



McHENRY COUNTY CHAPTER



"The Chapter with a Heart"

August 2009

McHenry County Chapter of ViêtNow
"THE CHAPTER WITH A HEART"

MEETING: General Meetings are open to the public and are held on **the fourth (4) Tuesday of each month** at 7:30 P. M. at the McHenry VFW – 3002 W. Route 120, McHenry.

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VETERANS HELPING VETERANS: All Chapter Board Members and Membership

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		John Bates (Dawn)

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EDITORIAL POLICY: The Newsletter Staff will evaluate all articles submitted as to appropriateness and Relevancy. Newsletter items must be submitted to the editorial staff by the Chapter meeting each Month.

President's Foot Notes: Wednesday August 19th, Rosie had a mini-stroke. She has an artery in her neck that is 70% blocked. She is doing as well as can be expected. In true Rosie form, let's get this taken care of as soon as possible and wants to get back to work and school. You know how Rosie is. Lorri Woodall's mom is having some medical issues on top of the medical problems that Lorri already has. Please keep each of them in your prayers.

Joe

25 Year Chicago Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Parade Anniversary
by Robert Kolling (DuPage County Chapter Member)

It sure doesn't seem like it has been 25 years since I worked on the Parade Committee. The DuPage County Chapter was newly formed back then and we had maybe 50 members. We were meeting at the College of DuPage and then in Glen Ellyn at the time.

Some of the original committee members have been meeting to put together a 25-year reunion. Not another parade – that could never be duplicated. Besides, 60-65 year old vets don't march too much anymore. What *is* in the works is a dinner, a concert, and various art displays throughout the city, as well as mini-reunions.

One of the reasons for this event is to commemorate this historic, emotional, and unique parade and continue to portray the Vietnam Veteran in a positive light. Another reason is to draw attention to the service and sacrifices of all veterans including the young men and women who are serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and all over the world in the hope that no other veterans will ever be treated with the level of disrespect that was endured by the veterans of Vietnam.

Tentative plans have the event scheduled for Friday June 10th thru Sunday June 13th, 2011. It looks like the dinner will be held on Friday, the concert on Saturday, and art exhibits on Sunday. We are planning to highlight the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum, as well.

I have taken on the role as chairman of entertainment. We have a couple of big names lined up for the entertainment, but I cannot publish this just yet.

The parade in 1986 drew over 200,000 marchers from all over the United States, plus Vietnam, Korea, and Australia. Police estimates of the number of spectators who lined the streets exceeded 300,000 making this the largest event of its kind in the history of the United States. The Tribune calls it one of the 100 events that shaped the city.

Our chapter's membership soared to over 450 members the year following the parade. Other veteran organizations memberships grew as well. It was a huge healing process that was felt across the country. Again, it cannot be duplicated, but it can be remembered and celebrated.

I will keep you up to date with more information as it becomes available via this newsletter. A website is being developed at this time that will be kept current with all news. If anyone has any pictures they would like to share with the committee, feel free to e-mail them to me at rkolling@comcast.net.

Meeting Minutes 8/15/2009 25 yr Reunion Planning

Meeting Minutes for 8/15/2009 at 10:00 a.m.
Oak Park Vet's Center, Oak Park, IL.

This was the heading of an email that I received from Roger McGill who is the secretary of the 25th Anniversary Reunion of the Chicago "Welcome Home" Parade. If you are interested, here is the web site to follow the progress of their plans.

Craig Flanders - gave an update on the WEB site: <http://www.serviceandhonor.org> , which everyone can go in and look at right now. He explained how he has put some pictures on the site already. We had much discussion as what we should be putting up on the site, and Craig said he will do anything that we need, and had many good ideas and suggestions.
Submitted By: Roger A. McGill

On the Vietnam Wall, Panel 19 West, Line 43-64 are the names of 109 Americans who lost their lives during the four days of the Woodstock Music Festival, August 15-18, 1969. From James D. Anderson to Gary E. Young. **Richard Kolb** writes the following tribute to those 109 Americans in the August issue of the VFW Magazine;

While Woodstock Rocked, GIs Died

With the 40th anniversary of the '60s cherished rock concert, the so-called "Sixties Generation" remembers fondly those four days in August 1969. Instead, VFW magazine commemorates the 109 Americans killed in Vietnam then.
by Richard K. Kolb

Newsweek described them as "a youthful, longhaired Army almost as large as the US force in Vietnam". one of the promoters saw what happened near Bethel, NY as an opportunity to "showcase" the drug culture as a "beautiful phenomenon".

