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VNVDV VETERAN NEWS

APRIL 2010







PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

APRIL 2010

Saturday, March 20, 2010, was a day many Vietnam Veterans will not soon forget. Support groups, veteran and civic organizations and patriotic Americans, from the East Bay, hosted a "Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Celebration". The "Welcome Home" was held at the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

For several hundred Veterans attending the celebration this was an emotional homecoming. It may have taken 35-40 plus years, but they finally got the "THANK YOU FOR SERVING AND WELCOME HOME" they deserved. They finally had come home.

The event started with a parade by the Vietnam Veterans. The roadside was lined with hundreds of flag waiving well-wishers', young and old. Handshakes, hugs and slaps on the backs were everywhere. There were many misty eyed, grizzly Veterans in that parade.

After the parade, the celebration continued with music from the 60's, speeches and presentations. Mostly it was a reunion of Veterans and meeting new comrades. "Who did you serve with?" "When were you in-country?" "I was there in 196_!" were questions and answers commonly heard.

For many, it was also a time of quiet reflection, of friends lost, during and since the end of the War.

To the Vietnam Veterans and the MIA's/POW's that did/could not attend the celebration, you too were remembered. The celebration was also to honor you, "WELCOME HOME AND THANK YOU FOR SERVING".

To all those that were responsible for planning and executing the "Vietnam Veteran Welcome Home Celebration" at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, THANK YOU!

Jury Galia

A very special THANK YOU goes to BILL HAWKINS for over seventeen years of dedication to the VNVDV as our <u>Webmaster!</u> Congratulations on your retirement "Hawk" & THANKS from all the members for keeping us informed and promoting the image of the VNVDV!

THANKS TO VNVDV MEMBER **BILL HAWKINS** FOR EFFORTS ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL!

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APRIL 2010

VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS NOT AFFECTED

BY HEALTH REFORM LEGISLATION

Statement from VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki

March 21, 2010

As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, I accepted the solemn responsibility to uphold our sacred trust with our nation's Veterans. Fears that Veterans health care and TRICARE will be undermined by the health reform legislation are unfounded. I am confident that the legislation being voted on today will provide the protections afforded our nation's Veterans and the health care they have earned through their service. The President and I stand firm in our commitment to those who serve and have served in our armed forces. We pledge to continue to provide the men and women in uniform and our Veterans the high quality health care they have earned.

President Obama has strongly supported Veterans and their needs, specifically health care needs, on every major issue for these past 14 months – advance appropriations, new GI Bill implementation, new Agent Orange presumptions for three additional diseases, new Gulf War Illness presumptions for nine additional diseases, and a 16% budget increase in 2010 for the Department of Veterans Affairs, that is the largest in over 30 years, and which has been followed by a 2011 VA budget request that increases that record budget by an additional 7.6%.

To give our Veterans further assurance that health reform legislation will not affect their health care systems, the Chairmen of five House committees, including Veterans Affairs Chairman Bob Filner and Armed Services Chairman Ike Skelton, have just issued a joint letter reaffirming that the health reform legislation as written would protect those receiving care through all TRICARE and Department of Veterans Affairs programs.





Veterans Bills: Help for Homeless Vets & Job Opportunities

This week, the House will take up a series of veterans' measures, including a bill to arm the VA with better tools to fight and end homelessness. It is unacceptable that an estimated 131,000 veterans are homeless on any given night after risking their lives on behalf of this country.

