

# RUN FOR THE WALL

## Quarterly Newsletter

### *“We Ride For Those Who Can’t”*

### October 2007

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## THE EDITOR’S NOTES



November will be the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, and many events have been planned, year-long, to commemorate the event, beginning last November.

The highlight of the anniversary commemoration will be the Reading of the Names at The Wall during a ceremony that will begin the 2007 Veterans Day Observance. The Reading of the Names takes approximately 65 hours to complete and will occur over four days, Nov. 7-10, 2007. The names will be read chronologically by casualty date. This will be the fourth time in The Wall’s 25-year history that all of the names have been read aloud in Washington, D.C. Others readings took place at the National Cathedral before The Wall was dedicated in 1982 and at the Memorial on the 10th and 20th anniversaries. For more information on the anniversary events, visit <http://www.vvmf.org/index.cfm?SectionID=524>.

RFTW 2007 is already becoming a distant memory as we are beginning to make plans for 2008, but friendships were rekindled the weekend of September 8 in Angel Fire. Read all about it in this issue. It was the weekend of our first RFTW Reunion—the second one will be September 28-30 in Kerrville, Texas, and will be covered in the next newsletter.

On Friday evening after dinner, the mayor of Eagle Nest, Billie J. Odum joined us at the “Eagle Nest Stage,” an outdoor plaza where community events are held. Billie was completely thrilled that Run For The Wall honored their little village by spending the weekend there and hoped that we would continue to come to Eagle Nest every year. She expressed her gratitude to our veterans in a letter she read to us, copies of which were passed out.

“We, the Citizens of Eagle Nest, are proud that you chose to hold your reunion here in the village of Eagle Nest and that you visit our Village each year as you “Run for the Wall.” We are happy to be able to provide you with a stopover on your journey each year. We are happy to be able to support you and your mission: To promote healing among all veterans and their families and friends, to call for an accounting of all prisoners of War and those Missing in Action (POW/MIA), and to honor the memory of those Killed in Action (KIA) from all wars.

“Your presence each year helps us all remember that everyone who has fought, or has friends or loved ones who have fought, have done so for the freedoms, safety, and security that we all enjoy. Some have given all there is to give so that we may continue to enjoy these freedoms and for that we all are grateful.

“As you “Run for the Wall” each year, please know that you are always welcome in Eagle Nest.

Sincerely, Billie J. Odum, Mayor  
Village of Eagle Nest”

Make no mistake, Run For The Wall and our mission are making a profound impression all across America. By our presence in large cities and small towns, we have awakened a patriotism in people and stirred Americans to step up and honor our veterans and to press our government to bring all of our POWs/MIAs

home. We can be proud—but we must not stop, lest America again forget. We will continue to carry our message loud and clear “until they are all home.”

Judy “Velcro” Lacey, RFTW Editor

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► **FINANCIAL REPORT**

**RUN FOR THE WALL**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**January 1, 2007 to July 31, 2007**

**ASSETS:**

Current Assets:

Cash - Checking	\$34,324.47	
CD Savings	15,000.00	
Inventory	21,900.26	
<u>Total Current Assets:</u>		\$71,224.73

Property and Equipment:

Merchandise Trailers	\$21,500.00	
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	\$(8,808.33)	
<u>Total Assets:</u>		\$85,916.40

**LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE**

Liabilities:

Accounts Payable	<u>\$1,793.55</u>	
<u>Total Liabilities:</u>	\$1,793.55	

Fund Balance:

Fund Balance	\$36,022.09	
Current Revenue	<u>48,100.76</u>	
<u>Total Fund Balance:</u>	\$84,122.85	

<u>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund Balance</u>		\$85,916.40
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**Run For The Wall**  
**Statement of Profit and Loss**  
**For the Seven Months Ending July 31, 2007**

Revenue:

Merchandise Sales	\$105,159.32	
Donations *	10,419.29	
Registration Fees	<u>17,150.00</u>	
<u>Total Revenue:</u>	\$132,728.61	

<u>Cost of Goods Sold:</u>		
	Purchases	<u>\$53,401.78</u>
<u>Gross Profit:</u>		\$79,326.83
<u>Operating Expenses:</u>		
	Bank Charges	\$1,174.48
	Depreciation	2,508.33
	Equipment Rental	343.43
	Insurance – General	4,935.00
	Interest	8.07
	Office Supplies	157.00
	Permits & Licenses	2,103.68
	Postage	2,932.37
	Printing & Reproduction	2,350.14
	Supplies	9,504.96
	Tax – Trailers	144.64
	Telephone	2,177.76
	Truck & Vehicle Expense	2,145.85
	Web Services	<u>740.36</u>
<u>Total Operating Expenses:</u>		<u>\$31,236.07</u>
<u>Net Profit (Loss):</u>		\$48,100.76

*RFTW receives many blessings from the communities we pass through, and riders in turn make donations to help schools and other projects. In the 2007 RFTW, riders on the Central Route donated \$22,044, all of which went to Rainelle, WV Elementary School. Southern Route riders donated \$16,000, \$9,000 of which went to Montvale, VA, Wytheville, VA, and Colorado City, TX schools and \$7,000 of which was donated to the Wounded Warrior Project. These amounts are not in the Financial Statement because they do not go through RFTW. They are private donations from riders that go directly to recipients.*

**Note: Questions about these financial statements should be directed to Mr. John King, RFTW Board of Directors Treasurer or any other member of the Board. Their contact information is available at [www.rftw.org](http://www.rftw.org).**

## ► RFTW 2008

### HEADS UP FOR WASHINGTON D.C. HOTELS

From Patrick "Dragonrider" McCarthy ([rftw.db@gmail.com](mailto:rftw.db@gmail.com))

Arrangements are being with the hotels for RFTW XX. The hotels will not accept reservations for the RFTW group rate until the Official Route Schedule is published (usually in December). The D.C. hotel names on the Route Schedule will be Internet links to the appropriate on-line reservation sites. For those without Internet access, the telephone numbers to each hotel will be listed in the notes section below the hotel names. I will remind everyone now that parking at the Holiday Inn is FREE; parking at the Westin Hotel is NOT FREE. Watch the Route Schedule and Daily Itinerary for specific information concerning parking at the hotels (in Arlington). Also, Pastor Rich Neubauer of the Arlington Assembly of God Church has again offered free tent camping and showers to any riders desiring to stay on the church grounds.

## MERCHANDISE FROM THE INTERNET

Just wanted to let everyone know that the shelves have been restocked and items that we ran out of on the “Run” are now replenished. We have “Run Pins”, Challenge Coins, 2007 All The Way patches, Oval Eagle patches and a few 2005 and 2006 patches. For those of you who are attending either of the Reunions, there are specials on most items. Keep checking the website for Christmas Specials coming up in November and December along with a couple of close outs, which will include the 2007 t-shirts. If you have any questions and want to check on any items, please email me at [donmorris@earthlink.net](mailto:donmorris@earthlink.net). Thanks for all your support of RFTW.

