



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
FOR INFORMATION CALL BOB SILMSER (813) 220-7246 OR (813) 685-3483.
WEB SITE: WWW.VVA787.COM**



Submitted By: Jon Mueller

This Is What We Do!

Some people believe that individuals join Veteran Organizations for the sole purpose of sitting around drinking adult beverages, playing Bingo and telling war stories. That does not happen in chapter 787, Vietnam Veterans of America, (well maybe the war stories part has some truth on occasions). For example, each year volunteers from our chapter give presentations about their experiences in Vietnam, at our local High Schools. The Vietnam History project first developed by chapter member **Tom Hall*** and Hillsborough County teacher and chapter member **Ron Dykes.*** We also deliver a complete holiday meal to needy veterans and their families during Thanksgiving and Christmas. We volunteer our time to staff the Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park and Museum and we are the first group to step up when ever a veteran or their family members, needs a helping hand like a recent Iraqi vet who needed emergency money to help his family. Your chapter continues to be there.



Chapter Officers

President: Jim LaGarde

Vice President: Carl Harris

Secretary: Bob Silmsers

Treasurer: Bob Silmsers

Board of Directors:

Ron Schott

Tom Hall

Kevin Ruhl

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: 7:00 PM

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

Mailing address: P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404.

Pictured above L-R: Connie Thompson (Rambo's brother in-law) Vietnam vet, USAF 1965, Durant High School English teacher Laura Lee Estes who's class Rambo was teaching this day (Sept. 21 2007), and **Jim (Rambo) LaGarde**, President of chapter 787.



Pictured from L-R, Top row: Chapter 787 President **Jim LaGarde** starts his Vietnam history presentation to Ms. Estes English class at Durant High School. Second row, Jim writes down his Vietnam unit and MOS for the students. Chapter member and Hillsborough County Veterans Council President **Dave Braun** was representing chapter 787 at the Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park & Museum Sept. 21 2007. Bottom row, chapter member **Tom Damm** also is shown at his post in volunteering his valuable time to staff the Museum earlier in September. In addition to answering questions and taking donations from visitors, **Tom Damm** cleaned up the place by vacuuming and organizing the displays. Thanks Tom.

*From page 1, we noted chapter members **Tom Hall** and **Ron Dykes** help start the History of the Vietnam War classes in our High Schools, the Oral History Project, where students interview our Vietnam Veterans and make a permanent written record and the Speakers Bureau where Veterans like **Jim LaGarde** shown above speak about their experiences (in Vietnam) to the local High School classes.

Vets Project Contains False MOH Stories

Stars and Stripes | By Lisa Burgess | September 21, 2007

ARLINGTON, Va. -- The Veterans History Project, a multimillion-dollar collection of over 50,000 oral and written war stories from Americans sponsored by the Library of Congress, is rife with errors, exaggerations, and what appears to be outright lies, according to outside experts scrutinizing the site.

Of 49 purported Medal of Honor recipients who told their stories to the project, 24 turned out to never have been awarded the nation's highest military decoration, according to Doug Sterner, one of the country's foremost experts in high-level military honors.

After reviewing the project's Web site and cross-referencing it with his own databases, Sterner said, he found at least 32 out of 100 veterans who claimed to have earned the Distinguished Service Crosses did not, and 14 out of 50 entries improperly claimed the Navy Cross.

Meanwhile, out of 144 participants who said they were Vietnam-era prisoners of war, at least 45 were not, according to Mary Schantag of POW Network, a Skidmore, Mo.-based group that exposes fraudulent POW claims.

Research staff for the Veterans History Project conducts "periodic reviews" of its Web site for accuracy, said Matt Raymond, the library's director of communications. The last such review was held about 18 months ago.

But after the names of the 24 fake Medal of Honor claimants were revealed in a story by the Marine Corps Times, researchers "have gone through and scrubbed the database again and removed incorrect information" on the Medal of Honor, he said.

"Any time we are presented with incontrovertible evidence that [a record or story] is not true, we do remove that information," Raymond said.

Raymond said that the project's researchers felt they had been "ambushed" by the paper, saying researchers would have corrected errors immediately but were not given time to respond.

Sterner told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday that he raised the possibility that there were incorrect Medal of Honor citations on the project's Web site with researchers about a year ago, when he noticed that three names did not match the known recipients of the award.

