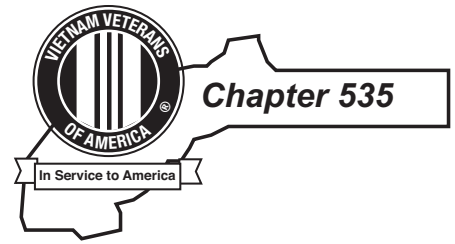




# INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
**CHAPTER 535**



Chapter 535 Web Page [www.vva535.org](http://www.vva535.org)

*"It Feels Good to Get Involved"*

Volume 24 Issue 7

*In Service To America and the Gold Country*

July 2014

## **President's Message**

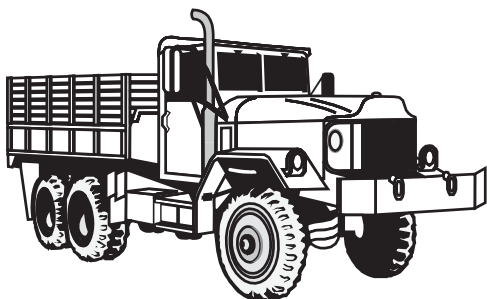
Happily for Fred and Margie Buhler, they are moving down the hill, out of the snow, and to an easier to maintain property out of our area. They want to travel more and simplify their lifestyles. Good for them!

Sadly for VVA Chapter 535, we have lost two of our hardest working leaders and volunteers. Fred resigned as our Chapter President and stellar organizer and Margie, who has been our Secretary, Membership Chair, NCCVC Delegate, Parliamentarian and all around helpful lady, is also leaving and will be greatly missed. We hope to see Fred and Margie from time to time and we look forward to getting some good, sound advice, which is always helpful, when they are in town.

At the Directors' Meeting on June 19, 2014, Pete volunteered to step up to my vacated seat as Vice President. He will also represent VVA at the Nevada County Consolidated Veterans Council and the VVA State Council. We still need a Secretary, until Dave Johnson can return, and there are several other open positions that need to be filled. Please contact me if you would like to get more involved in the business of our Chapter.

The July 4th Parade is coming up on Friday in Nevada City. We will participate as usual. The parade starts at 11:00 A.M. Our vehicles need to be on Broad Street no later than 10 A.M. I suggest we meet at the Nevada City Veterans' building by 9:00 A.M. to prepare our entries.

**Dick Corn, President 277-8856**



Contents	Page
Message from the President .....	1
A Soldiers Story .....	2
Chapter Information .....	3
Membership Facts.....	3
Upcoming Dates and Events .....	3
Chapter Birthdays .....	3
Homegrown by Heros.....	3
POW/MIA Forever Stamp .....	4
Chester Nez-Code Talker .....	6
Fair Booth Sign-up .....	7
VVA Application Form.....	8

## ***A soldiers Story***

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Ruediger Richter barely recognizes himself in the yellowed military photograph hanging in his den — one of the best-known images of the Vietnam War.

A sinewy GI stands in the middle of the frame, staring into the distance; behind him, another soldier looks down at the body of a comrade, wrapped in a poncho. The photo, enshrined in the National Archives, came to be known as “The Agony of War.”

Richter is the man at the center, though he does not look the same. Partly, it’s because of age — he was 25 years old when the photo was taken, and he is now 73, with two grandchildren. Partly, it’s because of war’s ravages — months after the photo was taken, he was shot in the head, and he spent years coping with anger, alcohol, addiction to pain medications, post-traumatic stress.

But Richter himself will tell you that he does not resemble the man in the picture because he is no longer

the man in the picture.

“I was a killer then,” Richter said on his front porch, the wife who helped save his life by his side, birds chirping in trees rustled by the breeze. “I have made my peace here.”

Vietnam in 1966

On Aug. 14, 1966, Richter’s job was clearing a landing zone in South Vietnam so helicopters could evacuate the wounded and dead after a mortar attack hit his unit.

Watching the scene unfold from a safe spot, Army paratrooper and photographer Paul Epley ignored an order to stay down to make the photo, which was used in newspapers and magazines worldwide after it was transmitted by The Associated Press.

“Climbing up the rocks, I saw the image coming together. I chased the light and caught it at the decisive moment,” said Epley, now retired and living in the woods of southern Virginia after a career as a



In the photo, Richter looks skyward with his mouth open and his arms raised slightly. Sgt. Daniel E. Spencer Jr. of Bend, Ore., looks down mournfully at the body of PFC Daryl Raymond Corfman of Sycamore, Ohio; Spencer also was killed in action, in 1968. The scene is shrouded in smoke.