Don “9-Ball” Morris, Director of Merchandise  
RFTW Board of Directors

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## ► OUR STORIES

### ANGEL FIRE REUNION

By Judy Lacey

The weather couldn't have been more perfect for a weekend of work on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire. We have two Reunions each year; last year and this year they were held in Angel Fire, New Mexico and in Kerrville, Texas. Last year it was decided that the Angel Fire Reunion would be a working weekend. There is much to be done at the Memorial, and RFTW wanted to help. Last year RFTW accomplished much: laying pathways, general cleanup, and the beautification of the gravesites of the Westphall family. This year we laid bricks engraved with veterans' names and service dates. Thus far, almost 400 bricks have been sold, and RFTW laid them all on Saturday.

Most who arrived early on Friday went to visit the Memorial. We were amazed to see the new amphitheater almost finished. The same gracefully curving “wings” of the Chapel were used on the amphitheater, and the resulting overall appearance of the Memorial is even more beautiful than before. We were also impressed by the new entrance from the parking lot. A small “wing” was placed on each side of the walkway, and a “Welcome Home” sign hung overhead between them. The Memorial is really growing.

The weekend began with a dinner at the Angel Fire Community Center, with guest speaker Father Mitchell giving another spectacular speech. He is a Vietnam veteran himself and his words speak directly to our veterans. Before the end of the evening, Monte asked how many riders planned to go on the Enchanted Circle ride in the morning instead of working at the Memorial. Eyes looked around the room, but not a single hand went up. Who would have dared admit they'd rather ride than work at the Memorial?! Very clever, Monte! The ride was cancelled—tomorrow everyone would be working.

Saturday morning began with a cold, damp fog, but it eventually gave way to beautiful blue skies. RFTW was at the Memorial early, ready to get to work, and we were greeted by Tom Turnbull, National Park Manager of Angel Fire Memorial. A brief ceremony was held, during which Tom expressed NPS's gratitude for our assistance. Walter Westphall, brother of David, for whom the Memorial was built, spoke of his gratitude also. Father Mitchell said a few words, then blessed the bricks. A space closest to the Visitors Center was cleared first, and Walter Westphall personally laid the first four bricks—those of his father, Victor Westphall; his brother, David Westphall; and his mother, Jeanne Westphall. Jeanne's will be the only brick of a non-veteran that will be allowed to be placed. The fourth brick was Walter's own.

Then the shovels and rakes came out, and the work started. The gravel that we put down only last year had to be removed to make way for the bricks, then sand spread as a base for the bricks. It was tedious work, making sure the sand was perfectly level, but RFTW was up to the job. There were a few groans about backs or knees hurting, but it didn't stop the work. There was no grumbling, but lots of friendly bantering and camaraderie. It was a labor of love.

When the soil was prepared, it was time to lay the bricks and it was done very solemnly and ceremoniously. Each name was called out, and volunteers stood in line to carry each brick to its place along the walkway. The procedure took hours, but those participating didn't mind a bit. Some of those present had bricks engraved for themselves, and they laid them personally. Others were laid by family members.

The only work stoppage was for a lunch break, provided by the David Westphall Foundation. The Foundation also paid for the Rental of the Community Center at Angel Fire. Cooks and servers were RFTW volunteers. Little time was wasted—there was still much to do.

In late afternoon, all the bricks had been laid and the walkway swept, and we stood back to admire the result. The bricks were perfectly level, and now the Memorial would be even more personal and meaningful.

Saturday night we dragged our weary selves to Texas Red's Steakhouse and Saloon in Eagle Nest for dinner, after which the mayor of Eagle Nest, Billie Odum, gathered us together at "The Stage" next door, where they hold community events. She thanked RFTW for visiting Eagle Nest and our veterans for their sacrifices. (Read her letter in Editor's Notes this issue.)

Sunday we all left for home or other parts of the country, but not before a last visit to Angel Fire Memorial. Many thanks to Monte Apodaca for a great job of organizing the many things that needed to be done to make for a great weekend for us.



Walter Westphall laying the bricks for his father Dr. Victor Westphall, his mother Jeanne, and his brother David Westphall, for whom the memorial was built



Lots of digging to be done



Spreading the sand



Everyone pitched in



Some laid their own bricks or those of their family members



The finished rows of bricks



The RFTW group at Angel Fire



The Memorial with the new amphitheater added

*Editor's note: The reunion at Kerrville, Texas comes after this issue's deadline, so it will be reported in the next issue.*

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## **I AM HOME AT LAST**

By Bill "No Chute" Hanlon

Courtesy of Monsoon's Dispatch, Chapter 785 VVA

Last week something happened that I have to let you all know. So many things in my life have changed since I am part of the PGR and Run For The Wall. I woke up after forty years. I am so proud of all of us and those I support (I'm a cager).

Well back to my story. I was in the store getting some ice for a mission to provide support as part of PGR at a funeral. I had water, just needed ice to top it off. I stood in line wearing "My Colors," ya know the cut-off Levi jacket with patches that speak to what we did, who we are, and what we stand for. Mine has the signature from the Governor of West Virginia on it. Anyway, a lady behind me began crying. I am not scary to anyone at 64 (LOL), so she wasn't scared being around me. I turned and asked "Are you OK?" She obviously was not, but I didn't know what else to say. (At this point Kirby would laugh at me and say that was a stupid thing to say!!) She began weeping more. I looked at the cashier and shrugged my shoulders and was ready to pay for the ice when the crying woman spoke to me as she put her hand on my shoulder. As I turn and faced her she spoke through her tears "I spit on you forty years ago. I was a college student and we used to go around knowing all there was to know and when we came upon a troop in uniform we spit on them." Her crying was even more—she could barely continue but she had to talk so her words came out through sobs. "I am so sorry. Can you ever forgive me. Please, it has hurt for so long, please forgive me." I looked at her and then noticed the cashier crying also. So what's a guy to do? I opened my arms and the crying woman fell into them sobbing. I closed my arms around her and said "WE forgive you." She cried more as did the cashier and others in line were touched.

The crying woman then backed away and asked, "What can I do?" Without hesitation and with a smile I said "don't let happen to our troops of today the same that happened to us, support them. Support the USO or any organization that supports our troops. Call them and ask what can you do to help our troops; they all have a wish list. Go up to every Military person in uniform and shake their hand; thank them for keeping terrorism off of our shores." She smiled through tears and running mascara, thanked me, and the moment passed as they all do.

I recall that day in San Francisco Airport when I was in uniform feeling proud leaving the military after a year in the hospital in Japan (from Nam), not able to walk fast and some group of scum came upon me and one spit on me, knowing full well I could not fight or even give chase. That moment hurt me to the core of my soul. The moment last week in the “stop-n-rob” will be burned in my mind and heart also. Am I home now? Damn right I'm Home! My work has just begun.

