

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS



McHENRY COUNTY CHAPTER



"The Chapter with a Heart"

May 2009

McHenry County Chapter of VietNow
"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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**** BOARD OF DIRECTORS ****

PRESIDENT:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Bobby Jones	847-409-1947
SECRETARY:	Tony Bilus	815-648-2826
TREASURER:	Steve Rucki	847-458-9850
DIRECTORS:	Rick Cross	815-403-3613
	Joe Ferrenti	815-653-4114
	Mike Wisniewski	815-344-5873
	Bill Richards	815-344-9591
	Harry van Beetz	847/516-9722

ADVISORS: All Past Chapter Presidents

****COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS ****

BYLAWS:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
CHAPTER PROGRAM		
GRANTS:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
CONVENTION:	Joe Lewis	815-568-8939
"JIM TOBER BASKETS":	Rose Lewis	815-568-8939
MEMBERSHIP:	Joe Ferrenti	815-653-4114
NEWSLETTER:	Rose Lewis, Editor	815-568-8939
NOMINATION/ELECTION:	Joe Kersten	815 338-1796
POW/MIA:	Steve Rucki	847-458-9850
PTSD:	Alan Belcher	815-344-0411
CHAPTER VETERAN		
SERVICE OFFICER	Ted Biever	815-338-9292
"RAP" GROUP INFO:	Alan Belcher	815-334-0411
VAC: Delegate:	Joe Kersten	815-338-1796

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS

All Chapter Board Members and Membership

****NATIONAL OFFICERS ****

PRESIDENT:	Rich Sanders (Mary)	DIRECTORS:
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Jim Stepanek (Marcia)	John Davis (Sandy)
SECRETARY:	Darrell Gilgan (Linda)	Gary Eisenhower (Sue)
TREASURER:	Terry Buscher (Linda)	Augie (Katie)
		John Bates (Dawn)

National Office Telephone: 815-227-5100 and E-mail: nationalhq@vietnow.com

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 Ramblings for May 2009
Your Chapter President, Joe Lewis

Hello and welcome to this issue of my President's Ramblings. The month of May has been an interesting one for both Rose and I and the chapter. Rose has taken more responsibilities at her job. She is busy exploring options for her future. This has been the best part and will take a little longer than this issue to keep you informed.

2009 ViêtNow National Convention Due to some unforeseen detours this year, our chapter was not seated on the convention floor. The bottom line is that we missed the deadline to get our registrations in on time. This resulted in the McHenry County Chapter to have no delegate on the floor. We missed the Saturday morning closed session for delegates only.

We also missed any voting that took place this year. I am not even sure what voting there might have been because I was involved with the national elections. It will be different for the 2010 National Convention. We WILL have delegates registered as soon as possible. Maybe by June of this year, 2009. We already have two delegates who have stepped forward.

Clearing My Thoughts Recently it has come to my attention that someone made the statement that I am just an old hippie. To the source of this statement, thanks. I am an old hippie. Back in the late 60's and early 70's the hippies wanted change in our society. They were willing to do whatever it took to try to get this change. After I returned from Vietnam, I was in agreement with what they stood for. No, not the drugs, or the violence. I wanted change in the USA. Everyday I saw how civilians and society, and even older veterans, how they treated the returning veterans.

In our small town of Marengo, we long haired veterans worked to better our community through involvement in the city. No, we did not fight city hall or anything like that. We did go to the park board to get permission to build things for the park that we could use for our pleasure. The thing that each of us learned was, in order to get change you have to learn the rules of the game. Then use the rules to make the changes to better yourself and the community in which we live in.

This mindset is what I have been using for the last several years now. We need laws put in place to return to us what we were promised when we first entered the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Change by violent means leaves a bitter taste when it is all over. Change by following the rules that are in place leaves a sweet after taste that you can savor for a long time.

This taste for rightful change is what drives me to do the help that I can give to people. By no long dream do I think that I know all the answers. Not by a far shot! However, I do know where to go and who to contact that can help us get things done locally. If I don't know where to go, friends can help me find what we need.