- These bills would also increase on-the-job training opportunities for returning veterans, prevent mortgage lenders from foreclosing on a veteran's home after their service, and make sure payments for disabled veterans keep pace with the cost of living.
- In these challenging economic times, with returning veterans experiencing unemployment rates in the double digits, we must do more to provide for our veterans' basic needs. This legislation shows that the U.S. is grateful for our veterans' service. Just as the military pledges to leave no soldier behind on the battlefield, this nation will leave no veteran behind when they come home.
- End Veteran Homelessness Act of 2010 (H.R. 4810, Filner) Strengthens successful comprehensive programs for homeless veterans through investments, requires housing counselors to generate more veterans housing opportunities at each VA medical center with housing services, strengthens permanent housing programs, and pays special attention to the needs of homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children. This includes provisions from H.R. 2504 and H.R. 3906 (Teague); H.R. 2559, (Hare); and H.R. 2735 (Rodriguez). National Guard Employment Protection Act of 2010 (H.R. 1879, Coffman) Extends key reemployment rights to all of those called up for full-time National Guard duty, including those assigned to a homeland security mission.
- Helping Heroes Keep Their Homes Act of 2010 (H.R. 3976, Perriello) -- Extends expiring
 protections that safeguard veteran homeowners from foreclosure immediately following
 deployment.
- Energy Jobs for Veterans Act (H.R. 4592, Teague) -- Increases job opportunities for veterans by reimbursing employers for the cost of providing on-the-job training for veterans in the energy sector through a new "Veterans Energy Related Employment Program" of competitive grants.
- Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010 (H.R. 4667, Perriello)
 Increases the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and
 the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled
 veterans, effective December 1, 2010.

These bills build on a significant record of accomplishment for veterans and troops over the last three years under the New Direction Congress – including the New GI Bill to make our returning veterans part of our economic recovery, historic investments to strengthen quality veterans' health care and improve care for those with PTSD.





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APRIL GUEST SPEAKER: HEBER SMITH

Our Guest Speaker for the **April 1, 2010** meeting will be World War II Veteran **Heber Smith**. As a 19 year old bombardier on a B-17 heavy bomber, Heber flew 35 combat missions over Europe during the war. His presentation will concentrate on seven of those frightening missions. Heber himself is a wealth of knowledge, but he also brings many charts, maps and photos to enhance the experience.

Future speakers include;

May 6, 2010 Howard Goldsmith – Veteran Workforce Specialist.

June 3, 2010 Joe Callaway – VNVDV Member & Author of "Mekong First Light"

July 1, 2010 No speaker at this date. If anyone knows of someone they think we would enjoy listening to, please contact Dennis at houseworks@pacbell.net.

August 5, 2010 **EAST BAY STAND DOWN 2010**. No scheduled speaker. This is a night when members who would like to educate, inform, or entertain us has a chance to take the floor. *Many members will be volunteering at EBSD.*

September 2, 2010 No speaker scheduled at this time.

October 7, 2010 Alexander Jefferson – A "Tuskegee Airman" and POW - noted author of "Red Tail Captured, Red Tail Free". Don't miss this speaker!

November 4, 2010 No speaker scheduled at this time.

December 2, 2010 Annual Holiday Appreciation & Recognition Dinner.

The Contra Costa County Veteran Service Office will be closed on Wednesday, March 31, 2010. My apologies for any inconvenience this may cause. We will re-open on Thursday April 1st, normal business hours.



Thank You.

Phil Munley Contra Costa County Veteran Service Officer 10 Douglas Drive # 100 Martinez, CA. 94553 (925) 313-1481 (925) 313-1490 (Fax)



MAKE SURE YOU PLAN TO GET YOUR BENEFIT CHECK-UP AT THE VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE IN MARTINEZ SOON

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UPCOMING EVENTS

April 17, 2010 - Saturday at **10 AM** Tour of Historic Mare Island Naval Shipyard - A three hour tour. More details in newsletter.

April 18, 2010 - Sunday at 2 PM; Danville Welcome Home Event for Danville Viet Nam Veterans at the Danville Community Center next to the library. Each of the honorees will receive a special proclamation, followed by a reception at the Community Center. Refreshments will be provided. The public is invited to attend. If you are a Vietnam Veteran residing in the Town of Danville, - or know of a Danville resident who served in Vietnam - please contact Rochelle Flotten at rflotten@ci.danville.ca.us, or by phone at 925-314-3328. Please provide the name, branch of service, and years of tour in Vietnam by April 2, 2010.

April 18, 2010 - <u>Cal Veterans Club 5K Run/Walk</u> - Berkeley 9AM-12 Register on-line @ www.CalVeterans.org. More detail on next page.

May 1, 2010; The "Last Harrah" Past - Present - Future... the very last event to be held in the current **Veterans Memorial Building** in downtown Danville. 12 Noon to 5PM - See Flyer in this newsletter.