I came home to "The Wall" for the first time and cried those tears I could not cry for 40 years. I have been on missions that have buried the very best of our country, missions that have buried a BROTHER that rode with me on the Run For The Wall, buried ONE OF US that was missing for 40 years in Nam. I got 100 American flags (for flag lines) from the county of San Bernardino when they said “NO” (I don't take “No” for an answer too well). I make my all American beads. My beads make me happy to make. After 40 years as a corporate executive, the irony of it all is just too damn funny. I make Viet Nam beads also and give to any who wants them. These beads are part of my heart and can't ever be sold, they must be given. I feel as if I am just starting. I feel as if a fog has lifted and yes I am home with brothers and sisters on the road and in my heart all the time. Can I die happy now? Hell NO! I have work to do. Thank you Pegleg, Kirby, Monsoon, Big Grumpy, Rock, Ed (monkey nuts??), Doc, Mayor and all of you. See ya on the road. Thank you.

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### **PRAYER AT ST. LOUIS VAMC**

Following is the beautiful prayer that Chaplain Donna Zuroweste offered while RFTW was at VAMC-St. Louis:

*"...To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you..."*

Jeremiah 1:7-8

As the daughter of a WWII staff sergeant who loaded bombers for Europe and the niece of a private whose best friend died in his arms in a trench in France; I thank you, I honor you and I Bless you. As you ride the road on your journey of honor and remembrance; you have seen the deep flush of color arrowing the eastern horizon, you have passed the trees laden with the flowers of fruit to come and the fields bursting with vegetables and fruit. As the sun rose, the crickets who chattered you to sleep underneath the bright stars of the heavens quieted and the joyful songs of birds filled your souls. If you have eyes to see, you have seen the beauty of God as you Run to the Wall; He who has carved the clouds into shapes you love, He who has swelled the rivers with the thundering storms of spring, He who placed the birds near your wakening hearts, He who unrolled the misty fabric of fog in the mornings, He who blew gentle breezes in your faces as you rode, He who warmed your bodies with the sun, He who laid His hands on yours as you rode, He whose Spirit pulls you to the Wall. You have seen the face of God and lived. Open your eyes and Spirit wide and look at Love. It is your God who is passing by.

As you ride with honor and remember veterans on your journey—walk straight and tall, and know there is no burden you and they cannot carry. Find your footing and lift up your burdens. Sing when you are crying, praise when you are swearing, and ride on with fierce determination. Burdens will always come, they are part of life; but never let them weigh you down. Never give in to what burdens you. Know that the burden is trying to take away your self-support, your dignity, and your will to overcome it. Face your burdens head on and insist, with God's help that they be gone. Doing this is not easy, but with persistence, consistency and God, you can do all things. Lift up the POWs, the MIAs and the KIAs as you stand on the sacred and holy ground of Jefferson Barracks and when you reach the sacred ground of the Wall. Honor them with your lives and the roar of your thunder. As Chief Sitting Bull said, “You are living in a new path.”

May the God of all Creation lead you to the Wall; may our brother Jesus be with you and within you as you ride the road to the Wall; may the Great and Holy Spirit give strength and power to you and your bikes. May God provide you with cool days and warm nights, sunshine and clear roads (and maybe even reasonably priced gas);

and, with His blessings and grace, may you arrive safely at the Wall to commemorate those who have fallen and those who are missing and prisoners of war. May His peace always be with you and within you, before, behind and beside you on this and every journey. We ask this in Jesus's name. Please join us in singing the Great Amen:

Chaplain Donna Zuroweste  
Chaplain Resident, VAMC-STL  
Ofc. 849-6566  
Fax: 314-845-5033

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## **AN AMAZING RECOVERY**

By Wayne Nicholls

You may remember approximately 17 month ago when the prayer request went out for a young Marine who was severely burned during an explosion in Iraq. The results of your prayers have been rewarding to us and Merlin German.

Burned over 97 percent of his body, Merlin has had 40 surgeries with more yet to come. Practically everyone who has met the Marine describes him with one word: Miracle. You'll often find him at the therapy gym at Brooks Army Medical Center, sucking on a "fentanyl pop" - a plastic stick with a morphine-like painkiller. He designed his own t-shirt, which says on the front: "Got a 3 percent chance of surviving: What are you going to do?" On the back it lists four options: "a. Fight Through, b. Stay Strong, c. Overcome Because I am a Warrior, d. All of the Above." The last one is circled.

Living with choice "d" is not easy. German has had to endure surgery after surgery (40 so far), learn to walk again with grafts, hands without most of his fingers, reconstruction of his ears, eyelids and lips, and adjusting to a ripple-scarred face. Having nearly died from a roadside bomb, he retains his steely resolve and tremendously supportive family led by his mother Yvonne and Aunt Michelle (Michelle is friends with my wife Debbie).

After many months of practice, Merlin (21 years old) put on his Marine dress blues and hit the dance floor at the "Brooks Army Medical Center Holiday Ball." To the surprise of his mother, he took her into in wounded arms and danced. His words to Yvonne were "Have I told you lately that I loved you?"

Please continue to keep Merlin German in your prayers as he still has a long way to go to recovery. If you ever get by Brooks Army Medical Center, stop by and see Merlin. He just may show you a couple of new dance moves.

Thank you for your prayers and may God Bless you all.

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## **A MUST-READ FOR ALL VIETNAM VETERANS**

In August, VVA Chapter 785 had a very special guest speaker: Kathy Upchurch, the newly-elected President of the Gold Star Wives. Kathy shared with members some wonderful stories of her husband, Lt. James Glenn Upchurch, who was killed in Vietnam in Quang Tri Province while leading a Company during ground combat operations. Kathy has made three trips to Vietnam, to walk the hallowed ground of her husband and to share his experiences with the brave Marines that he led. An outstanding article was written in the 1999 edition of the Leatherneck Magazine and Chapter 785 editor Bill "Monsoon" Mimiaga considers it a must-read for every Vietnam Veteran. Following are excerpts from that article.



## **Putting Ghosts to Rest In Vietnam, War Widow Exorcises Three Decades of Guilt**

By R. R. Keene

Dong Koi Mountain is one of those places where the Vietnamese do not go. It does not appear any more or less foreboding than neighboring Dong Ha Mountain and the surrounding hills of what was once Northern I Corps along the old Demilitarized Zone. But the local inhabitants believe it is haunted with the souls of unrested spirits. As a rule, combat veterans don't put much stock in ghost stories, usually dismissing such tales as products of overactive imaginations. But every once in a while, someone will tell them of something unusual which causes them to pause. Dong Koi is one such exception.

Twenty-five years after Reserve Second Lieutenant James Glenn "Jimmy" Upchurch made the ultimate sacrifice on that mountain, his widow, Kathy, stood at its foot, trying unsuccessfully to find someone to take her up on a tour. With her was Ed Henry, a former Navy corpsman who served with the Seventh Marine Regiment at Chu Lai and who is now a guide in Vietnam with Military Historical Tours of Alexandria, Va.

"We're not allowed in that area," he told her gently, as they looked up the ridge line. "It's an ancestral area the Vietnamese don't want disturbed."

