

Viet Vet Monsoon Tribune

VOLUME III, ISSUE NUMBER 10

VVA CHAPTER 106

OCTOBER 1986

New Chapter Leadership

At the September General Meeting elections were held. Newly elected officers are Dave Croteau, President; John Snirley, Vice-President; Mike Brasher, Secretary; Mike Smyth, Treasurer. Elected to the position of Director are Louie Leos, Neil Mack, Shawn Swartzmiller, David Bently and Gene Voelzow.

Many thanks to the previous Board members declining this time

around. Albie Ginaro, past President; John Paulos, past Treasurer; and Bill Rasmussen, past Secretary. Good Luck Guys!



Pictured above are former Board of Directors, from left to right, Dave Croteau, John Paulos, John Shirley, Louis Leos, Albie Ginaro and Mike Brasher.

PROGRAM

The program at this month's General Meeting will be provided by the Tucson Vet Center. A representative from the Director's staff is scheduled to give an update on the services available to Veterans in our area. Also, information from the Veteran's Administration in Washington will be discussed. There will be time after the meeting to talk with the representative in private, if anyone wishes to do so.

Don't forget that VETERAN'S DAY is the 11th of November! The Chapter will be entered in the Tucson Veteran's Day Parade. Anyone wishing to walk behind the Vietnam Veterans of America banner is encouraged to join in the parade. For more information contact Mike Brasher or Shawn Swartzmiller.

BOARD TALK

Board talk is a new feature of the newsletter. In it we will be giving you highlights of the previous board meeting so that you can have an idea of the direction the chapter is heading. The names of all the board members are listed elsewhere in the newsletter so we won't waste space by listing them again here.

The meeting on the 9th of October was the first meeting of the new board. We introduced ourselves to each other and gave our backgrounds..... The procedures for cashing chapter checks was changed and it now requires two signatures on the check..... Chapter goals were discussed and there were several good ideas. The main ideas brought up were: **Education** of both the Vietnam Veteran as to what services are available, and the public as to the diverse roles of the Vietnam era Veteran plays in today's society. **Visibility** to keep the Vietnam Veteran in the public eye in a positive manner. **Service** to the Vietnam Veteran from helping to solve a crisis to just being there to talk to. If you have an idea on the goals you would like to see the chapter adopt please contact one of the board members or write your idea down and mail it to the chapter. Better yet, bring it along to the next general meeting, that way we can have you and your idea there. This is **your** organization..... We also discussed the budget and formed a budget committee. The members are Mike Smyth, John Shirley, and Neil Mack. If you have an idea of a worthwhile project contact one of them to get the idea before the board..... We also discussed ways we can help the public and keep the Vietnam Veterans of America in the public eye in a non-monetary way by volunteering our services in fund raising events for others such as the KUAT public television fund raisers. If you know of any worthwhile causes who need volunteers, let a board member know..... Chapter calendar. The next event coming up is the Veteran's Day Parade on November 11th. Mike Brasher is the chairman for the parade. If you want to be in it or help in other ways call him (after 5pm please)..... Committees. We finally have a Membership Committee Chairperson. Karen Sertich volunteered for this very important and demanding job **THANKS KAREN!!!** Let's all help her out by bringing a new member to the next meeting..... There is a public relations course being offered by Pima Community College expressly for members of non-profit organizations. We are actively seeking volunteers to attend the course and work in public relations for the chapter. If you think that you're the person for the job, call a board member.....

If you haven't noticed by now, after just about every item we are soliciting your input. We are the elected officers of this chapter and as in every other democratic organization we are obligated to follow the mandate of the majority of the members. When we get no input we can only do what we feel is the correct thing. If you don't like something that is being done by the board and you don't tell us about it we can only assume that everyone agrees with what we are doing. **It's your organization—give us your input!!**

'Till next month

Your Board.....

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POW/MIA UPDATE

POOR IS THE NATION THAT HAS NO HEROES; SHAMEFUL IS THE NATION HAVING THEM THAT FORGETS!

