrol' Comes Home

For the better part of 16 years a group of men from Alpha Co, 3rd Recon Bn USMC RVN have been working with the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, JPAC, and its Military predecessors, to retrieve the remains of those that were left behind during the chaos and fog of battle. I am one of them. As I sit in Northern Minnesota on a beautiful Mothers Day Sunday morning working on a speech to be given at the Mall of America, Sears Court, on 29 May and Memorial day on the Veterans Living History Project, due to family commitments and the urge to script a really good 15 minute speech to deliver at the MOA I am not going to be there for that closure. But I do not think my fellow Marines think less of me for not attending this Ceremony. Our Nation is currently engaged in a War unlike any we have been in before. We are forced by the circumstances of this War to give up personal freedoms and liberties for the sake of our National safety. As every previous generation involved in War knows, such is War. I know that through the work of JPAC and the diligence of former Marines like George Neville and others from 3rd Recon BN USMC RVN and other US Armed Forces Units that families and mothers will finally have that moment to honor their fallen warriors. I ask that where ever you are on Tuesday May 10 at 1100 EDT as the Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery starts you join in a silent prayer of thanks for their return. Semper Fidelis. Tom

New York Daily News
May 8, 2005

The 'Last Patrol' Comes Home

By Richard Sisk, Daily News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - The "Last Patrol" of Marine "Recon Team Breaker" that began in the mountain jungles of Vietnam will end 38 years to the day this week with taps at Arlington National Cemetery.

On Tuesday, 2nd Lt. Heinz Ahlmeyer of Pearl River, N.Y.; Sgt. James Tycz of Milwaukee; and Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Malcolm Miller of Tampa, will be laid to rest.

Lance Cpl. Samuel Sharp Jr., the fourth member of the team whose remains were found northwest of the Marine stronghold at Khe Sanh, was buried last month in his hometown of San Jose, Calif., but he also will be honored at the burial of his three buddies.

The ceremony will take place two weeks after the Vietnamese held parades in what the Communist regime calls Ho Chi Minh City, and its residents still call Saigon, to mark the 30th anniversary of the fall of the South Vietnamese government that the four recon team members and more than 58,000 other Americans died trying to save.

"All these years, I never had much doubt my brother was gone," said Irene Healea, Ahlmeyer's sister, who now lives in Watertown, Tenn. "But until something like this happens, you always hold out a little bit, you always think one nice day he'll come walking in the door and it would all have been a big mistake."

Ahlmeyer was 23 years old, Tycz 22, Miller 20 and Sharp 20 when a helicopter set down their seven-man team from the 3rd Marine Reconnaissance Battalion at the crest of Hill 665 on the evening of May 9, 1967.

Their mission was to scout infiltration routes from nearby Laos along the Ho Chi Minh Trail supply route for the North Vietnamese Army, according to military after-action reports.

But the scouting quickly stopped as the patrol ran across enemy bunkers on the hillside. The team rushed back to the crest with the enemy swarming after them, hurling grenades and satchel charges.

The battle went through the night and into the morning. Ahlmeyer and Sharp were killed by rifle fire, Miller by a grenade.

Tycz picked up an enemy grenade but it exploded as he tried to throw it back. He was posthumously given the Navy Cross, the military's second highest award for valor.

Pfc. Steven Lopez worked the radio through the night, calling in artillery fire to hold off the enemy. Twice, helicopters tried to rescue the three survivors but were driven off by ground fire. Helicopter pilot Capt. Paul Looney died of wounds received in the first rescue attempt.

At about 10 a.m. on May 10, the third helicopter rescue effort succeeded, pulling out Pfc. Lopez, Clarence Carlson and Carl Friery but leaving behind the four dead of the recon team.

In 1991, several Vietnamese told U.S. officials they had found remains on Hill 665. Between 1993 and last year, 18 joint U.S./Vietnamese teams searched the area and the remains were identified through DNA testing.

The Pentagon said the remains of 748 Americans have now been recovered from Vietnam, and 1,835 are still missing.