Their Vietnamese guide was less tactful. When he was asked to lead them up the ridge, his reply was a firm, "No!"

So Kathy Upchurch stood at the foot of Dong Koi Mountain and prayed. She had been an 18-year-old college freshman when, on a blind date, she met her future husband, an upperclassman who played football for East Central State University in Ada, Okla. Jim Upchurch looked like the all-conference tackle that he was: broad-shouldered, full of youthful power and confidence and well-liked, but also a natural leader.

"He had a boy's sense of humor, direct with an easy laugh. And we became best friends," she said. "He was the first person in my life to ever fight for me," she added softly, without elaborating. He proposed on St. Valentine's Day 1965, and they were married in June. Not quite two years later, he received his draft notice on Jan. 28, 1967, his 23rd birthday. Things were such then that he could have gotten a waiver, but he wasn't going to do that. His grandfather had been a Marine," Kathy said. She remembers the day when Jim and his friend, Larry Beck, came through the door and said in unison, "Guess what we did today?" They had signed up for Officer Candidates School. She still can hear that refrain today, tolling like a prophetic chorus, for both would die in Vietnam. *"Guess what we did today?"*

Second Lieutenant Upchurch's Basic School class graduated in August 1968, and by September he had orders to the Republic of South Vietnam. The couple had a month's leave to prepare for the separation. Kathy had been teaching school while Jim attended OCS and TBS at Quantico, Va. They returned to his father's resort in Graford, Texas, where she would work as a back-up fry cook, cabin cleaner, boat worker and wait while Jim did his 13-month tour. He wanted to make the Corps a career, and she really wanted to have children. But decisions on both would have to wait. After Vietnam, there would be plenty of time for such things.

### **On the war front**

Vietnam in late 1968 was a time when the warring parties reassessed their strategies. The Third Marine Division launched a series of mobile fire base operations along South Vietnam's northern border area. The Americans, however, had come to realize that there was a limit to their participation in what had turned out to be America's longest war. The Corps, according to one Marine general, had "adopted the idea that we were in the postwar period." Maybe, but there was still a lot of killing to be done. Second Lieutenant Upchurch found himself commanding 2d Platoon of "Echo" Company, 2d Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment, 3dMarDiv, in what was then Quang Tri Province. He considered himself lucky, as his platoon sergeant, Douglas "Mack" McConnell,

was considered to be one of the best. They hit it off and became friends in a situation where friendship is not easily earned nor quickly given. Kathy recalled Jim's letters speaking in glowing terms of Mack. In fact, the whole platoon seemed to take to their new lieutenant. Kathy received a Christmas letter from an anonymous member of his platoon, that read, in part: "We feel he is one of the best lieutenants ever.... He works with and for us. He takes great interest in our personal health and welfare. We are fortunate in having such a good lieutenant. On the other hand, he is fortunate in having a thoughtful wife who remembers us peons at Christmas." (The latter is a reference to Christmas and other care packages she regularly sent to the platoon with notes of encouragement.) More importantly, Lt Upchurch proved to be a quick study and fast learner, essential traits in combat. In five months, he participated in eight major combat operations including Dewey Canyon. Operation Dewey Canyon took place in January 1969 in the Ashau Valley, an infamous North Vietnamese Army supply route. With the slap of AK47 bullets overhead and the "krumph" of incoming mortar rounds forcing 2d Plt to hunker down into the red clay, Lt Upchurch coordinated supporting-arms fire with cool skill and quiet confidence. He ordered a counterattack toward the heaviest point of contact, suffering casualties. The enemy soon took flight. The young platoon commander was proving to be as tenacious as he was courageous. Later in February, one of his squads sprung a nasty ambush that killed those unlucky enough to be walking point for a large NVA force.

Pressing his advantage, Lt Upchurch and a fire team reinforced the ambush squad, and then he led the combined group in a vigorous assault. He was out front throwing grenades and firing his .45-caliber pistol. The NVA, bloodied and surprised, fell back. Later in February, Echo Co took on an NVA unit that was heavily armed with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades. Upchurch deployed his platoon to ensure that all avenues of approach to their position were covered. When the shooting became heavy and the confusion of combat ensued, he stood exposed to heavy hostile fire and pointed out targets to his machine-gun squad. Nobody in the platoon doubted their lieutenant's courage. Yet he confided in his letters to Kathy, "I'm scared every day." He also wrote of his concern for his fellow Marines and the fact that there were so many 18-year-olds. In one of his last letters, he wrote: "I really do believe there is a God, and I'm not afraid to die."

### **On the home front**

On March 25, Kathy had a dream that Jim was killed in combat. It upset her because she had recently written to him, asking to postpone for a month their planned rest and relaxation rendezvous in Hawaii due to a potential teaching job. She had been notified that the R&R dates had changed, but Jim hadn't yet replied.

They came to her door at 8 a.m., March 27. One was a Marine captain who was the recruiting officer out of Fort Worth. He was wearing the yellow-and-green and white-and-green ribbons that told her that he was also a Vietnam veteran. Kathy saw them, and though she knew why they had come, she asked: "Is he a prisoner of war or missing in action?"

The Marine captain with the ribbons from Vietnam said, "No." She told them, "You'd better come inside."

### **Picking up the pieces**

Jim had been an only child, and now there would be no children. Their marriage had lasted only three years and nine months. "It wasn't fair," she thought, and she was right. And, certainly, nothing that followed seemed right.

Kathy later learned the details of how her husband died in a letter from Sgt Mack, written May 1, 1969, at Quang Tri.

"Dear Mrs. Upchurch, I'm sorry I've been so long in answering the letter you addressed to our platoon. I was your husband's platoon sergeant, and I like to consider myself also as one of his friends.... I'm sure I can speak for all of the platoon when I say we share your loss of not only a damn good platoon commander, but also a fine human being. The rapport he established was one of the finest I've seen in my career.

"You asked for details surrounding your husband's death.... I'll try to tell you.

"The NVA had been hitting Route 9 with mortars and sniper fire. The battalion had wanted the 2d and 3d platoons of Echo and two platoons of Fox Co to sweep the hills and clear the enemy....

"It was decided that the lieutenant would take the 'company minus' as the company commander, a job we all felt he was well qualified to do. I was to take over his job as the 2d Platoon commander.

"We had seen signs of the enemy, but it appeared that he was leaving the area. The company felt that it would be an uneventful operation, including the lieutenant. We all felt we were in good hands while 'Mr. Upchurch' was in charge.

"The next day, the 3d Platoon was moving out first, and the command post and mortars [the lieutenant's group] were going to be moving up with the 2d Platoon. It was at this time the enemy first opened up with automatic weapons on the column. They were on our objective and on another hill to the right from which we were taking automatic and machine-gun fire. Just before we made the assault the lieutenant told me, 'Give 'em hell, Sgt Mack.' It was his platoon, and I knew he was wishing he could make that assault with us. It was what he had been training us for for so long.

