



NORTHLAND VIETNAM VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 16975
Duluth, MN, 55816
www.nvva.us



Meetings: 4th Monday of Month at 6:30 PM at 101 West Second Street, Duluth, MN 55802

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To donate www.mac-v.org

MAY MEETING NOTICE

Due to Memorial Day, our meeting day for May has been moved to Wednesday, May 28. Same time: 6:30 PM. Same place: 101 West Second Street.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:

Spring is upon us and our busy season is starting. We had a great banquet on the 29th of March. The food was excellent and the company was outstanding. A great big "thank you" goes to our Entertainment Committee for a job well done. They work hard and long to put together this class event. All their diligence shows through with the outcome of the evening. They are now working on this year's picnic. Memorial Day will be here soon, along with parades. Don't forget the Bluesfest in August. We have started planning for it, and we are looking forward to another successful event.

Kathy Camps

President, N.V.V.A.

We recently lost a good friend and Life Member of N.V.V.A. **Robert "Bob" Hendrickson** passed away on Tuesday, May 6, 2008. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his wife **Sandy** and family. This newsletter is edged in black in his memory. "Rest quietly now old friend, your struggles here are over."

COLOR GUARD:

Observed Memorial Day, Monday 26 May 2008:

The Color Guard will assemble for the ceremony at Bethany Cemetery to be held at 0930 Hrs. The parade in West Duluth will step off at noon, but the formation can start up at 1030 on 59th Ave. West below Grand Ave. Denfeld High School Parking lot will be the sight of the city Ceremony right after the parade at 1300 hrs.

Traditional Memorial Day, Friday 30 May, 2008:

The annual remembrance ceremony that we observe at the Northland Vietnam Veterans' Memorial will be held at 1800 hrs. This year, we will be doing a joint ceremony with the men from Company "B.", as they honor their comrades. This is our event and we hope that all attend as we have our own **Dwight Nelson "Deac"** as our speaker. There will be an announcement of the 2008 NVVM Scholarship recipient. If you are interested in volunteering, at a possible joint booth with MACV and NVVA, at the Duluth Air Show this summer please contact my office. All these events are open to the public so bring your family and friends. I really want to encourage you to bring your children and grand children. This is living history and real history, not what is taught in schools. Be a part of it and we will see you soon.

Thanks, *Durbin M. Keeney*
N.V.V.A. Color Guard

DULUTH COMBINED HONOR GUARD
CEREMONIAL AND CEMETARY TIME SHEET FOR
OBSERVED MEMORIAL DAY, May 25, 2008

Squad One		Squad Two	
Location	Time	Location	Time
Park Hill	0830	Canal Park	0800
Forest Hill	0900	Greenwood (Chris Jensen)	0845
Calvary	0945	Union	0930
Polish	1000	Bethany	0945
Sunrise	1045	Oneota	1100
Maple Grove (Jewish)	1115	Denfeld High School	After Parade

TRADITIONAL MEMORIAL DAY, MAY 30, 2008
NORTHLAND VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL, on the Lakewalk, at 1800

POW/MIA REPORT

The remains of a Vietnam soldier missing in action since 1972 along with two crewmates could be identified and returned to the U.S. as early as this summer. Capt. Arnold "Dusty" Holm Jr., of Waterford, Conn., was 28 when his helicopter was struck by enemy fire and crashed in a harsh jungle region southwest of Hue. Holm and his crewmen, Spc. Robin Yearley (23) of South Bend, Ind., and Pfc. Wayne Bibbs (three days shy of 18) of Blue Island, Ill., were never found.

