



In Service to America

# THE OUTPOST

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787, Tampa Fl.



**NATIONAL CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2001, FLORIDA STATE COUNCIL,  
CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, CHAPTER STATE NEWSLETTER  
OF THE YEAR 2007, FOR INFORMATION CALL BOB SILMSER (813) 220-7246 OR (813) 685-3483.  
WEB SITE: WWW.VVA787.COM**



Submitted by: Tom Hall

## Our own Beverly Thomas is nominated to be 2nd Vice-President for the Florida State A.V.V.A.

### **Chapter Officers**

President: Tom Hall  
Vice President: Carl Harris  
Secretary: Bob Silmsers  
Treasurer: Bob Silmsers

### **Board of Directors:**

Jim LaGarde  
Kevin Ruhl  
Dave Braun  
Jon Mueller

### **State Council Delegate:**

Kevin Ruhl

**Newsletter** Editor: Jon Mueller, E-mail: ParaSF68@aol.com

### **Meetings**

Chapter Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month.

Time: 6:30 PM

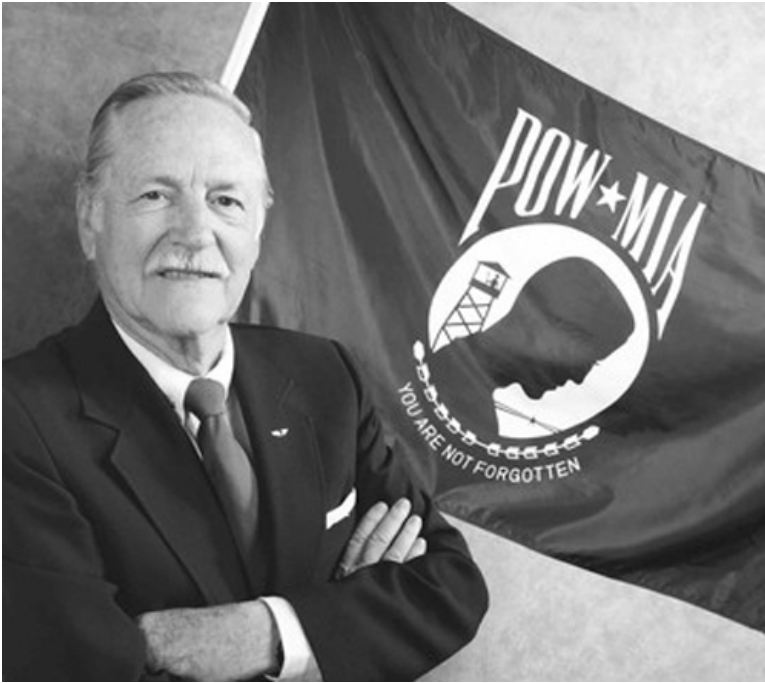
Location: Veterans Memorial Park & Museum  
3602 Hwy. 301 N.  
Tampa Fl. 33619. See Map on last page.

**Mailing address: P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl.**



Pictured above: L-R, **Dianne Magee** the new Associates of the Vietnam Veterans of America (A.V.V.A.) state council president, **Beverly Thomas**, and **Donna Maury** the new AVVA state council secretary/treasurer.

## **Newt Heisley dies at 88; veteran designed POW/MIA flag**



By Valerie J. Nelson  
May 20, 2009

Newt Heisley, a commercial artist who designed the Vietnam-era POW/MIA flag that came to symbolize the nation's concern for military personnel missing or held prisoner in modern conflicts, has died. He was 88.

Heisley, who was a World War II pilot, died Thursday at his home in Colorado Springs, Colo., after years of failing health, said Jim Heisley, one of his two sons.

In 1971, Heisley was a graphic designer for a New Jersey advertising agency when he sketched the stark black-and-white images at the center of the flag -- the silhouette of a man with head bowed, a guard tower and a strand of barbed wire -- and the words "You Are Not Forgotten."

His client was Annin & Co., a major flag manufacturer that had been commissioned by the wife of a soldier missing in action. She had recognized the need for a symbol to represent the National League of Families of American Prisoners and

Missing in Southeast Asia.

