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VVA CHAPTER 106

June, 1987

'Nam Photo Display Featured at General Meeting

This month's program at the General Membership meeting will feature an exhibit of photographs shot in Vietnam and in the United States during the Vietnam war.

Curated and displayed by Boyd Nicholl and Dick Amerault.

"The Vietnam era was a crucial experience for many Americans--a time of choices we have had to live with ever since. We hope showing these photographs will be an opportunity for healing and coming together over our past experiences, and for allowing those of us who lived through the times to see choices we didn't make and things we didn't see."

Dick Amerault is a retired Army sergeant with four tours of duty in Vietnam. Boyd Nicholl is a self-described "old hippie" and conscientious objector to the war. They met through a photography class in which Nicholl was teacher and Amerault student, and have since become good friends and partners in a small business, Southern Arizona Photography Workshop.

In putting together this show, they have so far looked at more than ten-thousand images from over one-hundred men and women--and continue to welcome more. The Vietnam war was probably the most photographed war in history--if not the actual battles, certainly the soldiers, the equipment, and the camps. Likewise at home, cameras abounded and everything was photographed. Interestingly, the curators discovered that the photographs they received of Vietnam were often quite lyrical and compassionate, while the images from the peace demonstrations at home could be quite angry and violent. The exhibit has become in many ways a surprising re-vision of the era.

Anyone wishing to see this fine display will be welcome. The program will start at 7:30 on Thursday, June 25th at the DAV Chapter 18.

MAY GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATION

We were privileged to have as a guest speaker Mr. Craig Oliver, president and founder of The Refugee Education Organization. Mr. Oliver's organization operates medical facilities in remote areas of Thailand along the Cambodian border, not serviced by the U.N. or Red Cross because of hostile actions in the area. He stated that Tucson medical services at large have donated over 20 tons of much needed medical supplies which have provided medical services to as many as 60,000 refugees in that country.

Mr. Oliver stated that his main reason for an organization such as his is, "to help the neglected people who fought side by side with us, (during the Vietnam Con-

Continued on page 3

BOARD TALK

Committees Chuck and Patty Bald-Coulter volunteered for and were selected to co-chair the Membership Committee. Congratulations Chuck and Patty and thanks for taking on such an important job!!! A budget committee was formed. The members are Mike Smyth, Frank Thompson, and Gene Voelzow. Thanks guys! Now you can help us spend some money. All other committees were tabled for the time being. Dave Croteau made a plea for volunteers to become involved in committees. How about **YOU** ??? Come to a meeting or call one of the board members and volunteer your free time to help YOUR organization The newsletter and the problems with the publishing of it were discussed. A final decision was tabled until the general meeting. It seems it's the same old folks writing for the newsletter. I'm sure that you have a "war story" or two that you can tell us, or maybe some poetry or some pictures you can lend. Dig through your stuff we'll give you your pictures back when we're done It was voted to reimburse John Shirley \$196.62 for auction expenses Treasurer's report Balance of \$2740.00 Louie Leos discussed the Memorial Day parade. We had a good turn out, but again there were more non-members marching than members. Also a special thanks to the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club who participated!!!

Lastly, a sales pitch. Each meeting there are more new faces appearing. It's good to see and we hope to see more and more as time goes on. However, we would like to see some OLD faces at the meetings. I'm fairly new myself, only being a member for a little over a year. I keep seeing and hearing the names of some of our early members and how their hard work and dedication to all our brothers and sisters kept this chapter going through some pretty rough times. I also know of some of the things that finally turned you off and caused you to stop participating. Hopefully that's all ancient history now and we can put it all behind us. So what ever your reason for leaving **COME HOME WE MISS YOU!!!**

Till next month.....

YOUR BOARD



MEETING DATES

GENERAL MEETING: Thursday, June 25th at D.A.V. Chapter 18, 7:30 PM

JULY 4th PARADE AND PICNIC, Starting at 8:00 AM, Ramada #27, Reid Park. Walk through parade with picnic to follow. Bring your families and friends and come on over.

BOARD MEETING: Thursday, July 9th at D.A.V. Chapter 18, 7:30 PM

GENERAL MEETING: Thursday, July 23rd at D.A.V. Chapter 18, 7:30 PM

All Board Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month and all General Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month. These meetings are held at Disabled American Veterans Chapter 18, located at 4656 E. 1st Street (one block south of Speedway and one block west of Swan) at 7:30 PM.

PARADE AND PICNIC

July 4th is a time of celebration of independence and liberty. This 4th, the Chapter is participating in the annual Fourth of July Parade to be held at Reid Park followed by a Chapter sponsored picnic with games, food and beverage.

The event begins and ends at Ramada #27, starting at 8:00 AM with parade organization followed by the parade and festivities. For more info, contact Louie Leos at 889-6090 concerning the parade and for picnic information call Bernie Croteau at 792-9109.