# Chapter 535 Information Center

## Chapter 535 Officers & Board of Directors

### Officers-Phone

<b>President</b>	
Dick Corn .....	277-8856
<b>Vice-President</b>	
Pete Burelle .....	274-3787
<b>Secretary</b>	
Dave Johnson .....	885-1230
<b>Treasurer</b>	
Ralph Remick .....	559-7716
<b>Past President</b>	
Fred Buhler .....	265-4878

### Directors

Ric Sheridan rfsheridan@sbcglobal.net .....	274-1413
Dan Davis .....	272-4110
Dave Chaix .....	269-1431
Bill Holman bholman@succeed.net.....	265-8387
Kent Hawley.....	432-3551
Bart Ruud.....	823-1368
Dale Epps .....	368-6156
Harold Graves.....	470-8507

### CA State Council Delegates

Pete Burelle

## Chapter 535 Committees Chairs

Finance .....	Ralph Remick & Dave Johnson
Parade and Honor Guard .....	Pete Burelle
Membership Affairs .....	Vacant
Newsletter ...	bholman@succeed.net, 265-8387 Bill Holman
Nominations .....	Harold Graves
Christmas Year Round .....	Harold Graves
NCCVC .....	Margie Buhler
Web Master.....	Ralph Remick

### Nevada County Veterans Affairs Rep.

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

## July Birthdays

7	4	Johnson, Craig
7	8	Bill Holman
7	8	Ken Farmer
7	8	Richard Stahlman
7	11	Robert W. Pattee Jr.
7	21	Dan Smith
7	28	Wayne Simonson
7	30	Buhler, Margie
7	31	Garza, Armando

## Homegrown by Heroes

### Nationwide Labeling Program

A new nationwide labeling program will allow farmers, ranchers and fishermen who served in the military to use a special logo to promote their agricultural products. The "Homegrown by Heroes" labeling was first created by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture in 2013. The label allows consumers and businesses purchasing agricultural products to see the logo in multiple areas, enabling them to select products that support U.S. farmer veterans. The initiative is now being expanded nationwide. "Farming and military service are more closely linked than one might think," said Michael O'Gorman, executive director of the Farmer Veteran Coalition. "Thousands of our service men and women leave the rural communities and farms they call home in order to serve our country in the military. Upon completion of their service, they often return home to resume work on the family farm."



The Vinh Son Orphanage, has a new web site

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

### Membership Facts Chapter 535

<b>VVA</b>	
Individual members	33
Life members	39
<b>AVVA</b>	
Individual members	1
Life member	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>



### Upcoming Dates and Events

July	2 (Wed.)	Chapter Meeting 6 pm
July	4	4th of July Parade Nevada City 11 am
July	17	Chapter Board Meeting 6 pm

## 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.

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapters are hereby given permission to reproduce any locally produced articles published in this newsletter. Permission to reprint anything else must come from the original source.

### 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.

---

## POW/MIA Forever Stamp

### Formal Petition to USPS Planned

John Fruit can't visit his uncle's final resting place because no one knows where it is. He hasn't forgotten his mom's older brother, who is one of more than 83,000 U.S. service members missing in action. Ralph V. Jackson was serving in an Army military police unit when he was sent out on a search and rescue mission on Nov. 30, 1950, in what's now North Korea. "Some mortars came in and hit near his jeep and apparently the jeep and my uncle ended up in a ravine. The jeep was found, he was not," said Fruit, 50, who served in the Marines in the 1980s. Jackson's family in Richland Center received a telegram reporting him missing in action. He was 20. Three years later the Army declared him dead.

It's part of the American military ethos to never leave anyone behind. But the reality is that in war it often happens. Planes disappear from radar. Soldiers sent out on patrol never come back. Dead and wounded on battle-

fields are overrun by the enemy. Ships sink beneath waves. Memories of the missing in action remain fresh in the minds of those who loved them. But for anyone else who has never been touched by the tragedy of losing a friend or family member in combat, it's easy to forget or simply not to know. That's why Wisconsin's American Legion as well as legionnaires in other states are trying to persuade the U.S. Postal Service to create a Forever stamp featuring the black POW/MIA flag. Because the POW/MIA flag was represented on a stamp in 1995 and is no longer in circulation, the U.S. Postmaster has declined to make it a Forever stamp.



commercial photographer and, later, a veterans' service officer.

People have attached a range of emotions and attributes to the photo through the decades: Richter was praying, he was questioning God, perhaps calling upon angels.

Richter dismisses those interpretations with a profanity. "I was looking at a helicopter," he said.

"That picture is genius because you see the smoke behind me," he added. "It was a red smoke grenade I threw."

The story of how he came to be in that place at that time is an extraordinary one.

Born in Berlin in February 1941, when Hitler's Nazi troops already had been marauding across Europe for years, Richter's earliest memories are of bodies outside bombed-out bunkers and bright flares dropped by Allied bombers.

"We called them Christmas trees. They were beautiful," he said. "You could hear the sirens going off all over Berlin."

Richter said when the war ended in 1945 and the Allies sliced the city into sectors, he was fortunate enough to live in the American district, where GIs were a soft touch for a young German boy begging for food. With few options in Berlin, Richter said, he joined the German merchant marine at age 14. That three-year stint ended when his ship docked in Calais, France, where he and other sailors were arrested after a bar fight.

"They put us in a dungeon with water dropping down, just like in a movie. There was just a little window with bars," he said.

