



McHENRY COUNTY CHAPTER



"The Chapter with a Heart"

September 2010

September 2010 McHenry County Chapter of ViêtNow's Newsletter

2010 – 2011 MCHENRY COUNTY CHAPTERS

** BOARD OF DIRECTORS **

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Advisors: All Past Chapter Presidents

Chapter website

www.vietnow-mchenrycounty-il.org

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS **

AGENT ORANGE: Bobby Jones 847-409-1947
BYLAWS: Joe Lewis 815-568-8939
PROGRAM GRANTS: Joe Lewis 815-568-8939
CONVENTION: Joe Lewis 815-568-8939
"JIM TOBER BASKETS": Rose Lewis 815-568-8939
MEMBERSHIP: Rose Lewis 815-568-8939
NEWSLETTER: Rose Lewis, Editor 815-568-8939

NOMINATION/ELECTION: Joe Kersten 815-338-1796
POW/MIA: Steve Rucki 847-458-9850
PTSD: Steve Rucki 847-458-9850
SERVICE OFFICER: Ted Biever 815-338-9292
VAC: Delegate: Joe Kersten 815-338-1796
Alternate: Tony Bilus 815-648-2826

“VETERANS HELPING VETERANS” - This is more than our national motto; this is the ViêtNow way of life.

“THE CHAPTER WITH A HEART” is our chapter's unique motto. We adopted this to reflect the positive of image that is ViêtNow and not the negative another chapter had adopted.

Our Chapter's Beginning - In the early 1980's there was a group of Vietnam Veterans attending “Rap” group meetings in the McHenry County Health Department building. As time went on, some of the vet's in the group began to feel better about their experiences in Vietnam but did not want to leave the group. They had come to trust and cherish the bonds that they had developed within the group. Yet most of the veterans did not want to be a part of the traditional veteran organizations.

Someone had heard of a new group that had formed in Rockford Illinois that called itself ViêtNow. A couple of the vets went to one of their meetings and liked what they saw. They brought back information on ViêtNow to the group and explained their motto of “Veterans Helping Veterans.” Most everyone liked the idea of starting a chapter here in McHenry County.

It took a lot of work to get the McHenry County Chapter going. In November of 1983, the State of Illinois issued the “McHenry County Chapter of ViêtNow” their State Charter as an Illinois Not-For-Profit Organization. This gave the McHenry County Chapter of ViêtNow the distinction of being the **first** ViêtNow expansion chapter.

In our Chapter's beginning, we would break into small groups and continue the “Rap” group setting. This was what had brought us together to become YOUR Chapter. This remained an important part of the meets for many years to come.

NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Rich Sanders (Mary) **DIRECTORS:**
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Gary Eisenhower (Sue)

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

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EDITORIAL POLICY: The Newsletter Staff will evaluate all articles submitted as to appropriateness and relevancy to the goals of ViêtNow. Newsletter items must be submitted to the editorial staff by the Chapter meeting each month.

IMPORTANT NOTICE for ALL MEMBERS FOLLOWS!

New Chapter Meeting Location and Night – At our chapter meeting in August, we had an overflow group of members. With the air conditioning running at full blast, everyone was commenting on how hot it was in the building. We only had 14 members in attendance. After some discussion, there was a motion made to relocate to a bigger meeting site. We made the decision to take up the Moose in Woodstock on their offer to hold our meetings there. The only stickler to this was the Moose is not available on Tuesday nights. So what the chapter decided to do was move back to our original night of the last Monday of each month.

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For the time being, our meetings will be held at the Woodstock Moose at 406 Clay Street, Woodstock, IL 60098. This is the Northeast corner of Clay and Hutchins Streets, across from the Metra train station parking lot. Meeting time is 7:30pm and we will meet the last Monday of each month. Just in case you get a little disoriented finding their building, their phone number is 815/338-0126. They can give you good directions.

IMPORTANT NOTICE for ALL MEMBERS ABOVE!