Where did this all come from? All I can say is that changes need to be made in how veterans respect each other. Veterans should learn to work together to get things done and not against one another. You know the saying; there are two sides to the coin! Well, there are times when there might be more than just these two sides of the coin.

To be more specific on this, some veterans believe that things are running great in county office. Take off the blinders and open your ears. There are those who need to listen to more than blind faith. They need to listen to the music of our veterans and not just the wine and roses.

National Newsletter Reimbursement While Rose and I were counting the ballots for this year national election, the national officers passed out the various membership awards, chapter charters, and newsletter reimbursements. Some of the delegates told me that our chapter was awarded the \$400.00 for the newsletter reimbursement. I tried to find out but everyone was a little too busy to talk. So, the check is in the mail so to speak.

Until Next Time, Stand Tall and Be Proud
You are the BEST of YOUR Generation, YOU Are ViêtNow

McHenry County Chapter Updates and Reminders

The “Latest and Greatest” From around the Chapter

Announcements and Updates

The McHenry County Chapter of ViệtNow and Woodstock AMVETS Post 269



**Invite you to attend a combined
organizational picnic**

Date: June 14, 2009

**Location: 132 Turkey Hill
Cary, IL 60013**



The home of David & Mariann Dahl

Bring a dish to pass, lawn chairs, and your eating ware.

See you there.

Friday June 5th, 2009

Chapter fundraiser with the Woodstock AMVETS Post 269

Parking Cars at the Harvard Milky Way located West of Harvard on Route 173

TIMES: From 4:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

The chapter gets a percentage of the proceeds based on the amount of people who volunteer to help park cars. **PLEASE** bring a flashlight.

Come on out and help raise funds for the chapter and have a lot of fun doing it.

2009 – 2010 Chapter Board of Directors

President – Joe Lewis
Vice President – Bobby Jones
Treasurer – Steve Rucki
Secretary – Tony Bilus

Directors - **Rick Cross**
Joe Ferranti
Joe Kotarba
Bill Richards
John Sorensen

Events to Make Plans For

Congress Must Act to Restore Earned Benefits to All Vietnam Veterans – Including “Blue Water” Vets!

Washington, D.C. – House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA) announced the introduction of H.R. 2254, a bill to restore equity to all Vietnam veterans that were exposed to Agent Orange.

“We owe it to our veterans to fulfill the promises made to them as a result of their service,” said Chairman Filner (D-CA). “If, as a result of service, a veteran was exposed to Agent Orange and it has resulted in failing health, this country has a moral obligation to care for each veteran the way we promised we would. And as a country at war, we must prove that we will be there for all of our veterans, no matter when they serve. The courts have turned their backs on our veterans, but I believe this Congress will not allow our veterans to be cheated of their earned benefits.”

H.R. 2254 would clarify the laws related to VA benefits provided to Vietnam War veterans suffering from the ravages of Agent Orange exposure. In order to try to gain a better military vantage point, Agent Orange, which we now know is a highly toxic cocktail of herbicide agents, was widely sprayed for defoliation and crop destruction purposes all over the Vietnam War Battlefield, as well as on borders and other areas of neighboring nations. It was also stored on U.S. vessels and used for vegetation clearing purposes around U.S. bases, landing zones and lines of communication.

Currently, VA requires Vietnam veterans to prove a “foot on land” occurrence in order to qualify for the presumptions of service-connection for herbicide-exposure related illnesses afforded under current law. This issue has been the subject of much litigation and on May 8, 2008, the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals upheld VA’s overly narrow interpretation and the Supreme Court later denied certiorari essentially affirming this ruling. However, Congress clearly did not intend to exclude these veterans from compensation based on arbitrary geographic line drawing by VA.