And Schantag said her group knew years ago that the project had a problem and tried to talk to officials at the project, to no avail.

There are no requirements that the veterans participating in the project prove their military service before hand, and the volunteers who collect the stories for the project are largely civilians with no knowledge of the military. Schantag said that leaves them unlikely to sense when someone is spinning tales.

Raymond said that's missing the point.

"[The project] is not intended to be a registry, or be a substitute for other forms of historical documentation," he said. "It's a supplement."

Critics disagreed. Schantag said it's one thing to say they are based on the memories of soldiers, and "everyone knows memories can be faulty, especially with the fog of war.

"But out-and-out fraud is another thing."

Direct TV subscribers can now get multiple Vietnamese Channels



This Month During the Vietnam War

October 1965: "Operation Shiny Bayonet", the 1st Cavalry Division initiated their first brigade-size airmobile action against the enemy. A combined U.S.-South Vietnamese force attempted to trap elements of the NVA 325th Infantry (Song Lo) Division in the Suai Ca River valley about 275 miles northeast of Saigon near An Khe in Binh Dinh Province. The 1st Cav air assault task force consisted of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 7th Cavalry; 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry; 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry and the 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery.



October 1966: The 1st battalion 22nd Infantry regiment of the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division took part in Operation Paul Revere IV which was a search and destroy operation that took place, in the western II Corps area. The 22nd engaged the enemy a number of times providing crucial intelligence and causing significant damage to hostile forces.



October 1966: The first KIA of the 1st Logistical Command. Supporting the troops was dangerous business. The unit received five Meritorious Unit Commendations and three of its soldiers earned the Medal of Honor. The 1st Log became the largest single major command in Vietnam as its military personnel strength increased to more than 50,000.



October 1966: On Hill 484 US Marines battled the NVA. A frontal assault by the Marines on October 4 was thrown back by NVA soldiers tossing grenades from the upper slope. The Marines pulled back while air and artillery pounded the hill. The next morning, following another air strike, the 2d Platoon of the 3r Battalion's Company M gained the crest at noon. Fleeing into the jungle, the enemy left behind ten bodies and numerous blood trails that marked the evacuation of many wounded. The battle for the ridge was over. The 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, had driven NVA division 324B back into the DMZ, in the process losing twenty dead but killing one hundred enemy.



October 1966: The conclusion of Operation Hastings by the USMC. Originally, Marine General Lew Walt led a joint US Marine and ARVN force of 8500 and 3000 troops in a strike through the DMZ. Plans to maintain US occupation of the Cam Lo area in the Quang Tri province soon become known as Operation Hastings. Under the command of BG Lowell E. English, the operation continued from July to October. His responsibility was to secure landing sites so that more US Marines and ARVN soldiers could occupy the rear of the province. However the major goal of the operation was to thwart the NVA 324 B Division's efforts to take control of Quang Tri Province. The mission was strategic success in terms of driving off the 324 B, but the NVA forces successfully withdrew across the DMZ. When the ease with which the NVA was able to move across the DMZ became apparent, the US military leadership ordered a steady build-up of US Marines near the DMZ from 1966 to 1968.



October 1971: Enemy activity increased sharply as expected throughout the Republic of Vietnam just prior to the 3 Oct. 1971 presidential election. Although rockets fell on both Saigon and Vung Tau during the early morning of the Election Day, little damage resulted. U.S. Navy casualties rose slightly during October. The VNN took steps on 1 October to strengthen its Coastal Surveillance Force by a staff reorganization. This move considerably streamlined command and control of coastal surveillance. The North Vietnamese sent three trawlers to probe RVN defenses during the month. All three trawlers were tracked by MARKET TIME forces; two of the vessels were scared off without attempting an infiltration, while the third was still being tracked at the end of the month. Typhoon Hester, the worst such storm in 27 years, struck the coast of MR 1 near Chu Lai on 23 October and then veered north. The storm brought all military activity virtually to a standstill. The VNN Supply System continued its rapid improvement in October. The Vietnamese now control all spare parts for their riverine craft in their own supply system. U.S. Navy Seabee assets continued to decrease as several details of the only remaining naval construction battalion in Vietnam finished up their projects and retrograded to CONUS. The remaining Seabees in Vietnam are now engaged primarily in civic action projects.



