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# INCOMING NEWS

VNVDV VETERAN NEWS

**MAY 2010**



## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

May 2010

April is just about gone. Taxes put to bed. The calendar says it's spring, but the weather still feels like winter. There is an open salmon fishing season, however, someone forgot to tell the salmon. April has been busy and May promises to be likewise.

Upcoming in May is our monthly meeting, Thursday, the 6<sup>th</sup>. If you know of a veteran that is seeking employment or is unemployed, invite him to our meeting. Howard Goldsmith, Veteran Workforce Specialist, Employment Development Department (EDD), will be our guest speaker. Plans for the VNVDV's Memorial Day Observance, on Monday, May 31 at Oak Hill Park are being finalized. As soon as all the pending details are confirmed, we will be send out an early edition of the INCOMING with the pertinent information.

Here's what you can plan on:

Start time of the Event is 1000 hrs (10:00 AM), Monday, May 31, 2010, Oak Hill Park, Danville.

Music by the 191<sup>st</sup> Army Band, USAR

Featured speaker will be Rear Admiral Winston Copeland, USN (ret.)

US Marine Corps Color Guard

A picnic after the event, for current (2010 dues paid) VNVDV members and immediate family only

And of course, an all "able body" member work force to setup and take down

Memorial Day honors all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, in the service of our Country and those veterans who have passed on. Come and honor them.

The East Bay Stand Down (EBS D) is well into the planning stage. Once again the VNVDV is supporting the event, not only financially, but also with many of our members in leadership roles. The EBS D will take place August 5, 6, 7, 8, 2010, at the Alameda County Fairgrounds. To find out more on the EBS D go to the web site [www.eastbaystanddown.org](http://www.eastbaystanddown.org). You can volunteer to work at the EBS D, and even make a donation via the web site.

A reminder, the VNVDV Board of Directors meets each 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at the Crow Canyon Country Club, at 6:00 PM. All current members are invited to attend. If you have something to discuss with the Board, just email me requesting to be added to the agenda, along with the subject to be discussed. My e-mail address is [jyahiro@aol.com](mailto:jyahiro@aol.com). Thank you for serving and "Welcome Home"!

**Memorial Day  
Monday, May 31, 2010  
Oak Hill Park  
Danville, CA**

**Program Outline:**

Pre-ceremony Concert (191 <sup>st</sup> Division Army Band)	10:30 – 10:55	
Ceremony begins		11:00
Highlights:		
•	Presentation of colors	
•	Flyby: ANG F16s from Fresno	
•	National Anthem	
•	Invocation	
•	Welcome by Mayor of Danville	
•	Recognition of veterans from all wars	
•	Salute to each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces	
•	Recognition of War on Terror veterans	
•	Featured Speaker: Rear Admiral Winston Copeland	
•	Closing remarks	
Ceremony concludes		12:00
Special Salute at All Wars Memorial	12:05	
•	Special salute to War on Terror Veterans	
•	Special salute to Mike Shimansky	
•	21 gun salute	
•	Taps	
•	Amazing Grace (Sheriff's Pipe and Drum Corps)	
•	Closing remarks	
•	Retire Colors	
Overall ceremony concludes		12:30

The annual VNVDV Memorial Day picnic will follow the ceremony, at the southeastern corner of Oak Hill Park, near the volley ball court.

The picnic will be for VNVDV **MEMBERS AND IMMEDIATE FAMILY ONLY**. VNVDV will provide the main course and hot dogs for children. Please bring something for yourselves and to share with others, a salad or dessert. Also, please bring your own beverage of choice.

**PLEASE CONTACT MIKE SLATTENGREN VIA E-MAIL AT [mjsslatt@yahoo.com](mailto:mjsslatt@yahoo.com) AND LET HIM KNOW HOW MANY IN YOUR FAMILY WILL BE ATTENDING THE PICNIC AND WHAT YOU WILL BE BRINGING TO SHARE.**

## **AKAKA'S SWEEPING OMNIBUS BILL FOR VETERANS AND CAREGIVERS NOW LAW**

*President Obama signs bill to bring unprecedented support for caregivers of seriously injured veterans, veterans in rural areas, and women veterans*

*President Obama greets Chairman Akaka following the signing ceremony in the State Dining Room of the White House, as Secretary Shinseki and Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden look on from the left.*

(Photo captured from [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov) streaming video)

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii) joined President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Dr. Jill Biden, Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, and others at the White House today for the signing of **S. 1963**, the [Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act](#).

