



THE OUTPOST

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787, Tampa Fl.

In Service to America

**NATIONAL CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2001, FLORIDA STATE COUNCIL,
CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005
FOR INFORMATION CALL (813) 597-1326, FAX: (813) 737-4929.
WEB SITE: MEMBERS.AOL.COM/VVA787/INDEX.HTML**



Chapter 787, March Fund Raisers



Pictures Top row L-R: Don Wallick and Chapter President Jim (Rambo) LaGarde, Richard Nye and Chapter of the Year member Carl Harris, Chapter Treasurer and State Council Delegate Kevin Ruhl and Chapter Secretary Bob Silmser.

Picture at left: Former Chapter President and current Board Member, Tom Hall with President Jim LaGarde.

Other chapter members, not pictured, who gave of their time to support our fund raisers in March at Wal-Mart and Publix are: AVVA member Eddy Ortelt, Luther Lassiter, Linda Pugsley, John Robinson, and Herman Rainey. Thanks again for your help.

Chapter 787 donates to the Oral History of the Vietnam War Project.

At right, Tom Hall, chairman of the Oral History Project (of the Vietnam War) presents a \$500 check to Assistant Principal Tyvan Lindbeck of Newsome High School.

This money will help fund the "Oral Histories of The Vietnam Veterans" Volume II.



Chapter Officers

President: Jim LaGarde
Vice President: Dale Wagner
Secretary: Bob Silmser
Treasurer: Kevin Ruhl

Board of Directors:

Ron Schott
Carl Harris
Tom Hall
Jon Mueller

State Council Delegate:

Kevin Ruhl

OUTPOST Publisher & Editor: Jon Mueller, E-mail: JonMue@aol.com

Meetings

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

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Brandon Veterans Hall, 115 W. Clay Brandon Fl. 33510. See Map on last page. **Mail-ing address: P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404**

Chapter, Annual Election of Officers



By Tom Hall, Nomination Chair



On **April 27, 2006**, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787 will conduct its Annual Membership meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Brandon Veterans Hall located at 115 W. Clay in Brandon, FL. The purpose of this meeting is the election of Chapter Officers and Board of Directors and any changes to the Chapter By-laws.

Any Chapter member in good standing may run for any elected position in the Chapter. Those members wishing to running for any elected office should send a "Letter of Intent" by mail to the Chapter post office box address or by e-mail to marinedi@aol.com stating which position they wish to run. All candidates **MUST** provide a copy of their DD-214 prior to the election to the Nominating Chair. Candidates, who are nominated from the floor prior to the election, must provide a copy of their DD-214 at that time. The election process and campaign restrictions for office will be in strict accordance with the VVA Constitution.

This article is published to provide the required notice to the membership in accordance with the VVA Constitution. If you have any questions, please contact **Tom Hall, Nominating Chair, at 655-7129.**

Do you have a family member currently serving in the US Military. We want to hear about them. Please send their name, rank, branch of service, duty station, etc., to Jon Mueller. E-mail: JonMue@aol.com. Please include pictures.

V.V.A. Chapter 787 T-shirts for sale, very cool!



Chapter T-Shirts

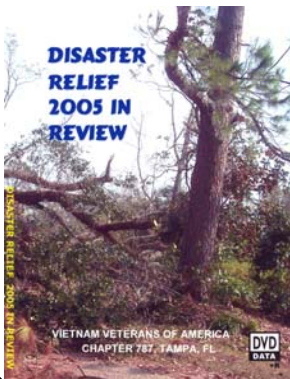
\$15.00 for size Large & X-Large, 4 in stock now. \$17.00 for size XX-Large

We can mail the shirts to your home for an additional \$4.00,

Or pick them up at the next chapter meeting, and save the \$4.00.

Contact Bob Silmsmer by e-mail: rafkirk64@verizon.net or phone: 813-685-3483, to order, or if you have questions.

3-1/2" Iron on Patches and window decals \$3.00 (shown at right).



At Left: Disaster Relief DVD. Created by chapter Secretary, Bob Silmsmer, this DVD shows how chapter 787 assisted victims in the states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana during the disastrous hurricane season of 2005. The DVD shows how chapter members made multiple trips with supplies and other assistance to the affected regions.

The DVD is well worth the small \$10 cost. Contact Bob Silmsmer at (813) 685-3483 for copies.

Chapter 2006 Fund Raisers

SCHEDULED FUND RAISERS

MARK your calendar.