Submitted By: Jon Mueller

Quotes

'Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake'*Napoleon Bonaparte*

'It is the object only of war that makes it honorable'*Thomas Paine*

Wannabe's

Man Charged as Medal of Honor Imposter

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, by: John Diedrick, August 23 2007

Terry J. Powell has spoken to veterans' groups and public gatherings numerous times while wearing a Medal of Honor that he said he received for heroic actions during the Vietnam War - claims that federal investigators say are bogus, according to court documents made public Tuesday.

Powell, 56, of Milwaukee, has given different stories about how he came to earn the nation's highest award for valor.

He told veterans in May that he received it for combat in Vietnam and gave a similar story to a crowd of more than 200 gathered on Memorial Day at Cory Park in the Village of Dousman, according to a federal search warrant.

In June, he told Waukesha County sheriff's detectives he was a cook on the destroyer USS O'Hara and nursed several sailors with food poisoning back to health, the warrant said. He showed the detectives a Medal of Honor certificate that he says he received from President Nixon on July 15, 1972, and was signed by Navy Secretary John Chaffee.

The warrant points out several reasons to doubt Powell's claim: the O'Hara was a transport ship decommissioned in 1961 and scrapped by 1968, years before Powell claimed to have saved the sailors. Chaffee wasn't secretary of the Navy in the summer of 1972; John Warner was. The certificate, along with others Powell had for other medals, appeared to have been altered. And Powell is not listed as a Medal of Honor recipient on any records.

Powell has been charged with unlawfully wearing the Medal of Honor, according to documents made public Tuesday. If convicted, he faces up to a \$100,000 fine and a year in prison.

Powell responded angrily to a reporter's call for comment Tuesday. "I am a Medal of Honor recipient!" Powell yelled, adding he would submit to a lie detector test. Powell said he lost the original certificate when his basement flooded and said he now has a "third party certificate," and denied forging it. He repeatedly used profanity when referring to the FBI, which investigated his case. He said he is displaying his American flag upside down in protest. He called a reporter a profanity and then hung up.

Authorities learned about Powell from veterans. Robert K. Schmitt and Gerry Gramins, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9496 in Menomonee Falls, said Powell wore the Medal of Honor to the post on May 1. Powell spoke at the VFW that day and described how he said he earned the medal during combat in Vietnam.

During the Memorial Day speech in Dousman, which was videotaped, Powell said he served three tours in Vietnam and one in Iraq. Afterward, a Waukesha detective called Powell and said he wanted to write an article for a police newsletter about him, which was a lie, the warrant said. Powell posed wearing the Medal of Honor for photographs, the warrant said.

On Aug. 7, Powell again wore the Medal of Honor to the VFW post and tried to speak to the group but wasn't allowed, the warrant said.

The issue of illegally wearing medals will be discussed at the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's annual convention, set for Green Bay beginning Sept. 3.

Kenneth Stumpf, 63, of Tomah earned the Medal of Honor for rescuing wounded soldiers under intense fire and organizing an assault on machine gun bunkers in April 1967 in Vietnam.

"We're very proud and privileged to wear the Medal of Honor and all that it stands for and for the men who came before us," he said. "To have someone (falsely) say they're a Medal of Honor recipient is just a disgrace."

See a video of Powell claiming to be a MOH winner: <http://www.620wtmj.com/podcasts/jeffwagner/9314397.html?video=pop&t=a>

Medal of Honor Winners of the War in Vietnam

The Bravest of the Brave



Cpl. Richard A. Anderson



For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as an Assistant Fire Team Leader with Company E, Third Reconnaissance Battalion, Third Marine Division, in connection with combat operations against an armed enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. While conducting a patrol during the early morning hours of 24 August 1969, Lance Corporal Anderson's reconnaissance team came under a heavy volume of automatic weapons and machine gun fire from a numerically superior and well-concealed enemy force. Although painfully wounded in both legs and knocked to the ground during the initial moments of the fierce fire fight, Lance Corporal Anderson assumed a prone position and continued to deliver intense suppressive fire in an attempt to repulse the attackers. Moments later he was wounded a second time by an enemy soldier who had approached to within eight feet of the team's position. Undaunted, he continued to pour a relentless stream of fire at the assaulting unit, even while a companion was treating his legs wounds. Observing an enemy grenade land between himself and the other Marine, Lance Corporal Anderson immediately rolled over and covered the lethal weapon with his body, absorbing the full effects of the detonation. By his indomitable courage, inspiring initiative, and selfless devotion to duty, Lance Corporal Anderson was instrumental in saving several Marines from serious injury or possible death. His actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country.