The newsmagazine wrote of "wounded hippies" sent to impromptu hospital tents. Some of the 400,000 of the nation's "affluent white young" attended the "electric pot dream". One sympathetic chronicler recently described them as "a veritable army of hippies and freaks."

Time gushed with admiration for the tribal gathering, declaring; "It may well rank as one of the significant political and sociological event of the age." It deplored the three deaths there - "one from an overdose of drugs [heroin], and hundreds of youths freaked out on bad trips caused by low-grade LSD." yet attendees exhibited a "mystical feeling for themselves as a special group," according to the magazine's glowing essay.



The same tribute mentioned the "meaningless war in the jungles of Southeast Asia" and quoted a commentator who said the young need "more opportunities for authentic service".

Meanwhile, 8,429 miles around the other side of the world, 514,000 mostly young Americans were authentically serving the country that had raised them to place society over self. the casualties they sustained over those four days were genuine, yet none of the elite media outlets were praising their selflessness.
So forty years later, let's finally look at those 109 Americans who sacrificed their lives in Vietnam Aug. 15, 16, 17, and 18, 1969.

An American Profile

They mirrored the population of the time. A full 92% were white (seven of whom had Spanish surnames) and 8% Black. Some 67% were Protestants and 28% Catholic. A disproportionate number - more than one third - were from the South. Over two thirds were single; nearly one third were married. Not surprisingly, the vast majority (92%) were under the age of 30, with 78% between the ages of 18 and 22.

Overwhelmingly, (87%), they were in the Army. Marines and Airmen accounted for 8% and 4% of the deaths respectively with sailors sustaining 1%. Again, not unexpectedly, two-thirds were infantrymen. that same proportion was lower-ranking enlisted men. Enemy action claimed 84% of their lives; non-hostile causes, 16%. The preponderance (56%) had volunteered while 43% had been drafted. One was in the National Guard.

Of the four days, August 18 - the last day of "peace and love" in the Catskills when the 50,000 diehards departed after the final act - was the worst for the men in Vietnam. Thirty-five of them died on that one miserable day. Many perished in the Battle of Hiep Duc fighting with the hard luck Americal Division in the Que Son Mountains. In fact, 37% of all the GIs who lost their lives in this period came from this one unit.

So when you hear talk of the glories of Woodstock - the so-called "defining event of a generation" - keep in mind those 109 GIs who served nobly yet are never lauded by the illustrious spokesmen for the "Sixties Generation".

NOW THEY'RE FEELING GUILTY - The "I-missed-Vietnam" Guilt

"The day I turned 19, I went down for my physical and had my first and only experience of Army life. I took with me a letter from Dr. Murphy, my childhood doctor, describing in uncompromising detail the asthma that had been a major part of my life up to 16."

Thus begins an article by Christopher Buckley in the September issue of Esquire magazine - an article that should spur millions of members of a generation of American men to question a part of their lives that they had thought they put behind them long ago. Buckley - the son of conservative columnist William F. Buckley Jr. - describes in the article how he had received a medical deferment from the Army, and thus how he had escaped going to Vietnam.

The article is titled "Viet Guilt, " and it addresses itself to those millions of young American men who did not go to Vietnam - and who are beginning to realize, all these years later, that by not going they may have proved something about their own lack of courage - their own, lack of manhood, if you will - that ought to make them very uncomfortable. Enough words have been devoted to the moral issues of the war. The point that Chris Buckley makes is that, if the truth were really to be told, most of the men who managed to stay home from Vietnam did not do so for reasons of morality alone. Their real reason for not going was that they did not want to die, did not want to get shot at. And they found out that there were many ways to avoid Vietnam. Young men of my generation got out of Vietnam because of college deferments, because of medical deferments, because of having a "lucky" number in the Selective Service birthday lottery that was initiated toward the end of the war. Three million men of fighting age went to Indochina during the Vietnam War; 16 million men of fighting age did not.