The following are excerpts of two speeches made during National POW/MIA Recognition Week in September, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and University of Arizona ceremonies:

"Courage and sacrifice are no strangers to America. Since our first struggle for independence, America's POW's have endured terrible hardships and have been called upon to make extraordinary sacrifices. The bravery, perseverance, and profound devotion to duty of our unreturned men and women have earned them a place of honor in the hearts of all people. Their spirit of hope and their commitment to the defense of freedom are a claim on our loyalty to them.

I have recently returned from a five-day Freedom Walk through Colorado. My sister and I joined a group of Vietnam Vets, concerned citizens, spouses, and children on this venture. What I learned from this is the unwavering obligation these men and women have to our country, to their missing comrades, and to the families of the missing men and women.

The purpose of the mission was to call attention to the 2500 men and women still unaccounted in Southeast Asia and to honor the fallen warriors whose names are engraved upon the Wall in Washington, D.C. There are over 58,000 names on the Wall but, if any of you have placed your hands upon that Wall, you would realize it is not cold! To touch it is to know that it is warm and vibrant! That Wall is a living entity -- it beats as the heart of a nation!

There are those who remember the Alamo and Pearl Harbor. When freedom called they answered and stayed until it was over. The heroic dead were left in Flanders Field, on the rock of Corregidor, on the bleak slopes of Korea, and in the steaming jungle of Vietnam.

You and I have a commitment to this nation and to the men and women who still wait to come home from Southeast Asia -- don't let them be forgotten! And, we have an obligation to the future of this country, to our children, and to the men and women who serve in the military -- **THAT SUCH A TRAGEDY SHALL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN!**

This group of men and women that I walked with were referred to as The Last Patrol. They carried a lighted torch during this five-day journey through Colorado. They had committed themselves to "live their lives in the cause of freedom." That firelight will continue to burn and their voices raised for there is one patrol still out -- **SERVING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA!** May God grant us the strength, unity, and endurance to continue this mission until our people are home!"

There are individuals in our government, whether they be congressional, military, or civilian whose mindset is that human life is expendable. I refuse to accept this attitude. Human life is a precious commodity and should be treated as such.

The men and women who serve our country, through the military and other special areas, are viewed as a non-entity. They are looked upon as a number and as a replaceable robot. Those responsible have placed personal careers ahead of preservation of human life. The tragedy of our missing men and women is entangled in a network of international politics, foreign trade, and humanitarian and moral issues.

These missing Americans have continued to honor their country. Now, we must ask, "What will their country do for them? We, individually and collectively, are their country. **WHAT PART WILL YOU PLAY IN THEIR REPATRIATION?"**

Eleanor Apodaca Reitz
Sister of Major Victor J. Apodaca, USAF
June 8, 1967 North Vietnam

HISTORY

Oct 64--Under-Secretary of State George Ball dictates a 67-page memo against sending more troops to Vietnam. Ball sends copies to Rusk, McNamara and McGeorge Bundy. No one bothers to send a copy to President Johnson until Feb 1965.

5 Oct 65--After a long debate, the administration authorizes the use of tear gas by US troops in Vietnam.

4 Oct 66--Pope Paul VI addresses 150,000 people in St Peter's Square in Rome and calls for an end to the war in Vietnam through negotiations.

29 Oct-3 Nov 67--The Vietcong's 273rd Regiment attacks a US Special Forces camp at Locninh and the defenders are quickly reinforced by two battalions of the US First Infantry Division. The US forces fight the Vietcong through the streets from house to house and finally drive them from Locninh. More than 900 Vietcong are reported killed during the encounter.

4 Oct 68--US Marines reoccupy the abandoned base at Khesanh to secure a hill for two artillery batteries.

9 Oct 69--The National Guard is called out as demonstrations continue in Chicago protesting the trial of the Chicago Eight.

