

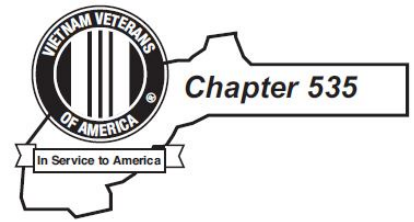


# INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

## CHAPTER 535

Website: [www.vva535.org](http://www.vva535.org)



Volume 26 Issue 4

June 2016

### President's Message

No President's report as of publishing deadline.

Matters of interest as outlined at Board Meeting of May 19, 2016:

- Memorial Celebration of Life for Pete Burelle.
- VVA Convention – June 24, 25, 2016 delegates will be Chuck Holmes and Dale Epps.
- Reimbursement donation of \$100 to assist spouse with housing as her husband undergoes surgery at San Francisco VA Medical Center (Fort Miley) upon submission of documentation.
- Donation of \$100 to Honor Guard for services rendered at Pete Burelle's service.
- Submission of \$20 reservation for Sept. 24, 2016 use of Hideaway Park at Lake Wildwood.

### Editorial Comment

While no one among our membership looks forward to his or her demise, end of life will surely prevail as a part of the human condition. That said, each of us could assist those planning a Celebration of Life if documentation was prepared in advance of death detailing the deceased's record of military service. This kind of documentation

can assist in the writing of an obituary and can provide clear details which lend clarification opportunities to those who have a need to understand the Veteran's record of service. Simple details such as branch of service, rank, years of military duty, military occupation, missions served, and similar details are vital if full recognition is to be offered at in an obituary or celebration of life. Family will not always know the details and the Veteran alone can best share what he or she might want noted. Those who would be asked to share a history of the deceased's military service should keep such script, together with a DD-214 in an accessible file.

### Upcoming Events

June 2, 2016 – General Chapter Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

July 4, 2016 – Parade – Nevada City - 11:00 a.m. VVA – 535 will be second in the line-up.

August 10 – 14, 2016 – Nevada County Fair

Sept. 18, 2016 – Constitution Day Parade

Sept. 24, 2016 - Summer picnic – Lake Wildwood  
Noon to ?. Save the date; details to follow.

December 2016 – Victorian Christmas

**General Meeting of  
June 2, 2016  
"LAST DAYS OF VIETNAM"**

**Oscar Nominated Film – Part 2**

During the final days of the Vietnam War, North Vietnamese forces closed in on Saigon as South Vietnamese resistance crumbled. An unlikely group of heroes emerged as Americans and South Vietnamese took matters into their own hands. The Part 2 showing will be followed with a brief time for comments and discussion.

**Chapter 535 Loses One of Its Own**

Peter M. Burrelle, recent past president of VVA-535 passed away unexpectedly of an apparent heart attack on April 26, 2016. A long time advocate for Vietnam Veterans, Pete served his country with pride that seemed to grow with the passage of time. A part of Pete's legacy is his enduring advocacy for Vietnam veterans.

**Celebration of Life for  
Pete Burrelle  
May 21, 2016, 2:00 PM  
Lounge of American  
Legion  
255 S. Auburn Street  
Grass Valley, CA**

American Legion Post 130 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Amendment Sweepstakes

Raffle tickets remain available for a Mossberg 500 Tactical 12 gauge

shotgun and a Glock 19 semi-automatic 9 mm pistol. Tickets are \$10 each or 11 tickets for \$100. Winner need not be present to win. Contact Dick Corn at 530-277-8856 for updated information.