All Chapter members and friends are urged to come!

VVA PRODUCTS

Many of you have been asking for more varied items, such as caps, patches and different stickers. Buying your VVA Products through your chapter will save you time and postage. Here's a (growing) list of the items:

VVA Bumper Sticker (strip)	\$1.50
VVA Bumper Sticker (round)	\$1.25
VVA Lapel Pin	\$3.00
VVA Patch	\$3.00
Foam "Huggers"	\$2.50
Cap with VVA Logo	\$6.00

Some of the above items are limited! Requests for other products such as books, coffee mugs and shirts will be taken. Stop by any meeting and ask for Shawn.

MEETING Continued from page one

flict) and to let them know America still cares."

Among the topics of discussion was the fact that these people are caught in the middle of the wars of several countries, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand. They are still living with fighting and the perils of war, mines, booby traps and poor sanitation (the nearest potable water is over 60 kilometers from where they are forced to live). Typhoid, malaria, cholera and TB are rampant.

Also discussed was the mention of live POW sightings and his own feelings regarding the issue.

Unfortunately, because of short notice we were unable to get the word out to all the Chapter members in time about this presentation. All the more reason to come faithfully to as many general meetings as possible. Stay informed and up to date with items of interest to all veterans - JOIN IN THE GENERAL MEETINGS! Each month, we'll be bringing you new and informative news.

HISTORY

16 Jun 61--Following a meeting between President Kennedy and Nguyen Dinh Thuan, an agreement is reached for direct training and combat supervision of Vietnamese troops by US instructors.

11 Jun 63--Buddhist monk Quang Duc and other monks publicly burn themselves in a plea for Diem to show 'charity and compassion' to all religions. In an orgy of bad taste Madame Nhu refers to the burnings as 'barbecues' and offers to supply matches.

20 Jun 64--General Paul Harkins is succeeded as head of US MACV by his deputy, Lieutenant General William Westmoreland.

26 Jun 65--General Westmoreland is given formal authority to commit US forces to battle when he decides they are necessary 'to strengthen the relative position of the GVN (Government of Vietnam) forces.'

9 Jun 66--During the third day of a battle in Kontum Province, Captain W S Carpenter of the 101st Airborne Division calls for air strikes on his own position to prevent NVA attackers from wiping out his company. Carpenter and his men subsequently fight their way through machine-gun fire to safety. He will be recommended for the Congressional Medal of Honor.

28 Jun 67--General Duong Van Minh, in exile in Bangkok, announces that he will be a candidate for the presidency in September. The Ky government forbids Minh to return.

5 Jun 68--Senator Robert Kennedy is shot after making a victory speech in California's Democratic presidential primary; he dies the next day.

16 Jun 69--Troops of Thailand's Black Panther Division repel 500 Vietcong soldiers who assault their base 20 miles east of Siagon three times. The defenders, aided by the supporting fire of US jets, helicopters and artillery, report killing 212 enemy soldiers. Thai losses are six killed and seven wounded.

8 Jun 70--In a speech delivered in Hanoi, Norodom Sihanouk pledges Cambodians will fight with the Vietnamese Communists to defeat US 'imperialism.'

15 Jun 71--After a 12-hour Central Highlands battle between Siagon paratroopers and the North Vietnamese breaks a three-week seige of Fire Base 5, the South Vietnamese capture a large Communist complex 100 yards from their artillery base.

17 Jun 72--Five men are arrested for breaking into the Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate Hotel in Washington D.C.

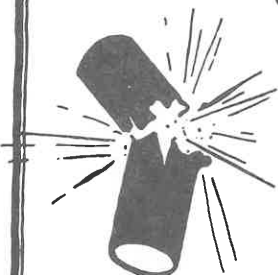
JULY 4th PICNIC

Directly following the Parade on July 4th
at Reid Park -- Join us at Ramada #27 for
a Picnic -- Burgers & Beer provided by
Chapter 106

“Volleyball & Horseshoes”

If you wish to help out by bringing any
Needed items: **Please** contact
Bernie Croteau at **792-9109**.

We Need Your Help & Support”
Let's Have Fun!



"Prevailing Winds"

Editor's Note: This is the second in our continuing series on family relationships by George Gafner, ACSW, Coordinator of Family Mental Health Services at the Tucson V.A. Medical Center. Questions and comments are welcome.

A wife of a Viet Nam vet writes, "My husband says he loves me, but he hardly ever talks to me. What can I do?"

This is a common concern of wives of vets from all periods of military service. Why is it that some men rarely disclose what they feel or think, or don't ask for help or wish to admit they are wrong? Is it that they don't want to let you into their private world, or that they might appear weak or vulnerable? The reasons are no doubt complex.