Your help is needed this year.

May 5th-6th Publix--Bloomingdale & Providence Road, Riverview 8am-4pm

June 2nd-3rd Publix---Bloomingdale & Bell Shoals, Brandon 8am-4pm

More Fund Raisers are trying to be scheduled for the 2nd half of the year.

We hope to be able to do the Home Show in Tampa again and possibly the one at the Fair Grounds. Nothing has been finalized as of yet but we will keep you informed on our progress. If your name is on our Call List for Fund Raisers you will be called if you wish to be placed on that list to help us raise money for our projects contact **Bob Silmsner at 813-685-3483.**

Disaster Relief Program for 2006: Amount unknown at this time

80 Holiday Meals at Thanksgiving \$19.00 ea \$1520.00

70 Holiday Meals at Christmas \$19.00 ea \$1330.00

Plus other projects that happen thru-out the year without prior notice

We are also trying to bring the Wall back to this area in 2007 and need to raise money to fund that project.

Chapter Breakfast, Everyone's Invited

Each month, Chapter 787 members and family, should plan to attend a morning breakfast at the FLYING "J" restaurant which is located at the intersection of Hwy 579 North and I-4. The intersection is near the Lazy Days RV dealership.



Show time is 7:00 AM the 4th Saturday of each month (first Saturday after the chapter meetings). Wear your colors. The chapter wants to continue to support events that can bring together members and their families who may not be able to attend other functions.



This Month during the War in Vietnam



April 1968 Operation Pegasus was launched by the US Army's 1st Air Cavalry Division to relieve the Marines at Khe Sanh.



On 31 March, the 1st Cavalry Division took control of the 26th Marine Regiment, signaling the start of Pegasus, a fifteen-day air assault operation that ended the battle of Khe Sanh. The 1st Cavalry Division, along with the 1st Marine Regiment and South Vietnamese 3d Airborne Task Force, began a push from Ca Lu, located east of Khe Sanh, to reopen Route 9 and relieve the pressure on Khe Sanh. The siege, in effect, was over.

The base plan of Operation Pegasus called for the 1st Marine Regiment, with two battalions to attack west toward Khe Sanh while the 1st Cavalry Division air assaulted onto the high ground on either side of Route 9 and moved constantly west toward the base.

On D plus 1 and D plus 2, all elements would continue to attack west toward Khe Sanh. Then on the following day the 2d Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division would land three battalions southwest of Khe Sanh and attack northwest. The 26th Marine Regiment, holding Khe Sanh would attack south to secure Hill 471. The linkup was planned for the end of the seventh day.



April 1970, the colors of the US Army's 1st Infantry Division returned to Fort Riley. Home again, the Big Red One became a dual based division with its 3rd Brigade in West Germany. The division was originally deployed to Vietnam in the Summer of 1965.

April 1970 HMAS Vendetta leaves the waters of the South China Sea. She was the only Australian-built warship to serve in Vietnam waters and was first deployed in September 1969.



April 1975 The Fall of Saigon occurred on April 30, 1975 when the South Vietnamese government announced its unconditional surrender to the Vietcong.

The President, Duong Van Minh, who has been in office for just three days, made the announcement in a radio broadcast to the nation early in the morning. He asked the South Vietnamese forces to lay down their arms and called on the Vietcong to halt all hostilities.

Directly addressing the Enemy forces, he stated: "We are here to hand over to you the power in order to avoid bloodshed."

The announcement was followed by the swift arrival of Vietcong troops. Their entrance was virtually unopposed, contradicting any predictions of a long and bloody final battle for the city.

The front line of tanks smashed through the gates of the presidential palace within minutes, and at 1130 local time (0330 GMT), decades of war came to an end.

Quote

A young man who does not have what it takes to perform military service is not likely to have what it takes to make a living. --**John F. Kennedy**--

"For too long, the world was paralyzed by the argument that terrorism could not be stopped until the grievances of terrorists were addressed. The complicated and heartrending issues that perplex mankind are no excuse for violent, inhumane attacks, nor do they excuse not taking aggressive action against those who deliberately slaughter innocent people." -**Ronald Reagan**

Submitted By: Kevin Ruhl

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Humor

Bomb Squad Humor



Below: Deployed National Guard in Iraq, Sign reads: One Weekend a Month, My ASS!

Tank Mating Season



Right: Commercial Airline Pilots are now allowed to carry personal weapons in the cockpit..