Submitted By: Jon Mueller



Man who saved life, survivor to meet

The two had been stationed in Vietnam



By: Israel Saanz Originally published 04:41 a.m., September 10, 2007, Updated 04:33 a.m., September 10, 2007



Stateside, July 28, 1968, was a typical summer day.

The Boston Red Sox defeated the Washington Senators 10-8 at the capital's D.C. Stadium. Psychedelic rockers Jefferson Airplane played San Francisco. "The Green Berets," with John Wayne, had audiences filling theaters to see a heroic vision of U.S. operations in Vietnam.

Halfway around the world, an Alice man experienced that war without the glory.

Lance Cpl. Henry "Hank" Fletcher, then a 19-year-old attached to Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, lay in a patch of grass for six hours that day with a hole in his chest. A rocket-propelled grenade had struck only several feet away, peppering him with shrapnel. His eyes were closing when a young Navy corpsman from Phoenix named Jerry Walker -- who had traversed through automatic and sniper fire to get to Fletcher -- sealed his wound using a pack of cigarettes.

Fletcher survived. Both men left the war behind and started careers and families. Fletcher still lives in Alice and now works as an Exxon Mobil operating technician. Walker, after a career in the Navy, has worked in San Bernardino, Calif., for eight years as a juvenile court judge.

He says he was just doing his job patching up other men that day; Fletcher, however, will meet the man he says saved his life at a company reunion Wednesday in San Antonio. It'll be their first meeting since their days in Vietnam.

Both men easily conjure up memories of the fight. Fletcher -- who gives an animated description -- imitates Russian-made automatic fire. Walker -- who for the most part stays unemotional in his account -- closes his eyes to picture one fatally wounded fellow soldier only feet away. One he didn't get to in time.

Continued on page 9.....

Submitted By: Jon Mueller



From the web site Home of Heroes September 2007 http://www.homeofheroes.com/a_homepage/news.html

National Database of Awards and Service Under Consideration

Last year Congress passed the "Stolen Valor Act" giving the FBI needed changes in Federal Law governing the unauthorized wear or false claims to military awards. Prosecutions have been essentially 100% successful under this new law. That bill however, was only PART ONE of a TWO-PART effort to properly recall and preserve the valor of our men and women in uniform. The Stolen Valor Act was needed to weed out the phony heroes, for unless measures were taken to insure that only those men and women authorized to claim or wear valor medals did so, the legitimate awards might themselves become suspect. The time has now come to insure that those who DID receive those awards are properly remembered.

We are now calling upon Congress to hold hearings on the matters of properly recording the history of those who serve in uniform and the medals earned by our military heroes. Four years ago NARA (the National Archives and Records Administration) did a study that found it would cost \$12 million to digitize all DD-214s from 1947 to present, and to upgrade their facilities to 21st Century technology. That study further found that in so doing, it would save \$4 million PER YEAR--essentially paying for the process in three years. In a further study prepared by your webmaster, we determined that for an additional \$6 million the citations for **ALL military awards (down to CIBs and CARs) could be digitized.**

We are now calling for Congress to look seriously into this needed centralized, readily assessable and comprehensive database of service. The very least our nation owes those who serve in uniform is to properly record for posterity, the history of their service and their deeds. This call is well-heralded in the September 11 edition of "Marine Corps Times" including the cover story, two inside stories, and an editorial. Included in that edition are endorsements for this effort by both the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. The Military Order of the Purple Heart has also endorsed the measure.

Furthermore, several members of Congress have also weighed in positively. Rep. John Salazar, D-Colo., who sits on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, feels "it makes perfect sense for him to carry legislation as a follow up to Stolen Valor," which he introduced in the House two years ago, said his spokesman Rick Palacio. "It's a great idea. There should be an accessible digital database of military records including medals and awards. That database is going to be a tool law enforcement officers can use in order to enforce Stolen Valor and protect legitimate heroes," he said. Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo., credited with giving the Stolen Valor Act the last minute momentum it needed to make it to the floor before Congress adjourned last year by signing onto the bill after a former Marine in his district was caught wearing an unearned Navy Cross, may again co-sponsor the legislation if Salazar introduces it in the House. "Sam is very interested in this idea," said his communications director Jason Klindt. "There should never be any doubt that medals were won and not stolen, so he is committed to protecting the integrity of these awards."