Buckley was one of the men who did not - and I was, too. Reading his article made me realize the truth of the emotions I have been feeling lately about that particular subject. I sense a strong feeling - "shame" is not too strong a word - among many men who did not go to Vietnam, and perhaps now is the time to bring that feeling out into the open.

Those of us who did not go may have pretended that we held some moral superiority over those who did, but we must have known - even back then - that that was largely sham. A tiny, tiny minority served jail terms - the rest of us avoided the war through easier methods. The men who went to Vietnam were no more involved with the politics of the war than we were. They were different from us in only two important ways: They hadn't figured out a successful way to get out of going, and they had a certain courage that we lacked. Not "courage" as defined the way we liked to define it; not "courage" in the sense of opposing the government's policies in Vietnam. But courage in an awful, day-to-day sense; courage in being willing to be over there while most of their generation stayed home. When I meet men my age who are Vietnam veterans, I find myself reacting the same way that Chris Buckley indicates he does.

I find myself automatically feeling a little lacking. "I have friends who served in Vietnam..." Buckley writes. "They all saw death up close every day, and many days dealt with it themselves." They're married, happy, secure, good at what they do; they don't have nightmares and they don't shoot up gas stations with M-16s. Each has a gentleness I find rare in most others, and beneath it a spiritual sinew that I ascribe to their experience in the war. I don't think I'll ever have what they have, the aura of I have been weighed on the scales and have not been found wanting, and my sense at this point is that I will always feel the lack of it..." "I will always feel the lack of it."

I think many of us are just beginning to realize that. I know when I meet those men of my generation who did serve in Vietnam, I automatically feel less worthy than they are; yes, less of a man, if you want to use that phrase. Those of us who did not have to go to Vietnam may have felt, at the time, that we were getting away with something; may have felt, at the time, that we were the recipients of a particular piece of luck that had value beyond price. But now, I think, we realize that by not having had to go we lost forever the chance to learn certain things about ourselves that only men who have been in war together will ever truly know.

Our fathers learned those things in World War II; our sons, God forbid, may learn them in some future conflict. But we - those of us who did not go - managed to avoid something that would have helped form us into different people than we are now. Buckley writes "by not putting on uniforms, we forfeited what might have been the ultimate opportunity, in increasingly self-obsessed times, of making the ultimate commitment to something greater than ourselves. The survival of comrades." But I think it may go even beyond that; I think it may go to the very definition of our manhood. I know that when I meet a man who, it turns out, has served in Vietnam, part of me wonders whether he is able to read my mind.

I don't know how widespread this feeling is among men of my generation who didn't go; but I can testify that, at least for some of us, it's there, all right.

By Bob Greene
WELCOME HOME VETERANS!



Postage

McHenry County Chapter
P.O. Box 998 McHenry, IL 60051

Next Meeting

Tuesday, August 25, 2009
7:30 @ Woodstock AMVETS Post
12320 Davis Road, Woodstock, IL

McHenry County Chapter ViệtNow Membership Application

NAME _____ PHONE (____) _____ - _____

DATE _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

SEVICE BRANCH _____ DATES OF DUTY (1957-CURRENT) _____

_____ I am an honorably discharged veteran and want to be a FULL MEMBER OF ViệtNow

_____ I am not a veteran but want to be an ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF ViệtNow

Enclosed is my check for _____

Membership Dues and Fees are \$15 annually renewable June 30th
Veterans must enclose a copy of their DD214 form, which will be returned.

Send with check payable to: **McHenry County Chapter of ViệtNow**
Our Address is: **PO Box 998, McHenry, IL 60051**

For a sum of ten (10) times the yearly dues, you can become a **LIFE MEMBER**