Men learn to behave this way, and they can unlearn it with your help. Blaming and analyzing him won't help, but it does help---when the time is right---to let him know it's okay to share his thoughts with you. Then tell him you appreciate his effort.

So, wives, girlfriends, mothers and daughters, maybe your journey of a thousand intimacies can start with a single hurt feeling shared by a man. If not, perhaps a counselor at the Vet Center or the VA can help you get on the road faster.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

AMPHITHEATER PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMPLOYMENT OFFICE

All available positions in the district are advertised by means of the employment message telephone and updated on a "needs" basis. At any time during the day or night, and on weekends, you may call this number to learn the current available positions. 887-8388

Maintenance Position General maintenance position is available, knowledge of heating, ventilation, air conditioning helpful. Apply at Hotel Park, 5151 E. Grant Road.



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA TUCSON CHAPTER 106

P.O. Box 40903
Tucson, Arizona 85717

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The Secret Agent

Agent Orange Settlement Upheld

by VVA Legal Services

On April 21, 1987, three judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals in New York, handed down nine separate opinions covering most of the appeals filed last year in the class action lawsuit against the chemical companies that made Agent Orange. The original settlement creating a \$180 million fund was announced in May 1984.

The general thrust of the lead opinion is that the work done by District Court Judge Jack Weinstein was okay: the settlement was approved as fair and reasonable; the distribution plan that he adopted was mostly approved by the appeals court. The other actions he took during the proceedings were almost all upheld.

Totally ignoring scientific studies completed over the past three years, the Court of Appeals concluded that veterans could not have made their case in court. "The weight of present scientific evidence thus does not establish that personnel serving in Vietnam were injured by Agent Orange."

Claims by class members that the notices distributed by the court allowing them to opt out of the case were not widely enough distributed were rejected. Claims that the case should not have been a class action were rejected. Claims by the veterans who opted out of the settlement were rejected.

Complaints by wives and children that their cases should not have been thrown out of the district court were rejected as were claims by veterans against the U.S. Government, claims by the chemical companies against the U.S. Government (hoping to re-

cover anything they had to pay veterans), and claims by civilians exposed to Agent Orange.

The appeals court rejected Judge Weinstein's plan for creating an independent foundation directed by Vietnam veterans. The purpose of the foundation was to provide services to those veterans who did not qualify for cash payments. Despite rejecting that part of the Weinstein's distribution plan, the judge was left with authority to use part of the Settlement Fund to provide some kind of services.

The Court of Appeal's action—almost exactly one year after the case was argued and nearly three years after the settlement itself—brings veterans who are severely disabled and in need of cash one step closer to getting it. The district court has already begun to put into motion the appeals court opinions. Weinstein has set a date of May 1, 1987, to hear from people who do not want him to go forward and let contracts to Aetna Insurance Company to get ready to cut checks. Although no firm time table has been released by the court, according to one of the clerks for Weinstein, he is working "as expeditiously as possible."

There remains the possibility that additional appeals may be filed by veterans or attorneys. Someone could ask all the judges of the court of appeals to reconsider the 3-judge decision. Someone could also ask the Supreme Court to consider the case.

In fact, it is likely that someone will file further appeals. It is unlikely that the court of appeals or the Supreme Court would agree to consider the case. However, additional time will be lost while these requests are processed by the courts.

Under the distribution

plan that was upheld by the court of appeals, only totally disabled veterans and survivors of veterans would receive cash payments. The maximum payment to a veteran disabled for several years would be approximately \$12,800—paid over a ten-year period. The average payment will be considerably less. The maximum payment to a survivor would be approximately \$3,400—paid in one lump sum.

Before any veterans or survivors who have already filed an initial application with the court get any money, they will have to complete an application for payment. Letters will be sent to each person on the court's mailing list offering them a payment application form. Once those forms are processed, final calculations of the amounts to be paid will be determined.

One additional opinion is expected very soon on the only issue that the Vietnam Veterans of America argued

before the court in April 1986. VVA argued that the records and documents given in secret to the district court by the chemical companies should be released to the public. The district court ordered the documents released, but the companies appealed. VVA is represented by VVA Legal Services in this effort.

These so-far-secret documents may finally give the public the information needed to decide just how much the government knew and when it knew it. VVA has long argued that it is the federal government's responsibility to care for veterans suffering from health effects of exposure to Agent Orange.

The benefits theoretically available from the Veterans Administration for the very same veteran who qualifies under the court's distribution plan far

outweigh what the court has available to pay out. In one month, a 100% service-connected disabled veteran would receive from the VA \$1,355—in one year that totals \$16,260 tax free. The maximum available under the court's plan—\$12,800 paid out in ten annual installments of \$1,280.