Membership

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 _____ ID _____

Membership Type:

Individual 1 year _____ \$20 3 years _____ \$50

Individual membership is open to all Vietnam Veterans who served on active duty for other than training purposes from 1/1/1959 to 5/7/1975. Individual members must submit a copy of their DD-214 with their application and payment.

Associate 1 year _____ \$20 3 years _____ \$50

Life Member \$250, payment plan, \$50 down, and 8 monthly installments of \$25.

Payment Method: Check _____ Money Order _____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____

If using a credit card: Card # _____



Medical, PTSD

Reprinted from an E-mail by the Special Forces Association dated Feb. 23 2006.

TOM MEZS, PA-C, MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC, VA PUGET SOUND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM,
AMERICAN LAKE DIVISION, TACOMA, WA 98493 (253.582.8440 X 76695)

Here is the information Dr Murray Raskind, of the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, Seattle Division, Washington State would appreciate if you would put out concerning posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – whether in e-mail or newsletter form. Dr Raskind has an impressive background in medicine and mental health issues in the VA health care system. He has devoted a great deal of time and effort in helping our deserving veterans cope with issues such as PTSD, many of whom do not realize that they are trying to deal with this not so obvious problem. Dr Raskind is especially interested in reaching out to the Special Forces veterans' community and discussing with them some of the issues that many veterans face when dealing with PTSD. The article as it should appear follows. (If you have any questions/comments, please contact me (Tom Mezs) at the phone number above or at my home email: kam-mar@mindspring.com). Thank you.

To better acquaint the Special Forces community with the issue of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), you may want to read the following article as it may be of value to you personally or someone you know. The article is an extract from the University of Washington's Behavioral Science newsletter of Spring 2005 and prepared by Dr Murray Raskind of the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, Seattle Division. Dr Raskind has devoted a great deal of time and effort in helping our deserving veterans cope with issues such as PTSD. He is especially interested in reaching out to the Special Forces veterans.

TRAUMA SURVIVORS HAVE HOPE FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

In February 2005, Alan McLean committed suicide. He was an Episcopal priest, a husband, a father, and a Vietnam veteran. His war injuries – his legs were amputated as a result of stepping on a landmine – weren't what caused him to end his life. The symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were aggravated by the Iraq War and only worsened as that war progressed. According to an article in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, McLean's wife, Betsy, said it was the constant trauma nightmares of the war-zone experience 38 years after the fact that finally overwhelmed him. Numerous war veterans unable to face another night reliving the horrors of being in the war zone in their sleep undoubtedly have repeated Rev. McLean's story. Decades after serving as combat soldiers in Vietnam, they were still unable to get a peaceful night's sleep.

Dr Murray Raskind, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, Executive Director, Mental Health Service, VA Puget Sound Health Care System, explains, "PTSD is a frequent, chronic problem for military veterans who have participated in combat." Despite modest advances in pharmacologic and psychotherapeutic treatments, many of the symptoms of PTSD have remained chronic and treatment-resistant, especially those occurring at night. These symptoms include recurrent and terrifying dreams or nightmares that feature the traumatic wartime event or parts of it; sleep disruption with disturbed, anxious awakenings; and the inability to return to sleep. This disruption can result in daytime fatigue, irritability, and difficulty performing daily functions.

Dr Raskind describes his initial experience studying PTSD in veterans of war: "When I first started working with combat veterans in 1996 in a group therapy program for African American combat veterans mostly from the Vietnam War, several of the veterans in this group were desperately struggling with their nightmares decades after returning from Vietnam. In some cases, their nightmares and sleep disruption were so distressing that the threat of suicide was ever present."

The veterans were taking several medications which sometimes provided a sedating effect to help them get to sleep but did not prevent the nightmares and arousal from breaking through the sedation. Many veterans had resorted to using alcohol to try to get a few hours of sleep.

Continued on next page.....

Medical.....Continued from page 6

Dr Raskind initially tried a medication called propranolol which is in the family of drugs known as beta blockers and has been used for years for high blood pressure and as an anti-anxiety drug. Unfortunately, this medication did not work as expected and only intensified the bad dreams vet's were having. He then focused on a drug from the 1970s called prazosin. It is an inexpensive, generic medication that has been used to treat millions of people with high blood pressure and also millions of older men with enlarged prostates because it eases urinary flow problems.