Heinz Ahlmeyer's friends, classmates and his soccer coach from the State University at New Paltz plan to attend the Arlington funeral, which several of them likened to opening and then quickly closing again a time capsule from the turbulent 1960s.

"It seems like a thousand years ago and miles away," said state Assemblyman Bill Parment (D-N.Y.), a teammate of Ahlmeyer's.

"Heinz had such a great personality, he could fill up a room with his smile," Parment said, but he wondered how his friend would have coped with the nation he would have returned to in the late 1960s.

"He probably would've been shocked. Everything had changed so dramatically, we were having anti-war protests and the beginnings of the drug culture," Parment said.

Soccer coach Al Miller, a member of the National Soccer Hall of Fame who was instrumental in establishing the annual Heinz Ahlmeyer Award at New Paltz, described his former player as "your basic fresh-faced, all-American kid, you just instantly liked him."

"He was so gung-ho about the Marines," said Miller, who still treasures a letter Ahlmeyer sent to the school after completing initial Marine training.

"He said boot camp was a piece of cake after my training camp," Miller said with a laugh. "I still can't make myself believe he's gone."

VA FY06 appropriations bill passes House

News from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Steve Buyer, Chairman, 335 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515

IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, May 26, 2005

CONTACT: Brooke Adams (202) 225-3664

HOUSE PASSES APPROPRIATIONS BILL H.R. 2528, WITH VETERANS HEALTHCARE, INCREASE OF \$1.64 BILLION

Washington, DC - Today by a vote of 425-1, the House passed H.R. 2528, the Fiscal Year 2006 Military Quality of Life Appropriations Act. The bill provides an increase of \$1.64 billion over FY05 funding levels for veterans health-care.

"The \$1.64 billion increase will allow veterans to receive the quality healthcare and medical services that they so richly deserve," said Chairman Buyer. The bill also provides significant funding for veterans' specialty mental health programs, including PTSD treatment. "America's warriors and their families can rest assured that VA will be funded at an increased level in order to treat battlefield exposures to shock, trauma and the stressors of combat," Chairman Buyer added.

Chairman Buyer has worked to increase funding for veterans in several areas:

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

- * Veterans Healthcare funded at \$1.64 billion above FY05, a 9 percent increase and \$1 billion above the budget request. Veterans Healthcare and medical services are funded at \$21 billion.
- * Veterans healthcare has increased by 18 percent over the last two years.
- * Funds \$2.2 billion specifically for veterans specialty mental health programs, including PTSD treatment, which includes a \$100 million increase over current funding, in recognition of the wartime needs of returning service members.
- * Doubles funding for mental health research.
- * Increases major veterans health facility construction funding by 33 percent.
- * Includes \$10 million for a new revenues improvement demonstration program that will allow the VA to more readily collect 3rd party billing/funds.
- * Maintains the partnership between the VA and States for cost-sharing in caring for veterans in State nursing homes.

VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

- * Funds cost-of-living increase (COLA) for service-connected veterans and survivors.
- * Increases readjustment benefits funding by 26 percent, primarily to fund expanded education and training benefits for Reserve personnel ordered to active service and changes in the Montgomery GI Bill education program.
- * Funds pension, and burial benefits.
- * Funds administration and supervision of VA insurance programs, such as SGLI - Service members Group Life Insurance, to ensure benefits will be paid in a timely fashion upon death of participating service members and veterans to their designated beneficiaries.

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

- * Funds operation and maintenance of VA's national cemeteries, as well as land acquisition for new cemeteries in Bakersfield, CA; Birmingham, AL; Columbia-Greenville, SC; Jacksonville, FL; Sarasota, FL; and southeastern PA.
- * Funds cemetery expansion and improvements at Ft. Rosecrans, CA.
- * Funds State Cemetery Grants Program.

INSPECTOR GENERAL

- * Office of Inspector General (OIG) - The bill provides \$70,174,000 for the Office of Inspector General, an increase of \$1,021,000 over last year's funding level. The funding increase will assist OIG in overseeing the quality of health care services, identifying internal control vulnerabilities in benefits payment processes, and detecting waste, fraud and abuse through extensive review and analysis of VA databases and matching initiatives.

