



# INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA



## CHAPTER 535

*"It Feels Good to Get Involved"*

Volume 22 Issue 3

*In Service To America and the Gold Country*

March 2012

### **President's Message**

**Kent Hawley, President**  
432-3551

### **2nd E-Waste Event**

Members of the Nevada County Consolidated Veterans' Council (NCCVC) held our Second E-waste event on February 18, 2012. A steady stream of local residents brought in their unusable, unwanted, unsellable, or damaged electronic/electrical items which the NCCVC happily unloaded from trucks, vans, cars and even walk-ins. Coffee and donuts disappeared as the volunteers from the American Legion and Auxiliary, Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary, Marine Corps League, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of American and Nevada County Facilities Management welcomed the opportunity to help local residents dispose of their E-Waste. It is a win-win situation; the residents can get rid of unwanted items, the items don't end up in the landfill and we help Nevada County stay green. Funds raised by the E-Waste Event will be used for improvements in the Veterans Remembrance Room in the Grass Valley Veterans Memorial Building. During the morning, we filled one 22-foot bin and partially filled a second bin. Our first E-Waste collection held last September netted \$926.55 (including a donation of \$30). We will receive the results of this collection in approximately two months. The NCCVC thanks all who volunteered and donated to this event.

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**Margie Buhler, Secretary NCCVC**  
**VVA Delegate**

## Vietnam Body Retrieval

Forty years later, Major Wilfork still can't forget the smell. The deep, pungent aroma of jungle mingling, then giving way to, the dizzying smell of death, left to simmer in a subtropical stew of heat and humidity. "People say the things they saw in Vietnam were bad," Wilfork said softly. "I promise you, that smell ... it stays with you a long time after. A long time." During his time in Vietnam, the Florida native had a job that no one else wanted: body retrieval. It was his job to bring home the bodies that might otherwise become lost in the vast jungle. "People would say, 'Man, how can you do the stuff you got to do?'" Now nearly 60, he is still as lean and wiry as the former high school quarterback who joined the Marines in the late '60s. Thirty-five years after leaving the Corps, he can still fit in his work uniform, and he treasures his "anchor and eagle" - the Marine Corps symbol attached to his service cap. "Not many people could do it. But it had to be done. It was important, it was an honor. "But it was tough - real tough. You saw things in the jungle that ... well, hell is the only way to put it."



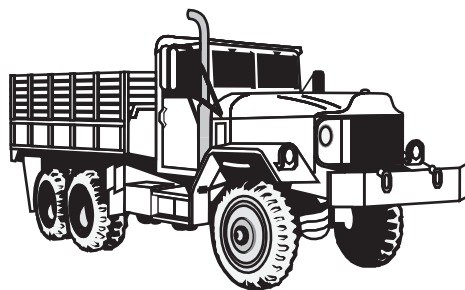
Major Wilfork

In 1969, Wilfork graduated from Delray High School in Florida. He had hopes of attending college, even playing football. "Instead, five days after graduation, I got a letter from Uncle Sam," he said. "I was told to enlist either in the Army or Marine Corps. I was young and stupid. "I heard that the Marines didn't train soldiers: they trained warriors. And they trained us well." He toughened up at summer boot camp at Parris Island, S.C., then requested his specialized training. "I had a friend whose family ran a funeral home in Florida," Wilfork said. "That was my thinking. I figured I'd serve, get out and work with them. "First, they trained me to drive all kinds of trucks at Camp Lejeune. I guess you never knew what sort of vehicle you'd need to get in there. Honestly, I didn't think about that part of the job. But retrieval, that was the hardest part. "And a lot of

that job, you learned by doing." In 1970, Wilfork began his tour in the sprawling military base near Da Nang. Located just south of North Vietnam, it was the operations center for troops in the area. "I remember sometimes, you could see snow on the tops of the mountains," he said. "But where we were, it was hot, always July hot."

