



INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA



CHAPTER 535

"It Feels Good to Get Involved"

Volume 22 Issue 7

In Service To America and the Gold Country

July 2012

President's Message

The Chapter has been busy the past few weeks. For those of you who ordered chapter shirts, the shirts were delivered to the embroiderer in Penn Valley on June 12th to add the VVA Chapter 535 logo. The embroiderer promised to have the shirts ready for us the week before July 4th. As soon as Pete receives them we'll contact you to arrange for pick up.

We tried a little different format at our June meeting. We opened the evening with a guest speaker, then took a break for Jose's blueberry short cake. Congrats to Jose. His "surprises" get better every month. After the refreshment break we held our meeting. Let us know if this format worked for you.

On June 24th we'll have a booth at Rough n Ready's Secession Day Celebration to sell Snow Cones. With a little hot weather this should be a great success.

A work party will deliver a cord of wood to Hugh Gordon, who won our first drawing for "seasoned" fire wood.

On June 30th our Color Guard will present the colors at the 60th anniversary dinner of the local chapter of the Federated Republican Women. The dinner will be held at the Alta Sierra Country Club.

On July 4th we will sell hats and participate in the Independence Day Parade in Nevada City. And then, we'll put our feet up and enjoy the summer! As noted elsewhere, there will be no meetings in July.

At our August meeting we hope to give you a live demonstration of our new website. Our webmaster is doing a great job in bringing our new site on line. You can preview Ralph's progress at www.vva535.org.

We have lined up a slate of guest speakers for our meetings from September to March. With all that is going on, we welcome your feedback. Let us know if you think we are headed in the right direction or if you have other ideas for the group.

Fred Buhler, President 265-4878

No Meetings in July

At our June meeting the chapter decided to take July off. Both the chapter meeting on July 5th and the board meeting on July 19th have been cancelled. We'll see you in August!

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VA Claims Backlog

California's senators and representatives are demanding answers, and accountability, regarding the state's three Veterans Affairs regional offices – all of which received scathing reviews in MAY for their slow and inaccurate handling of vets' disability claims. Most of the state's congressional delegation, as well as Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, signed a letter sent 17 MAY to the Veterans Affairs secretary following a critical report by the VA inspector general last week about the Oakland, Los Angeles and San Diego regional offices, which handle all of the state's veteran disability claims. "These reports show that the Los Angeles, Oakland and San Diego VAROs have significant deficiencies as a result of mismanagement and a lack of staff understanding of applicable rules and regulations," according to the letter to VA Secretary Eric Shinseki.

"As a result, the benefits claims of veterans in California take longer to process and experience more errors than veterans' claims in other states." The letter asks for answers to these questions:

What steps are being taken to ensure the offices address the inspector general recommendations, including how staff will be held accountable?

What follow-up actions will be taken to ensure the California offices improve?

Why is the Los Angeles office in "safe mode," allowing staff to not be held accountable to VA standards?

In Oakland last month, the office had average delays of 320 days, the second worst backlog of the nation's benefits centers, according to the VA inspector general's report. One claim had been pending for eight years. In addition, 39 percent of the 90 disability claims inspected in Oakland were incorrectly processed. The other two California facilities were not much better. At the Los Angeles office, 80 percent of claims reviewed in that report were unnecessarily delayed, as were about half of those at the San Diego operation. Also in Los Angeles, 97 percent of temporary total

As The Crow Flies

Navy Term of the Day: "As the crow flies" In a straight line, the shortest route between two points. It was common for 18th and 19th century ships to carry crows on board for use as a last resort when other attempts at navigation failed. When released, a crow will instinctively head to the nearest food supply which would be shore if it is near. Navigators would often time the crow's flight as a means of measuring the distance from ship to shore.

disability evaluations studied for the report were incorrectly processed. In San Diego, 77 percent were processed improperly, as were 53 percent of those in Oakland. Ironically, that inaccuracy rate ranked Oakland as the eighth-most accurate of the 44 VA facilities reviewed. In evaluations of residual disabilities of traumatic brain injuries, the reports found about half of the evaluations were processed incorrectly in all three California facilities – a higher rate than other regional offices across the country. "I've heard time and again from veterans in California about the troubling delays they experienced while having their claims processed. These are truly heartbreaking stories, and this is not the way their service and sacrifice should be honored," said Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton, who previously wrote Shinseki to add the Oakland office to a group of 12 regional offices to receive updated technology.