Not Too Late to File Initial Agent Orange Claim

Any veteran who has recently become totally disabled can still file the initial claim with the court. The deadline for filing is 120 days after learning that you are totally disabled.

"Totally" means that the

Social Security Administration has decided you are qualified for disability benefits, or the VA has decided you are 100 percent disabled for either a service-connected or nonservice-connected disability.

Under Judge Weinstein's plan, a disability must not be from an accident, i.e., traumatic source. The disability does not have to be proven related to exposure to Agent Orange.

Spouses who have recently become widows also have 120 days from the date of death to file the initial application form. In the past, Judge Weinstein has also accepted applications even though they were filed after they were due. Veterans or family should not hesitate filing now even if the above deadlines have passed.

Copies of application forms are available from VVA Legal Services (ATTN: AO Claim Form, 2001 S St., NW, Washington DC 20009) or from the following address established by the court:
Agent Orange Computer Center
Box 887
Smithtown NY 11787

NEWS UPDATE

Viet vets hold forth on the wounds of war

By Douglas Kreutz
The Arizona Daily Star

The men told war stories, real ones that slammed home like mortars.

The kids listened and tried to understand.

A woman held up a picture of her brother, missing in Vietnam since 1967.

The kids wanted to know: Why can't he come home?

• • •

It was history in the raw yesterday at Sahuaro High School.

In a special classroom session that might have been called "Introduction to the Vietnam War 101," four combat veterans and the director of a Tucson POW/MIA organization offered their personal accounts of the war.

About 80 Sahuaro juniors and seniors took part in the class, which was arranged by teacher Virg Stan and members of the Vietnam Veterans of America chapter here.

No memory of war

Chapter member Dennis Lee, a Tucson native who graduated from Palo Verde High School in 1966, introduced himself and fellow veterans Gene Voelzow, Frank Thompson and Chuck Bald-Coulter.

He then stepped lightly into the heavy topic: "We're the group that invented sex, drugs and rock and roll.

"Most of you were not born when this war was going on," Lee told the students. "The Vietnam War was as divisive in this country as the Civil War was. We're still paying for that war socially, economically and physically.

"This was a war you could watch live on your television set. People could watch their sons, husbands or boyfriends being shot at on TV every night."

Lee, who told of watching night bombings light the Vietnamese sky "like thunderstorms," said he came home from battle feeling dirty, exhausted and out-of-place in an America he no longer knew.

Bald-Coulter, confined to a wheelchair as a result of an injury suffered while serving in the Merchant Marine after his com-



Photos by Benji Sanders, The Arizona Daily Star

Bald-Coulter recalls the war while listening behind him are Lee, left, Voelzow, Thompson and Apodaca Reitz

bat duty, said he fought with the U.S. Marines in Vietnam in 1959, six years before the official beginning of U.S. involvement there.

A surgical corpsman, Bald-Coulter told a nightmare story of trying to treat a soldier whose leg had been blown off by a mortar shell.

The man was in such agony he couldn't hold still, Bald-Coulter said, "until another mortar took his other leg off. Then I was able to work on him.

"I can tell you that war ain't no fun," he said as the students listened solemnly. "It made my day really busy."

Thompson said he was one of group of soldiers who were sent to fight in areas in which U.S. of-

ficials denied there was American involvement.

"We were never in Cambodia," Thompson said. Then, pointing at Cambodia on a map, he added, "But here's where I went."

He said the war was hell. "It hits hard when you have a friend who doesn't come back." And coming home was a far cry from heaven: "I was a baby burner on one hand and a nigger on the other," said Thompson, who is black.

Voelzow, a career Army officer who flew helicopters in the war, presented a brief history of Vietnam and told the students, "It's actually a very beautiful country."

Voelzow said his homecoming was less painful than those of many veterans because "I was a

lifer . . . and so I was part of the 'military family.'"

Eleanor Apodaca Reitz, director of the Arizona Families of POW/MIAs, stood before the class with a picture of her brother, Air Force Maj. Victor Apodaca Jr.

She said her brother has been missing in action since his jet was shot down over Vietnam in June 1967. Non-government sources have told her he is alive and "being used as slave labor," she said.

When several students asked why government officials haven't arranged for the release of Apodaca and others still missing in Vietnam, Apodaca Reitz responded that "this is very politically involved."

She said she believes officials should increase efforts to gain the release of MIAs, even if it means paying the Vietnamese, "because we're already paying to get people (hostages in other countries) home."

"Think about your future," Apodaca Reitz told the students, "and get involved."

"This was a war you could watch live on your television set. People could watch their sons, husbands or boyfriends being shot at on TV every night."

**Tucsonan Dennis Lee
Member of Vietnam Veterans of America**



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Membership in Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. is open to Vietnam Era Veterans
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Name _____ Phone _____

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