This landmark bill authored by Chairman Akaka will establish an unprecedented permanent program to support the caregivers of wounded warriors, improve health care for veterans in rural areas, help VA adapt to the needs of women veterans, and expand supportive services for homeless veterans. S. 1963 passed the House and [Senate unanimously](#) last month.

*“With his signature, President Obama has taken the last step in what has been a long struggle for wounded warriors, their caregivers, and others who have called for a law to strengthen the partnership between VA and veterans’ families. Today belongs to the family caregivers who sacrificed so much with too little support, and never gave up on their wounded loved ones. VA, veterans’ families, and disabled veterans will all be better off thanks to this important law. I am also pleased about provisions in the new law to help disabled veterans, women veterans, homeless veterans, those who live in rural and remote areas, and others,”* said Akaka.

*“I am especially pleased that VA will now be able to reimburse veterans who require air travel to receive the care they need. Neighbor Island veterans have asked for this change for years, and now it is law,”* said Akaka.

Akaka held a series of hearings as Chairman, bringing in the families of seriously injured servicemembers to discuss how VA might better help those caring for severely disabled veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Akaka then developed legislation to establish a program to certify, train, and financially support veterans' caregivers. When this bipartisan bill was blocked in the Senate, Akaka led a successful [floor fight](#) to secure floor passage. A longtime supporter of veterans' caregivers, Akaka also introduced legislation in 2006, later enacted as part of an omnibus bill ([Public Law 109-461](#)), establishing a pilot program to assist caregivers

The bill's caregiver support provisions will:

- Fulfill VA's obligation to care for the nation's wounded veterans by providing their caregivers with training, counseling, supportive services, and a living stipend
- Provide health care to the family caregivers of injured veterans under CHAMPVA
- Require independent oversight of the caregiver program

The bill will also provide numerous other improvements for veterans, by:

- Expanding health care services for women veterans
  - Reaching out to veterans living in rural areas
  - Improving VA's mental health care programs
  - Removing barriers to care for catastrophically disabled veterans
  - Enhancing a variety of VA medical services
  - Strengthening VA's ability to recruit and retain a first-class health-care workforce
  - Improving and increasing services to homeless veterans

# Agent Orange Retro Claims Allowed

Tom Philpott | April 01, 20

## New Agent Orange Rule to Allow Retro Claims by 86,000

About 86,000 Vietnam War veterans, their surviving spouses or estates will be eligible for retroactive [disability compensation](#) from the Department of Veterans Affairs -- an average of 11.4 years for veterans and 9.6 years for survivors -- under a draft VA rule to expand by three the number of diseases presumed caused by herbicide exposure in the war.

The 86,000 are beneficiaries who can reopen previously denied claims for these conditions: ischemic heart disease, **Parkinson's disease** and chronic B-cell blood cancers including hairy cell leukemia. But another 29,000 claims are expected to be approved this year for Vietnam veterans suffering from these diseases but applying for benefits for the first time.

The projected cost of this dramatic expansion of claims linked to [Agent Orange](#) and other defoliants deployed four decades ago is \$13.6 billion this fiscal year and \$42.2 billion over 10 years. VA plans to hire 1772 new claims processors, starting this October, to be able to handle these claims "without significantly degrading the processing of the non-presumptive workload."

In the proposed rule published March 25 in the Federal Register, VA officials explained that Secretary Eric Shinseki has cut the usual 60-day public comment period by half "to promote rapid action" on these claims.

When a final rule is published, soon after April 26, VA claim offices across the country can begin making payments. Veterans with these diseases will need to show they set foot in Vietnam during the war. Those who served aboard ship just off the coast remain ineligible.

John Maki, assistant national service director for Disabled American Veterans, said DAV was glad to see the comment period cut to 30 days. Otherwise, the draft regulation contains no surprises. "It basically is going to take those three conditions and just add them to disabilities already listed as presumptive diseases for Agent Orange," Maki said.