On April 3, 1969, Air Force Maj. Perry Jefferson (37) of Denver, Co. and Army 1st Lt. Arthur Ecklund (24) of Galesburg, Ill., took off in a single-engine O-1G Bird Dog aircraft for a reconnaissance flight over the mountains of South Vietnam. They were never seen again. For fifteen years their disappearance remained a mystery. Then, in 1984, in the Philippines a former member of the South Vietnamese Air Force turned over a human jaw bone he said belonged to one of two pilots whose aircraft were shot down. The jaw bone turned out to be Ecklund's. And in 2001, a Vietnamese national living in California handed over human remains he said were recovered at a site where two American pilots crashed. Those were Jefferson's.

SPECIAL NOTICE

There will be a new look in the upcoming newsletters from N.V.V.A. A new area monthly veteran's publication will be making its appearance in June. A monthly magazine, for and about veterans in the area, called **CADENCE** will be coming out at the end of June. N.V.V.A. will have a page in the newsletter and other information for the membership. **CADENCE** will be a full color monthly magazine, instead of a quarterly or by-monthly newsletter, mailed directly to the members. We feel this will be a great improvement over our present mailings. So look forward to the July Issue. **CADENCE** will be born on the 4th of July.



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Attention to Orders

By Durbin M. Keeney

Remember the group "Ten Years After" from Woodstock? I am sitting here ten years after the first day we opened the doors of MACV-Duluth. It was April 1st, and we chose that date if for no other reason, because there were many people who said that we would never open, we April fooled them. It was not easy to get to that point. With your indulgence I would like to reflect back on how we got started.

There were many Stand Down's for Veterans that lead to discussions that we needed to do more. A group of concerned veterans came to realize that there was a continuous need to serve veterans in our community. Personally, I had left the staff of Union Gospel Mission and my own life was at a crossroads. What do I do? I had a family to consider, and I was getting older. I certainly did not seek the life's work that I have today. I truly believe that God had a plan for me and all that I had done brought me to this point and for that I am truly grateful.

It began when I received a call from Bernie Martin, the Social Service Director for the Salvation Army, to come out and have a cup of coffee. I thought since we were in the same Kiwanis Club that she had a project to talk about, and truth be known she had another idea. She showed me the City of Duluth Consolidated Plan and the St. Louis County Continuum of Care Documents. She asked me, "What was missing?" She pointed out that there were no support services for homeless veterans. I asked her what she wanted me to do. She said, "Fix it!" I went away wondering how do I fix this. Bernie said that she would help, but there was this issue about needing to feed my family, and I did not have a clue where to begin. Northland Vietnam Veterans Association (NVVA) provided me with travel monies to look at programs in Minnesota and surrounding states. I attended National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Jointer's Conference in D.C. and we formed a local committee to sift through the information. I met with Jimmie Lee Coulthard of, what was then, Transitional Housing Veterans Council, later to become Minnesota Assistance for Veterans (MACV). We had many meetings, but the key meeting took place in a Vietnamese restaurant not far from the Ft. Snelling VA Medical Center. We turned over place mats and drew up many ideas of how we could work together.

There was then the question, do we do this on our own thing or do we joint together in an effort to form a statewide organization and how do we proceed? There was a seminal moment that took place between our committee members, Jimmie Coulthard, Mark Mulvihill and Board President General Ray Bonnabeau at Porter's. It got real tense and at one point Bernie told the General "this is your problem and either we go forward together or we do it on our own?" It was agreed to go forward together and Sandi Fjeld, the local committee chair, and I attended the May 1997 Board meeting. At that meeting I saw the name was changed to MACV. Veterans Outreach North (VON) in Duluth was welcomed with some stipulations. Sandi was elected to the Board and served for many years as MACV's Secretary. We must especially thank Ed Colbert for his many years of continuing representation on the MACV Board.

Those stipulations were that we had to provide a budget for a year and had to raise it before we could open. That was crunch time! I had to sit down with my family and decide, "What we were willing to give up to make this happen?" It was a very thin year and if it were not for NVVA we would have never made it and what had been a dream would have ended right there. I remember a meeting I had with Karen Olesen of the Duluth's Development office. She told me that I had a rough road ahead of me. I understood that homeless veteran's were not a popular subject. We received support from NVVA, Northland Foundation, Ordean Foundation, VFW's, American Legion #71, and private donations to get started.