"It was intended for a small group. . . . No one realized it was going to get national attention," Heisley said in 1997 in the Colorado Springs Gazette.

The flag emblazoned with POW/MIA first flew over the White House in 1988. It was installed in 1989 in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda and is on permanent display.

In 1990, Congress adopted the flag as "the symbol of our nation's concern" for those missing and unaccounted for during U.S. military action in Southeast Asia.

Congress later mandated that the flag be flown at federal buildings and military installations six days a year, including Memorial Day and the Fourth of July.

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## **Former anti-war hotbed reaches out to military**

By Ryan J. Foley - The Associated Press Posted : Monday Jun 29, 2009 15:25:23 EDT

MADISON, Wis. — The University of Wisconsin-Madison, which saw some of the fiercest Vietnam War protests in the nation, is shedding its long-standing antimilitary image by hiring a military historian and teaching a new course for military officers. The university also has improved services for veterans after hiring an assistant dean with a military background last year. "It really is a group effort to reach out to the military in a way we never have before, at least not in the last 20 to 30 years," UW-Madison history professor Jeremi Suri said. "We've actually in the last few months, out of circumstance, made enormous headway. ... We're getting beyond this really silly notion people have that we're antimilitary."

The image dates to the 1960s and '70s, when the university was a hotbed of Vietnam War protests. In 1970, four student radicals used a car bomb to destroy a building housing the Army Mathematics Research Center, killing a young scientist.



## Medal of Honor recipients of the War in Vietnam



**PFC Gary W. Martini**



Rank and organization: Private First Class, U.S. Marine Corps, Company F, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division. place and date: Binh Son, Republic of Vietnam, 21 April 1967. Entered service at: portland, Oreg. Born: 21 September 1948, Lexington, Va. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. On 21 April 1967, during Operation UNION\* elements of Company F, conducting offensive operations at Binh Son, encountered a firmly entrenched enemy force and immediately deployed to engage them. The marines in Pfc. Martini's platoon assaulted across an open rice paddy to within 20 meters of the enemy trench line where they were suddenly struck by hand grenades, intense small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire. The enemy onslaught killed 14 and wounded 18 marines, pinning the remainder of the platoon down behind a low paddy dike. In the face of imminent danger, Pfc. Martini immediately crawled over the dike to a forward open area within 15 meters of the enemy position where, continuously exposed to the hostile fire, he hurled hand grenades, killing several of the enemy. Crawling back through the intense fire, he rejoined his platoon which had moved to the relative safety of a trench line. From this position he observed several of his wounded comrades Lying helpless in the fire-swept paddy. Although he knew that 1 man had been killed attempting to assist the wounded, Pfc. Martini raced through the open area and dragged a comrade back to a friendly position. In spite of a serious wound received during this first daring rescue, he again braved the unrelenting fury of the enemy fire to aid another companion Lying wounded only 20 meters in front of the enemy trench line. As he reached the fallen marine, he received a mortal wound, but disregarding his own condition, he began to drag the marine toward his platoon's position. Observing men from his unit attempting to leave the security of their position to aid him, concerned only for their safety, he called to them to remain under cover, and through a final supreme effort, moved his injured comrade to where he could be pulled to safety, before he fell, succumbing to his wounds. Stout-hearted and indomitable, Pfc. Martini unhesitatingly yielded his life to save 2 of his comrades and insure the safety of the remainder of his platoon. His outstanding courage, valiant fighting spirit and selfless devotion to duty reflected the highest credit upon himself, the Marine Corps, and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

## **A BIG THANK YOU!**

Chapter 787 President and chief organizer of our May 30th Car Show, **Tom Hall**, wants to thank the following individuals for their help in this annual chapter event. Volunteers for fund raisers are the life blood of our organization.