After three days in lockup, a judge gave the penniless Richter a choice: Stay in prison or join the French Foreign Legion, which was battling rebels in French-controlled North Africa. He was too young to join legally at age 17, Richter said, so he was given a new name — Horst Timm — and allowed to enlist.

Richter does not know how many men he killed with the Legion, or how many night-long marches he made through Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. But after five years, he left the Legion and regained his true name. An

aunt and uncle living in Columbus suggested he come to America to restart his life, so he did in 1964.

Richter grew bored with his job constructing helicopter landing pads, so he enlisted in the Army in 1965. According to his military file obtained from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, he shipped out to Fort Campbell, Ky., and landed in Vietnam in June 1966 with the 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Richter became an aide to Col. Michael "Iron Mike" Healy, he said, and Healy — who went on to play a major role as a commander in Vietnam — was just outside the frame when Epley snapped the shutter.

The moment captured, Richter kept going. He transferred to a reconnaissance unit. The war finally came to an end for him on March 25, 1967, when a bullet hit him on the left side of his face.

The slug destroyed his upper palate — an injury that still makes it difficult for him to speak. It shattered his teeth, left him blind and deaf on the right side. As he was evacuated aboard an Army chopper, Richter used a fork and a ballpoint pen to make his own tracheotomy just to keep breathing; the scar is still there.

'I did my job'

"I hate war. I hate guns because they are the root of all the bad things in the world," said Richter, who won two Bronze Star medals for heroism and other awards that he has since thrown away. "People come up and say things like, 'You're a hero.' I hate that. It makes me mad. I did my job."

But when the job was done, the effects lingered.

Today, after about a dozen reconstructive surgeries at Walter Reed hospital, Richter's appearance is pretty typical for a man his age, save for scars that are mostly hidden by glasses. He avoids wartime buddies and military reunions — he didn't go to North Carolina for a battalion dinner held Friday during a reunion of the 173rd Airborne — and doesn't like to talk about his experience in Vietnam.



## **OBIT Chester Nez 04 Jun 2014**

The final member of the original Navajo code talkers, the group of 28 Native Americans who played a crucial role for U.S. communications during World War II, has died. Chester Nez died Wednesday in Albuquerque, confirmed Judy Avila, who helped Nez write his memoirs. He was 93.

Nez, among the first recruited, helped to develop code based on the Navajo's unwritten language. The code thwarted the Japanese trying to intercept American communications in the Pacific during World War II. The 2002 John Woo film "Windtalkers" brought the story of the code breakers to the big screen. "The passing of Chester Nez, one of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers, sadly marks the end of an era in our country's and Marine Corps' history," Col. David Lapan, director of the Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication, said in a statement. "We mourn his passing but honor and celebrate the indomitable spirit and dedication of those Marines who became known as the Navajo Code Talkers." In his memoirs, Nez said he knew he made the right decision to join the fight. "I reminded myself that my Navajo people had always been warriors, protectors," he said. "In that there was honor. I would concentrate on being a warrior, on protecting my homeland. Within hours, whether in harmony or not, I knew I would join my fellow Marines in the fight."

The code, which they had to memorize, was based on a system in which the Navajos used their own words to substitute for the 26 letters in the English alphabet. For example, the word "wol-la-chee" means "ant" and it might have stood for the letter A in a coded message. Because the Navajos had no words applicable to modern warfare, they settled on hundreds of descriptive words in their own language. A tank was a tortoise; a submarine, an iron fish; a dive bomber, a chicken hawk; a grenade, a potato; a battleship, a whale. Bombs were eggs, and the commanding general a war chief. The death in 2011 of Lloyd Oliver 37

made Nez the last surviving member of the unit. In 2001, when the surviving Navajo code talkers were invited to Washington to receive the Congressional Gold Medal for their service, Nez told the Los Angeles Times that their operations did not always run smoothly. "Quite a few Navajo guys were mistaken for Japanese," he said. But he said he had jumped at the chance to enlist when Marine recruiters came to the reservation boarding school where he was enrolled. "I told my buddy [Roy Begay], 'Let's get the heck out of here, climb that mountain up there and see what's on the other side,'" Nez said.



Chester Nez, 93, the last of the Navajo code talkers dead. In 2001, Nez received a Congressional Gold Medal for his work during World War II.

# Nevada County Fair August 6th Thru August 10th, 2014

**DUTY ROSTER** - Write Name and Phone Number

We need two volunteers per shift. If you would like to sign up  
please call Dick Corn at 277-8856 or Harold Graves 470-8507

**Time:**                    **10:00 to 2:00**            **2:00 to 6:00**            **6:00 to 10PM**

**8/6 Wednesday**    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**8/7 Thursday**      \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**8/8 Friday**         \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**8/9 Saturday**     \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**8/10 Sunday**     \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Booth Set-Up / Tuesday 8/5 @ 9:00am GV Vets Bldg:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Booth Take-Down / Monday 8/11 9:00 am @ Fairgrounds:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**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, \$25/mo Until paid in full  
**Select Age Group**  Ages 56-60 \$200     Ages 61-65 \$175  
    Ages 66 and over \$150     Ages 72+ \$100

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

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

*In Service To America*

Address Correction Requested