Scholarships

Brad Bennett

The four scholarships in the amount of \$1,000.00 each were awarded for the 2004-2005 academic year. This year the title for the essay was "After interviewing a Vietnam veteran, How do you feel the VA medical system has handled the medical issues related to the war in Vietnam?"

Renewal:

Victori Friermuth: Graduate of Cromwell High School. Is attending completing her Associate Arts degree at Lake Superior College in the Physical Therapy Assistant program. Her parents are William and LuAnne Friermuth. William served with the US Navy from, 1966-1972.

Mario Picinich: Graduate of Solon Springs High School. He is attending Lake Superior College in the Firefighting program. His parents are Mario and Dana Picinich. His father served with the Coast Guard from 1974 to 1977.

New:

Lindsey Anderson from Cloquet. Lindsey attends the College of St. Benedict majoring in Elementary Education. Her parents are Lee and Jan Anderson. Lee served with the US Marine Corps from '66-'69.

Trina Marie Kolojeski: A graduate of East High School attends the University of Minnesota majoring in Elementary Education. Her parents are Gary and Pat Kolojeski. Her uncle, Michael McKeever, served with the US Marine Corps and was killed in action.

Sunday 26 June 2005

Hi Everyone.

Well the big push is over. We had 20 AmerAsian families interviewed last week. Ten of them were approved and coming to America in the next 2 months. It was a real emotional roller coaster for me. I was so happy for the 10 and so sad for the other 10. The 10 that didn't get a yes were told to go home and wait for a letter. We are not sure what that letter will say, so we will have to wait also. All of these had been disapproved 1 to 3 or 4 times before. The ones approved can't believe they got approved and can't believe it took such a short time. All of the women came and hugged me and kissed me and several of the men did also. All of the children came running with smiles and hugs. All of the hard work was well worth it. Ten family's lives are changed forever. I believe it will be very difficult for most of the AmerAsians, as most of them are uneducated. The children are the ones that will receive the most by coming to America and get a good education. In the Vietnamese culture the children take care of the parents, so the adults will be OK in the future. For the adults it will take at least a year to get adjusted but for the children I think it will only take a couple of months.

On last Thursday we had an extra 30 people staying at my house. A lot of the AmerAsians had to come long distances and then be at the Consulate at 8 AM. The police came and checked everyone's ID Cards and wanted to know what I was doing. They spent about an hour here but everything is OK, just have to go pay the police money for the privilege of having someone stay at your house.

Some of the AmerAsians are having trouble with getting passports. Immigration knows they are approved to go to America and they want lots of money to give them the passport. It is terrible the way things are done here. AmerAsians are victims again.

We had 25 families we were working with. 10 of them approved but we still have things to help them with until they go to America. The other 10 we will see what we can do. 5 still need to get an interview. When we are done with these 25 we will start on another 10 at a time.

The website is being worked on so it won't be to long. I will have stories and pictures on all of the AmerAsians we are working with. If any of you know of a church or organization that would sponsor a family in America, let me know. About half of them are Catholic and half Buddhist. They will be coming to America in 6 to 8 weeks.

We are going to slow down here for awhile and get some rest. Over the last six weeks we put in many 16 hour days and some even 20 hours. Chau and I are both exhausted. I will keep you update on new things happening. Thanks for everyone's prayers and I will talk to you later.

JON

Jon Tinquist

VVA Chapter 352

AAHOPE Foundation

jktinquer@yahoo.com

www.aahope.org

Memorial Day 2005

Given at the Viet Nam Memorial
Duluth, MN

It is always a dangerous thing to ask a clergyman to speak; we might be tempted to take an offering. However, let me remind you that as we gather here this evening at this memorial I am very aware that the offering for today has already been made by the men and women we remember this day.

When I was first approached about speaking I asked, "How long do you want me to go on?" "Eight minutes will be plenty" came the response.