**Gerard Abbett, Dave Braun, Carl & Eliane Harris, Jim LaGarde, Richard Nye, Herman Rainey, Kevin Ruhl, Bob & Margaret Silmsen, Tony Towers, Beverly Thomas, David Thomas, Mickey Taylor, Art Jorgensen, Steve & Penny Williams, and Jon Mueller**

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

## Quote

**“Everyone wants peace - and they will fight the most terrible war to get it.”**

- Miles Kington, on BBC Radio, 4th February 1995

## **Calendar of Events**

Date	Event	Time
<b><u>July 2009</u></b>		
4th Saturday	<b>Independence Day Parade</b> , chapter members should meet at the Clayton Plaza	7:30 AM
9th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
11th Thursday	Chapter 787 annual <b>Fisher House Picnic</b> , set up at 9:00 A.M.	11:00 AM
23th Thursday	Chapter 787 Meeting, Veterans Park & Museum	6:30 PM
<b><u>August 2009</u></b>		
13th Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
27th Thursday	Chapter 787 Meeting, Veterans Park & Museum	6:30 PM

**Check out our EVENTS page on the chapter web site: [www.vva787.com](http://www.vva787.com), click EVENTS then click Calendar of EVENTS**

Submitted by: Jon Mueller

### **Alaska vet gets Purple Heart 42 years later**

The Associated Press Posted : Monday Jun 1, 2009 14:52:25 EDT

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A Vietnam veteran has received a Purple Heart 42 years after being wounded.

Wayne Stackhouse was awarded the medal Saturday.

Shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade in 1967 struck and wounded Stackhouse. He was one of two people to survive the attack.

Stackhouse says he was questioned about a Purple Heart last year when he went to a Veterans Affairs clinic and was encouraged to pursue it.

He says he's never been more proud to be a Vietnam veteran.

He says the Department of Army Records Correction Board called the 42-year delay in receiving the award an administrative error.



### **Financial Status of Chapter 787 as of June 2009**

Total \$14,031.11 (Moving Wall Fund..\$8,177.22, AVVA \$220.36, General checking \$1,867.20, Holiday Meals Fund...\$1,725.20).

Total \$2,780.25 ( Household Goods.....\$386.77 Convention Fund.....\$2,780.25)

**All Accounts Total: \$16,811.36**

**Thanks to our Treasurer Bob Silmsr**

## VA claims backlog ready to hit 1 million

The Associated Press

Posted : Thursday Jun 18, 2009 10:56:41 EDT

WASHINGTON — This isn't the same as getting a free duffel bag for being the millionth person to go through the turnstiles: The Department of Veterans Affairs appears poised to have hit the 1 million milestone on claims it still hasn't processed.

This unwelcome marker approaches as the agency scrambles to hire and train new claims processors, which can take two years. VA officials are working with the Pentagon under orders from President Barack Obama to create by 2012 a system that will allow the two agencies to electronically exchange records, a process now done manually on paper.

Meanwhile, veterans, some of whom were severely wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, continue to endure financial hardship while their claims are processed. They wait more than four months on average for a claim to be processed, and appealing a claim takes a year and a half on average.

Adding to the backlog are factors ranging from the complexity of processing mental health-related claims of Iraq veterans, to a change that made it easier for Vietnam veterans exposed to the Agent Orange herbicide to qualify for disability payments. The VA says it's receiving about 13 percent more claims today than it did a year ago.

The VA's Web site shows the department has more than 722,000 claims and more than 172,000 appeals it currently is processing, for a total of about 900,000. That is up from about 800,000 total claims in January, according to the site.

Since early 2007, the VA has hired 4,200 claims processors and with that has seen improvements in the number of claims it's processing. It's also working to modernize its system.

Last year, Congress passed legislation that sought to update the disability rating process. A hearing Thursday by a House Veterans Affairs subcommittee will look into whether the law's changes are being implemented and whether the VA will be able to handle a million claims.

Veterans advocates acknowledge there have been improvements in the claims process, but say it is still too cumbersome. They say some injured veterans from the recent wars are paying bills with credit cards, pending their first disability payments, at a time when it is challenging enough to recover from or adapt to their injuries.

"They keep talking about a seamless transition, but I can tell you I haven't seen it being very seamless," said John Roberts of Houston, who is national service director for the nonprofit Wounded Warrior Project, which helps veterans such as David Odom, 29, of Haleyville, Ala.

Odom, a former Army staff sergeant who did three tours in Iraq, said he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. With symptoms such as anxiety and anger, he finds it difficult to work. He said he's waited months to learn the outcome of an appeal that would give him higher compensation.