So on April 1st 1998 we opened. The first day I sat in suite 211A of the Carnegie Library with donated office furniture, equipment that came from Sam's Club with a notepad donated from the Vets Clinic in Superior, and having a Jimmie Carter moment wondering, "What do I do now?" The local committee had decided it needed

to be "veteran driven." It did not take long before we got busy. We would meet the needs of the veterans we served instead of making them fit a box that we had predetermined. While we are more structured today we still adhere, as our first priority, to the needs to those we serve.

Who would have thought it that we would be part of the only statewide non-profit organization of its kind? That MACV would have assisted over 3,850 veterans and their families would have been unimaginable ten years ago. MACV has grown to add an office in Mankato, more housing in the Twin Cities, Mankato, and St. Cloud, and we have had a housing arrangement for many years with the YWCA for housing. Cliff Gawne-Mark came on board almost nine years ago, first as an intern, and now as our Program Coordinator. Our name has changed as we gave up VON and became at first MACV-North and now we are real happy to be known as MACV-Duluth. Arvid Nelson first came to us as part of the Senior Program and has been volunteering as our Volunteer Coordinator he has been a tremendous help in many areas. Our Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program to work with homeless veterans in the greater Duluth area has been active for nine years. A program for families in the six surrounding counties, first with Harriet Harrington and now with Steve Sarri in charge has been in place for six years, and since last fall we hired a Paul Pedersen as Outreach Coordinator to reach out to all thirty counties that makes up the MACV-Duluth region. Late February we hired a Mike Dickinson as a Discharge Planner to address prevention recidivism of veterans in our county jail system. Now, since the YWCA is being sold, we are in the process of finding housing for our HCHV program.

We have come a long way since the first day. Understand that this is not, by any way, a one-person effort. We are blessed with Kathleen Vitalis, Executive Director and her St. Paul Staff, and Regional Directors Jimmie Coulthier (MACV-Metro), and Sue Sorensen (MACV-Mankato) their staffs and all the incredible work that they do. We are blessed with a great Board of Directors that supports what we do. There are so many to thank from the State of Minnesota, Federal Government, Counties, and Cities to thank them individually for their support. That does not even begin to include all you that have supported us in our work. Wow! It is a bit overwhelming.

We are not done yet. MACV has expended its scope to reach out to the service personnel who are returning, those that are in crisis. We are looking to the future to a permanent housing for veterans, new transitional housing and new office space all in one location (more to come).

It has been said that life is a journey and where it takes you who know where? I for one would have never expected that we of MACV in this last ten years have been able to touch so many lives. As I sit in my office I see a wonderful dedicated staff and I think back to the first days. This is, for me, a dream in progress. As long as there are veterans and their families to be helped we promise that MACV will be there.

It is humbling and there are no words to explain what it means to help prevent a veteran and their family from becoming homeless, or helping to taking the veterans off the streets and see them move their lives forward. We remind them that we believe in them as their county had, and we honor them for their service our country. What we do is to often rekindle that pride that they once had when they were in the military. We see many go from not being able to look us in the eye, to having that stride they once had. We are so blessed to have reunited families, set people on the right road, help them regain their dignity in themselves, and move their lives forward.

We just think of so many people we need to thank for this rich blessing that we have to serve our true hero's in a time of need. We, MACV, will continue to serve these men and women in the future as we have in the first ten years. As long as there is a veteran that needs us we will be there. That is with the ongoing support of the community and God's Blessing.

We can never forget that there are men and woman that have served, are serving, and will be serving, to provide and keep our freedoms, who need your support and prayers. That includes their families. There may be only one military member in a family, but when one person is in the service all of the family has made a commitment. Keep them all in your prayers. God Bless them all. And thank you for allowing us to serve them.