In a September 11 story in the Denver Post, Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave (R/CO) said, "Soldiers risk life and limb for our nation, and we recognize their service in a solemn way and award them medals. The honor becomes diminished when others are able to defraud the government and military by obtaining medals they did not actually earn. I support creating a system of accountability that preserves the integrity of our military medals and recognizes the bravery of our soldiers, sailors and airmen."

The Stolen Valor Act was successfully passed because thousands of veterans and family members got behind it and as one large American TEAM, we applied pressure on the last Congress to act. Once again we need to pull that team together to call for accurate and appropriate recording of the names and deeds of those who have served, and those who continue to serve. If you would like a copy of the "working paper" on this, e-mail me: doug@homeofheroes.com, and I will happily send it. In the meantime, call your Senators and Representatives and urge them to look into the need for this important database.

(NOTE: The information that we are requesting be included in this database will NOT violate any privacy laws--we ask only that the database include that information which is already available to the public through an FOIA (Freedom of Information Act Request).

The Silver Star Data Base is now on-line at: <http://www.homeofheroes.com/valor2/siverstar.html>



Calendar of Events

| Date | Event | Time |
|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <u>October 2007</u> | | |
| 11th Thursday | Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House | 6:30 PM |
| 20th Saturday | Chapter Picnic, Veterans Memorial Park, Tampa Fl. | 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM |
| 25th Thursday | Chapter Meeting, Veterans Memorial Park & Museum, Tampa Fl, New Location | 7:00 PM |
| <u>November 2007</u> | | |
| 8th Thursday | Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's House | 6:30 PM |
| 22nd Thursday | No Chapter Meeting. Thanksgiving Celebrated. Enjoy Time with your Family | |

Chapter Picnic will Celebrate our 10th Anniversary

President **Jim (Rambo) LaGarde** asked that chapter 787 hold a picnic for all members and their families so set your calendars for Saturday **October 20th from 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 PM**, Veterans Memorial Park & Museum, Tampa Fl. The same location as where we now hold our chapter meetings. President LaGarde says the chapter will provide a catered barbeque for all so be sure everyone brings their children and grandchildren out to the event.



Submitted By Jon Mueller



Florida All Airborne Days

LaQuinta Inn, Clearwater Fl.

Thursday, Oct 25th to Sunday Oct 28th



The Army's 82nd Airborne Division will sponsor and welcome all past and present, US Military and foreign qualified paratroopers to this annual event. There will be a number of activities that are geared to those select few who get to work by jumping from a perfectly good airplane or helicopter. During the Saturday Dinner, a CZ 83 .380 automatic pistol will be raffled off. Many attendees are Vietnam Vets.

For details or to get a registration form, contact Jack Nolan by e-mail at: JNOLAN7@TAMPABAY.RR.COM, or by phone at: 727-797-7706. You can contact the hotel by phone at: 727-799-1565 or 1-800-327-7767.



Financial Status of Chapter 787 as of September 13 2007

Checking Account.....\$10,933.37 (Moving Wall Fund..\$4,692.80, Available Funds \$3,856.91,

Holiday Meals Fund...\$2,380.66*) Household Goods.....\$1,007.32 Convention Fund.....\$1,693.06

All Accounts Total: \$13,630.75

Thanks to our Treasurer Bob Silmsen

***It is estimated that we will need \$3,540 to cover this years Veteran Holiday Meal Program.**

From Vietnam Veterans of America National President John Rowan

Washington, D.C.) - Vietnam Veterans of America President John Rowan today called on the Department of Veterans Affairs to move immediately on issues raised by a just-released report by the Institute of Medicine. The report found evidence that exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides is associated with an increased chance of developing high blood pressure and AL amyloidosis, a rare blood disorder, among Vietnam veterans.

"VA Secretary Nicholson needs to take immediate action on this," Rowan said. "We strongly urge him to add these two diseases to the long list of serious health problems associated with exposure to Agent Orange, thereby allowing veterans with those diseases to receive proper treatment and compensation."