His primary job: getting up before daybreak and heading for the previous day's battlefield. The goal was to find and recover the body of every allied soldier killed. On rare occasions, they'd find someone still alive. "But most of the time, you knew what you were going to find," Wilfork said. His eyes cast down, his voice ebbed to a near-whisper. "The battlefield was going to be a dark, smelly hole, and it was filled with death. That smell just hung in the air in the morning. "Then you had to worry that Charlie (enemy forces) might not be finished there. Early morning was when they moved a lot. They were creeping like little ants in the jungle." Hospital masks, usually dabbed with vinegar, were essential. But, Wilfork noted, nothing could totally hide the smell. "It seeped into you, especially when you had to bring in bodies that had been out a while," he said. The bodies were taken, by truck or helicopter, to the GRP - Graves Registration Point - at Da Nang. "After we got them in, we cleaned them up and packed them for embalming. We made sure they looked as nice as possible, cleaned their fingernails and got them fresh uniforms. "Once we were finished, when everything was done, then we showed ... a long time. Some guys would drink - well, we all did. You cope as best you can."

The bodies, with accompanying paperwork, were placed in reusable aluminum "transfer cases" (never called coffins) for their trip home. The remains were sent either to Dover, Del., or Oakland, Calif., depending on the location of the next-of-kin. And Wilfork would get ready for another day among the dead in the jungle. During his



# Chapter 535 Information Center

Web Page [www.nccn.net/~vvanc/welcome.htm](http://www.nccn.net/~vvanc/welcome.htm)

## Chapter 535 Officers & Board of Directors

### Officers-Phone

#### President

Kent Hawley ..... 432-3551

#### Vice-President

Vacant ..... 0

#### Secretary

Pete Burelle [howling\\_wolf28@yahoo.com](mailto:howling_wolf28@yahoo.com)..... 274-3787

#### Treasurer

Harold Graves [haroldgraves@sbcglobal.net](mailto:haroldgraves@sbcglobal.net)..... 470-8507

#### Past President

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Dan Davis ..... 272-4110

Pete Burelle [howling\\_wolf28@yahoo.com](mailto:howling_wolf28@yahoo.com)..... 274-3787

Jerry Molloy [petem1947@sbcglobal.net](mailto:petem1947@sbcglobal.net) ..... 273-4804

Gary Tanaka [garytanaka@att.net](mailto:garytanaka@att.net)..... 272-2317

#### CA State Council Delegates

Pete Burelle, alternate Wayne Simonson

## Chapter 535 Committees Chairs

Constitution/Bylaws ..... Vacant

Finance Review ..... Bill Holman (chair) and  
Nick deZaparkanszky

4th of July/Constitution Day..... Dick Corn

Product Sales ..... Pete Burelle

Victorian Christmas ..... Jose Gonzales

Membership Affairs ..... Joe Sanders

Newsletter... [bholman@succeed.net](mailto:bholman@succeed.net), 265-8387 Bill Holman

Nominations ..... Vacant

Public Relations..... Vacant

Nevada County Fair ..... Harold Graves, Jerry Molloy

Christmas Year Round ..... Harold Graves

Single Point of Contact (SPOC)..... Bill Holman

Entertainment..... Jose Gonzales

Veterans Benefits ..... Refer to VSO Officer

NCCVC ..... Pete Burelle

#### Nevada County Veterans Affairs Rep.

Eric ..... (530) 273-3396



### Network Real Estate

167 S. Auburn Street  
Grass Valley, CA 95945

### Dick Corn

Broker Associate  
CA Lic. # 13235009  
Certified Residential Specialist

(530) 271-3858 Office

(530) 272-8703 Fax

(800) 421-5130 Toll Free

[dick@dickcorn.com](mailto:dick@dickcorn.com)

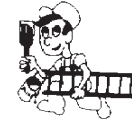
[www.dickcorn.com](http://www.dickcorn.com)



### Chapter 535 Web Page

[www.nccn.net/~vvanc/welcome.htm](http://www.nccn.net/~vvanc/welcome.htm)

## DAN'S PAINTING



RESIDENTIAL

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Dan Davis

(530) 272-4110 eves.

P.O. Box 651

Grass Valley, CA 95945

## TRACTOR WORK

Bill Holman 265-8387

Backhoe  
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Berry Bushes Removed



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## Your Ad Could Be Here

## \$25 for One Year

The Vinh Son Orphanage, has a new web site

[www.friendsofvso.org](http://www.friendsofvso.org)



## Veterans Directory

### Congress

Senate - Veterans Affairs Committee .....202-224-9126  
 House - Veterans Affairs Committee.....202-225-3527