President’s Ramblings

Joe (Boxer) Lewis, Your Chapter President

OOPS! - Wow. I just finished rereading my President’s Ramblings for August. Like most of you, I was wondering where that came from. What happened is very simple. Steve was sending my info on PTSD he found on a site that we could use to inform our membership about.

This information was put into the draft and I wrote my Ramblings based on that information. Then Steve and I got to talking about the whole package on that site and we decided to start the series from the beginning. Steve sent me the web site and I copied the info and put it into what went out last month. On Sunday 8/29/2010, I noticed the error. To save you all the reading on my pen again, you can read my ramblings from last month.

The information contained in this month’s newsletter is very helpful in your claim for service-connected disability. Over the years, I have tried to get veterans, take these steps first. When filing a claim with the DVA, the veteran should file as much supporting information as possible. When you file the claim, take copies of your supporting documents as possible. **NEVER** take the original.

Use An Accredited Service Officer – When you are filing a claim for service-connected disability, whether you are working with me or anyone else, always file your claim through an Accredited Veteran Service Officer. I will admit that I am a little partisan when it comes to this part. I will send veterans to the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and to the McHenry County VAC. Be sure to sign the paperwork to authorize them to represent you in your case.

Chapter Web Site: <http://www.vietnow-mchenrycounty-il.org/> this is the web site for the McHenry County Chapter of ViêtNow. Thanks to one of our new members, this is up and running. This is a work in progress site. *Yes*, it is a working site. Anyone can visit the site and read our newsletters in the **Newsletter** tab, see what we have been doing in the **Vets in Action** tab, check out our **Calendar** tab for what is going on, and download a membership application from the **Application** tab.

Convention 2011 – The members of the McHenry County Chapter of ViêtNow, at the August meeting, votes to put a bid in to host the 2011 ViêtNow National Convention. At this time, we will not be putting anything in print. After we know whether our bid is acceptable to the National Board of ViêtNow, we will fill you all in on the plans we have currently looked at. Just a little nibble at this for you to chew on for now.

If we get the honor of hosting the next national convention, this will be a chapter function. We will need all of your help in making this the standard setter for upcoming national conventions. We need all sorts of help with stuffing ditty bags, folding letters, stuffing envelopes, registering delegates and guest, and handing out convention material.

We will keep you informed on whether we get to host the next ViêtNow National Convention or not. More in October.

Have a safe and fruitful month. Rosie and I are off to New Mexico. Chat with ya later.

RECORDS & RESEARCH

MEDICAL RECORDS

After your discharge, your military medical records were transferred to the Department of Veterans Administration. Contact your state VA office to obtain copies. (You may also contact the service officer at your VAC office, AMVETS, American Legion, DAV, and VFW. ViêtNow also has these forms on hand for any veteran to fill out and submit to get your service records.

FINDING AIDS FOR UNIT & PERSONAL RECORDS

Sarge's list of Official Records kept by U.S. Government agencies, and how to obtain them.

The NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER (NPRC) St. Louis

(A) Serviceman's PERSONAL RECORDS

- a. Commonly referred to as "**YOUR 201 FILE**" The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, MO keeps your personnel "**OFFICIAL MILITARY PERSONNEL FILE**" this is the complete packet of your records. I.e. every record of your service, copies of awards and commendations, and tests you took from basic through discharge.
- b. An SF 180* will be needed to obtain your packet (see SF 180 below). DD-214 is that single page of paper that you got upon your discharge, and the document that you are constantly being asked for as "proof" of your military service – it is also held in St. Louis and a form SF 180 is needed. Although, a new ON-LINE REQUEST can be made using; <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>

(B) Unit PERSONNEL RECORDS

- a. (Monthly) *COMPANY ROSTER*'s and (Daily) *MORNING REPORT*'s for your unit are also kept in St. Louis. These were prepared by the Company Clerks of each Company in the battalion. It is my suggestion that you request a Company Roster for only one or two months at a time – and be sure to ask for *YOUR COMPANY*. Only ask for two or three days at a time for Morning Reports, they do not like it when you ask for too much at a time! [Daily Battalion Journals are kept at the National Archives & Records Administration (NARA), Suitland, MD [see below for address].
- b. The SF 180* will be needed to obtain Company Rosters and Company Morning Reports.
 - i. *SF 180 is Standard Form 180.