Not long after switching a veteran with recurring nightmares to prazosin, according to Dr Raskind, the veteran came into his office, shook his hand, and reported that after taking prazosin, he had had the first night of good sleep since Vietnam. To see if this response would be as effective in other veterans, Dr Raskind began to prescribe the medication to combat veterans with these treatment-resistant nightmares. He discovered that it appeared successful in 80 to 90 percent of the veterans who took it. Prazosin is very well tolerated and, as a generic drug, costs less than a dime a day even for a relatively large dose.

In further treatment trials conducted by Dr Raskind with combat veterans, it was proven that nighttime prazosin was significantly and substantially superior to placebo for reducing or eliminating nightmares and improving both sleep and overall PTSD clinical status. These findings were again substantiated in additional Vietnam combat veteran studies. (In both studies, prazosin was started at 1mg for three nights and then slowly increased over three weeks to an average effective dose of 10mg at bedtime.) Using this regimen, adverse effects were infrequent and mild, and prazosin did not produce sedation. Interestingly, normal dreaming usually returned when trauma nightmares had been eliminated.

The troops now returning in large numbers from combat duty in Iraq and Afghanistan comprise a group of "new" veterans with a high incidence of PTSD. In collaboration with Madigan Army Medical Center at Ft Lewis, WA, Dr Raskind and his colleagues have initiated a large clinic trial comparing prazosin to the antidepressant paroxetine (Paxil) and to placebo in troops suffering from persistent trauma-related nightmares and sleep disruption. Dr Raskind reflects on similarities between PTSD, trauma nightmares, and sleep disruption

In soldiers recently returned from Iraq and those who returned from Vietnam three to four decades ago: "Troops in both war zones were in a constant state of vigilance, rarely knowing who the enemy was and where or when they would be attacked from ambush or encounter deadly landmines, sniper fire, mortars or rockets. The resemblance between Vietnam and Iraq is clear, and the troops' high rates of PTSD and their major PTSD symptoms look very similar."

An advantage of prazosin is that it continues to be effective for years; the brain receptor does not become resistant to the beneficial effects of the drug. A downside is that prazosin is not a "cure" for PTSD, at least not in the Vietnam veterans. Combat veteran with chronic PTSD who stop taking prazosin almost always experience the rapid return of trauma nightmares and sleep disturbances accompanied by worsening of daytime PTSD symptoms. Another "problem" for some PTSD patients is that prazosin has little if any sedative effect. It does not initiate sleep as would a "sleeping pill". Rather, it maintains uninterrupted sleep once sleep has been achieved.

Because the effects of a single prazosin dose last only six to eight hours, veterans who experience daytime PTSD symptoms such as flashbacks, intrusive trauma memories, irritability, and exaggerated startle response appear to do best when they take prazosin both at night and at smaller doses once or twice during the day.

Continued on next page.....

This newsletter is not the official publication of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida. All opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions 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 JonMue@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.

Medical.....continued from page 7

Dr Raskind's extensive, placebo-controlled studies have demonstrated that prazosin eliminates or substantially reduces trauma nightmares and sleep disruption and improves overall PTSD status in Vietnam War combat veterans. Accumulating clinical experience strongly suggests that prazosin also is effective in soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and in victims of civilian trauma as well. In these populations, prazosin appears to work at lower doses than those necessary for maximal effect in middle-aged Vietnam veterans. Prazosin is inexpensive, has a long record of safe use in millions of older persons, and produces few adverse effects when initiated at a low dose and then increased gradually to a dose that eliminates most or all target symptoms.

So why is this new treatment that is the first and only medication demonstrated effective for the debilitating nighttime symptoms of PTSD not widely publicized and promoted? Most likely because prazosin is available as an inexpensive generic preparation from several companies. Therefore, there is no incentive for a pharmaceutical company to carry out the expensive marketing effort that is the usual means of promoting the use of a new medication. The news about it's effectiveness must be spread from provider to provider and from patient to patient, or in presentations for those willing to listen and learn about PTSD and this cheap, readily available, effective treatment.

For some veterans, the impact of being in combat can endure long after the war experience. To ensure that veterans get the help they need, it is important for physicians and the veteran population to know about this treatment in the form of a dime-a-day pill. With the budding and well-deserved attention prazosin is now receiving, the hope is that war veterans and civilians with posttraumatic stress disorder who have been suffering, some for decades, from trauma nightmares and sleep disruption can get this simple, inexpensive treatment and finally get a good night's sleep.

