

# Viet Vet Monsoon Tribune

Volume III, Issue No. V

VVA CHAPTER 106

NAM JAM '87

## October General Meeting

On Thursday, October 22, we welcomed some visitors from the VA Medical Center at our general meeting. Mr. Jerry Boyd, the new Director of the VAMC, brought a small contingent of Service Chiefs with him to get to know us and field some questions. Joining Mr. Boyd were: Mr. Milt Wiedeman, the Chief of Medical Administration Service; Mr. Dave Mellady, the Chief of Social Work Service; Mr. Bob Taylor, the Chief of Voluntary Service; and Dr. Gabriel Manasse, the Chief of Psychiatry Service.

It was most unfortunate that Dr. Manasse had to leave the meeting early to meet a prior obligation; his familiarity with mental health issues, the program for homeless vets, PTSD programs, and other aspects of the VA's orientation toward Viet Nam veterans would have enabled him to address some specific questions more effectively.

Mr. Boyd, however, did a fine job of answering most of the questions that were posed. In those instances where he was unable to answer, he offered to follow up on the issue, or referred the person asking the question to someone who **could** answer it. He expressed a personal as well as an administrative commitment to serving the needs of Viet Nam veterans.

In his 'introductory' remarks, Mr. Boyd pointed out some of the factors and trends that effect the way the VA serves its beneficiaries, and revealed the general administrative policy the VA intends to follow to meet the changing medical needs of the veteran population. The VA's long range plans include provisions for: meeting the increased medical needs of the aging WWII veteran population; providing more comprehensive services for our nation's women veterans; emphasizing the importance and effectiveness of outpatient treatment versus hospitalization; improving the scope

and effectiveness of services available to Viet Nam veterans; and improving performance in 'reaching' them with information about services that are available.

The 'question and answer period' that followed was a lengthy one that covered a wide range of topics. It would be impossible to adequately or fairly report the exchanges here, but several issues were raised that demand at least some attention. Chuck Hovey, armed with a battery of procedure manuals and other information, asked how the VA diagnoses patients for PTSD. He pointed out that his experience, and the experience of others he's talked to, seems to indicate that the VA does not follow the outlined procedure when evaluating a patient with suspected PTSD. Mr. Boyd and Mr. Wiedeman examined the material and arranged to meet and discuss the issue later at length.

Chuck also wanted to know if accurate testing was being done for exposure to agent orange (testing of fatty tissues, as the villain in agent orange, dioxin, accumulates in fatty tissues) as well as agents white, blue, and so on. Mr. Boyd didn't know exactly what kind of testing was being done, but indicated that the VA is committed to its program of research into agent orange exposure, and he would pursue the question.

One of the recurrent things that kept cropping up throughout the session was a complaint that VA employees often seem to exhibit a callous attitude toward the people they're serving, the veterans. This is a tricky issue, and there are, of course, two sides to the coin. Mr. Boyd's response to a member's question of what (Mr. Boyd) is going to do about the problem was to ask any veteran who feels he is being treated unfairly or rudely to get a name and see the Director. As he pointed out, it's pretty

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# President's Message

By Dave Croteau

Since I have become active with Vietnam Veterans of America I have been asked the question "Why should I join?" This is an attempt to answer that question.

The VVA is a veteran's service organization devoted to the men and women who served on active duty from 1965 to 1975. The U.S. Congress granted the VVA its own charter May 26, 1986 and therefore is not an arm of the VFW, DAV, American Legion or any other veteran's organization.

As a member you can have the opportunity to meet and talk with others about shared military experiences, this in itself aids in the ongoing healing process. As a member you can have a voice in changing our government's views/directions regarding future military actions.

VVA, nationally, maintains up-to-date information on all actions, legislation, and issues concerning veterans. This information is regularly passed on to the local chapter.

Personally, I have had the opportunity to meet the many men and women who share the pride of having served our country in one of its most difficult times, and the joining together with our families to enjoy chapter social functions as well as promoting issues of special interest to the Vietnam Veteran.

## In Service To America

Vietnam Veterans of America, like any national not-for-profit service organization, must rely on the generous contributions from the community in order to fulfill their goals. In the past, as well as today with NAM JAM '87, people and organizations have come forward with donated time and money to further the goals set forth by VVA Chapter 106.

It would be impossible in this short column to name everyone who's contribution has brought us success in our endeavors, but a few people and organizations do stand out.

Disabled American Veterans Chapter 18 for the generous hospitality and meeting hall that has been home over the years. Ms. Margaret Maxwell of the law firm of Rowland and Durazzo when we needed help in legal matters. Jim Click Ford for donating transportation to Washington D.C. for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedication. Antique Printing for newsletter coordination and publication. The list could go on and on.

If you feel your organization could benefit by helping our organization, please feel free to contact any officer or a member of the board for assistance in this matter. You'll find the names listed in this newsletter.