One surprise still might be the thoroughness of the draft rule's analysis of the beneficiary populations and the costs facing the department from this wave of claims for both retroactive payments and new benefits. **Adding ischemic heart disease to the list of presumptive Agent Orange illnesses is by far the most significant part of the new rule**, accounting for 82 percent of additional expected payments to beneficiaries.

**The rule defines ischemic heart disease as a condition causing inadequate supply of blood and oxygen to the myocardium, the middle and thickest layer of the heart wall. "IHD" can include, but is not limited to, acute, subacute and old myocardial infarction; atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease including coronary artery disease (or spasm) and coronary bypass surgery, and stable, unstable and Prinzmetal's angina.**

Because IHD is a heart disease it "does not include hypertension or peripheral manifestations of arteriosclerosis such as peripheral vascular disease or stroke," the draft regulation explains.

Of 86,000 beneficiaries eligible for retroactive claims, VA estimates that nearly 70,000 of them are living Vietnam veterans, their average age now 63. Of those, 62,200 previously were denied compensation for IHD, 5400 were denied for B-cell leukemia and 2300 for **Parkinson's disease**.

### **Agent orange, cont.**

About 53,000 who previously filed claims for these diseases already are receiving VA compensation for other service-related diseases. Of those, roughly 8350 are rated 100-percent disabled and therefore might not be eligible for **retroactive pay**.

VA assumes that veterans with Parkinson's disease or for B-cell leukemia will be awarded a 100-percent disability ratings. The average rating for ischemic heart diseases is expected to be 60 percent.

In calculating VA costs from this change, VA assumes that 80 percent of the eligible population will apply for benefits and 100 percent of those who do will be approved. But eligible vets and survivors must file claims to get paid; nothing will happen automatically. To file claims online visit: <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>. Veterans without a computer can call a toll-free helpline at 1-800-749-8387.

VA maintains a directory of veterans' service organizations with trained staff to help in filing claims. The website: <http://www1.va.gov/vso/>. Many state, county and local governments also have personnel to help. Find information on these agencies at: <http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>.

VA also expects many ineligible veterans to file claims. They will be found ineligible because they can't show they ever set foot in Vietnam though they suffer from one of the qualifying diseases. Many claims will be filed by veterans with hypertension but those will be rejected because that condition is not a "heart disease" under the VA draft regulation.

In total, VA expects claims volume from presumptive [Agent Orange](#) diseases to hit 159,000 this year and to exceed 270,000 by fiscal 2019.

Maki noted that entitlement to benefits only occurs with final publication of the regulation. Retroactive payments usually will be made back to the date a claim was filed for a presumptive disease.

"It is possible, since this is a liberalized law, that somebody may be able to get the retroactive date [moved back] to one year prior to the effective date in the regulation, if they can show they had the claimed condition prior to that year," Maki said.

The growing list of Agent Orange diseases stems of a court case, *Nehmer v. Department of Veterans Affairs*, filed in 1986. The class action lawsuit won by veterans, and reinforced by legislation, requires VA to direct the National Academy of Sciences to report every two years on any positive association between new diseases and exposure to herbicides in Vietnam.

In 2007, the Bush administration went to court to challenge the legal need for NAS studies on presumptive AO diseases to continue. It lost. The NAS reports are to continue through Oct. 1, 2014, with the possibility that more diseases will be found to have an association with herbicide exposure.

To comment, e-mail [milupdate@aol.com](mailto:milupdate@aol.com), write to *Military Update*, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA, 20120-1111 or visit: [www.militaryupdate.com](http://www.militaryupdate.com)



**EBSB Executive Board** is pleased to announce...

***The MAY Community Planning Meeting in Pleasanton for:***  
**EAST BAY STAND DOWN 2010**



**The MAY Community Planning Meeting will be held on Tuesday – MAY 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30PM at the Alameda County Fair Ground – Palm Pavilion.** The building is located on the east side of the fairgrounds.

Additional information – along with other updates regarding the **2010 EBSB** can be found on the website.

We strongly encourage community participation and support. **Find out how you and /or your organization can help...** get involved – start by attending the *MAY informational meeting*. **East Bay Stand Down** is designed to provide - *a helping hand up* - to homeless veterans in the greater East Bay area. **You can make a difference!** Volunteer *now* by registering *on-line* – you can also **donate on-line**. These informational /planning meetings are held monthly prior to stand down.