"It's added quite a bit of stress because I don't know what's going to happen. I want to know either way so I can figure out what my next step is," Odom said.

Former Marine Cpl. Patrick Murray, 25, of Arlington, Va., who was severely burned and had his right leg amputated after a roadside bomb explosion in 2006, considers himself fortunate. He got a job once he was discharged from the military, making for an easier wait as his case is processed.

"For someone that gets out of the military and doesn't have a job lined up, they have no income," said Murray, who works for a construction company. "They are sitting there making zero money, either racking up credit card bills or taking out loans, whatever it may be, all the while waiting."

Murray said the first claim he filed was lost. The second ended up at a VA office in Colorado, and the third was finally processed after a couple of months. It was mind-boggling, he said, to have spent 11 months in Walter Reed Army Medical Center and in outpatient care with stacks of medical files, only to find out he had to mail his records to the VA to prove he was injured.

"The biggest disappointment, I guess, is that it should be unnecessary," Murray said.

Submitted by: Elsie Amos

## VA Hospital Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

April 30 2009, James A. Haley VA Hospital dress up lunch. The theme was the 1950's and so all us ladies from VFW Post #8108 Riverview dressed in men's white shirts, rolled up jeans, bobby socks, saddle shoes and long pony tails.

Pictured left R-L is **Gerard** and **Lori Abbott**. Gerard won the first place prize for best costume.



Submitted by: Jon Mueller

## Swim Teacher receives Jump Wings

Susan Mueller, wife of chapter 787 member Jon Mueller, is owner of Water Elements LLC. The company teaches individuals how to overcome their lack of swimming abilities which may be due to poor training as a young person or fear of water itself.

One of Susan's students this year was Marine Sgt. Saint Mathew Scott. He needed new water skills to pass his parachute training course. Through a combination of bookwork and water classes he was able to make his final water jump. Sgt. Scott presented Susan with his gold Navy/Marine Jump Wings to honor her efforts.



## Chapter 787 fund raiser volunteers needed!

If you can spare a few hours of your valuable time, please consider volunteering for one or more of our on-going fund raiser projects. You will be amazed as how rewarding it can be to meet with fellow veterans and the general public who really appreciate your service. Please contact **Jim (Rambo) LaGarde** on his cell phone (813) 758-4547 for details.

## Membership Application

Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28th 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.



### Vietnam Veterans of America

Send to: VVA Chapter 787, P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter #787 Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Type:

Individual: 1 year \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 3 years \_\_\_\_\_ \$50. Associate: 1 year \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 3 years \_\_\_\_\_ \$50

Life Member Options: \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member Ages 49 and Under: \$250, \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member Ages 50-55: \$225, \_\_\_\_\_ Life

Member Ages 56-60: \$200, \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member Ages 61-65: \$175, \_\_\_\_\_ Life Member Ages 66 +: \$150

\_\_\_\_\_ I am already a V.V.A. member and want to become a life member. My V.V.A. Member number is

\_\_\_\_\_.

Optional Time Payment plan: \$50 down, and \$25 per month until paid in full.

Payment Method: Check \_\_\_\_\_

Money Order \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ If using a credit card: Card

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

This newsletter is not the official publication of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Chapter 787, Tampa Florida. All articles, and opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Chapter 787, the VVA State Council, the VVA National or the Chapter members.

You can receive a copy of the OUTPOST each month at no cost. Contact Jon Mueller via e-mail at ParaSF68@aol.com and provide your e-mail address. You will need to have an Adobe Acrobat Reader on your PC to open the newsletter. You can also receive it by US mail. The cost is \$12 per year. Make your check payable to V.V.A. Chapter 787 and mail it to P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404. Make sure you identify the payment for the OUTPOST.