### Department of Veterans Affairs

Board of Veterans Appeals .....202-233-3001  
 Central Office .....202-233-4000  
 Freedom of Information/Privacy Act .....202-233-3616  
 Personnel Locator.....202-233-4000  
 Public Information .....202-233-3056  
 Veterans Health Administration .....202-535-7010  
 VA Telephone Care Program .....800-733-0502  
 Cemetery, Burial, & Headstone Info.....800-697-6947

### Agencies

Department of Defense .....703-545-6700  
 DEERS Information (California).....800-334-4162  
 CHAMPUS (California).....800-741-5048  
 Office of Management and Budget Veterans Affairs.202-395-4500  
 Small Business Administration Office of Veterans  
 Affairs .....202-205-6773

### Locator & Reunion Services

Army Worldwide Locator.....317-542-4211  
 Navy Times Locator Services .....703-750-8636  
 Service Reunions .....703-998-7035  
 Vietnam Veterans Locator.....319-388-9023  
 Veteran's Locator Service ..... 800-449-VETS

### Miscellaneous

Vietnam Women's Memorial Project .....202-328-7253  
 Sons & Daughters In Touch CA .....805-872-4035  
 Retired Pay - Cleveland DFAS.....800-321-1080  
 Navy Lodging..... 800-NAVY INN  
 Army Lodging ..... 800-GO ARMY

## Newsletter Submissions

Please ensure that submissions for the newsletter reach us no-later-than the 15th of the month before the meeting. They may be mailed to:

### VVA Chapter 535

Attn: Newsletter Editor  
 18455 Augustine Rd, Nevada City, CA 95959  
 e-mail to [bholman@succeed.net](mailto:bholman@succeed.net) or  
 call Bill Holman at (530) 265-8387

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of Vietnam Veterans of America National, State Council, or Chapter 535 or the newsletter editor, but those of the author of the comments.

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### Has Your Address Changed?

Please let us know before the Post office quits forwarding your newsletters. If you find your not receiving your newsletter's or hearing from us, please contact Bill Holman at 265-8387.

## Vacant Committee Chairs

There are four vacant committee chairs that need to be filled and the position of secretary for the Chapter. This is a good opportunity for a member to become more active in the Chapter. Anyone interested should contact: Pete Burelle ([howling\\_wolf28@yahoo.com](mailto:howling_wolf28@yahoo.com)) 274-3787.  
 Chapter Secretary..... Vacant

Chairs  
 Constitution/Bylaws ..... Vacant  
 Nominations ..... Vacant  
 Public Relations ..... Vacant

### Membership Facts Chapter 535

<b>VVA</b>	
Individual members	34
Applications waiting for ( DD214)	
Life members	34
<b>AVVA</b>	
Individual members	2
Life member	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>



### Upcoming Dates and Events

March 1 Chapter Meeting 6 pm



## **"Veteran" on Drivers License**

Attached is AB 1725 by Assemblywoman Bonnie Lowenthal, the Chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee. This bill is jointly sponsored by the American Legion-Department of CA, AMVETS-Department of CA, CA Association of County Veterans Service Officers, and the Vietnam Veterans of America-CA State Council.

There are approximately 2 million veterans in California, but there is no state data base with this information. California literally has no single database which identifies info on who these veterans are. This legislation will begin the process of identifying California veterans so that the CA Department of Veterans Affairs can contact them through its CALVET Connect Program to notify them about any federal or state benefits they may be eligible for. This legislation supports Governor Brown's Executive Order establishing the Interagency Council on Veterans, which is designed to breakdown the stovepipes among California state agencies so that more services can efficiently be delivered to veterans. The DMV has recently begun sharing data with the CDVA. This bill will expand this effort. This bill is modeled after similar legislation in several other states, such as Texas.

This will give veterans an opportunity to display their pride in being veterans. It would also identify them to California businesses who wish to offer discounts as shows of support for our nation's warriors.

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## **VA Handbook**

The VA began mailing a personalized Veteran Health Benefits Handbook the last week of FEB to all veterans enrolled in VA health care. The new handbook is tailored specifically for each veteran and provides detailed information about the VA health services the veteran may be eligible to receive. The Veteran Health Benefit Handbook provides answers to common questions such as contact information for the Veteran's local facility, instructions on how to schedule appointments, guidelines for communicating treatment needs and an explanation of the veteran's responsibilities, such as co-pays, if applicable. Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare will receive their personalized handbooks via mail as part of a national rollout campaign based on Priority Group, beginning with Priority Group 1 and ending with Priority Group 8. In the near future, VA will develop an online version of the handbook for Veterans to access via MyHealtheVet. This will allow veterans to access their up-to-date health benefit information anywhere, anytime. The VA estimates it will take around 16 months to get the handbooks to everyone.