Please *visit* the **EBSB website** to become a *volunteer* through *registration on-line* prior to the event – also donating to support *Stand Down* and information on future meeting locations – and other details about this year's **August 5-6-7-8** event. The *official EBSB website* is: **www.EastBayStandDown.org**. **EBSB** is on **Facebook** too!

We ask that you assist us this year by sharing information about Stand Down with others... encouraging all interested individuals & organizations to support this event. All meetings are open to the public - providing the community with the opportunity to find out more... directly from the coordinators – and those who volunteered in the 2008 EBSB... this unique & special four-day community-service program.

Veteran and community organizations are encouraged to attend, in addition to: military support groups – churches – clubs – community service organizations and all other interested companies – corporations or individuals. These are informational meetings. **Please send a representative to the MAY meeting held in Pleasanton - from your organization and get involved NOW!**

Note:

**Media & Public Relations contact is Bart Buechner** and he can be e-mailed at the CDVA in Yountville at: [Bart.Buechner@cdva.ca.gov](mailto:Bart.Buechner@cdva.ca.gov) - regarding official “press releases” - announcements and other media information, including detailed plans for the **2010 EBSB** event scheduled for August 2010 at the *Alameda County Fairgrounds*. All major and significant donations are encouraged to make their presentations at one of the *public planning meetings* to ensure proper community recognition of your support for this major homeless veteran program conducted in the east bay. Again for more information – please visit the website at – **www.EastBayStandDown.org**.

Thank you for your support...

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# 20th Annual BLACKHAWK

## "Food, Wine & Film Festival"

*A Private Event for Donors of the Danville/Sycamore Valley Rotary Foundation*

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**THURSDAY, MAY 13TH, 2010**

LOCATION: BLACKHAWK MUSEUM

5:30PM - 8:00PM "FOOD, WINE & COCKTAIL AUCTION"

8:00PM - 8:30PM "LIVE AUCTION"

*For More Information Regarding  
Invitations, Donations or Becoming a Sponsor -*

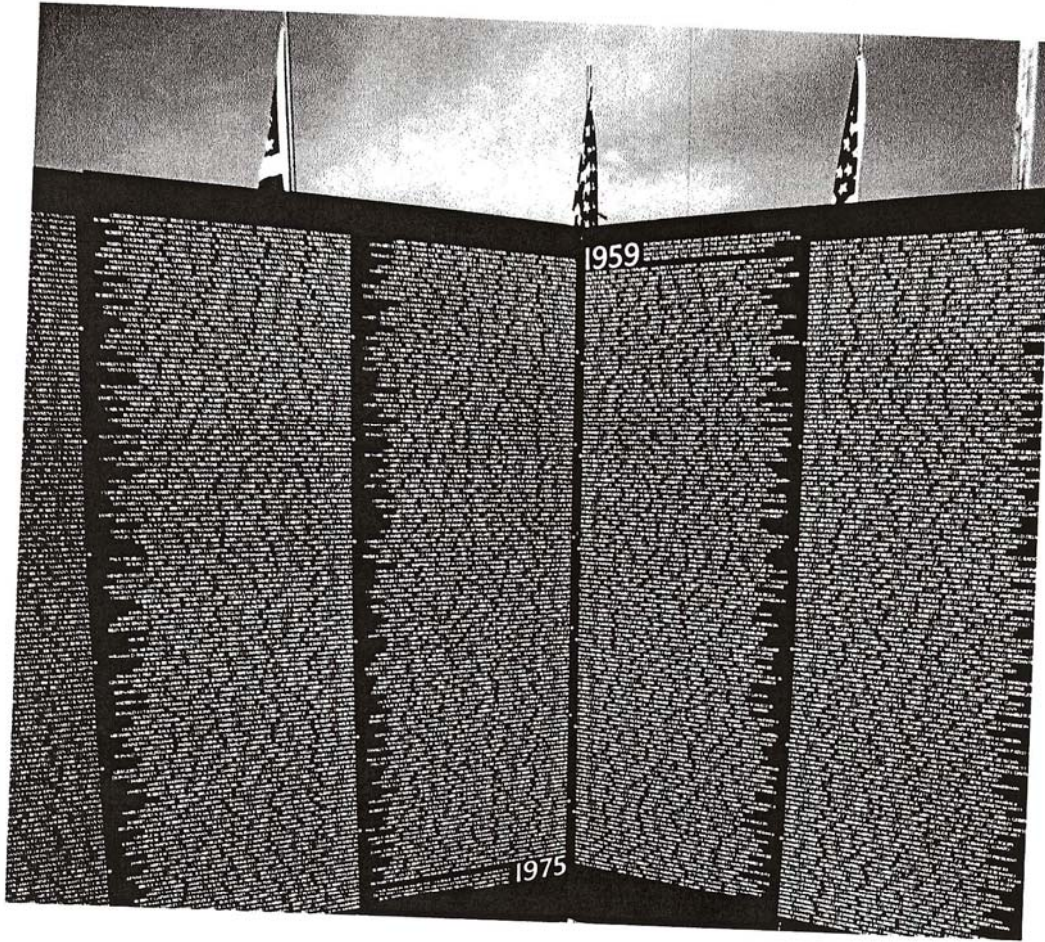
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*With your participation over the years, Danville /Sycamore Valley Rotary has  
contributed over \$500,000 to community & international service projects!*





