

Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 400 (East Bay)

LZ FRIENDLY

WELCOME HOME!



After many years, Chapter 400 has a new vitality!

We're back! Not that we actually went anywhere, but now we're a whole lot more visible.

Several months ago, a Veteran of the Vietnam war (Navy Officer) passed away, and left us a significant (for us!) sum of money.

None of us can remember meeting this gentleman, and he wasn't a member of Vietnam Veterans of America.

Perhaps he was in the audience of one of the numerous events we've staged, or saw our Color Guard at an A's, Giants, or Forty-Niners game.

So, what to do with this newly acquired largess?

We, the officers and board members of Chapter 400, put our heads together and decided that the best use of the funds would be to disburse it for the betterment of the Veterans Community.

These are the recipients who have benefited by our donations: -

- Alameda Naval Air Museum
- Blue Star Moms

- Encinal High School JROTC
- KIPP Academy (Music Program)
- St. Mary's Center
- NCVCSB (Project Hope) Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- Veterans Home, Yountville (Christmas)
- The Pathway Home, Yountville (PTSD)
- College of Alameda Veterans' Emergency Book Fund

This last item is a fund that we established to assist those veterans who have not seen their initial GI benefits yet. This fund will allow them to buy the necessary books to start their classes.

While not required, these students are encouraged to "replenish" the fund when possible, so that their following fellow veterans can partake.

So, as you can see, we've been busy!

We've proposed and voted on a budget for a ten-year period, also taking into consideration incidentals, such as mailings, phone, CSC (California State Council) meetings, state and national conventions.

Chapter 400 goings-on..... (Continued from Page 1)

However, the larger portion of our expenditures is to benefit our fellow veterans, as that is what our benefactor would have wanted.

The chapter's membership has grown, slightly, and we're

Hoping to bring back our members who have stopped coming to our meetings.

OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Several weeks ago, you received ballots for our officers and board members.

We got back a goodly number of responses, but not as many as we had hoped.

Here are the results:

President Arnold Dos Santo

Vice President George Bruno

Secretary Bill Hodges

Treasurer Andy Huntoon

Board of Directors

David Pastor

Roberto Rocha

Bronson Parry

An added note: For many years, we "unofficially" combined the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, due to lack of active members.

Now that we have more people participating, and with the enlarged treasury, we have gone back to our original format of four officers and whomever we can entice to serve on the board.

LZ FRIENDLY is the publication of VVA Chapter 400 (East Bay), and is published whenever we can get enough worthwhile information together.

Publisher Arnold Dos Santos

Editor (for now) Bill Hodges

FRIENDLY FIRE

By Arnold Dos Santos

With the return of LZ Friendly, I'd like to note that my old column ***Friendly Fire*** would also return from time to time. Typically a not always politically correct but hopefully thought provoking column, you can rely on at least my honest take on things as they mostly relate to the Vietnam Veterans community or the Chapter.

I want to take a moment with this First Issue (of the revived LZ) to give you my take on VVA 400. I see Chapter 400 as a vehicle through which I can (and have) make things happen for the benefit of our fellow Veterans. Chapter 400 is not an idea factory, but a rag tag group of Vietnam Veterans who turn ideas into reality on a national and local level.

As I wrote back in 1999 " Personally I'm not married to Vietnam Veterans of America or any other Veterans organization. I look at VVA as a way to further my pet cause.

VVA helps legitimize my efforts to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. While my efforts revolve around all Veterans of all Wars, it is the image and memory of those I knew who never came back that drives me." What I said then still holds.

Now that we are all reaching the point of retirement where we should have a little more time on our hands how about some of you stepping up to make VVA 400 an even better organization. We all know many who are receiving Veterans benefits in some form who are not members.

We need to bring them into the fold and remind them that their benefits are in large part a result of lobbying on their behalf by VVA National.

The least they can do is show minimal support by becoming a member of Chapter 400. Many of you out there can bring unique skills and perspectives to the table in an effort to enhance the true image of the Vietnam Vet.

We are not the losers and dysfunctional people the media and some Vets like to portray us as.

We are above average citizens as a group who are well adjusted and contributors to society. We should be the one's writing our epitaph, not the anti-war crowd bent on dishonoring us by continuing to portray us as homeless and PTSD stressed out losers unable to fend for ourselves.

Just some friendly fire to get the juices flowing. Don't be shy, feel free to reply and please keep it civil and not personal.

Semper Fi

**PLEASE NOTE: WE MEET ON THE
THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH,
AT THE ALAMEDA VETERANS
MEMORIAL BUILDING, AT 2203
CENTRAL AV., ALAMEDA, CA 94501**

Presidential Notes

By Arnold Dos Santos

I honestly cannot remember when the last issue of LZ Friendly came out. I do know it has been a lot of water under the bridge and a whole lot of new aches and pains since then. Since our last LZ, it has been a rag tag core group of 6-7 Vets keeping Chapter 400 alive and together. We maintained our presence in the annual 4th of July Parade and Memorial Day Ceremonies in Alameda. We also made numerous donations of Flags and money to various charities. Although most of our Annual Budgets were well below \$1,000, we kept alive hoping that as we start to reach retirement age, new members would join and give us old salts a break. On that count we are still waiting.