"Well, we took the hill without a friendly casualty. He was really proud of us. I was talking on the radio with him, and he had maneuvered the 'company minus' into taking both the objective and the other hill. He told me that the enemy was on the run and was going into Fox Company's blocking force.

"We then set in and were preparing to take a break. We could see Mr. Upchurch and his radio operator on the hill to our left. Then it happened.

"The enemy started dropping mortars on the hill the lieutenant was on. The first round they fired was too far over the target they had picked. We, the 2d Platoon, could see it hit and tried to tell them by radio to take cover, for it seems they didn't see it. However the enemy had 'keyed out' our radio frequency, and we had no communication with them.

"The next round was only a moment later, and we could see it had hit our lieutenant and his radio operator [who would survive]. Then the enemy started dropping mortar rounds all over their hill which we had just taken. The corpsman was right there to help, but Mr. Upchurch had been slain immediately.... We were able to get the killed and wounded out by chopper.

"War, Mrs. Upchurch, is a horrible nightmare. It makes old men out of young boys. I saw some of those 'old men' in the lieutenant's platoon crying that day. There is no doubt that they had lost a platoon commander [whom] they loved as a leader and as a man.... The loss of our lieutenant is one we cannot or will not forget.... We all share your grief for the loss of one we all admired and respected. We will always be proud to say we served under him.

"Most of the old platoon is gone now. There are only about 10 of us left. Some have gone home, some have been wounded, some died, but those who have gone carry the memory of their lieutenant and the fine things he did for them as a platoon and as individuals.

"We all suffer losses in these hard times. All I can say after, is the way I've found to help ease some of the pain I've encountered, is faith in God through prayer. I'll close for now.

"My deepest regret, Sgt Mack."

For the next few weeks and months, she listened to people offering sympathy as she wrapped things up. She had come to the conclusion that the Marines had handled things badly, from sending an officer who was inexperienced in casualty assistance to shipping her husband's body in what she believed was a less-than-timely fashion. "Jim's death and what was happening to me: It all just wasn't real.

"It came home to me when his personal effects arrived. His wedding ring and a crucifix were the first things I saw, and I knew it was final." She wept alone. She had their wedding bands made into a ring which she kept and made a scrapbook for Jim's father that included his Purple Heart and two Bronze Star citations. "I threw away Jim's letters because I didn't have a child to pass them off to." Then, she tried to start over. However, one thought lingered. "Is teaching more important than me?" And each time she heard his words, she always

answered, "If I hadn't asked for the R&R date to change, he'd still be alive." It haunted her. She went back to school and earned a master's degree in physical education. Then she wanted to be a nurse, but ended up teaching public school in Springfield, Va. She dated a few military men and four years later remarried. That marriage lasted six years.

"If I hadn't asked for the R&R date to change, he'd still be alive," she kept thinking. Looking back, Kathy said that it was that thought, more often than not, that sabotaged her relationships with others. Depression set in. "I was becoming an A-number-1 b----, who needed to see a shrink." She did, and he suggested that she visit Vietnam. She also discovered the Gold Star Wives of America Inc., a nonprofit national military widows' service organization that took its name from an old custom in World War II. Families of those serving in the military back then were issued "Blue Star" flags, which were proudly displayed in their windows while they waited for a loved one to return from the war. Sometimes the wait was in vain, and the family replaced the blue flag with a Gold Star flag signifying a member of their family had been killed in action. In this group, Kathy found others who understood how she felt. It was a combination of friends, old and new, who encouraged her to bring things to closure in a journey to Vietnam.

In 1994, on what would have been Kathy and Jim Upchurch's 29th wedding anniversary, she arrived in Hanoi. A few days later, with maps provided by Marines who had known her husband, she was near the 17th Parallel at the foot of Dong Koi Mountain, looking up toward where her husband had been killed. Kathy chose a sapling and hung a small wooden folk angel on it to approbate the spirits and in remembrance of not only Jim, but of all who fought and died there.

"I really believe that I heard Jim's voice, and he told me: 'I am at peace. We all are at peace. I knew you would come, for God and I have been guiding you.... It is now time for you to be at peace.' "

"I didn't hear anything," said guide Ed Henry, "but I'll tell you what. It was like being in a bad place. The Vietnamese guides just left. While we were there, I got a feeling of something not being right, sort of like just before an ambush we once walked into near Chu Lai. It was like we were surrounded by people watching us. It was just spooky."

She returned to Vietnam again in March of 1998 because she discovered that she liked the country and its people. While she still thinks now and then of the man she has loved for so long, she admitted that it is sometimes difficult to remember Jim's smile, laughter and brown eyes.

"How dark brown they were," she whispered and wished she had never thrown his letters away.

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## ► VA NEWS

### VA HONORS LITTLE CAESARS FOUNDER

WASHINGTON (Sept. 17, 2007) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson today presented a Secretary's Award to Little Caesars founder Michael Ilitch in recognition of his advancement of veterans in business through pizza franchise discounts. Ilitch's restaurant franchise has a program to aid any veteran interested in starting a Little Caesars restaurant and also offers special opportunities with additional deep discounts, credit, training, and marketing support for those veterans who are service-disabled. "Michael Ilitch recognizes the value of veterans in business," said Nicholson. "VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise will assist veterans seeking to become Little Caesars franchise owners and looks forward to helping veterans translate the leadership skills they learned while in uniform to business ownership and expansion." In conjunction with the award ceremony, Ilitch, who is a former Marine, served pizza to homeless veterans at the VA headquarters in Washington from

Little Caesars' "Love Kitchen," a pizza kitchen on wheels that travels across the U.S. and Canada to feed the homeless and disaster survivors.

To assist service-disabled veterans who want to open a Little Caesars restaurant, the program waives a \$20,000 franchise fee on the first store, provides \$10,000 credit on the initial equipment order, and provides a variety of marketing support and financing options and other benefits, which can total \$68,000. For other veterans, the fee is reduced by \$5,000 and the credit extended for equipment is \$5,000. Veterans are offered business opportunities by a variety of franchisers through the International Franchise Association's VetFran program. More information about the companies' special benefits for veterans is available at [www.franchise.org](http://www.franchise.org) and the VA Center for Veterans Enterprise's resource site to assist veteran entrepreneurs at [www.vetbiz.gov](http://www.vetbiz.gov).

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## SHINGLES VACCINE AVAILABLE TO VA PATIENTS

WASHINGTON—A vaccine for shingles, which Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) researchers helped develop, is available to veterans who are patients at VA medical facilities nationwide.

“Shingles can seriously degrade the quality of life for those who suffer from this disease,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. “Offering this vaccine to our patients is further evidence of VA’s commitment to provide world-class health care to America’s veterans. VA will continue research that leads to real-life solutions like the distribution of this shingles vaccine for patients at VA facilities across the country,” Nicholson added.

VA physicians will offer the vaccine to patients with appropriate medical conditions, usually those who are 60 years of age or older and have healthy immune systems. A single dose of the vaccine offers protection against shingles, which is scientifically named Herpes Zoster.