You MUST fill out this form to get ANY action from St. Louis. These forms are available at any local Veterans Organization (VVA, VFW, DAV, [ViêtNow] etc), your local Veterans Representative (city or county); "on line" via the NARA, VA, or you can write St. Louis and request one. I have even found a SF180 in the blue binder "Facts on File" in the reference section at the library. All I can tell ya is YOU NEED ONE for each request!

Write to:

National Personnel Records Center
Attn: U.S. Army Liaison
Military Personnel Records
9700 Page Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63132

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (NARA) Washington D.C.

UNIT RECORDS has unit operational information like the daily BATTALION JOURNAL (S-3 Journal, Duty Officers Log, etc.), and OPERATION REPORT, LESSONS LEARNED (ORLL), and other goodies. All these records (and there are 9,000 cubic feet of them) are filed under RECORDS GROUP 472.

Records of the United States Forces in Southeast Asia, 1950-1975 are held by the MODERN MILITARY RECORDS UNIT at College Park, MD.

Nevertheless, what do YOU care! You want to know what you want to know.... RIGHT? JUST WRITE THEM! And wait..... and wait and wait! Thanks to the Internet EVERYBODY is asking for stuff from these *poor, OVERWORKED* Civil Servants!

Write them. Don't ask for too much information at a time. Be specific as to what you want. List the unit (2/12 Infantry, 25th Infantry Division), date of action, grid co-ordinates (if known) etc.

(NOTE: This National Archives address will send you records for ANY ARMY UNIT IN VIETNAM. Request by YOUR unit – mine (ours) was the 2/12th Infantry so I use it on this website.)

WRITE THEM and make your request for information a FOIA request! This WILL speed things up! FOIA stands for the FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT and because FOIA is the law of the land, it MUST be adhered to by the NARA within a time limit. START ALL YOUR REQUESTS (LETTERS) LIKE THIS:

Dear Sir,

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, I hereby request the following information [Records Group 472.7.6] about the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 25th Division (2/12 Inf.,25th Div.) [... and then describe what you want. See list below for what is available from the National Archives files..... and end your letter like this;]

I am willing to pay all reasonable costs involved in copying this information.

Thanks in advance for your prompt response to this request!

(Your Signature)

(Boxers Note: Make sure you date and keep a copy for your own records.)

DO NOT FORGET TO INCLUDE YOUR RETURN ADDRESS. Do not get freaked out by that "all reasonable costs" bit – it is just a buzz phrase they seem to like. I have gotten all kinds of records and never paid a dime. However, things are changing. There is a movement to "privatize" services for the NARA and the only way to get info is through these private (for profit) companies. Photographs are handled this way now, and it sucks! "Records Group 472.7.6" contains tactical records for units like ours in Vietnam.

Write to:

National Archives

Attn: Textual Reference (Vietnam)

8601 Adelphi Road

College Park, MD 20740-6001

Military Records Textual Reference Phone # (301)837-3510

WHAT TO REQUEST FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES:

O.K. so now WHAT DO I REQUEST from the National Archives, Records Group 472.7.6, in College Park?

Here is the list: (starting with the most informative info for us common grunt types.)