That's not very much time to pay honor to those whose names are inscribed on walls here and around our nation, whose graves fill row upon row in solemn national cemeteries here in our nation as well as cemeteries abroad, to remember those who disappeared into the murkiness of war and combat and whose fate is forever unsure. Eight minutes is not very much time. Hardly enough to even begin the litany of loss that stretches around the world: from the green fields and dirt trenches of Europe to the jeweled islands of the Pacific; from that cold reservoir in Korea to the stifling Iron triangle of Viet Nam. This heritage of sacrifice extends from the familiar fields of Gettysburg to the foreign streets of Baghdad. No, eight minutes is not enough time to begin to list the place where our nation has had "boots on the ground" as well as blood.

But I tell you this: any one of those we honor and remember today would gladly trade his or her spot engraved on a granite wall, or silent grave in a national cemetery, for just eight more minutes of life, to feel so briefly the warmth of the sun and the cooling breeze, to see the flowers blooming, to hear the children's voices. Understand that their lives, the ones we remember, were forever ended, and the lives of those who loved them – parents, children, spouses, siblings, friends – forever changed not in eight minutes but in a few, fleeting seconds. A mortal wound comes quickly in the confusion of battle and despite the best attempts to render assistance sometimes there is little to be done. A few seconds – that's all it takes.

It has become common parlance in our day to automatically confer the title "hero" upon those we remember today. Indeed, "hero" is freely applied to all who serve our community and our nation. But remember – not one of those we honor today, not one on the walls of granite, not one in the graves with the flags flapping over them, not one lost in the fog of war, not one wanted to be a "hero." And any one of them would gladly trade that label for a loving touch, a quiet afternoon, a long walk, or even a beer and a smoke.

"Hero" is a label we assign to help us make some sense of our loss, to try to assign some meaning to our grief, or perhaps to cover our fear of what may happen to those who serve today, to those we know and love. I find it hard to think of those serving today as "heroes." I know them too well. I taught them in confirmation; I baptized them; I officiated at their weddings; one of them is the father of my grandchildren. They are more than "heroes;" they are a part of me. Oh, I recognize that calling someone a "hero" is one way to disguise the fears we have about who we might lose; but I can't do it. Nor can I easily think of those whose names are engraved on walls, or whose graves are flag-draped, or who are lost afar, as "heroes." To call them so makes their voices inaccessible to me; it silences their witness to me.

In these eight minutes, for just these few minutes, listen with me and try to hear their voices once more? What are they saying to us this day?

Next page continued

Sound strange? I tell you I still hear the voice of one I knew so well, who died in my arms. I have never thought of him as a “hero” but as a comrade. I do not think I am alone in this. Those of us who were comrades in battle, perhaps even of those we remember this day, warriors in battles unnamed and now forgotten, still hear the voices of those whose lives were lost in but a few seconds.

It is hard to explain. We may not know their given names, only the nicknames of the march and battle. We may know nothing of their background, or family, or education, but we trusted our lives to one another. We ate together, partied, and fought together, made plans and perhaps even dreamed a little, but not too much dreaming, for life was too unsure. But how we talked, and we hear the voices still, not just one day a year for a few minutes, but every day. Those voices stilled in a few seconds, when so many people's lives were forever changed, those voices continue.

Hear what the voices say. “Remember me for who I was: call me sailor, call me soldier, call me airman, call me marine, call me coastguard, man or woman, for that is who I was. Call me, if you wish, son or daughter, father or mother, husband or wife, even friend, or any of those names in the litany of relationships of life.”

Do you hear them speak in these few minutes? “Remember me for who I was; remember me for my dreams of life. When you walk in the sun, when you plant gardens, when you raise up children and grandchildren, remember me. Tell these children and grandchildren my story, calling me by my name: call me soldier, call me sailor, call me marine, call me airman, call me coastguard. Tell them that I dreamed I might have a good life, and yes, that they might have a good life as well. Tell them, tell the children that I did not live my dream. Tell them they do live and they have a chance to live my dream and that they can honor me by having a good life.”