VA researchers and patients from across the country participated in studies which led to the vaccine’s approval by the Food and Drug Administration. The vaccine is available immediately to those who are recommended for the treatment.

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## ► OTHER NEWS

### VIETNAM WALL DEFACEMENT—ACCIDENT OR VANDALISM?

*You have probably read or heard about the recent defacement of The Wall. Pictures of streaks of possibly an acid of some kind circulated on the Internet, inflaming some to take action on the gross security lapse. Unfortunately, conflicting information was released. After investigation, it appears the damage was inflicted intentionally by vandals.*

This correction was issued by the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

**Sent:** Monday, September 10, 2007 2:44 PM

**Subject:** Re: Fw: Correction on Vietnam Wall Defacement

Correction on Vietnam Wall Defacement. Patriots and Comrades All: After several attempts, I was able to contact SGT Booker of the National Park Service (NPS), to check on the facts about the defacement of the Vietnam Wall last weekend. He explained it was a cleaning accident by a Park Ranger and NOT a defacement

as was originally reported by the Vietnam Veterans of American (VVA). The NPS is regarding this as an accident instead of an act of vandalism or terrorism. Our National Commander Patriot Henry Cook III has the direct phone numbers for SGT Booker of the NPS, and can verify these facts with him directly. A copy of this correction is also being sent the VVA for their followup and verification. My apology for the error, as sometimes it is not always possible to reach the NPS immediately. Any future report of attempted or actual vandalism will be verified with the NPS in advance, even if that means a significant delay in reporting the incident.

Yours in Patriotism,  
Steve Cobb Commander Region I, MOPH NE/Mid-Atlantic USA Military Order of the Purple Heart

On September 11, 2007, the NPS said it was still investigating, and that whether the incident was accidental or intentional was still unclear.

Office of Communications News Release  
Release Date: Tuesday, September 11, 2007  
Bill Line, Toni Braxton 202 619-7400

Washington, D.C. – On Friday evening, September 7, the United States Park Police (USPP) reported being notified of a light, oily and unidentified substance that was spilled over portions of some of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial's names panels and paving stones; the National Park Service (NPS) preservation and maintenance staff began the process of removing the substance on Saturday morning, September 8 and have been working daily to complete the substance's removal.

The United States Park Police is investigating the matter. Until this investigation is completed, it is premature to speculate whether any intentional act was committed.  
The NPS' preservation and maintenance staff believes it will be possible to remove the substance entirely.

For nearly 25 years, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) and the National Park Service have worked together on the maintenance of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

“The care and security of this national memorial and national treasure remain a top priority to both the Memorial Fund and to the National Park Service,” said the Memorial Fund's founder and president, Jan C. Scruggs.

“While it is unclear what transpired, we are heartened by the response of the veterans' community and the general public. After 25 years, their connection to The Wall remains as strong as ever, and we appreciate that,” Scruggs added.

As more information becomes available, the NPS will keep the news media and the general public informed.

A number of Vietnam veterans contacted their congressmen and pushed for the truth. On September 17, the National Park Service issued the following:

Sept. 17, 2007 Contacts: Lisa Gough, VVMF  
For Immediate Release (202) 393-0090, ext. 109  
Bill Line, National Park Service (202) 619-7177

**U.S. Park Police Rules that Substance Left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Is Vandalism**  
*National Park Service Continues Cleanup Efforts*

**Washington, D.C.** – The U.S. Park Police ruled today that the oily substance spread on sections of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and on the paving stones was an act of vandalism. Park Police spokesman Sgt. Robert Lachance stressed that the investigation is ongoing and would not offer further comment.

The National Park Service continues working to identify and remove the substance. Because it is not yet known what was spread on The Wall and paving stones, the National Park Service's (NPS) Preservation and Maintenance Staff is working with the most gentle of techniques to ensure the substance's removal, but also to ensure that the substance is not pushed into the granite stonework or grouting.

“We believe the American public would want the NPS to do the preservation and restoration work properly and not to move in a hasty manner,” said NPS spokesman Bill Line. “If the preservation work takes another week or two or more, it is more important to perform the removal properly than to move quickly and thus risk long-term damage.”

NPS urges concerned citizens to be patient with the cleanup and investigative work.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is continuing to monitor the situation and has offered its help to both NPS and the Park Police. It has contacted the stoneworkers who work on The Wall to get their expert advice.

“We deplore this act of vandalism on one of America’s sacred places,” said Memorial Fund Founder and President Jan C. Scruggs.

#### Incident noted in U.S. Congressional Record

Until September 20, there had been no mention in any media about the vandalism at The Wall. Rep. Ted Poe of Texas deserves our praise and thanks for delivering the following speech on September 20, 2007 on the floor of the House of Representatives:

“Madam Speaker, I do not believe that the men who served in uniform in Vietnam have been given the credit they deserve. It was a difficult war against an unorthodox enemy.”

“These are the words of General Westmoreland in the war where ‘all gave some and some gave all.’ But the disrespect continues. Now, despicable vandals have desecrated the sacred black granite Vietnam Wall. An oily, slimy, greasy substance was smeared over the Wall and the walkway. The Park Service is attempting to remove the damage, but the monument desecraters run free.

“This monument bears the name of 56,000 warriors. They answered the call for America and they died in their youth. I grew up with friends whose names are on that wall.

“The unpatriotic, cowardly, abusing criminals should be tracked down, prosecuted, and put in jail somewhere off the shores of America, maybe Guantanamo Bay.

“It has been said that ‘Vietnam was a war that asked everything of a few and nothing of most in America.’ Now America must be resolved to capture these outlaws and restore dignity to those who died for the rest of us.

“And that's just the way it is.”

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#### **“IN MEMORY DAY” HONORS NONCOMBAT DEATHS OF VIETNAM VETS**

By Malavika Jagannathan, Green Bay Press Gazette, April 16, 2007

When Green Bay resident Jonathan Fogarty was younger, he remembers his cousin Norman Bays as a cheerful man—always willing to lend a hand. It was only after Bays' death in West Virginia in 1999 that Fogarty realized the lasting impact of the Vietnam War in his cousin's fight with cancer, his alcoholism, and other lifelong physical and emotional scars.

Today, Fogarty will be in Washington, D.C., to commemorate Bays' death during "In Memory Day," a program hosted annually by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to honor soldiers who died prematurely of noncombat injuries caused by the war. Bays died of cancer related to Agent Orange exposure he faced when he served as a petroleum storage specialist in the Army.

"Most of those Vietnam vets don't really know about 'In Memory,'" said Fogarty, who is part of the Northeastern Wisconsin chapter of Rolling Thunder, an organization that raises awareness of soldiers who are prisoners of war or missing in action.

"Everyone talks about the names on The Wall, but there's the other people that came back and are still suffering. They need to be recognized for their sacrifices," said Fogarty, a veteran of the Gulf War.