Rowan also called upon the VA to begin an immediate outreach program to veterans and the medical profession, advising them about the new Institute of Medicine findings. "This report underscores another failing of the VA," Rowan said, "not paying proper attention to the elevated risks of a wide variety of medical conditions that veterans of Vietnam and all subsequent overseas conflicts face as a result of their service to the nation."

Rowan pointed out that the VA also has failed to complete the congressionally mandated National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal (Readjustment) Study. "Congress called for this study in 2000," Rowan said, "and we are still waiting for the finished result. We need to get this done so that we can have definitive evidence about the psychosocial, psychiatric, physical, and general well-being of Vietnam veterans."

Continued from page 6.....

Deadly move

At the end of July 28, 1968, 21 of the 115-man Kilo Company were dead, with about 60 wounded. It began with a routine operation to interrogate villagers in the Quang Nam province.

"At the same time we were interrogating villagers, they sent one platoon out to check the rest of the area," said Fletcher, 58.

Fletcher's group was left to watch the 30 villagers when word of hostile fire came -- and with it an order to charge a nearby tree line filled with North Vietnamese troops.

"They told us to get in line and charge, which is very bad," Fletcher said. "You open yourself up like that -- it's a desperation move."

The Americans, cradled by the L-shaped tree line they fired at, immediately were pinned down by automatic fire and RPGs from the foliage. Fletcher's charge toward the tree line was cut short when a rocket exploded a few feet away from him. It was 1 p.m.

"Shrapnel went through my flak jacket," Fletcher said. "I felt the heat from blood running down my chest. That's when I went down."

"I thought I was going to die. I thought about my mother."

Clinging to life

Fletcher had a collapsed left lung. Walker, then 20, went to work, avoiding fire to place battle dressings on wounded men. Corpsmen typically went into the field with about 60 dressings. Walker used all of his, and some others he had to scrounge around for.

"The first several marines I got to -- they were all killed," Walker, 59, said by phone from California. "There was one, he was in this indentation in the ground. Every time I tried to pull him up, they would try to shoot me. That's when I saw Hank."

Walker remembers treating Fletcher because he used his last pack of cigarettes to seal his wound. Fletcher now has his own theory on the bright light some say they see in near-death experiences.

"It's your eyes closing -- and the light is getting smaller," he said. "It would've been just darkness. Then Jerry Walker got to me. He got a clear paper off a cigarette pack, put it on the wound, tied it up with a battle dressing and laid me on my left side so blood would not go to my other lung."

Walker moved on. He spotted one marine, lying wounded only feet away with a heavily bleeding leg wound. A bullet had sliced through his femoral artery.

"He was bleeding, and I'm stuck behind this build up in the dirt, and every time I tried to get out there, somebody puts rounds right in front of me," Walker recalls. "Finally I just said profanity, profanity, profanity and just went. By the time I had got to him, he had bled to death."

He moved on. His fellow corpsman Wayne Caron, 21, was shot in the arm as he moved between wounded men. As he got to another man, he was shot in the leg. He tried to crawl to the aid of another marine when a rocket round killed him. **Continued on next page...**



The death of Caron -- who was awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor -- left the corpsman crew even more short-staffed. Walker and three other corpsmen were left to aid what would end up being around 80 casualties.

True to his calling

"It got kind of frustrating. When I was behind a bump and I'm trying to get someplace, someone keeps trying to blow my head off," Walker said. "I don't think I ever really thought about what I was doing at the time. It was just an obligation you had."

Fletcher stayed conscious the whole time, with enemy fire passing by him and a piece of metal moving around in his chest.

"They were shooting automatic bursts, trying to finish me off," he said. "You could hear them go 'zip!'"

Walker lost track of how many men he treated that day, much less how many of those men lived. It would be hours before two other companies and air support arrived in aid of Kilo Company.

Fletcher, picked up at 7 p.m., arrived at a hospital near Da Nang about 1:30 a.m.

"Arms gone, legs gone, faces messed up -- you name it," he said, describing the cafeteria-size emergency room. "All the tables were full, from one end to the other."

Hospital officials kept Fletcher in an intensive care unit for six days before he went back into battle. He was wounded two more times before leaving Vietnam that Christmas Eve.