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Vice-President  
Al Hernandez ..... 864-2480

Secretary  
Dave Johnson ..... 887-8297

Treasurer  
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Kent Haley ..... 432-3551  
Bart Ruud ..... 823-1368  
Dale Epps ..... 368-6156  
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Dick Corn ..... 272-5922

**Committee Chairs**

Finance ..... Ralph Remick & Dave Johnson  
Parade and Honor Guard ..... (vacant)  
Membership Affairs ..... Ric Sheridan  
Newsletter ..... (vacant)  
Nominations ..... Dick  
Corn  
Christmas Year Round ..... Harold Graves

NCCVC ..... Ken Farmer  
Web Master ..... Ralph Remick

**Nevada County Veterans Affairs Rep.**

Victor Ferrera ..... (530) 273-3396

**Property Tax Exemptions – an excerpt from the CalVet website**

California has two separate property tax exemptions: one for veterans and one for disabled veterans.

Veterans Exemption

The California Constitution provides a \$4,000 real property (e.g., a home) or personal property (e.g., a boat) exemption for honorably discharged veterans or the spouse or pensioned-parent of a deceased, honorably discharged veteran. Most persons, however, are disqualified from this exemption due to restrictions on the value of property a claimant may own. A person who owns property valued at \$5,000 or more (\$10,000 or more for a married couple or for the unmarried surviving spouse of a qualified veteran) is not eligible for this exemption. Thus, a veteran who owns a home would most likely not qualify for the veterans exemption.

Disabled Veterans Exemption

The California Constitution and Revenue and Taxation Code Section 205.5 provides a property tax exemption for the home of a disabled veteran or an unmarried spouse of a deceased disabled veteran. There is a basic \$100,000 exemption or a low-income (less than \$52,470) \$150,000 exemption available to a disabled veteran who, because of an

injury incurred in military service:

- is blind in both eyes; or
- has lost the use of two or more limbs; or
- is totally disabled as determined by the VA or by the military service from which the veteran was discharged.

An unmarried surviving spouse may also be eligible if the service person died as the result of a service-connected injury or a disease incurred while on active duty or as the result of active duty. In other words, a veteran may not have been eligible during his or her lifetime, but the surviving spouse may become eligible for the exemption upon the veteran's death.

Unlike the veterans exemption, the disabled veterans exemption has no personal wealth restriction. The exemption is only available on a veteran's principal place of residence. The home may only receive one property exemption. Thus, if a homeowner's exemption has been granted on a property and the owner subsequently qualifies for the disabled veterans' exemption, the homeowner's exemption should be cancelled to allow for the disabled veterans exemption as it provides the greater benefit.

The issues regarding these exemptions are complex, and the eligibility requirements are specific. Consult the local assessor's office for detailed requirements regarding these exemptions.

*Note: Both exemption amounts are annually adjusted for cost of living index; as of January 1, 2013, the exemption amounts are \$122,128 and*

*\$183,193, respectively.*

How Do I Apply?

Form BOE-261-G, *Claim for Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Exemption*, must be used when

claiming this exemption on a property for the very first time for both the basic and the low-income Disabled Veterans' Exemption. The claim form is available by contacting your [county assessor](#).

In order to receive 100 percent of the basic exemption in the first year claimed, the claim form must be filed between the date the property or veteran qualifies and on or before the following January 1, or 90 days after the date of qualification, whichever is later. A one-time filing is only required for the \$100,000 basic exemption; however, annual filing is required for the \$150,000 low-income exemption to ensure the veteran continues to meet the household income limit restriction (claim form must be filed between January 1 and February 15).

The veteran must file the form with the county assessor of the county in which the property is located. All information requested on the form must be provided, including the following information:

- Name of the person claiming the exemption
- Address of the property
- Statement that the veteran owned and occupied the property as his or her principal place of residence on the lien date, or that he or she intends to own and occupy the property as a principal place of residence on the next succeeding lien date
- Proof of disability

Veterans may also request more information from their local [County Veterans Service Office](#).

Please visit the Board of Equalization (BOE) [Veterans Tax Topics](#) for more information.

## **VA Weighs Adding to Agent Orange List**

VA Secretary Bob McDonald is expected to decide by late summer whether to add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson's-like symptoms or hypertension (high blood

pressure) to the list of 14 ailments presumed caused by exposure to Agent Orange and other military herbicides.