To qualify for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall, soldiers have to die in Vietnam—a fact Fogarty found out after trying to get his cousin's name on it. It was then he discovered the "In Memory" program. Since the program began nine years ago, 56 Vietnam-era veterans from Wisconsin have been honored. Many of them call Northeastern Wisconsin home, according to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. Fogarty's cousin is one of 77—including two Wisconsin veterans—who will be honored today.

More than 165,000 soldiers from Wisconsin served in the armed forces in Vietnam and 1,239 were killed there, according to the state Department of Veterans Affairs. A 2004 study by the Center for Disease Control of veterans showed that Vietnam-era veterans have a higher rate of mortality than other veterans. In 2001, out of 186,495 Vietnam veterans examined by the Veterans Administration for the Agent Orange registry, about 155,490 or 83 percent, were diagnosed with some disease or problem linked to exposure. Agent Orange is a common name given to the herbicide used in the Vietnam War to clear large areas of forest

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## **AGENT ORANGE NEWS**

Forwarded courtesy of Bob "Gibbo" Gibson - Duty First (D&E Platoon Rifleman - Vietnam) 1967-Oct. 1968, Australia

If you drank milk in 'Nam between 1965 and 1972 you ingested Agent Orange and a variety of other herbicide residues. As you may know, the Foremost Milk Company (now out of business in the US) based in Los Angeles held the DOD contract for the US military's milk supply in Southeast Asia. Before and after shipping packaged "finished milk" in its distinctive orange/white containers, Foremost shipped a milk concentrate to 'Nam which was to be mixed with water. Unfortunately the water used was taken from the Saigon River which, DOD belatedly learned, was infested with herbicide drainage. Foremost USA went defunct several years ago but Foremost Vietnam is still in operation. Milk became an essential export by the USG to Vietnam after 1967 after doctors in the States discovered they were treating large numbers of Vietnam vets suffering from gastroenteritis and other colon inflammatory illnesses due to lack of the enzyme used by the intestines to digest milk. If a person continues to drink milk their body will continue to produce the enzyme (kind of like a wet nurse who continues to manufacture breast milk for decades after giving birth as long as her milk continues to be suckled.) However, if a person stops drinking milk their body stops producing the enzyme. Because milk was not as available in 'Nam during America's early deployment, thousands of Americans assigned to Vietnam gradually stopped producing the enzyme. But when they returned back to The World the first thing they consumed in large quantities was milk—which made them sick because they could no longer adequately digest it. As a result, Foremost was contracted to ensure there was always a large supply of milk for GI's to consume. Unfortunately,



the high demand resulted in its Vietnam production being mixed with tainted water. Hence, many American's who served in Vietnam but had no direct contact with herbicide distribution or deployment contracted the chemicals through the milk they drank.

REFERENCES: 1. Herbicides Used in Vietnam <http://members.aol.com/warlibrary/vwhr1.htm>  
2. Foremost Vietnam  
<http://www.aseconnectvietnam.gov.vn/Localgovernment/Local.aspx?ProvinceId=50&Langid=1&MenuID=19&Type=5&DnID=7503>

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## ► BRINGING THEM HOME

### WORLD WAR II B-24 PILOT'S REMAINS LAID TO REST AT ARLINGTON

The remains of an Army Air Force pilot who died in an aircraft crash 64 years ago in Alaska were interred Sept. 7 at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

Lieutenant Hoskin, 22, was one of several crew members who died Dec. 21, 1943, when a B-24 Liberator crashed 120 miles east of Fairbanks, Alaska. His remains were identified in April following an investigation spurred on by Douglas Beckstead, the historian for Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska.

Two crew members bailed out before the crash. One of them, co-pilot 2nd Lt. Leon Crane of Philadelphia, survived for 86 days in the wilderness after he stumbled upon trappers' cabins where he found food and refuge from the elements. Crew chief Master Sgt. Richard Pompeo, the second man who made it out of the bomber, was never found. His sister and nephew attended the Sept. 7 service.

Others aboard the B-24 were 1st Lt. James B. Sibert, a propeller specialist, and Staff Sgt. Ralph Wenz, a radio operator, whose bodies were later found inside the aircraft. While flying at about 20,000 feet two hours into the mission, the aircraft entered into clouds and its instruments started to act irrationally, according to a statement by Lieutenant Crane that Mr. Beckstead discovered. It went into two spins, both of which were controlled somewhat by the pilots. When it started a third spin, Lieutenant Hoskin hit the crash alarm signal and yelled for the crew to bail out of the aircraft. Sergeant Pompeo and Lieutenant Crane exited the aircraft through forward bomb bay doors. Lieutenant Crane later reported that he watched the sergeant drift over a ridge but never saw him again, Mr. Beckstead said.

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### AIR FORCE PILOT'S REMAINS RETURNED HOME 38 YEARS LATER

Capt. Benjamin F. Danielson was a 26-year-old Air Force pilot when his plane was shot down on a mission over Laos on Dec. 5, 1969, said Dennis Danielson of Waukesha. Recently, DNA tests identified a piece of shoulder bone as belonging to his long-missing brother, Danielson said.

He still has the typewritten letter, its stationery having faded with time, sent to him when he was in the Army, stationed at the Panama Canal, that broke the news of the brother he idolized, gone missing.

“The aircraft was downed by suspected ground fire. A parachute was seen and beeper signals were heard and radio contact was made with him,” wrote Maj. Gen. DuPont. “Rescue efforts are being made but are being hampered by enemy fire,” the letter continued. “Please accept my sincere sympathy during this time of anxiety.”

Government papers bearing “Secret” and “Confidential” in bold black letters recently released to the public detail the largest rescue effort of the Vietnam War that had been launched to recover Capt. Danielson and his navigator.

“When the plane was hit, both my brother and his navigator got out and landed safely, separated by a river in an area heavily infested with the enemy,” Dennis Danielson said. “The first day, they bombed and used a smoke cover to go in and rescue the navigator.”

Two more days of trying and taking devastating enemy fire and the search for Capt. Danielson was called off, his brother said. “They now seem to think he may have been killed that very first night, that the radio contact gave his location away,” he said.

His brother ended up flying that deadly day in Laos through a fluke, Dennis Danielson said. “He was supposed to fly a tanker to Japan, but someone pulled rank and he ended up staying on base,” he said. “When they scrambled, he went up on the mission and never came back.” Until now.

Danielson’s remains were brought home in June and buried in his hometown of Kenyon, Minn., with full military honors.

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## ► EVENTS

### **VAMC VETERANS CAR SHOW**

**Sunday, October 7, 2007**

**Loma Linda, CA**

The Loma Linda VAMC Veterans Car Show will be October 7 at the VAMC. This worthy cause benefits veterans' programs at the VAMC and each year about \$100,000 is raised and donated to the volunteer services program. They in turn select from a list provided by the director and pay for these items as selected, instead of just giving the money to the VAMC for their general operating budget. This year they are raffling off many items as they always do and this year's car is a restored Chevy Chevelle Convertible. It was restored by the Over The Hill Gang, the sponsors of the car show.