(A) BATTALION JOURNAL (BATTALION DUTY OFFICERS LOG)

- a. This is the minute-by-minute JOURNAL of what happened that day. The Log was kept at the 2/12th's Tactical Operations Center and was written as things were happening (so it misses some things) and is the best guide to find out what happened that day. It lists many interesting things: Company locations, actions, enemy & friendly casualties, etc. It was used as the basis for other reports. Ask for the "2/12th INF Duty Officers Log (Daily Journal)" for the specific day you are interested in.
- b. Recently I received the "S-3 Journal" for the same days as a "Duty Officers Log / Journal." I found the S-3 Journal had all the information as the BN Off. Log – and a lot more detail. I recommend YOU REQUEST THE 'S-3 JOURNAL' for the date you are interested in checking into.

(B) BATTALION OPERATIONAL REPORTS (ORLL)

- a. [Operational Report and Lessons Learned]
- b. This is a summary of actions during a time period. Operation Reports were written on a quarterly basis and kind of dry – but they DO describe the battalion's activities. Ask for the "2/12th INF Battalion

Operational Report" for the day you are interested in. [They probably wont send you the entire reporting periods Operational Report because it's too long.]

(C) COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORTS

(D) Written by the 18th MILITARY HISTORY DETACHMENT, 25th DIVISION [or the History unit attached to YOUR division]

- a. These are great – IF the action was significant enough to have a member of the Detachment come out to the field and wrote it up. [These should not be confused with ORLLs (Operational Reports/Lessons Learned) – which is a very different animal!] Ask for the "After Action Report by the 18th Military History Detachment (25th Div)" for the specific date and describe the action.

(E) BRIGADE DUTY OFFICERS LOG & BRIGADE OPERATIONAL REPORTS

(F) ANNUAL HISTORICAL SUPPLEMENT

- a. This gives some of the highlights for the year for a particular unit and covers the period 1 January to 31 December. It appears to be the (very selective) highlights taken from the Quarterly Reports and ORLLs – the year in review on 9 or 10 pages.

These records are in Records Group 472.7.3 and give an overall picture of what was happening at the next (or) "parent" level. Ask for them by date. BUT WHICH BRIGADE was the 2/12th INF in? Good question! It varied over the years. Sometimes the 2/12th was not assigned to any Brigade in the Division – it was OPCON to another division, the Corps, or the II Field Force. Confused? So am I! However, here is my best shot at putting the 2/12th to a parent unit by time period, and you cannot take this to the bank! Use as a guide only.

- 1966 to August 1967 - 3rd Brigade, 4th Inf. Div
- Aug 67 to Sometime in mid 68 - 3rd Brigade, 25th Div [OPCON to 1st Inf. Div. at An Loc]
- TET 68 - 3d Brigade, 25th (and at Hoc Mon OPCON to Capitol Military Assistance Command)
- Middle 68 to FEB 70 - 2nd Brigade, 25th Div
- FEB 70 to Cambodia - [Your guess is as good as mine is. I think we were in the 3rd Brigade, but could have been OPCON to II FFV (Second Field Force, Vietnam)]. OR 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry I give up!
- {I am pretty sure we was 1st Brigade Cambodia and until we went to the 2nd at Xuan Loc. – b.h.] Post Cambodia [FSB Warrior & Katum] 1st BRIGADE?
- Xuan Loc to Mar 71 - 2nd BRIGADE (Separate), 25th DIV. OPCON to IIFFV [OK, so it's confusing, but I SAID it wasn't something you can take to the bank!]

WHAT YOU REALLY WANT FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES IS THE "BATTALION DUTY OFFICERS LOG / DAILY JOURNAL" for the day(s) you are interested in – they have the best details for any given day!

Once again, the address is National Archives, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001

NATIONAL ARCHIVES WEBSITE: www.nara.gov

VA defends Agent Orange, heart disease links against Senator Webb

September 24, 2010 posted by Chuck Palazzo

Honorable DVA Sec Eric K. Shinseki



- Shinseki, a Vietnam veteran wounded in combat, said six of nine rigorous studies reviewed by the agency showed strong associations between the herbicide and heart disease. The evidence “more than satisfies” the law’s requirements, he said. - By BEN EVANS

WASHINGTON (AP) – Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki on Thursday defended an expensive proposal to extend disability payments to Vietnam veterans who get heart disease, saying studies show a significant link between the ailment and the toxic defoliant Agent Orange.