On a more positive note thanks to a deceased donor's estate, we now have an annual budget of approximately \$15,000 that is projected to continue thru the next 10 years. The Chapter is looking forward to enjoying its newfound position of being able to do some of the things we have been dreaming about. LZ Friendly is one of those things. We always felt it important to communicate with the membership but just did not have the funds for printing and mailing. In addition there just was not much to report. That is changing and I hope you can become an active part.

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month at the Alameda Veterans Memorial Building, at 6:30pm (1830).

The address for the building is **2203 Central Ave., Alameda, CA, 94501**

We are not sure as to how often LZ Friendly will be coming out. We are shooting for 2 or 3 issues per year. If one of you out there wants to take on this aspect of Chapter 400, we would love to hear from you.

Semper Fi

Karl Schroth

Throughout the history of Chapter 400 there have been a few who have stepped up to give of their time above and beyond. Karl Schroth was one of those. Karl passed away on September 2, 2009 after losing his battle against Cancer. He was 60 years old. I had the privilege along with Andy Huntoon and George Clemmens of having known Karl on a continuous basis since high school. We were all in classes and sports together. We all volunteered for the Military (and the Vietnam experience) within a year of each other. The Marines got Andy and me in 1966 and the US Army Karl and George in 1967/68. George and Karl went to sign up together, but Karl was rejected because of weight issues and Last Surviving Son considerations. With Andy and me in Vietnam and George on his way, it would have been easy for most to sit it out with some legitimate "excuses". Not KarlOh HELL NO..... Not without me you don't. He hunkered down and lost the weight (never gained it back by the way) got his blood pressure under control and passed his physical saying to hell with that Last Surviving Son bullshit. Before getting to Vietnam Karl was a fast track NCO who had Staff Sergeant rank by the time his Vietnam tour started. Upon returning and getting out of the service there was very little talk about our Vietnam experience.....We started to come out of our shell when John Lingar somehow talked us into coming to a VVA 400 general meeting (back then there would be 20 or more at a meeting) and meet other vets. After the dedication of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial, we started displaying our long repressed pride in being Vietnam Veterans. It has been a long road since those days and the memories are many. I could go on and on, But as Karl would often say "YADA, YADA, YADA, enough already Arnold. Karl is buried in Tahoma National Cemetery in Washington State. Chapter members Cathleen Cordova, Andy Huntoon and myself, attended his services. Karl, you will be missed till my last days. Semper fi Brother, Arnold.

TAILINGS OF AGENT ORANGE

By Bill Hodges,

VVA CSC Agent Orange Committee Chairman

I volunteered (!) for this position, largely because it was unfilled. I thought, what the hell, we've practically got this problem solved. The chemical companies and the Veterans Administration settled on a large sum of money that would take care of all that ails our Vietnam veterans.

Case closed.

Well, guess what?! It looks like we're just starting. Those originally covered, only had to prove that they had served in areas that were sprayed.

Then, our fine feathered friends in Washington, D.C., allowed as how AO also contaminated the water in the streams, rivers and lakes, from where we got some of our drinking, bathing and cooking water.

So, after going back to court, those covered for exposure to AO also included anyone who stepped foot in-country.

Of course, AO was also sprayed in Laos and Cambodia. Only problem there was that a number vets who served there, didn't have that listed in their DD-214, as they weren't "officially" there!

And that's still only the beginning! Seems as though AO (or related dioxins) were used in the good ol' US of A, on our bases, thereby expanding the vets exposed.

Our pals in the Australian government commissioned a study as to possible AO exposure by the "Blue Water" Navy. AO runs down the creeks, streams and rivers into the bays and ocean.

The evaporators on capital ships pull water in and remove the minerals, so that the water can be used in the ship's boilers. The problem here is this process condenses the dioxin, thereby increasing its potency.

Sailors were using this water for bathing, brushing their teeth, drinking and cooking.

EXCEPT! Our lovable US gubmint refuses to recognize what the Aussies claimed! The explanation was that the ship builders were different.

However, they used the same (made in U.S.A.) evaporators!

I encourage you to write your local Congress-critters and Senators to keep our fight going. There are those who represent us, who want to end all funding. Democrats and Republicans alike.

Another aspect of AO, is the legacy of "giving" that it has as it is passed on from GI to children and grandchildren.

VVA National has published a great pamphlet on Agent Orange, and they will be available at the Veterans Building in Alameda.

Be sure to check out the VVA National website (www.vva.org) and click on "Faces of Agent Orange".

It's absolutely heart-breaking, and the stories are real. I've heard firsthand the stories directly from the veterans, their spouses and children.

I will be publishing more about this insidious chemical, but before I go, know also that some of our genetically modified crops contain traces of dioxins, designed to fend off weeds.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

CHAPTER 400 (EAST BAY)

ALAMEDA VETERAN MEMORIAL BUILDING

2203 CENTRAL AV., ALAMEDA, CA 94501



Ensign Patrick Lynch, USN



Patrick Lynch, Our Benefactor