H.R. 2254 is intended to clarify the law so that Blue Water veterans and every service member awarded the Vietnam Service medal, or who otherwise deployed to land, sea or air, in the Republic of Vietnam is fully covered by the comprehensive Agent Orange laws Congress passed in 1991. If enacted, this bill will make it easier for VA to process Vietnam War veterans’ claims for service-connected conditions that are linked to toxic exposures during the Vietnam War and that are identified in current law.

Chairman John Hall leads the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, the subcommittee with jurisdiction over these issues. He stated, “With this legislation, Congress will leave no doubt that the ‘Blue Water Navy’ and all combat veterans of Vietnam are intended to be covered and compensated; thus ensuring that these veterans will receive the disability benefits they earned and deserve for exposure to Agent Orange. This is the cost of war. We asked these brave men and women to fight for us and serve their country, and it is a grave injustice that they have had to wait this long for treatment. We must place care of our soldiers among our top priorities. This applies for all past, present, and future conflicts.”

“Time is running out for these veterans,” concluded Chairman Filner. “Many are dying from their Agent Orange related diseases, uncompensated for their sacrifice. There is still a chance for America to meet its obligations to these noble veterans. I will work with my Congressional colleagues to provide the earned disability benefits and health care to the thousands of Navy blue water veterans and survivors that earned this care in battle.”

SUBMITTED BY JOE KERSTEN

LITH soldier dies in Afghanistan

By SARAH SUTSCHEK - ssutschek@nwherald.com

A Lake in the Hills soldier serving in Afghanistan died Sunday, the U.S. military announced Monday.

Spc. Lukasz D. Saczek, 23, was assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry based in Woodstock. He died as a result of a noncombat-related injury that remains under investigation, said Maj. Brad Leighton, public affairs director of the Illinois National Guard.

Leighton declined to provide further details about the incident, and Saczek's father, Dariusz Saczek, declined to comment about his son's death.

Saczek had a 6-week-old daughter, Emily, and was married to Kathryn Saczek, Leighton said. Besides his father, he also is survived by his mother, Ewa Saczek.

Lukasz Saczek graduated from Steinmetz Academic Centre in Chicago in 2005 and enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard in July 2006. This was Saczek's first deployment, and he served in Operation Enduring Freedom.

Saczek was one of 55 soldiers who left Woodstock on Aug. 24 for two months of training before a yearlong deployment in Afghanistan. He died in the Nangarhar province, Leighton said.

"As we continue through this difficult deployment, each and every soldier is a vital family member to this National Guard force," said Maj. Gen. William Enyart, adjutant general of the Illinois National Guard. "Spc. Saczek, like all our soldiers, made the decision to volunteer to serve his country in a time of war and will be remembered."

The soldiers from Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 178th Infantry comprise one of about 30 units with the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The unit provides security for reconstruction teams that help the Afghan government build roads, hospitals, government buildings and other infrastructure.

Three soldiers from Saczek's unit recently were killed in Afghanistan on March 15 in a roadside bomb attack: Sgt. Robert Weinger, 24, of Round Lake Beach; Sgt. Christopher Abeyta, 23, of Midlothian; and Spc. Norman Cain III, 22, of Mount Morris.

SUBMITTED BY JOE KERSTEN

Study: Communities must do more for vets

By Kelly Kennedy

The military prides itself on taking care of its own. But a researcher who has studied post-traumatic stress disorder said local communities must play a larger role in the safety net for combat veterans.

If local organizations do not reach out proactively to the Defense and Veterans Affairs departments to become more engaged in treating the veterans returning to their communities, they can expect the veterans' pain to affect their families, their ability to contribute to society, and even their ability to care for themselves, said Audrey Burnam, senior behavioral scientist at the Rand Corp. think tank.

Burnam said vets returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq represent a "historic opportunity" for communities to learn more about PTSD, educate others about the illness and come together to deal with it.

Burnam, who spoke at a Health Affairs Journal panel May 5 in Washington, is the lead author of a new Rand report, "Mental Health Care for Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans," that makes a case for a broad reform of services that looks beyond VA.