# The Moving Wall Memorial



“The Moving Wall,” a half scale replica of the  
Washington Vietnam Memorial, will be at  
Greeley Hill, CA 95311  
Thursday, June 10th ~ Sunday, June 13th, 2010

For additional information contact :

Jesse Salcedo

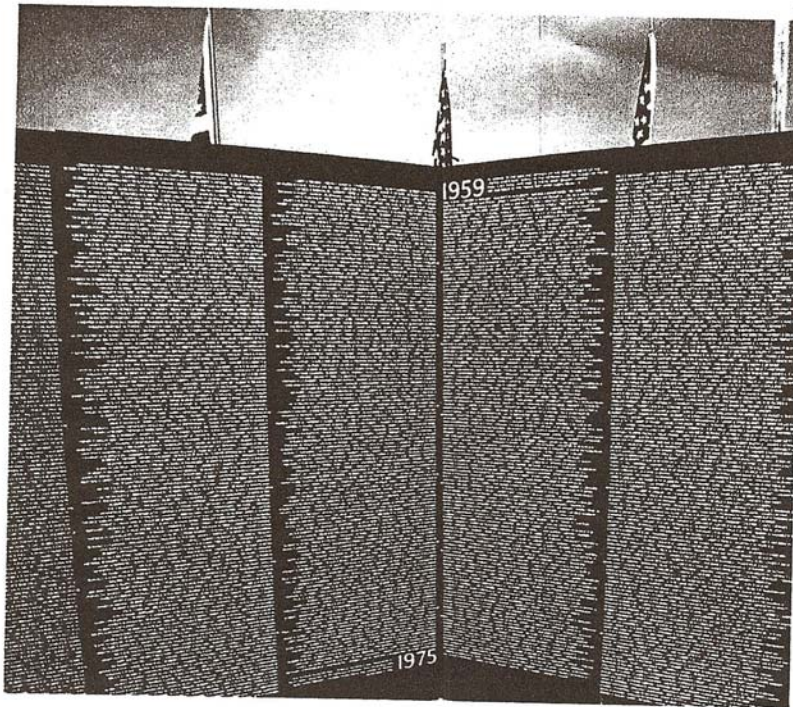
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[jdsalcedo@earthlink.net](mailto:jdsalcedo@earthlink.net)



# The Moving Wall Memorial



## PORK ROAST - CARNITAS

Beans, Rice, and Salad - \$10.<sup>00</sup> Per Plate  
To benefit "The Moving Wall" Memorial  
Head Cook & Bottle Washer, Retired Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class  
David Rodriques - Special Forces Group - Vietnam  
(209) 852-2172

Greeley Hill, CA 95311

Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at Noon

The "Moving Wall" will be in Greeley Hill, CA 95311  
Thursday, June 10<sup>th</sup> ~ Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010

For additional information contact :

Jesse Salcedo

650-369-0383

209-878-3302

[jdsalcedo@earthlink.net](mailto:jdsalcedo@earthlink.net)

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# Don't Miss . . .