May 13, 2010; 20th Annual Blackhawk Food, Wine, and Film Festival. 5:30PM to 8:30PM at the Blackhawk Museum sponsored by the D/SV Rotary Club. The theme this year... & movie - *The African Queen.* The VNVDV supports this event and it is a sell-out every year. Go to www.dsvrotary.com for Tickets on-line or contact Helen Reese @ 925/935-4294 for information and tickets.





ALWAYS CHECK THE "WEBSITES" OF OUR MANY SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS FOR MORE EVENTS!

VNVDV Encourages Your Support!



Sunday - April 18th - Berkeley Benefits East Bay Stand Down!

The VNVDV "Thanks" our Newsletter ADVERTISERS -Your Support is appreciated by our Members & Readers!



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It is TAX Time Again.... CONTACT

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they enable the VietNam Veterans of Diablo Valley to Serve Again!

Mare Island......Here We Come!!

Saturday, April 17, 2010 10 a.m.

Navy Leaguers and Guests have a great opportunity to tour the historic former *MARE ISLAND NAVAL SHIPYARD* escorted by a docent from the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation. The three-hour tour (by car and foot) will include Officers' row, the Admiral's Mansion, St. Peter's Chapel with Tiffany glass windows, the dry docks and waterfront and the Museum. Much to see and appreciate about this place which played such a significant role in World War Two as a ship repair facility for damaged ships, and a builder of ships and subs.

TOUR PRICE WITH GUIDE......\$15/person

After the tour ends we have an optional lunch opportunity for those who wish to take part. Roger and Holly Meininger suggest "The Front Door" on the waterfront across from Mare Island which will accommodate our group if we sign up for a limited menu....which sounds good!!

1) French Burger with soup or fries 2) Cheddar Burger with soup or fries

3) Club Sandwich with fries or soup 4) Italian Sausage sandwich on French roll, etc

Note: Lunch will begin at 1:30 following tour. Front Door, 295 Mare Island Way

PRICE for lunch, including non-alcoholic beverage, tax & tip.....\$13/person

HOW TO GET TO MARE ISLAND:

- 1) From Contra Costa: cross the Benicia Bridge on I-680. Follow I-780 into Vallejo and along the waterfront. After passing the Ferry Terminal, turn LEFT at Tennessee St. in to Mare Island entrance and cross the causeway. Turn LEFT at Railroad St. to Museum 9/10ths mile on left side. Tour starts from here at 10 a.m.
- 2) From Contra Costa: On I-80 cross the Carquinez Bridge to Tennessee St off ramp. Turn west and follow through downtown Vallejo to Mare Island entrance and cross the causeway. Turn LEFT at Railroad St. Museum is 9/10ths mile on left side.

There is a Vietnam-era River Boat with a shark painted on it in front

	RSVP D	eadline Monday, April 12, 2010
Checks payable to: CC	CCNLUS, pl	ease!
Please mail RSVP to: I	Roger Meini	nger, P.O. Box 1612, Martinez, CA 94553-0612
Enclosed is \$	for	for the Mare Island Tour ONLY.
		optional lunches at "The Front Door" ar Burger Club Sandwich Sausage Sandwich
Attending will be		Phone

Danville Veteran's Memorial Building



THE LAST HURRAH!



to Celebrate Our Veterans Hall



Saturday May 1, 2010 12 to 5 pm Ceremony 1 pm



Veterans Memorial Building of San Ramon Valley

400 Hartz Avenue, Danville



Come for FREE Dreyer's Grand ice cream, plus kids' scavenger hunt and coloring project



Learn about the hall's many stories of its past



See a great show by the Singing Blue Stars of the USS Hornet



Check out America's military vehicles



Videotape your memories about the hall



Create a legacy or donate to receive a challenge coin

Something for Every Generation!

Kids! Bring your parents, grandparents, and friends.

srvveteranshall.org

The Contra Costa County Veteran's Service Office will be on-site at the "Last Harrah"

Join the entire San Ramon & Diablo Valley for the very last evently You Can Make A Difference... Leave A Legacy!