When diseases are added, more veterans (and dependents and survivors) can see speedier compensation claims or even retroactive benefits.

The eligible population includes any veteran who served in Vietnam anytime between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975 – including aboard ship in Vietnam's inland waterways – and veterans who served in or near the Korean DMZ anytime from April 1, 1968, to Aug. 31, 1971.

VA is considering adding to the list following the March release of the final biennial review of evidence of health problems linked to herbicide exposure, conducted by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), a division of the National Academy of Sciences. IOM found that new research supports changing the strength of association to herbicide exposure for several ailments.

For bladder cancer and hypothyroidism, it found "limited or suggestive" evidence of an association to exposure, an upgrade from "inadequate or insufficient" evidence.

"Limited or suggestive" means the epidemiology indicates there could be a link between herbicide exposure and increased risk for a health effect. For some ailments, including Parkinson's and ischemic heart disease, limited or suggestive evidence was enough for the VA secretary to decide to expand the presumptive list. For other diseases, including hypertension, it hasn't been. The latest IOM review looked at more scientific literature on cardiovascular conditions and herbicides. It didn't upgrade, but did affirm, limited or suggestive evidence that hypertension is linked to herbicides.

The review also considered whether conditions resulting in Parkinson's-like symptoms, but not Parkinson's itself, should fall into the limited or

suggestive category of evidence. IOM concluded yes after finding “no rational basis” for exclusion.

This could be the first IOM report in six years to result in one or more diseases being added to the list of presumptive ailments.

Even more rare, IOM withdrew its earlier finding of limited or suggestive association for veterans’ children born with spina bifida. For 20 years, VA used a preliminary finding to grant these children VA benefits, but IOM now believes the scientific evidence no longer merits retaining spina bifida in that upgraded category.

On March 9, the same day IOM briefed senior VA officials on its report, McDonald ordered a working group of VA health and medical experts to begin reviewing not only the 1,100-page IOM report but the original studies IOM used, as well as any peer-review studies on herbicides completed since October 2014, which IOM would not have considered.

Ralph Loren Erickson, VHA chief consultant of post-deployment health services, is co-chairman of the working group. He said it will review carefully the IOM recommendations and prepare a response. Whatever decisions the secretary makes on individual ailments, they will be “rooted in science” and “evidence-based,” Erickson said.

Even regarding hypertension, a condition so common it is estimated to affect two of every three Americans 65 and older.

It is true that Vietnam War veterans are in their 60s, 70s, and 80s now and many have chronic diseases of older age, Erickson said.

“Hypertension is one of them,” he said. “And so teasing those things out – (to decide) is it related to this veteran’s age (or) to their being in Vietnam where they were exposed to Agent Orange – sometimes can be difficult.” (From May 2016 American Legion Magazine.)

## **Placer County VVA Chapter Update**

Don Bull, acting chairman of a fledgling VVA Chapter and his cadre of officers has announced an end to an effort to form a Chapter in Placer County. While the dream was to have a new Chapter seated in Foresthill, insufficient membership potential has derailed the attempt to form a new VVA group. Many who might have joined VVA are also members of the VFW and the American Legion, and that may have weakened the drawing power for a VVA chapter. That said, before completely closing the door on the formation of a new group, Don Bull will investigate moving the effort from Foresthill to Auburn.

### **“Long Trek Home – Return of POW Remains” Member Biography – Submitted by Dale Epps, USAF, Ret.**

In late February 1974, two handpicked C-130 crews were tasked to fly on 5 March 1974 to Gia Lam Airbase, Hanoi, North Vietnam to repatriate the remains of twenty-three POWs who had perished during captivity.

374 TAW Commander, Colonel Baginsky, to later retire and Lt. General, flew our C-130 serial ## 21-7889 as command pilot. We left Tan Son Knut AB, Saigon, at dawn on the morning of 5 March, with a five-man crew, plus four (JTM) members, a graves registration team, one Viet Cong General, two North Vietnamese Generals, and an interpreter.