Upcoming Dates and Events

- | | |
|---------|--|
| June 30 | Color Guard at Federated Republican Woman Dinner |
| July 4 | Independence Day Parade - Nevada City - 2PM |
| July 5 | There will be no Chapter Meeting in July. |

July 4th Hat Sales and Parade

As has been our custom since 1989 when founding chapter member Jim Reber grabbed an American flag and marched in the July 4th parade, we will once again participate in the Independence Day Parade, this year in Nevada City. We will meet in the Nevada City Veterans Hall parking lot at 11:30 to sell hats and U.S. flags along the parade route. This has always been a good fund raiser for the chapter, but we need your help to make it successful. At 1:15 we will gather in the Nevada City Veterans Hall parking lot to form up for the parade. We will have a color guard. We will also have a deuce and a half for those who would rather ride. (As an old tanker, I always preferred to ride to work.)

Hope you can join us.

Chapter 535 Information Center

Chapter 535 Officers & Board of Directors

Officers-Phone

President	
Fred Buhler	265-4878
Vice-President	
Pete Burelle	274-3787
Secretary	
Dave Johnson	885-1230
Treasurer	
Harold Graves haroldgraves@sbcglobal.net.....	470-8507

Past President

Kent Hawley.....	432-3551
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Dan Davis	272-4110
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Jerry Molloy petem1947@sbcglobal.net	273-4804
Bill Holman bholman@succeed.nett	265-8387
Fred Buhler	265-4878
Kent Hawley.....	432-3551
Dave Johnson	885-1230
Jose Gonzales.....	274-3559

CA State Council Delegates

Pete Burelle, Fred Buhler (alternate)	265-4878
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Chapter 535 Committees Chairs

Finance	Jose Gonzales (Chair) Ric Sheridan
Parade and Honor Guard.....	Pete Burelle
Product Sales	Pete Burelle
Food Sales.....	Jose Gonzales (Chair), Jerry Molloy, Dan Davis
Membership Affairs	Margie Buhler
Newsletter ...	bholman@succeed.net, 265-8387 Bill Holman
Nominations	Dick Corn
Christmas Year Round	Harold Graves
Chapter Events	Jose Gonzales
Shredding Program.....	Dan Davis
NCCVC	Margie Buhler, Pete Burelle
Web Master.....	Ralph Remick

Nevada County Veterans Affairs Rep.

Eric	(530) 273-3396
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Chapter 535 Web Page

www.vva535.org

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The Vinh Son Orphanage, has a new web site

www.friendsofvso.org

Veterans Directory

Congress

Senate - Veterans Affairs Committee202-224-9126
 House - Veterans Affairs Committee.....202-225-3527

Department of Veterans Affairs

Board of Veterans Appeals202-233-3001
 Central Office202-233-4000
 Freedom of Information/Privacy Act202-233-3616
 Personnel Locator.....202-233-4000
 Public Information202-233-3056
 Veterans Health Administration202-535-7010
 VA Telephone Care Program800-733-0502
 Cemetery, Burial, & Headstone Info.....800-697-6947

Agencies

Department of Defense703-545-6700
 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
 Affairs202-205-6773

Locator & Reunion Services

Army Worldwide Locator.....317-542-4211
 Navy Times Locator Services703-750-8636
 Service Reunions703-998-7035
 Vietnam Veterans Locator.....319-388-9023
 Veteran's Locator Service 800-449-VETS

Miscellaneous

Vietnam Women's Memorial Project202-328-7253
 Sons & Daughters In Touch CA805-872-4035
 Retired Pay - Cleveland DFAS.....800-321-1080
 Navy Lodging..... 800-NAVY INN
 Army Lodging 800-GO ARMY

Want To Go Shooting?