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### **25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE WALL PARADE**

**Saturday, November 10, 2007**

#### Opening Ceremony on the Mall: 10 a.m.-11 a.m.

The ceremony takes place from the huge stage on the Mall at 7th Street, between Jefferson and Madison Drives. Thousands of general public and veterans attend to Pledge Allegiance; hear the Invocation to those military now deceased and Armed Forces presently serving, a 21-Gun Salute, speeches from acclaimed present and former military (i.e., Medal of Honor Recipients), VVA leadership, distinguished guests, and partake of the befitting musical pageantry. For those requiring it, seating is available.

#### The Parade: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Immediately following the ceremony, the parade officially starts, with dignitaries and the Grand Marshal taking the lead. A parade of 25,000 plus participants will march along Constitution Avenue. Traditionally, various dignitaries walk in the parade up to the Reviewing Stand (in front of the IRS Building on Constitution Avenue),

where they proceed to announce and acknowledge the thousands of participants. There will be bleacher seating for those veterans who wish to view the parade. The media sets up roving camera crews throughout the parade route.

Veterans Fair and Concert - Sylvan Theater 12 noon - 6 p.m.

The prestigious outdoor Sylvan Theater, located close to the Washington Monument will host an afternoon of memorable entertainment and meeting place of friends past and present. Various booths will be in the area.

For more information on the anniversary events, visit <http://www.vvmf.org/index.cfm?SectionID=524>

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## ► SICK CALL

### ED “FINGERS” GOHN

*Fingers was injured on the second day of the Run this year, and has been recovering from 6 broken ribs and 20 broken bones in his right foot. We are thankful for his good recovery. He is back on his feet and full throttle into his normal activities. Send your good wishes to Fingers for a full recovery: [FINGERS@aol.com](mailto:FINGERS@aol.com). He recently sent the following email message:*

“I have healed enough to be riding again on my softail (the Ultra is STILL in the shop). Everything I had with me is back in California, although each took a separate route.

I am here because of personal safety equipment and the professional help of many. My sincere gratitude to all who were of assistance , especially those who prayed for me.

Never forget,  
Fingers  
Benevolent Lion”

### BILL “MONSOON” MIMIAGA

VVA Chapter 785’s Editor and “Water Point” leader for RFTW has been undergoing chemo for breast cancer. But it hasn’t stopped or even slowed down Monsoon’s devotion to duty—he continues to attend all activities of Chapter 785. Please keep Monsoon in your heart and prayers as he continues his fight against cancer. You can send your encouragement to him at [GUNNYMIMS@aol.com](mailto:GUNNYMIMS@aol.com).

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## ► WORTH READING/VIEWING:

Recently a very important book was released. AN ENORMOUS CRIME; The Definitive Account of US POWs Abandoned in SE Asia was published by St. Martin’s Press. The National Alliance of Families of POW/MIAs issued a memo to all POW activists, U.S. Veterans, and American Patriots urging them to read this book about how the Defense Intelligence Agency manipulated intel on U.S. POWs.

The authors, former U.S. Congressman Bill Hendon and MIA daughter/lawyer Elizabeth A. Stewart, have also launched a website, [www.enormouscrime.com](http://www.enormouscrime.com). This massive new site provides the “meat on the bones” for one of the most controversial charges in the book: that the Pentagon’s Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) deliberately “cherry-picked” and played fast and loose with first-hand, live-sighting intelligence—as well as

overhead aerial and satellite photography—in 1983-1984. This was an intense period in Washington D.C: POW activists were pushing the Reagan Administration to bring our men home and the bureaucracy was desperate to discredit the mounting evidence that indeed hundreds of our POWs were left behind and were still there.

### **More on An Enormous Crime:**

Hello Brothers and Sisters. I was with Alpha Co. 1/327, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne/Air Assault Infantry in Vietnam 1970-71. I am trying to get the word out about the just released book, “An Enormous Crime,” written by an ex-congressman and the daughter of a Vietnam MIA who have been trying since the Carter Administration to bring our heroes home. This is a must read for every veteran, service person, and their families. Look it up on the Internet: [www.enormouscrime.com](http://www.enormouscrime.com).

The book chronicles the history of and the attempt to bring our POWs home from Vietnam who were left behind in 1973. This is not a book of hearsay. It is full of archival declassified documents data that shows how each presidential administration has either covered up or just ignored the fact that there were approximately 700 live Americans who were kept by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Laotian Government. This book will open your eyes. It should infuriate you. Whether they are alive or dead, it doesn't matter, but we as a nation and especially as veterans owe it to our brothers who were left behind in Vietnam to raise OUR voices as we did March 2007 in Washington D.C. for the Gathering of Eagles and make it known that WE want our brothers home to their families.

Get the book. Read the book. Pass it on to the next brother or sister or your family member. If you are reading this and you don't think it applies to you, think again. If you happen to become a hostage in a terrorism attack, this will show you what hostages are thought of by this country's government and how good chances are that you would never make it back. Write your Congressman, Senator, and especially the President and demand for action on the POW/MIAs of Vietnam. It has gone on long enough.

Thanks,  
Mil "Bigdog"Thornton  
NEVER FORGET!!

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## ► CLOSING THOUGHTS

### **COLORS OF THE WALL**

By Larry Ouellette

Raindrops fall on sacred tablets of stone  
Known to our nation as the Wall.  
Releasing to sight all the colors mankind knows,  
Each giving meaning to one and all.

Black of the stone echoes the sorrow of their passing,  
Felt by all families and friends.  
Red symbolizes the bloodshed of their masses,  
Defending freedom and democracy to the end.

Blue signals the feelings of melancholy,  
Wishing for one last day to together spend.

Green shows the vitality of the sleeping warrior's valley,  
Where all eternally rest among brothers and friends.

Yellow reveals the sun's warmth and God's love,  
For warriors now locked in His embrace.  
White, the color of angel's wings looking down from above,  
Watching over the procession of people passing thru this sacred place.

Sun dries all the water from precious stones,  
Colors of the prism withdraw slowly from this place.  
I stand reverently here in my space alone,  
Wondering why it can't dry the teardrops from my face.

## You Are Not Forgotten



### APPLICATION FOR NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

The RFTW newsletter is published in January, April, July, and October. A one-year subscription is \$10, which covers the cost of printing and mailing. If you subscribe or renew by October 31 you will receive all four issues for that year. If you renew after October 31, your subscription will begin with the January issue of the next year.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ 2007

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ FOR 1 YEAR \_\_\_\_\_ 2 YEARS \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form with your check or money order (made payable to Run For The Wall) to Judy Lacey, 3310 Thunderbird Drive, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406.

# **RUN FOR THE WALL**



## **WE RIDE FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T**

**To promote healing among Vietnam veterans and their families and friends**  
**To call for an accounting of all Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action (POW/MIA)**  
**To honor the memory of those Killed in Action (KIA)**