We wore new blue “sanitized” uniforms, i.e., no nametags or rank insignia. The North Vietnam Regime directed that we were to bring no cameras or Press with us as we would be landing at one of their large airbases.

As we crossed the DMZ into North Vietnam, two fully armed Mig 23s joined up on our left and right wings and directed us to fly a

low level flight path over the Red River to prevent our viewing their military bases en-route. Col. Baginsky gave those Migs fits by flying as slow an airspeed as we could, causing the Migs to fly gear down and flaps extended.

As we neared Hanoi Air Control, we heard numerous Soviet IL-76 transports calling in for clearance in English, but as we called in, all of them suddenly switched to Russian. We later realized that every Communist Satellite country was present along with their Press.

After landing a Gia Lam Airbase, we were parked in a remote area and armed troops encircled both our aircraft. They came on board the aircraft and searched for cameras, etc. We then were loaded on a bus and taken to the open front concrete bunker where the twenty-three POW remains were on display in two by three foot red wooden boxes with sliding lids. A placard with the name of the deceased was attached on the front of the box. I noticed the center box in the front was USAF Capt. Lance Sijian. (More about him later.)

As the Repatriation event would not be until the next day, we formed into two-man teams to stand 2 hour Honor Guard around the clock in front of the bunker. The Communist Press harassed us by sticking their cameras in our faces and actually stepping on our toes. The rest of our crews were taken back to our aircraft and told to remain on the aircraft with entrance door closed until each Honor Guard change. We had portable johns on the plane, and they brought us box lunches with bottled water and bottles of Hanoi beer. Of course we refused to drink the beer.

The morning of the 6<sup>th</sup>, we assembled to witness the “disgusting show” by the North Vietnamese! With the cameras rolling from the Communist Press, two men came out in white hazardous suits with face shields, gloves, and boots, with tanks on their backs. They then carried each of the twenty-three remains boxes to a platform, and one at a time slid the lid back

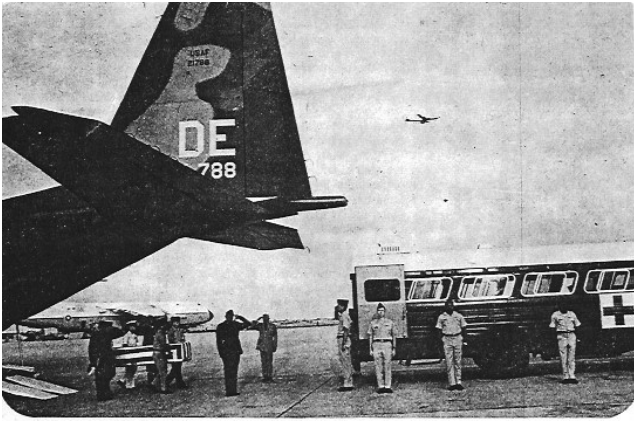
and lifted out each clear plastic bag with the bones and effects of the deceased, and sprayed them and the box with a smelly liquid. When they finally finished with their “show,” the remains were turned over to us.

The agreement was that we were to place the boxes on a flatbed truck and then slowly march along each sided of the truck to our aircraft, and then place the boxes in military coffins to be flag-draped and loaded on the aircraft. Whatever that fluid sprayed on the boxes was, it burned our hands. When the remains were loaded on the truck, the driver took off like a bat out of hell, leaving us standing there. Col. Baginsky formed us up and we marched toward our two C-130s.

After take-off we were again joined by two Mig-23s and escorted to the DMZ above Quang Tri, South Vietnam, and from there we flew to U-Tapao Royal Thai Airbase, where a real ceremony was conducted and the POW remains were routed on their way to the Central Identification Laboratory at the U.S. Army Camp Samae San.