In closing, VVA 106 would like to extend a very special thanks to all the people/organizations that have contributed to NAM JAM:

Walgreen Company  
KDL Enterprises  
Dennis Cox  
Dr. and Mrs. Joachim Saksen  
Dennis and Janis Lee  
Holmes Tuttle Ford  
Taina Miller  
Southwest Savings  
At The Hop  
Sheraton Tucson El Conquistador  
Bar 22

W.D. (Bill) Breck  
Viscount Suite Hotel  
Airport Holiday Inn  
Best Western  
Classic Limousine  
El Zarape  
Holsum Bakery  
Jack-in-the Box  
Antique Printing  
V.A. Medical Center Staff

# CALENDAR

DECEMBER 10th - BOARD MEETING, Thursday at D.A.V. 18, 4656 E. 1st St.,  
at 7:30 PM.

DECEMBER 12th - BOWLING PARTY & GENERAL MEETING, Saturday, FIESTA LANES,  
501 W. River Road at 7:00 PM.

DECEMBER 25th - MERRY CHRISTMAS!

JANUARY 14th - BOARD MEETING, Thursday at D.A.V. 18, 4656 E. 1st St.  
at 7:30 PM.

JANUARY 28th - GENERAL MEETING, Thursday at D.A.V. 18, 4656 E. 1st St.  
at 7:30 PM.

## Prevailing Winds

You hear a lot about Nancy Reagan's anti-drug campaign and just say No. You don't hear so much about just saying no to alcohol, America's Favorite Drug.

I was reminded of this when I read in last months Monsoon Tribune of the problems VVA Chapters all over the country have had with people loaded at meetings. It's enough of an issue for the convention to have agreed that we all ought to just say no to drugs - at least during meetings. And it was clear they were including alcohol.

If you've found yourself hassled at meetings or elsewhere about your drinking (or doping), if you find you're really angry or insulted at the idea that your drinking should be limited at meetings or anyplace else - here's where just saying maybe comes in. Maybe you need an education on abuse of and addiction to alcohol or other drugs-how they can camouflage, complicate, or even cause other problems, how they can rob you of your power. People at the Vet Center and the Alcohol and Drug Treatment Programs will be glad to help educate you. Think about it if it fits.

Guest Column by Marcia Traer, Ph.D.

Column usually written by George Gafner, ACSW, Coordinator, Family Mental Health Services, V.A. Medical Center.

VietNam

i remember the chatter of a  
hundred fire fights...  
and how i filled my canteens...  
the yell of a guy in pain...  
and all that rain...  
the long nights...  
and the too many days...  
i still hear the cry of my heart  
and the strain in my arms...  
of yet another G.I.  
lifeless...WHY???

Shawn Shwartzmiller  
Written 1972



## VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA TUCSON CHAPTER 106

P.O. Box 40903  
Tucson, Arizona 85717  
(602) 790-7602

### GOVERNING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
President	Dave Croteau	792-9109
Vice-President	John Shirley	884-7544
Secretary	Mike Brasher	298-6426
Treasurer	Mike Smyth	297-2315
Corres. Secretary	Albie Ginaro	749-4469
Director	Louie Leos	889-6096
Director	Gene Voelzow	888-7666
Director	Ronnie Lira	323-0991
Director	Frank Thompson	790-1978
Director	Chuck Bald-Coulter	790-7602



# VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Membership in Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. is open to Vietnam Era Veterans  
Associate Membership to the Public at Large

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\$20.00 Annual Dues Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Copy of DD Form 214 Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to

• VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA •

Tucson Chapter 106, P.O. Box 40907, Tucson, Arizona 85717

- I am a Vietnam era veteran and would like to be a Member. (Enclose DD Form 214)
- I am not a Vietnam era veteran, but would like to be an Associate Member.

Your Local Chapter No. \_\_\_\_\_

I want to give more. Enclosed is my check for  \$20,  \$50,  \$ \_\_\_\_\_  New Member or  Renewal  
(All contributions are tax deductible.)

Membership Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

**A CONGRESSIONALLY CHARTERED VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION**

FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE

To all Vietnam Vets, their families and friends:

Please come to our 2nd Annual Free Bowling Night at Fiesta Lanes, 501 West River Road, Saturday, December 12th at 7:00 PM. Included are three (3) games, shoe rental, sodas and munchies. Also provided this year is baby sitting and wheelchair bowling equipment. If either of these last two items are needed, please call Mike Smyth at 297-2315 before noon or after 6:00 PM. Last year was enjoyed by all - let's make this year bigger and better than ever!

FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE

## GENERAL MEETING

Continued from front page

All things considered, the visit by the Director and other staff of the Medical Center was an informative, encouraging event. Several meetings were arranged to follow up on issues that were discussed, and, most important, a working relationship was established between our chapter and the Medical Center.

If anyone has questions about services available, procedures, or anything concerning the Medical Center, you are encouraged to contact the appropriate office at the Medical Center. Their main number is 792-1450, and the operators can help you determine who you need to talk to depending on the nature of your inquiry.

difficult to teach manners to people who are already adults, but he'll try.

We need to remember that there will always be some bad apples in any barrel. Many of the apples in the VA barrel have been bruised pretty badly, and often unjustly, by irate veterans. Most of the employees are pretty decent people who work at the VA because they care about their country, and they care about veterans. The employees don't make policy, they just follow it. If you have a legitimate complaint about some of the staff's attitude, by all means get a name and go see the Director - but try to be patient and understanding, and realize that they have their bad days too.