She said American communities can expect the return of as many as 300,000 veterans dealing with symptoms of PTSD or traumatic brain injury. Though many will get the help they need while still in uniform, or their symptoms will resolve on their own, many more will deal with sleep disorders, nightmares, relationship issues, anger and flashbacks until they get the help they need.

But in addition to a continued reluctance among veterans to seek care, there are only about 500,000 mental health care professionals nationwide. Some areas have as few as eight psychiatrists per 100,000 people.

The report said policy reform is needed to push health insurance plans, professional organizations, states and local communities to improve veterans' access to high-quality services, citing example of mental health workers in New York state who have offered services pro bono, and a free PTSD counseling program in Washington state that also trains school teachers about the effects of deployment on children.

Burnam sharply criticized using only medication or counseling programs that have not been proven effective on combat vets. She recommended evidence-based treatments such as cognitive behavioral therapy, prolonged exposure therapy and eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing.

She said psychotherapy is much more effective for PTSD than medications, and such treatments have been proven to work.

SUBMITTED BY JOE KERSTEN

“Effective treatments for PTSD and depressions exist,” Burnam wrote. “Yet they are not being provided systemically to most affected veterans because of significant challenges that extend beyond the [Defense Department] and VA service systems to the broader communities in which veterans reside.”

In some cases, veterans don’t qualify for VA services because their incomes are too high, or they go through their own employer-based health insurance, she said.

Matthew Friedman, executive director of VA’s National Center for PTSD, agreed with Burnam’s study, but said he thinks VA and the Defense Department can meet the clinical needs of service members and veterans — if people are reached early.

Thousands of VA clinicians have undergone training for prolonged exposure and cognitive behavioral therapy, and there has also been “large-scale” training in the Defense Department, he said.

Still, he acknowledged, “I’m convinced many civilian mental-health providers are not adequately trained.”

That can be an issue when a combat veteran sees a family therapist who has no idea how to use exposure treatments, what military acronyms mean or where Fallujah is. Friedman also agreed that medications are not yet as effective as psychotherapy in treating PTSD.

He added that there may soon be new treatments using medications that mediate new learning and could turn a 10-appointment treatment into a five-appointment treatment, or determining a genotype that lets doctors know when someone is more at-risk for PTSD, or finding a “psychological vaccine” that makes people more resilient to trauma exposure.

ROOM TO IMPROVE

Burnam of the Rand Corp. think tank proposes six ways to improve mental-health services for veterans:

- Give combat vets confidential treatment for combat stress, unless they have a severe illness or need medication.
- Teach combat vets about evidence-based treatments so they can be their own advocates.
- Train and certify the mental-health workforce in those evidence-based treatments
- Encourage more people to go into mental health care fields.
- Study and craft quality-improvement for veterans health care.
- Offer technical assistance to states seeking to offer or expand programs for combat veterans.

SUBMITTED BY JOE KERSTEN

2009 Fiesta Days Schedule of Events
MUSIC FEST
July 10, 11, & 12th - Friday thru Sunday
PETERSEN PARK, 4300 Petersen Park Rd. 60050

Friday, July 10th

(4:00 pm - 11:00 pm) Admission: \$4 adults, 12 & under free.

- ◆ Food ~ Beer: 5:00 pm - 11:00 pm
- ◆ Amusements Rides: 5:00 - 11:00 pm
- ◆ Chamber Fiesta Days Mixer: 5:00 - 7:00 pm
- ◆ Re/Max Hot Air Tethered Balloon Ride: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Performance Times:

5:39 pm: Goin' South

8:00 pm: Modern Day Romeos

We need your help Chapter Members by manning the two gates at Fiesta Days. Please let me know if you can help. It is A LOT of fun! Lots of SUN! Plenty to eat & drink. GREAT MUSIC to listen to. THANK YOU, ROSE

815-568-8939

Saturday, July 11th

(1:00 pm - 11:00 pm) Admission: \$8 adults, 12 & under free.