Dr Murray Raskind, Seattle Division, VA Puget Sound Health Care System, Seattle, WA

For questions or comments contact: Murray.Raskind@med.va.gov

Submitted By: Kevin Ruhl

Bringing Back the .45 cal. Pistol

January 27, 2006.

Source: www.strategypage.com

After two decades of use, the U.S. Department of Defense is getting rid of its Beretta M9 9mm pistol, and going back to the 11.4mm (.45 caliber) weapon. There have been constant complaints about the lesser (compared to the .45) hitting power of the 9mm. And in the last few years, SOCOM (Special Operations Command) and the marines have officially adopted .45 caliber pistols as "official alternatives" to the M9 Beretta. But now SOCOM has been given the task of finding a design that will be suitable as the JCP (Joint Combat Pistol). Various designs are being evaluated, but all must be .45 caliber and have a eight round magazine (at least), and high capacity mags holding up to 15. The new .45 will also have a rail for attachments, and be able to take a silencer. Length must be no more than 9.65 inches, and width no more than 1.53 inches.



The M1911 45 caliber pistol that the 9mm Beretta replaced in 1985, was, as its nomenclature implied, an old design. There are several modern designs out there for 45 caliber pistols that are lighter, carry more ammo and are easier to maintain than the pre-World War I M1911 (which is actually about a century old, as a design). The Department of Defense plans to buy 645,000 JCPs. The competition could get intense with an order this size, and there are already some good .45 caliber designs out there, including a SOCOM version of the Heckler and Koch USP. The U.S. Marine Corps uses an upgraded version of the M1911, and were also looking at new .45 caliber designs.

A message from chapter 787 State Council representative, Kevin Ruhl regarding the RECON magazine published by the State Council of Florida and the VETERAN, the magazine published by V.V.A. National!

“ If our members are not getting the Recon or Veteran they need to submit change of address. Submit them to the State Council and VVA National, if and when someone moves. This will also cause membership renewals to not get to our members”.

Calendar of Events

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Event and Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
<u>April 2006</u>			
13th	Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30PM
27th	Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Veterans Hall, Brandon	7:00PM
29th	Saturday	3d Annual V.V.A. Chapter 787 Car Show, Kingsway Plaza Brandon	9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
<u>May 2006</u>			
11th	Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House	6:30 PM
25th	Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Veterans Hall, Brandon	7:00 PM
27th	Saturday	Chapter Breakfast get together, at the "Flying J" Restaurant	7:00 AM
29th	Monday	Memorial Day	

Retired Soldier wants all Veterans to salute the Flag, even when not in uniform.

From an e-mailed received from SFA HQ, dated March 21 2006.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Following is a letter which a good friend, Ret' d Army MG Vern Lewis, asked me to pass on to my associates. I think he has a great idea, and if you agree, hope you will pass it on to your retired mil contacts.

I gathered some 16 of my old military friends who agreed to sponsor a movement for Veterans to salute rather than place their hands over their heart when honoring the flag, fallen comrades, and/or the country. I have some from each of the four principal services. Three of them were former Vice Chiefs or Assistant Commandants of their services, and several were former CINC's.

We refer to saluting when we do the pledge to the flag, when the National Colors pass or are presented, when the National Anthem or honors are played, or when taps are played and firing squads or guns render honors. We got MOAA magazine to ask veterans what they preferred, hand over the heart or saluting. When last I looked, some 583 veteran respondents had voted 81% in favor of the salute. In addition, my email address was in the questionnaire and I've had about 150 responses, with all but a dozen or so in favor of the salute. Obviously an overwhelming majority of the veterans want to salute.

There are no regulations telling us veterans what we can and can't do in this matter. If we decide we want to salute, who will dare to tell us "no"?

It is a matter of personal choice. We've earned the right to render a salute. Now the challenge is to get the word out. I believe the unit and branch associations are the best way. The commanders of the American Legion and VFW never answered my emails, presuming they even got them. If we can get this started it will take on a life of its own. Those who object can continue the hand over the heart thing. Gradually the custom will change, as well it should.

Just imagine thousands of fans saluting at NFL, MBA, and Major League Baseball games when the National Anthem is played. It will telegraph a message to all others of how many have served this country in the Armed Forces---it will be a positive and patriotic message.

You can help by putting the word out in your organizations, which are made up of patriots like you and me. Thanks, my friend.

Vernon B.