# MEMORIAL DAY 2010 MONDAY - MAY 31ST OAKHILL PARK



Memorial Day is probably the VietNam Veterans of Diablo Valley's biggest event - coordinated with the Town of Danville and the All Wars Memorial Foundation. The event traditionally draws over one-thousand guests to beautiful Oakhill Park in Danville - and is one of the largest "formal remembrances" of **Memorial Day** in the East Bay. This event requires our members to volunteer at what ever level they are able to assist in making this event the best possible. Please - every available member - supporter and friend from the community your help is needed to "volunteer" on Monday - May 31st @ 0800.

President **Jerry Yahiro** has the good fortune of again having Past President **Bill Picton** as the Memorial Day Chair. To assist with all events the organization conducts—the Director of Events - Ray La Rochelle is assisting the President with event details. Bill indicated members are needed in every area - organize - set-up & take-down all the materials and equipment required for a successful event. Bill will discuss needs at our May 6th "dinner meetings" - & will contact specific members by e-mail and phone to assist. He informed us he has a great program this year to honor those who have given the ultimate sacrifice and those who have gone before us. We need volunteer set-up help early on Monday - May 31 at Oakhill Park - 0700.

Work Parties will start at Oakhill Park to obtain chairs and set-up the shade cover over the seating area - and set-up the chairs - and then return them afterwards. Director Bill Green is working the "power needs" - Past President Del Loewe is working on the PA & Speaker System and Bill is working with members of the All Wars Memorial Foundation on the AWM program. Mark you calendar now and plan to be there early! Any questions? **Contact VNVDV Memorial Day Chair - Bill Picton @ [BPicton@sbcglobal.net](mailto:BPicton@sbcglobal.net) to volunteer. Thanks!**

The **ALL WARS MEMORIAL** Foundation which "operates and manages" the AWM for the **Town of Danville** is ready to finalize our Spring 2010 "engraving order" for Pavers at the AWM and we are now just waiting for final orders and the weather to dry-up to begin engraving. Have you sent your paver order in yet? Now is the time to purchase a paver... so it will be installed hopefully by Memorial Day (weather permitting). **These gift pavers ordered will be cherished forever!** This is still a great time to visit the AWM. Purchasing an AWM "paver" as a "gift" is a *special memory* which will always be remembered... and is a true honor for those who have served or are current members of the military. The AWM can provide special "family groupings" if you have multiple family members who have served or desire to honor other family members in a grouping. *AWM Paver ordering information can be found on their new website at:*

*[www.allwarsmemorial.com](http://www.allwarsmemorial.com). All AWM pavers currently installed will soon be on the website by Summer with photos. Order a Paver for your favorite veteran or family member today! AWM Pavers are only \$250. Mail your order form to AWM - P.O. Box 158 - Danville, CA 94526.*

## All Wars Memorial

**After MEMORIAL DAY  
we will have our "Members  
Only" Family BBQ Picnic.  
All current members are  
encouraged to attend.**





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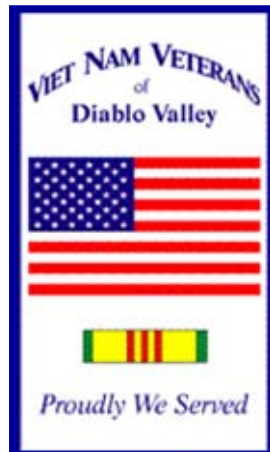
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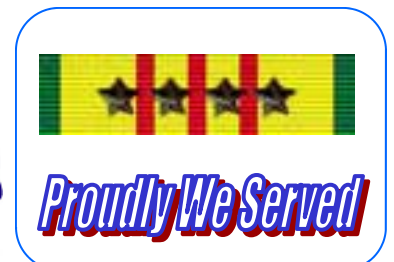
The **VietNam Veterans of Diablo Valley** was established in 1991 as a non-profit Veterans organization to promote and enhance the image of the VietNam Veteran through Community Service and Support of fellow Veterans.

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!**



**VIET NAM VETERANS  
of  
Diablo Valley**



**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP DINNER & OPEN SOCIAL MEETING**

**THURSDAY - APRIL 1st - with Howard Goldsmith 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**