- ◆ Food ~ Beer: 1:00 - 11:00 pm
- ◆ Amusements Rides: 1:00 - 11:00 pm (*unlimited ride special 2pm-5pm*)
- ◆ Do Something Amazing.com presented by U.S. Air Force: 2:00 pm - 11:00 pm
- ◆ Fiesta Favorite Competition: 1:30 - 5:00 pm
- ◆ Canoe Challenge Races: 1:30 - 4:00 pm
- ◆ Volleyball Tournament: 2:00 pm -
- ◆ Harley Motorcycle Show: 2:00 - 5:00 pm
- ◆ Plywood Boat Challenge (McCullom Lake):
 - 1:30 pm Orientation
 - 2:00 - 4:00 pm Building Time
 - 4:30 pm Race
- ◆ Performance Times:

9:00 PM: Music Fest Rock N' Rev - Gin Blossoms



Sign up for a chance to win an autographed guitar signed by Gin Blossoms. Registration takes place at the Air 1 Wireless, Spring Grove Sprint Booth. Guitar donated by Washburn Guitars.

2009 Fiesta Days Schedule of Events
MUSIC FEST
July 10, 11, & 12th - Friday thru Sunday
PETERSEN PARK, 4300 Petersen Park Rd. 60050

Sunday, July 12th

(12:00 pm - 9:00 pm) Admission: \$5 adults, 12 & under free.

- ◆ 26th Annual Car Show: 8:00 am - 3:00 pm [website](#)
- ◆ Food ~ Beer: 12:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- ◆ Amusements Rides: 12:00 pm - 10:00 pm (*unlimited ride special 12pm-3pm*)
- ◆ Do Something Amazing.com presented by U.S. Air Force: 12:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- ◆ Men's Annual 3 on 3 Basket Ball Tournament: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
at McHenry Middle School.
- ◆ Volleyball Tournament: 12:00 pm
- ◆ Fiesta Favorite Finalists Competition: 12:30 - 1:30 pm [application](#)
- ◆ Sand Sculpture Contest: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
- ◆ Extreme Sports Show: 1:00 - 3:00 pm *Skateboard Demo*
- ◆ Performance Times:

3:30 pm: The Moods



5:45 pm: The Ides of March featuring Jim Peterik



Work both gates again this year. The Vendor Gate and Admissions Gate

Work the gate at the times listed

Friday, July 10 from 4 pm to 11 pm

Saturday, July 11 from 1 pm to 11 pm

Sunday, July 12 from 12 pm to 9 pm.

Please call me, Rose, at 815-568-8939 (home).

IMPORTANT NEWS RELEASE

McHenry County Chapter of VietNow will hold a second Shop & Share fund-raising program on **July 13, 14 & 15, 2009 (Monday – Wednesday)** at all Jewel-Osco Stores.

By shopping at Jewel-Osco on one of those days, 5 percent of the total purchases, excluding tax, will be donated by Jewel-Osco to the organization.

McHenry County Chapter of VietNow will use the money generated by their Shop & Share to raise funds for our “2009 Jim Tober Christmas Basket Program.” This year we will deliver 45 baskets to Veteran and Needy families throughout McHenry County.

Anyone interested in helping McHenry County Chapter of VietNow by shopping at Jewel-Osco on those dates will need a “Shop & Share Identification Slip” and should contact Rose Lewis at 815-568-8939 or 815-236-1639 (cell phone) to obtain a slip before shopping.

**SHOP AND SHARE JULY 13, 14 & 15, 2009
MONDAY, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY**

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS



postage

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

Next Meeting
Tuesday, May 26, 2009
@ 7:30 pm

McHenry County Chapter VietNow Membership Application

DATE _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

NAME _____ PHONE () _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

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

_____ I am a veteran and want to be a **FULL MEMBER OF VietNow**

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

Enclosed is my check for _____

Memberships are \$15 annually renewable June 30th.
Veterans must enclose a copy of their DD214 form.
Send with check payable to: McHenry County Chapter of VietNow
PO Box 998, McHenry, IL 60051

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