## **Military History Anniversaries**

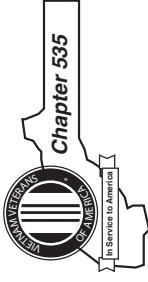
- Feb 15 1898 - U.S. battleship Maine mysteriously blows up in Havana Harbor, Cuba killing more than 260 crew members and bringing the United States closer to war with Spain.
- Feb 15 1943 - WWII: The Germans break the American Army's lines at the Fanid-Sened Sector in Tunisia, North Africa.
- Feb 15 1967 - Vietnam: Thirteen U.S. helicopters are shot down in one day in Vietnam
- Feb 16 1804 - 1Lt. Stephen Decatur led a successful raid into Tripoli Harbor to burn the U.S. Navy frigate Philadelphia, which had fallen into the hands of pirates.
- Feb 16 1862 - Civil War: 14,000 Confederate soldiers surrendered at Ft. Donelson TN. Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's victory earned him the nickname "Unconditional Surrender Grant."
- Feb 16 1864 - Civil War: The H.L. Hunley becomes the first submarine to engage and sink a warship, the USS Housatonic.
- Feb 16 1865 - Civil War : Columbia, South Carolina is burned as Confederate forces flee from advancing Union forces.
- Feb 16 1944 - WWII: Battle of Eniwetok Atoll begins. The battle ends in an U.S. victory on 22 February.
- Feb 16 1944 - WWII: Operation Hailstone begins. U.S. naval air, surface, and submarine attack against Truk (Chuuk), Japan's main base in the central Pacific, in support of the Eniwetok invasion. (WWII)
- Feb 16 1945 - WWII: American troops landed on the island of Corregidor in the Philippines.
- Feb 17 1864 - Civil War: The Confederate submarine Hunley sinks the USS Housatonic in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina.
- Feb 18 1865 - Civil War: Union troops force the Confederates to abandon Fort Anderson, N.C.
- Feb 18 1865 - Civil War: Union forces under Major General William T. Sherman set the South Carolina State House on fire during the burning of Columbia.
- Feb 19 1942 - WWII: President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the executive order 9066, allowing the United States military to relocate Japanese-Americans to Japanese internment camps.
- Feb 19 1943 - WWII: German troops of the Afrika Korps break through the Kasserine Pass, defeating U.S. forces. U.S. troops retake the pass 5 days later.
- Feb 19 1944 - WWII: The U.S. Eighth Air Force and Royal Air Force begin "Big Week," a series of heavy bomber attacks against German aircraft production facilities.
- Feb 19 1945 - WWII: Battle of Iwo Jima - about 30,000 United States Marines land on Iwo Jima.
- Feb 20 1864 - Civil War: Confederate troops defeat a Union army sent to bring Florida into the union at the Battle of Olustee, Fla.



## Chapter 535 Marching in the Mardi Gras Parade



# March - 2012



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				General Membership Meeting 6 pm 1		
Ron Bost						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Daylight Savings Time Begins 	Donald Mattson					St. Patrick's Day
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Jose Gonzales						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
			Jerry Molloy		Diane Meyers	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



**Application For Membership**  
**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC., CHAPTER 535**  
P.O. Box 37, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Individual membership is open to all Vietnam-era veterans who served on active duty for other than training purposes between August 5, 1964 – May 7, 1975 and In-Country Veterans: February 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone (        ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone (        ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Chapter No. **535**                      Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

- ◆ **Membership Type:**     Individual – 1 year @ \$20 annual     Individual – 3 years @ \$50  
(select one)                       Life Member    **Payment Plan**     \$50 down, 8 monthly payments of \$25  
**Select Age Group**     Ages 49 and under \$250     Ages 50-55 \$225  
 Ages 56-60 \$200     Ages 61-65 \$175     Ages 66 and over \$150

- ◆ **Payment Method:**     Check         Money Order         Visa         MasterCard  
(select one)

◆ **Card Number** \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Individual members **must** submit a copy of their DD-214 along with this application and dues payment. Associate participation is open to family, friends, all veterans, and other interested persons.

*In Service To America*

Address Correction Requested