After the battle

In a photo taken the day after the battle at Walker's camp he stands holding a cigarette, wearing the same clothes as the day before, and not smiling for the camera. He would finish out his tour and leave the country in May 1969. After graduating from officer candidate school he went back in January 1973. He stayed there until a month before the United States evacuated Vietnam in 1975.

Fletcher says the battle took his youth and gave him perspective.

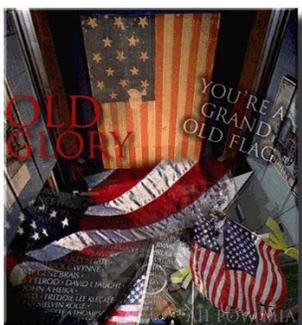
"If I'm having a bad day at work, if everything's falling apart, I think of my worst day besides the day my mother died," he said. "The pressure of a job, compared to that day, is nothing."

The Kilo Company holds annual reunions around the country. It will be the first Walker and Fletcher attend. Walker, whose wife is a teacher, learned about it from her as she tried to organize a project in which her students wrote to troops in Iraq.

He steadfastly deflects a sense of pride about what he did that day, although he says he's glad Fletcher's still around. Fletcher is not short in gratitude -- or nerves -- about meeting the corpsman: "How do you thank the person who saved your life?"



Submitted By: Al Doyle, Kevin Ruhl & Herald (Kit) Carson



Salute The Flag, in or out of Uniform

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) today praised the passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S.1877) clarifying U.S. law to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag. Current law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states that veterans and servicemen not in uniform should place their hand over their heart without clarifying whether they can or should salute the flag.



"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Senator Inhofe said. "Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform. "Unfortunately, current U.S. law leaves confusion as to whether veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag. My legislation will clarify this regulation, allowing veterans and servicemen alike to salute the flag, whether they are in uniform or not. "I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly at baseball games, parades, and formal events. I believe this is an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the United States who have served in the military and remain as role models to others citizens. Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others." This Bill was passed July 25, 2007. Let your veteran friends know about the Passage of this Bill.

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, 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.

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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.

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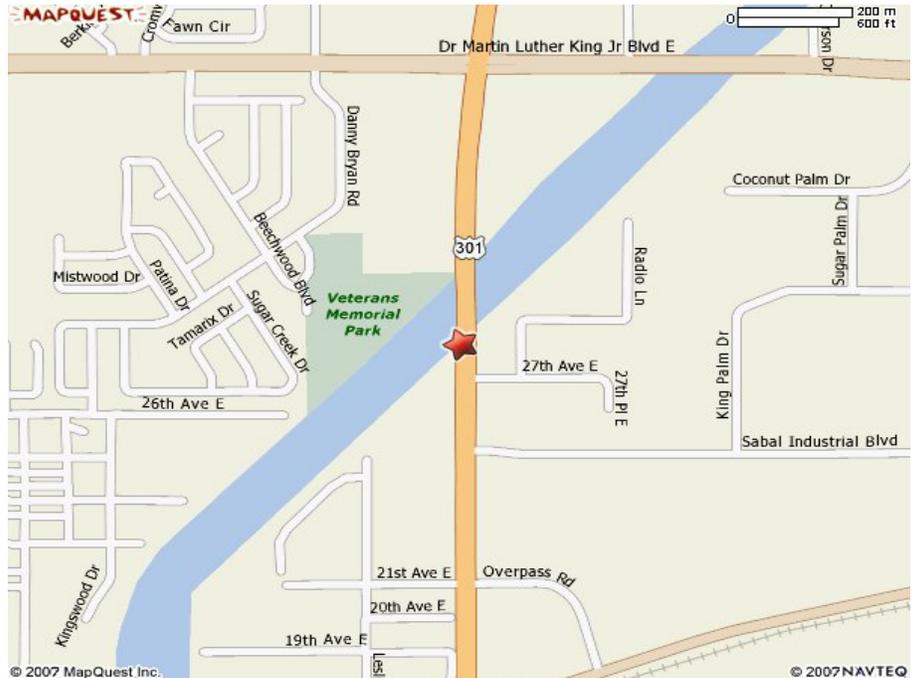
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Important Web Sites

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| Vietnam Veterans of American, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida..... | http://www.vva787.com |
| 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 |
| Florida State Council web site..... | www.vvafsc.org |