After returning to Travis AFB, CA in late 1974, I was on a C-141 mission to SEA with my pilot, a Major, who was a POW in the Hanoi Hilton until released in 1973. I mentioned that I brought our the POW remains, and he told me that Capt. Lance Sijian had been his cell mate and had tried to escape twice. After the second attempt, the infamous “Mongolian” prison commander beat him to death. One of the two Morth Vietnamese Generals on that mission to Hanoi was the “Mongolian”!

(Thank you, Dale, for sharing your personal story of patriotism. Your service and work is one of historic perspective.) [Editor]



#### Surly bonds reclaim

A routine flight of a KC-135 cleaves the solemnity of a procession transferring the remains of flyers who died in captivity from aircraft to an ambulance bus. Twenty three flyers were recently returned on two missions routed through U-Tapao on their way to the Central Identification

Laboratory at U.S. Army Camp Samac San. The two 30-minute processions were the result of a year's negotiations among the Four Party Joint Military Team in Saigon. (U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. William P. Campbell)

## Local Heroes Memorial Bridge Tours

### Schedule of Memorial Day Events and Tours

- 9:00 a. – Memorial Day Ceremony at Pioneer Park, Nevada City – VFW, host
- 9:15 am – Bicycle Tour of Memorial Bridges – leaving from Pioneer Park
- 11:00 am - Memorial Day Ceremony at Grass Valley Veterans Hall – American Legion, host
- 1:00 pm – Local Heroes Grass Valley Memorial Bridge Walking Tours. Will meet under the Memorial Bridge Tour Banner in front of Memorial Hall.

ARMED FORCES Pavilion Community Garden

## FOR A LIMITED TIME

The Forgotten Soldier Program Is Offering  
Your Soldiers Name, Date of Service and

Service Branch

Imprinted On A Brick To Be

*Memorialized*

In the Community Garden



Soldiers Can Be From Any War - Alive Or Deceased

We Also Memorialize Your Favorite Citizen, School or  
Your Business/Organization Name

This Is A Once In A Lifetime Chance To Be A  
Part Of Something Great To Last A Lifetime!

**Price Per Brick \$95.00**

**All Proceeds to Go To The Forgotten Soldier Program**

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Contact The Forgotten Solder 530-889-2300

John Doe  
USMC  
1965-1969







501 ©3 # 27-2305344 Non-Profit

# BRICKS

## *In the Veterans Garden*

Sgt John Doe  
USMC  
1965-1969

The Forgotten Soldier Program is offering the opportunity to leave your veterans mark in a very special place. Bricks are available to be engraved with your customized message until we sell out.

Honor a family member or organization in a very special way.

The cost is \$95 per brick for one to three lines, limited to 23 spaces per line. The Forgotten Soldier Program will verify information before engraving and will contact you when installed.

### ORDER FORM

(Please Print Clearly)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Purchaser : \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### NAME/ORGANIZATION

(Please Print Clearly)

LINE 1 \_\_\_\_\_

LINE 2 \_\_\_\_\_

LINE 3 \_\_\_\_\_

*\*The Forgotten Soldier has the right to approve all messages.*

All proceeds go directly to The Forgotten Soldier Program a non-profit. A receipt will be provided for tax purposes. Please pay with cash or check made out to the Forgotten Soldier program.

Contact The Forgotten Soldier Program @ 530-889-2300 Or Email [info@the-forgotten-soldier-program.org](mailto:info@the-forgotten-soldier-program.org)  
Or complete and mail form to 991 Lincoln Way Auburn Ca 95603

# June 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 General Meeting 6:00 p.m.	3	4
5	6 D-Day Allied Invasion of Europe	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Flag Day US Army Founded (1775)	15	16 VVA 535 Board 6:00 p.m.	17	18 Armed Forces Day
19	20	21	22	23 VVA State Convention 6/23 – 6/26	24	25 Korean War Began (1950). Battle of the Little Big Horn began 1876
26 Battle of the Little Big Horn ended 1876.	27	28	29	30		

## 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