CABPRO is working to set up the First CABPRO invitational Shoot out which will be held in Sept(date still working) at the Nevada city Sportsman.



Wanted to see if you guys in Chapter 535 had an interest in participating, in which case I'll get you on the invite list. Please let me know!!

Best Regards
 Chuck Shea, Executive Director
 CABPRO
 530-416-2083

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 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 newsletters or hearing from us, please contact Bill Holman at 265-8387.



Membership Facts Chapter 535

VVA	
Individual members	27
Applications waiting for (DD214)	
Life members	38
AVVA	
Individual members	1
Life member	2
Total	68



New Office for Welcome Home Vets

Welcome Home Vets recently signed a lease with the Emanuel Episcopal Church in Grass Valley for the Lola Montez House at 248 Mill Street, Grass Valley. The group expects to open their office within a few weeks.

Welcome Home Vets, Inc, is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides mental health and readjustment services to veterans and their families in Nevada County and surrounding rural areas at no cost to them. Education and advocacy are also an important part of Welcome Home Vets' mission. Executive Director Gary Brown pointed out that "vets often find it difficult to work through the maze of veterans support functions offered by both the state and federal governments. In addition to counseling Welcome Home Vets provides advice to veterans and their families on how to obtain benefits available to them."

In addition to providing office space and meeting rooms for the group, the historic Lola Montez House, built in the 1850's, will provide an informal meeting place for vets to gather as well as space for peer to peer support meetings. Welcome Home Vets started offering services in March 2010. VVA member Doug Becker played a key role in organizing the group and served as their founding Board Chairman. Kurt Chismark, also a VVA member, is the current Board Chairman for Welcome Home Vets.

Kurt has worked for the past decade as Executive Director of two member organizations of Catholic charities of Sacramento which provide mental health services. He is a "Leadership Fellow" of the Sierra Health Foundation Health Leadership Program and an Outpost Leader for Point Man Ministries, a Christian faith-based "Veterans helping Veterans" group that provides fellowship, mutual support, and spiritual counseling for combat veterans and their families.

Kurt served in the U.S. Army with the 6th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and commanded troops in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He was awarded three Bronze Star Medals and the Air Medal.

Lost Rifle

"When I lost my rifle, the Army charged me 85 dollars. That is why in the Navy the Captain goes down with the ship."

Dick Gregory (60's comedian, vegetarian, Civil Rights activist)

Nevada City Wants You!

The organizers of the Constitution Day parade on September 9th will honor both active duty service men and women and veterans of all ages and their families during this year's parade. Each year Nevada City celebrates the signing of the U.S. Constitution with a re-enactment and the world famous "marching presidents" march down Broad Street. There is also a re-enactment of civil war battles. The civil war troops also join in the parade. But this year there will be something different. This year Nevada City wants to honor both those currently serving in the military as well as our veterans and their families. I hope you will join us on September 9th. Let's fill Broad Street from one end to the other with vets!



NCCVC Report

If you've been in the Remembrance Room lately, you will have noticed there is a projector in the ceiling and a screen for presentations and more electrical outlets along the walls. The facilities manager is looking for a larger screen but until then, the smaller screen is useable. The carpets were cleaned and please clean-up any spills and other dropped items that can soil or damage the carpet. The clock for the room is on order and we hope to have it soon. Issues that you would like to have discussed at the Council meeting can be brought to the VVA board or call Margie (265-4878) to have it put on the Council's Agenda.