Submitted By: Ron Schott



Final Days.....

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MSgt. Lewis O. Brabham, Jr., who almost single-handedly directed air operations from the ground at Saigon's airport on the final day of conflict, will be presented the William H. Pitsenbarger Heroism Award tonight at the annual AFSA Awards Banquet.

The Pitsenbarger Award is named in honor of an airman first class pararescueman who lost his life in Southeast Asia while attempting to save the lives of others.

Pictured is Ron Stanford and Lew Brabham, Dalat, Viet Nam



At 4 a.m. on April 29th, 1975 Tan Son Nhut, Saigon's main airfield came under intense accurate rocket fire, mortar and artillery fire from firmly entrenched and virtually unopposed enemy forces. Within a few minutes nine U.S. and Vietnamese Air Force cargo aircraft and a number of helicopters were burning on the ramp. Sergeant Brabham roused his Combat Control Team and set up communications in the midst of the shelling to relay vital intelligence information to an airborne command post flying nearby.



The barrage intensified during the morning, showering the airfield with shell fragments and debris. The attack became so intense and accurate that it triggered mass panic among the South Vietnamese. Many VNAF aircraft were making unauthorized and uncontrolled departures from the runways and taxiway, jettisoning live rockets, missiles, bombs, rocket pods and ammunition along the way.

Brabham organized an attempt to clear the active runway and make it safe for operations. Unprotected and continually exposed to exploding rounds, the Sergeant, although untrained in explosive ordnance disposed repeatedly moved by hand or with fork-lift, various types of live and unexpended ammunition from the landing surface.

Within a short time, the northwest sector of the airfield fell to the North Vietnamese and *both* run-ways came under their control, isolating the lone controller in the control tower.

Without regard for his own safety, Sgt. Brabham crossed the runway and adjoining open area under fire to the tower, recovered the controller and led him back across the field. He withdrew his men to the Defense Attaché Office compound without casualties. There, he prepared his radio jeep for destruction and used his portable radio equipment to control the helicopter landing zone for the evacuation of personnel. He remained until the last moments to work air traffic and assist personnel in boarding outbound helicopters for flights to off-shore ships.

Sergeant Brabham was later awarded the Silver Star by the Air Force for his gallantry



Submitted By: Kevin Ruhl

WHEELCHAIR FISHING BOAT: MacDill AFB Marina in Tampa Florida has available a pontoon fishing boat modified for Veterans who use wheelchairs. Vets and their families have free use of the boat as long as they pay for the gas. The 24 foot 'Miss Beverly' is equipped with a wheelchair ramp, a 75 HP Mercury outboard motor and additional safety features for mobility-impaired individuals. Volunteers are available to meet and greet and escort users through the MacDill Entry Gate and pilot the boat. For boat reservations, call the Marina at: (813) 828-4983. For a list of volunteers and their phone numbers, call the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Florida Gulf Coast Chapter in Tampa at: (813) 935-6540. This boat was donated to MacDill by the PVA. MacDill maintains the boat and allows veterans and active duty personnel to use the boat, free of charge. The only criteria for free use is that one or more members of the boating party **MUST** have a mobility impairment, i.e., must be a wheelchair-user. [Source: eFloridaVetsNews16 Jan 06]

Red-Tape Cut in Vietnam Vets Visitors Center Project

****Washington****, DC **-** Today the House Resources Committee passed H.R. 4882, /the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitor Center Deadline Enforcement Act /by a vote of 32-0. The bill will cut two-and-a-half years worth of bureaucratic red tape by designating a location for the visitor center on Washington's National Mall. Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-CA), Ranking Member Nick Rahall (D-WV), and Reps. Steve Pearce (R-NM) and Donna Christensen (D-VI) co-sponsored the bill.

Congress authorized the construction of a visitor center in November of 2003, but progress in selecting a specific location for the Center recently suffered the effects of an unreasonable bureaucracy.

"I felt compelled to take this unusual action in direct response to what I believe is the unreasonable bureaucracy choreographed by the National Capital Planning Commission," Pombo said. "And I am proud of the Resources Committee for working across the aisle to support our veterans. Enough is enough. Our veterans deserve more than stalling and procrastination."

"I thank my colleagues on the Resources Committee for supporting us in this endeavor," said Rahall. "Vietnam ended more than 30 years ago and with each passing year the majority of visitors to the Wall bring with them less and less personal experience of the war. If we are to educate ever-younger visitors regarding what the Wall stands for, we need to get this visitor center up and running."