## THE OUTPOST

**Help Your Chapter Grow**  
**Bring a New Member to the Next Chapter Meeting.**  
**Come and Join Us. Give us your Ideas.**

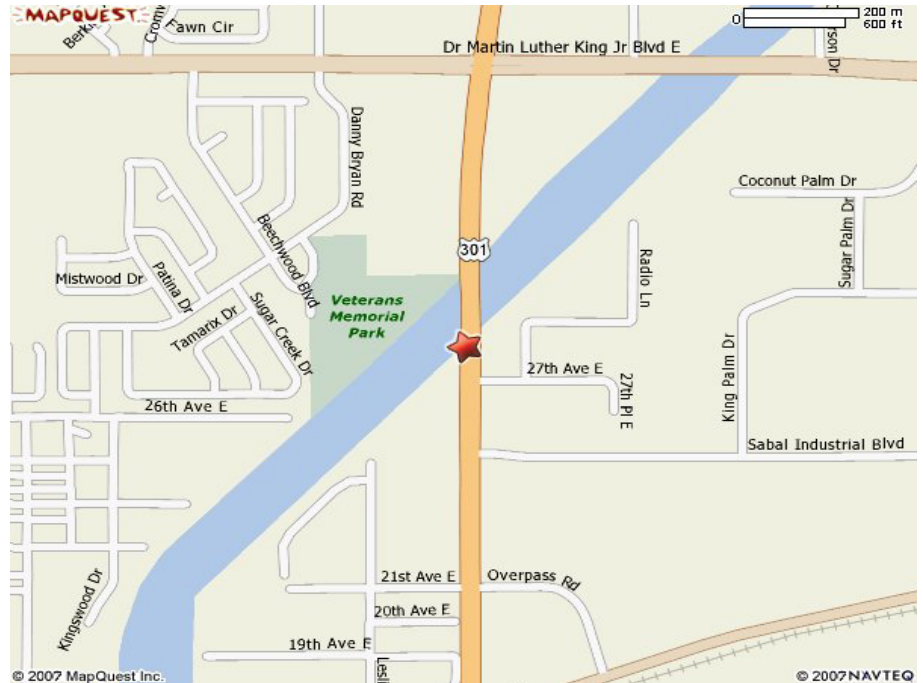
Chapter meetings are held at the Veterans Memorial Park & Museum, 3602 Hwy. 301 N. Tampa Fl. 33619.

### Contact E-mail Addresses:

**President Tom Hall:** MarineDI@aol.com  
**VP Carl Harris:** c-e-harris@tampabay.rr.com  
**Secretary & Treasurer Bob Silmsler:**  
Rafkirk64@tampabay.rr.com  
**State Council Delegate Kevin Ruhl:**  
MSgtMCRet@aol.com

### Board of Directors

**Kevin Ruhl:** MSgtMCRet@aol.com  
**Jim LaGarde:** clagarde@tampabay.rr.com  
**Dave Braun:** Prowler143@aol.com  
**Jon Mueller:** ParaSF68@aol.com



## Important Web Sites

Vietnam Veterans of American, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida..... <http://www.vva787.com>  
Hillsborough County Veterans Park Museum & War Memorials (NEW).....[www.hcmemorials.com](http://www.hcmemorials.com)  
Vietnam, Yesterday & Today.....<http://servercc.oakton.edu/~wittman/chronol.htm>  
Vietnam Veterans Legacy Foundation.....[www.vvlf.org](http://www.vvlf.org)  
National League of Families of American POW's/MIA's.....[www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)  
V.V.A. National Office on the World Wide Web.....[www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org)  
U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs.....[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)  
OPM Veterans Hiring Preference.....[www.opm.gov/veterans](http://www.opm.gov/veterans)  
Uniformed Services Family Health Plan (USFHP).....[www.usfhp.com](http://www.usfhp.com)  
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.....[www.vetapp.uscourts.gov](http://www.vetapp.uscourts.gov)  
Children of Vietnam Vets.....[www.geocities.com/pentagon/9125](http://www.geocities.com/pentagon/9125)  
The Center for Women Veterans.....[www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet)  
Vietnam Women Memorial Foundation, Inc (formerly "Project").....[www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org](http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org)  
The Moving Wall—Vietnam Combat Veterans LTD.....[www.themovingwall.org](http://www.themovingwall.org)  
The Virtual Wall.....[www.virtualwall.org](http://www.virtualwall.org)  
Get a Copy of your DD-214 on-line.....<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html>  
Florida State Council web site.....[www.vvafsc.org](http://www.vvafsc.org)