Listen to the wisdom of the voices from the walls and grave and far off lands. “Perhaps in their time these children and grandchildren will take on the name I proudly bore and others will call them soldier, call them sailor, call them coastguard, call them marine; call them airman. If so called, may they bear the name as I did and do their best.”

“But remember me and tell them my story and tell them that they most certainly will have a great opportunity to bear the name of *citizen* of our great and good land. And that when as a *citizen* they vote, or they engage in responsible discourse, when they greet their neighbors and treat others even in disagreement with respect, when they salute the flag or worship freely, I am with them and they honor me and all those like me.”

Hear the voices. “Remember me, for whenever you act freely as a good citizen I am part of you and you are part of me.”

Greetings From Silver Bay

By Ward C. Wallin

NVVA SUPPORTS MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME – SILVER BAY

During our past fiscal year (July 2004 – June 2005) the NVVA has been a large supporter of the Minnesota Veterans Home – Silver Bay. During this time, the NVVA has donated \$6,500 to help fund our Recreation Department. Some of our activities include lunch outings, fishing trips (both summer and winter), picnics, bowling, and field trips such as going to sporting events, attending the Lake County Fair, going on shopping trips, going to the circus, and watching parades to name just a few.

Looking Back

The last few months have been very busy and exciting. In late April we were honored with a visit from the National VFW Auxiliary President Joanne Ott who hails from Ohio. This was made possible by the efforts of our past State VFW President, Lil LaVoy. What an honor for us! And speaking of dignitaries, in early June we were once again graced with the presence of a national officer, this time, VFW National Chaplain Ted Bowers stopped by for a visit. We were very excited to “show off” our great facility!

Some of the highlights from past months included our Annual Volunteer Recognition Banquet, the VFW 8th District Spring Party, the M.O.C. Pup Tent 59 Bingo Party, our monthly American Legion Auxiliary Birthday Party, our monthly VFW Big Bucks Bingo Party, our Pike for Vets Luncheon, and our 13th Annual Lake Superior Fishing Trip. This year, 71 fish were caught including a 20 pound lake trout that we are hoping to get mounted. What a great day on the big lake.

Moving Forward

As we look ahead, we are staying busy with summer activities. Now that summer seems to have finally arrived, we are going fishing, going on pontoon rides, enjoying picnics, and taking scenic rides through the Superior National Forest. Also, many residents are excited to attend a Duluth Huskies baseball game on July 17th at Wade Stadium.

The NVVA has been critical to making the Minnesota Veterans Home a great place to live and work. On behalf of our residents, staff, and volunteers, we thank you for all that you have done.

Respectfully submitted,

Ward C. Wallin
Volunteer Program Administrator

Northland Vietnam Veterans Association

(NVVA) Membership Questionnaire Summary of Responses June 2005

1. What in your opinion is the primary purpose of NVVA?

- 1) Readjustment services and supports
- 2) Public education
- 3) Remembrance and recognition
- 4) Socialization

2. Are you satisfied with the current direction of NVVA?

- 1) 10 affirmative
- 2) 4 negative

3. If you are not satisfied, what should NVVA be doing differently?

- 1) More efforts to reach out and help Vets
- 2) Engage members (more friendly and supportive) (Annual meeting)
- 3) Give money to Veteran associated causes
- 4) Work more closely with other Veteran organizations and service providers
- 5) Be more visible in the community

4. What specific things should NVVA try to accomplish during 2005?

- 1) Work to assess and address the evolving needs of Veterans
- 2) More public presentations and better community exposure
- 3) Assist current returning Vets
- 4) Review the relevance and effectiveness of our current activities and functions

5. Are there any specific activities or events that you think NVVA should get involved with?

- 1) Continue gravesite recognition activities
- 2) Encourage travel to Vietnam
- 3) Spend more money helping Vets (ie: Veterans North Retreat, transit services)
- 4) More emphasis on the immediate and future needs of Veterans
- 5) Public education (PTSD workshop)
- 6) More state and national level involvement
- 7) Mentor Iraq Vets
- 8) Develop specific "giving" guidelines
- 9) Annual meeting

b. Any other comments.