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Visitors Center will be located on the National Mall, adjacent to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, in the area between Henry Bacon Drive, 23rd Street, Constitution Avenue and the Lincoln Memorial. The bill ensures final approval of the visitor's center will occur 30 days following the bill's enactment.

The National Park Service and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund fully complied with all requests to date from the National Capital Planning Commission, including the completion of an extensive environmental analysis. The analysis successfully met full compliance of consideration on seven alternative sites in addition to weighing the impacts and sight-lines of the National Mall to traffic and sound analysis.

www.vvmf.org

FRIENDS FOR IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETERANS LAUNCHES TroopNet Bringing Troops and Vets Together in Virtual Community

Submitted By: Tom Hall

NEW YORK - Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (www.iava.org <http://www.iava.org/>) is formally launching the first and only online community-building site, based on the popular modules used by Friendster and MySpace, exclusively for Troops and Veterans of those wars. IAVA's TroopNet allows Troops and Veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) to post profiles and pictures, search for others based on a number of criteria, link to "buddies," and privately message others signed up to the site.

TroopNet can be found at IAVA's website (www.iava.org). Already, more than 600 Veterans of OIF and OEF have profiles set up.

"You cannot overestimate how important it is for men and women coming home from war to talk with others who had the same experience," said Paul Rieckhoff, Executive Director of IAVA and a Veteran of the war in Iraq. "In the past, Vets were limited to meeting other Vets at a VFW hall, if they were lucky enough to have one around. With this new technology, finding another Vet to talk to, who has been through the same war as you, is never more than a click away."

TroopNet is already getting rave reviews from Veterans of the current wars.

"TroopNet mixes helpful and fun," said Bobby Yen, an Iraq combat Veteran. "You can meet and make new friends, and talk to people who have been there and understand what you've been through. It's a great idea and something that all vets of OIF/OEF should check out." Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) is the first and largest group for Veterans of those wars and the civilians who support them.

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 Brandon Veterans Hall. 115 W. Clay Ave, Brandon Fl. See map below.

Contact E-mail Addresses:

President Jim LaGarde:

cLaGarde@tampabay.rr.com

VP Dale Wagner: g.gator2@verizon.net

Secretary Bob Silmser: rafkirk64@verizon.net

Treasurer Kevin Ruhl: MSgtMCRet@aol.com

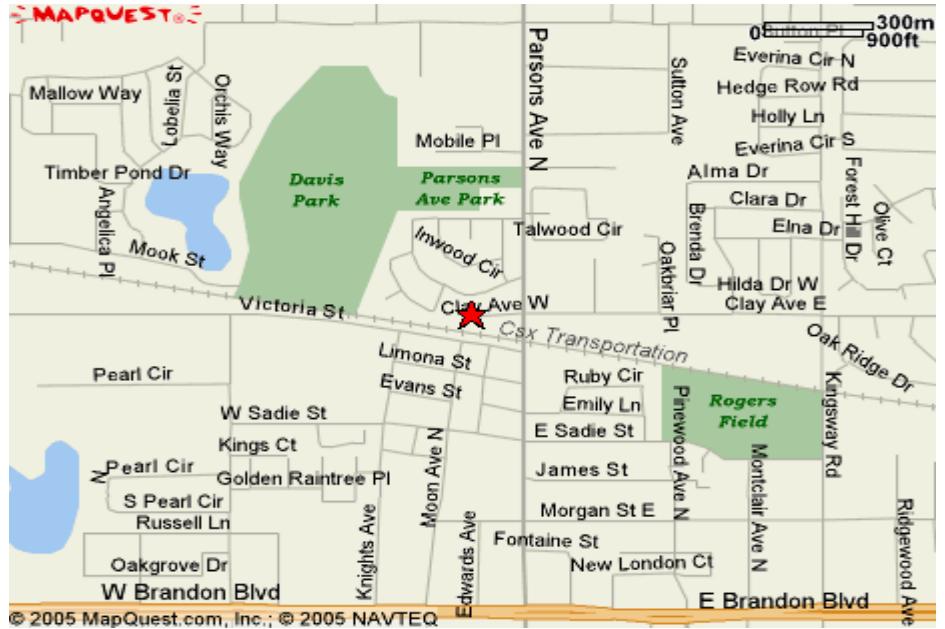
Board of Directors

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Important Web Sites

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