11 Oct 70--A US helicopter gunship accidentally fires 12 rockets at South Vietnamese soldiers in the Mekong Delta, 132 miles southwest of Saigon, killing eight and wounding 23.

7 Oct 71--In the most intensive air strike on North Vietnamese bunkers and artillery sites in over a year, US B-52s drop nearly 1000 tons of bombs on enemy targets near Krek in Cambodia, and around the South Vietnamese city of Tayninh.

12 Oct 72--The 163rd session of the regular peace talks is held in Paris.



Reprinted
Courtesy of
Paul Miller

Vietnam Veterans Will Soon Comprise the Majority

Vietnam Veterans will soon comprise the majority of military Veterans in this country. Within the next decade the Vietnam Era Veterans' Organizations will be deciding and helping to formulate laws related to all veterans. This will be a tremendous responsibility for those involved in such decision making.

The Vietnam Era Veteran has often been labled as being apathetic to issues such as Veterans' rights and legislative issues concerning these rights. We are currently experiencing a growing awareness of the need to be involved in the decision making process when it directly affects our lives. We no longer can afford to have an attitude of "Let someone else do it." All veterans of the Vietnam Era must let their voices be heard and realize that if they remain silent and do not participate, then all veterans will suffer the consequences.

Organizations such as the V.F.W. and American Legion have successfully fought for Veterans' right for years and without the efforts of organizations such as these Veterans would probably receive substantially less benefits than are presently enjoyed. The V.V.A. must endeavor to carry on this effort on behalf of all Veterans. All Vietnam Veterans organizations must be willing to "pick up the Torch" when it passes on to our generation. V.V.A. and other organizations must provide the leadership and membership to support the programs and policies established by these service organizations.

Veterans who have complained about problems with the U.S. Veterans' Administration and its' policies will have the opportunity in the near future to try and do something about it. We have problems facing us that are unique to Vietnam Veterans. Issues such as Agent Orange, PTSD and POW/MIA's are just some of the problems facing us in the years to come. We must dedicate ourselves to ensuring that our rights as Veterans are never compromised. An attitude of apathy will only serve to have these rights denied to us. Our fathers and grandfathers have fought long and hard to achieve these benefits for Veterans. We must be equally diligent in our efforts to sustain these rights. It will be a continuous struggle for all service organizations to battle governmental bureaucracy in the future. I feel that the Vietnam Veterans will respond to this challenge just as courageously as they responded to the call to serve their country in the time of War.

Yours in Comradeship
Gary Allen

Reprinted from VVA Chapter 203,
Chattanooga, Tennessee

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The Secret Agent

AGENT ORANGE Government can't look away any longer

"I am a lawyer and I don't think I could prove in court, by the weight of the existing scientific evidence, that Agent Orange is the cause of all the medical problems - nervous disorders, cancer and skin problems - reported by Vietnam veterans, or of their children's serious birth defects. But I am convinced that it is."

A Vietnam veteran

That was printed in the New York Times Magazine a month ago, before a study was released that many scientists and veterans believe confirms this veteran's suspicions.

The instincts of hundreds of thousands of such veterans point to the smoking gun of Agent Orange. The study, financed by the state of New Jersey, has been described as bringing the case against the defoliant two crucial steps forward.

The findings show that traces of dioxin remain in the body for years after exposure, and that the levels of dioxin are 10 times higher in the exposed group of veterans than in other Vietnam veterans.

The study does not tie up all the loose ends, but it is a breakthrough. It also challenges the government to stop stalling on the issue. For years, "research protocol" has kept governmental studies on hold. Such bureaucracy will only bring more resentment and pain to a group of warriors who fought a misguided war and came home to an unappreciative country and a government that will not give them the benefits they deserve.

A 1984 out-of-court settlement with manufacturers of the defoliant - who maintained their products weren't responsible for the veterans' suffering - garnered \$180 million for the victims of Agent Orange. In 1985, a federal court ordered that the money go only to the totally disabled and to families of those who had died. Last month, lawyers for the veterans successfully sought a stay on that federal distribution plan, saying it failed to connect the ailments to Agent Orange exposure, a key contention in the case.