Responding to concerns about the costs of a rapidly expanding program, Shinseki told the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee that the law requires his agency to grant automatic benefits for diseases that are scientifically associated with Agent Orange. It leaves him no discretion to weigh costs or other considerations, he said, such as the fact that heart disease occurs commonly in men in their 60s and is strongly linked to smoking, poor diet and other factors.

Shinseki, a Vietnam veteran wounded in combat, said six of nine rigorous studies reviewed by the agency showed strong associations between the herbicide and heart disease. The evidence “more than satisfies” the law’s requirements, he said.

Past studies on the link have been inconclusive, and the National Academy of Sciences says there is only a “modest” association, with no way to control for other risk factors. The VA acknowledges that the lack of data about soldiers’ exposure to the defoliant makes it impossible to determine what role it may play in specific cases.

That has led some to question the proposal to add the disease – along with Parkinson’s disease and certain types of leukemia – to a growing list of ailments qualifying for a program that Congress set up in 1991.

The agency estimates that the additions, set to take effect next month, could cost up to \$67 billion in the next decade. The average veteran getting benefits for heart disease would receive about \$1,000 per month, with many also getting new health care benefits.

Most lawmakers said Thursday they’ll support the plan. But several raised concerns about covering common diseases and suggested the law be revisited.

“We have sometimes up here an uncomfortable duty to ask the hard questions,” said Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., a Vietnam combat veteran. He said there are too many unknowns about cause and effect, with little information specifically on exposure in Vietnam and no process for accounting for other risk factors.

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Shinseki Fights off Veterans’ Enemy Sen. James Webb, Defends Agent Orange Benefits

September 23, 2010 posted by Michael Leon

- Watching C-SPAN 3’s telecast of the hearing on VA Disability Compensation, Presumptive Disability Decision-Making by the United States Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is an illustration why no veteran or advocate in Virginia should consider voting for Sen. James Webb (Traitor-VA) –

By Michael Leon

This morning, while posturing as the earnest student of empirical investigation, Webb prefaced his hostile line of questioning of witness Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki saying Webb is concerned about protecting the “credibility of our [VA] programs.”

I was hoping Shinseki would pull out a can of aerosol composed of dioxin [tetrachlorodibenzodioxin (TCDD)] and offer to spray it around the Committee room and see if anyone of the august senators had a presumptive problem with it.

Shinseki and the other witnesses responded politely and on-point, more than the Committee deserved.

“[This hearing] is also about the accuracy of the scientific process as it pertains to the Agent Orange and service in Vietnam. We have struggled with this now for more than 30 years,” said Webb.

As if it to illustrate his point of concern about the recent Presumptive Agent Orange Disability rule, Webb asked his assistant to produce a chart (who is also a Marine Webb pointed out) showing that 431,699 additional Vietnam veterans would now be eligible for service-connected benefits because of the expanded Agent Orange VA rules.

You mean Vietnam Veterans will get disability benefits? Horrors.

This piece of wasted space named Sen. James Webb is up for reelection in 2012. Virginia should send him home to his fat military and Senate pensions.



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

Next Meeting @ 7:30 pm
Monday, September 27 2010
Woodstock Moose Lodge

McHenry County Chapter ViệtNow Membership Application

DATE _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____
NAME _____ PHONE () _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
SERVICE BRANCH _____ DATES OF DUTY (1957-
CURRENT _____

_____ **I am a 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 _____

Annual Membership dues are: \$15 annually renewable by June 30th.
New Veterans must enclose a copy of their DD214 form, which will be returned to you.

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

Send check payable to: McHenry County Chapter of ViệtNow, PO Box 998, McHenry, IL 60051