The third E-Waste event on June 9, 2012 went off well although we didn't receive as much E-waste material as we received at the prior events. We collected 9,390 pounds and should receive a check within the next month. We are hoping that the total dollar amount will exceed the amount needed to replace the three windows in the Remembrance Rooms. As many of you know, E-waste collections have become very popular and we feel we did well. Every attempt is made to avoid scheduling an event that would be in conflict with one of the schools or other sponsoring organizations; however, that isn't always possible. Thank you to all who came to help and who donated. Information as to how we fared monetarily will be sent out as soon as it is received.



Membership Report

The Chapter Welcomes Two New Members. At the June meeting, Joe Alietti and Tom Eberlein submitted their paperwork for renewal and transfer to our Chapter. After the end of each month, a list of members is sent to the Chapter from VVA National. As of May 31, 2012, we have 27 Individual members, 38 Life members and 3 AVVA (1 Individual and 2 Life members). In addition, we have two Honorary members and five pending renewals (two of whom are out of county or state). If you have any changes in your address, telephone number or email address, please send the information to the Membership Chair at P.O. Box 37, Grass Valley, CA 95945 or email to margie95959@earthlink.net. Jose Gonzales and Margie are working on the new address directory which will be available soon.

Banker Sue Callantine addresses the Chapter



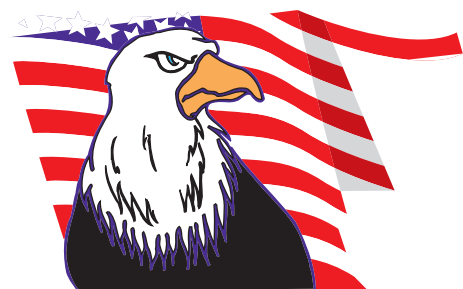
Sue Callantine and VVA Member Tom Eberlein Discuss Mortgage Problems.

With fifteen years of experience, Bank of America Vice President Sue Callantine is well positioned to talk about problems in home financing. Sue led a lively discussion at our June chapter meeting about the problems homeowners are having in restructuring their home loans. Asked whether a borrower should ever miss a payment in their home loan to get the bank to restructure their loan, Sue advised that it all depended on where you are in life and how important your credit rating is compared to other considerations. She pointed out there were circumstances where it might make sense to miss payments as part of the process of negotiating a restructuring of your loan. On the other hand, if maintaining a strong credit rating is important to you, it might not make sense. When asked why it takes so long to arrange to refinance a loan, Sue said that as a result of the problems we are all aware of, banks are being very careful to ensure every "T" is crossed and every "I" is dotted. This takes time.

Thanks to Sue for her forthright and interesting presentation.

Military Trivia

PTSD was observed and noted in the Civil War, too. The illness was called, "Nostalgia". In October 1861 Alfred Lewis Castleman, a surgeon in the Fifth Regiment of the Wisconsin Volunteers, described the first death in his regiment. It was not from battle. "The poor fellow died of Nostalgia (home-sickness), raving to the last breath about wife and children," he wrote. "Deaths from this cause are very frequent in the army." While today "nostalgia" is used to describe the longing for a lost time, the word originally signified acute homesickness, a condition widely regarded as a dangerous and often deadly illness. Doctors maintained that it could kill, either by worsening existing maladies or by causing its own physical symptoms, which included heart palpitations, lesions, damage to internal organs, "hectic fever," bowel problems and incontinence. A Civil War veteran described nostalgia's effects in 1866, noting how it "fastens upon the breast of its prey, and sucks, vampyre-like, the breath of his nostrils. Many a heroic spirit after braving death at the cannon's mouth ... has at length succumbed unresistingly to this vampyre, Nostalgia." During the Civil War, with close to three million men away from home and therefore potential victim to its ravages, Americans both on the battlefield and on the home front worried about nostalgia.



July - 2012



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Joseph Spontini 1		Armondo Garza 3	Craig Johnson 4	NO General Membership 5		
Bill Holman Richard Stahlman 8						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
					Dan Smith	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Margie Buhler					Wayne Simonson
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