The fund, which has grown to \$225 million, has yet to help any victims. And the biological "fingerprints" in at least 245,000 veterans continue to do their evil work.

The veteran who wrote the introductory paragraph is the son of Adm. Elmo Zumwalt Jr., the man who ordered the spraying of Agent Orange, ironically to protect soldiers from the enemy who hid in the foliage. Lt. Elmo Zumwalt III is battling two types of cancers. Elmo Russell Zumwalt IV, age 9, has brain dysfunction.

Unlike his son, the admiral comes close, but not close enough, to blaming the suffering of the exposed veterans on the spraying of Agent Orange.

"Knowing what I do know, I still would have ordered the defoliation.. But that does not ease the sorrow I feel for Elmo, or the anguish his illness, and Russell's disability, give me.

All can sympathize with him, but not with his inability to sense the need for restitution. The government suffers from the same failing. The hope is that the hard evidence in this latest study will persuade the admiral and the government to change that attitude. Guilt alone accomplishes nothing.

Reprinted from The Arizona Daily Star, Tuesday September 30, 1986.

MEETING DATES

NEXT GENERAL MEETING: - October 23rd, D.A.V. Chapter 18, Time 7:30 PM

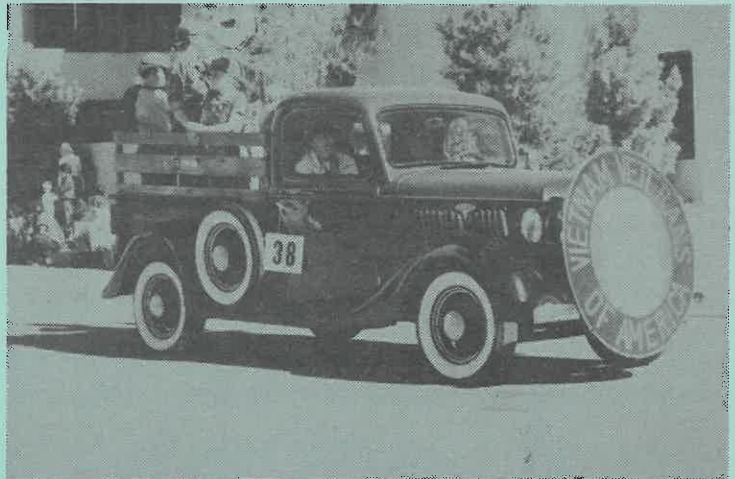
BOARD MEETING: - November 13th, D.A.V. Chapter 18, Time 7:30 PM

GENERAL MEETING: - November 27th, D.A.V. Chapter 18, Time 7:30 PM

Board meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month and the General Meeting on the fourth Thursday. Anyone is Welcome!

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Gene Zabel and other Chapter membership road in a Tucson Veterans Day parade. . . . Do you remember this truck? How many years ago?

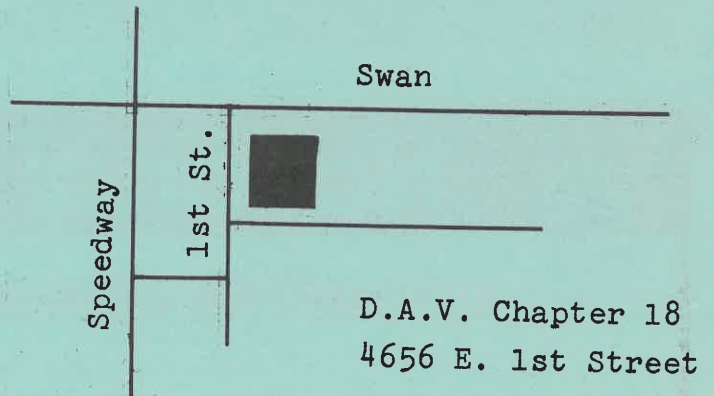


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