- 1) Spend more money on a variety of projects and services
- 2) Our organization should be more democratic and open (engage members)
- 3) More visibility and involvement at local, state, and national levels

National Coalitions for Homeless Veterans

The Northland Vietnam Veterans Association (NVVA) last month during the annual conference in Washington D.C. received from the National Coalitions for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) "Outstand Community Partner Award." This award is presented to local the organization that has demonstrated their support for programs that serve veterans that are experiencing homelessness. Kathy Camps president received the award from the NCHV President Dr. Charles Haenlein (See picture attached) also attending were members Fr. John Peterich, and Durbin M. Keeney.

The cover letter of the nomination to the NCHV, which was made by the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans regional office of Veterans Outreach North read. "Northland Vietnam Veterans Association (NVVA) of Duluth Minnesota has demonstrated that you do not have to be a national veterans service organization to make a difference in serving those veterans in our community that are experiencing homelessness. They have from their inception in 1980 always have had a focused on the needs of fellow veterans. NVVA has always reached out to all veterans with a true heart. Very few organizations truly live their motto like NVVA does "Dignity Thru Unity." They are annually the largest Veterans Service Organization (VSO) contributor in the state of Minnesota to Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. Their support for regional office Veterans Outreach North is second to none and they always been there to help make a difference in the lives of those we serve."

The nomination read as follows: As a group of Nam veteran's was formed from a rap group to provide needed support for each other. Many felt that they did not have a place in the VSO's of the community, thus the beginnings of Northland Vietnam Veterans Association (NVVA). They felt that if the needs for our generation of veterans were to be met they would have to do it for themselves. They had a difficult beginning with many having many different directions to take the young organization. It was difficult and after much infighting that almost ended this young organization they found their focus. Now the NVVA is highly respected in their community guided by the principles of serving the needs of Vietnam veterans first, veterans and their families, veterans and their communities, and their communities. They formed a nonprofit corporation that currently has a membership of 171 Vietnam era veterans and 105 associate member (family members and interested members from the community). The membership largely comes from but not limit to, the counties that are at the head waters of the Lake Superior in Minnesota that is St. Louis (Duluth), Lake, Cook, Itasca, and Koochiching counties, and in Wisconsin it includes Douglas (Superior), Ashland, and Washburn. Early on they came up with a motto that fits with everything that they have tried to do and that is "Dignity thru Unity."

The goals set by this charitable organization includes:

- 1) Development of structure to assist Vietnam veteran to readjust back into society.
- 2) Educate and facilitate receipt of veterans benefits for it's members.
- 3) Provide informational exchange of issues relevant to Vietnam and Vietnam era veterans.
- 4) Provide a forum for members to articulate their needs and concerns stemming from their military experiences.
- 5) Instruction to public on topics useful to the Vietnam era veteran benefits to the community including upper Great Lakes area through lectures, forums, or similar programs.
- 6) Provide crisis intervention counseling and referral for Vietnam era veterans.

Over the last twenty-five years they have as an organization:

- They took the lead roll in the campaigned to establish the Vet Center in Duluth to provide counseling services. This grew out of the original rap groups need to help fellow veterans that had not come all the way home.
- The Northland Vietnam Veterans Memorial valued at \$1.5M donated to the city of Duluth and was dedicated on memorial day 1992 is located on Duluth's Lakewalk (see web site for pictures) has been part of a healing process for veterans from the Vietnam War and for those close to the veterans. From the beginning with the planning of the Memorial, construction, and ultimately to the observances held at the monument are done to honor with dignity. Special events are held there form Memorial Day, POW/MIA Vigil, funerals and memorial services to name a few.