VNVDV Proud Supporters of the Rotary



New Richmond Veterans Center with One-Stop Services

West County veterans have a new Richmond center designed and developed with state-of-the-art ideas. Please join me at the **March 31** grand opening of the new American Legion Post 875 in Marina Bay, a full-service veteran's center featuring:

- Career development
- Job placement
- Life skills training
- Counseling
- Troop support
- Financial planning/assistance
- Scholarships

The Post is located in a spacious waterfront building with event and banquet facilities, media and lecture rooms, health and wellness spaces, and a bingo hall.

I'm pleased to support the new American Legion Post as one way of giving back to the brave men and women who have served our country in the military. Post 875 services will help new veterans successfully reenter our community as civilians, and help older veterans get the assistance they need to thrive. Spread the word to veterans you know, and join me at the Grand Opening if you can:

What: Grand Opening of American Legion Post 875, One-Stop Veterans Service Center When: 3:30 pm to 7 pm. Wednesday March 31 -- Ribbon Cutting Program starts at 5 pm

Where: 1401 Marina Way South (near the Bay), Richmond

For more information contact Greg Cantrell, Executive Director of Post 875 at nmmti@yahoo.com.



Governor Schwarzenegger Celebrates First Annual "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day"

Continuing his commitment to honor our nation's men and women in uniform, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today attended the Vietnam Veterans of America recognition ceremony and presented his proclamation for the inaugural "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" in California.

Last year, the Governor signed AB 717 by Assembly member Paul Cook (R-Yucca Valley) to establish an annual "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day." AB 717 encourages all public schools in California to observe the day and conduct exercises recognizing the contributions of all those involved in the Vietnam War on March 30th of every year.

Governor Schwarzenegger presents his proclamation for the inaugural "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" in California. From left to right: Assembly member Paul Cook (R-Yucca Valley), Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Founder Jose Ramos, Assembly member Marty Block (D-San Diego), Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Senator Jeff Denham (R-Merced) and Jon Voight

The text of the Governor's proclamation for March 30, 2010 is below:-

PROCLAMATION

Many years have passed since the Vietnam War was waged, and despite the divisions that existed in our country, our troops continuously demonstrated the best of the American spirit by performing amazing acts of heroism. Our Vietnam veterans deserve our respect and recognition for everything they did to defend freedom, which is why I am proud to proclaim March 30 as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

This day of appreciation, like the Vietnam Veterans' Memorials in Washington and in Sacramento, is a tribute to the sacrifices of all the American veterans who served in Vietnam. It is a time for us to reflect on our past, and March 30 represents our continued dedication to honoring and supporting our veterans as we offer all of them a heartfelt "welcome home."

I encourage every Californian to take a moment this day to remember the brave veterans of the Vietnam War. It is never too late to recognize the selfless actions of these courageous men and women who answered duty's call and served our nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim March 30, 2010, as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 24th day of March 2010.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

Governor of California

ATTEST:

DEBRA BOWENSecretary of State



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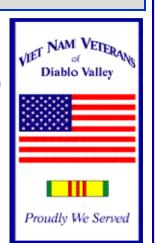
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To:

VNVDV Memeber & VIPs

The VietNam Veterans of Diablo Valley was established in 1991 as a non-profit Veterans organization to promote and enhance the image of the VietNam Veteran through Community Service and Support of fellow Veterans.

We meet each month on the 1st Thursday every month in the Diablo Valley @ Crow Canyon Country Club. Our Board of Directors Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Veterans Building in Danville. To see some of our programs we support... visit our website. All veterans are welcome to attend our membership meetings. We are a "fun" social group - always looking for new members who enjoy friendship & the special bond as military veterans. We are Proud of our Military Service... and of our continued contributions to veterans and our community.

OPEN - SOCIAL DINNER MEETINGS - JOIN US!







GENERAL MEMBERSHIP DINNER & OPEN SOCIAL MEETING

THURSDAY - APRIL 1st - with HEBER SMITH as Guest Speaker at *THE CROW CANYON COUNTRY CLUB* in Danville

Social Hour starts at 1700 - Dinner at 1815

Featuring "Chef's Special Buffet Dinner"

Viet Nam Veterans of Diablo Valley
"INCOMING" Newsletter