Once the memorial was completed it was brought to the attention that the city did not have the funds to maintain the memorial to the standard that NVVA wanted. They then raised \$100,000.00

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- to create a formation known as the Northland Vietnam Veterans Memorial Foundation (NVVMF). The NVVMF maintains the Memorial, provides average of eight \$1,000.00 scholarships to Vietnam era veterans and their decedents. The NVVMF also are the Stand Down North's local tax-exempt organization and has taken a leading roll in fund raising for that event annually.
- NVVA was instrumental in bringing the Twin Port VA Outpatient Medical Clinic to the Twin Ports of Duluth and Superior located in Superior Wisconsin and had been very involved in keeping it open.
- Silver Bay Veterans home has enjoyed long time support from NVVA providing thousands of dollars to meet the needs of our older veterans.
- Carlton County Veterans Service Office receives monthly support for their van program to provided transportation from this rural county to the VAMC at Ft. Snelling.
- The creation of Veterans on the Lake a place for disabled veterans was began with the support of NVVA.
- Internationally they have built a school in Vietnam and helped to sponsor two trips to take over 800 wheelchairs to the Delta area of Nam.
- Creation of Veterans Memorial Hall at the St. Louis County Historical Society's Vietnam exhibit honors NVVA for their contribution to the community by naming the exhibit "Dignity Thru Unity." Part of that exhibits shows their support for MACV, and the Stand Down.
- Over ten years ago they founded the first Stand Down North in Duluth. Because of their members time and resources Stand Down North has served well over 2,000 veterans in Northern Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin.
- As an out growth of that first Stand Down they saw that was a great unmet need our community for veterans experiencing homelessness. They funded their Outreach Chairman, Durbin M. Keeney, to look to other program in Wisconsin and Minnesota as to how to address the needs of veterans experiencing homelessness. From that desire to make a difference in the lives of veterans a community committee was formed to see what if anything they could do. It was that committee that built a relationship with MACV. In 1998 on April 1st the doors of Veterans Outreach North opened as a MACV's first outreach program. Since that date VON has severed over 800 veterans and their families that are at risk of homelessness and veterans that are experiencing in northern Minnesota.

NVVA's relationship did not end there since VON has opened its doors they have been the largest annual funder of MACV by any VSO in the state. Their on going relationship with MACV provided monthly support for VON in the amount of \$1,100. NVVA raises money at the Bluesfest Festal in Duluth and from the tips they provides on average \$850 to buy clothing for VON's clients seeking work and tools needed for employment. Monthly \$300.00 is provided to and Outreach Fund at the Salvation Army used to help our veterans. This past Christmas they provided over \$500.00 in bedding for veterans and their family to match Slumberlands furniture stores donation of five beds for our veterans and other emergency help. Their understanding of how important the NCHV is to our work NVVA has been the principle sponsor to our attending the annual meeting in Washington D.C. They understand that in order for us to be successful we must have the opportune to attend such important events. Today members are working with us to try to acquire a building to house VON offices, and house our veterans in our Health Care for homeless Veterans program, provided permanent housing for veterans and their families in the community. This building will house 30 SRO's, 1-1BR, 5-2BR, & 3-3BR units.

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The core values of NVVA are the essence of what we the NCHV stands for and they live those values organizationally. This small but mighty group of Vietnam era veterans and their families truly walk the walk. When it means that there is a veteran in need they do their best to meet that need without fanfare. Their acts of compassion and concern for the welfare of those who have served our country have sets them apart from their peers. The time and effort of these wonderful people spent to give back to their fellow veterans and their community has gained them the respect and admiration of their community. Therefore, it is our great pleasure that the Board of Directors of MACV, VON Committee, and MACV staff on behalf of all those veterans that would still be homeless today if it were not for the support of the Northland Vietnam Veterans Association place NVVA in nomination to receive NCHV' 2005 Partnership Award.

For additional information please contact Durbin M. Keeney, Regional Director MACV/VON 722-8763.

The St. Louis County Veterans Service Office would like to congratulate NVVA on their receipt of this award. Job well done!! Please forward this message on to the membership of the NVVA.

Richard L. Blakesley, Director
St. Louis County Veterans Service Office

