



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 750



LOCK AND LOAD

SEPTEMBER 2010

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V.V.A. Chapter 750 Board Members: John H Howe, Mike Isbell, Rod Kutz, Marie Mayo, Bob Hart, Fred Collins and George White.

From the Presidents Desk:

Thanks to all who attended the August meeting. Membership in our chapter is a choice. A choice to not forget our fellow warriors that may need our help. Help that we gladly give without reservations.

I said it the last time and I will say it again, we are coming upon some busy times. Watchfire, the Rifle Raffle and the Annual Poker Run. It appears (and I am making one hell of an assumption) that things are coming along on these projects. All of these projects need volunteers. The members of these committees can do only so much and your helping can assure success. More will be discussed at the next meeting.

I don't have a lot to say this month (no jokes please) but I hope to see many of you at our next meeting.

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Contact John at johnhhowe@me.com to be added to the email list. And don't forget our web site (<http://okvva750.org>). Check it out!

The next Chapter 750 business meeting: **September 16th, 1900** hours (7 p.m.), at the American Legion Post on South Street.

This newsletter was printed and distributed by **THE UPS STORE**, 14th St., Ponca City.

August 19th Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7PM by President Howe.

Pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for all POW/MIA'S and active duty personnel.

Invocation by Larry Grantz

Attendance: 16 members and 1 associate.

Minutes were read and accepted.

Treasure report: None

Committee Reports:

Bob Hart reported that a donor plaque needs to be completed.

Bricks: Mike Isbell stated that we currently have 5 bricks waiting to be engraved.

Membership: 98 and 6 associates.

Old Business:

Rifle Raffle: George White and Jerry Johns displayed the rifle and accessories that will be raffled. The cost of raffle tickets is \$5.00 for one ticket or 5 for \$20.00. They asked that all members please take tickets to sell. The cost to the chapter is approximately \$1000.00;

Questions were asked about what age someone must be to purchase a ticket? The age limit is 21. Several other questions came up and all were answered to the satisfaction of the members present. The raffle is being advertised through several radio stations at no cost to the chapter. The drawing for the winner will be held the 5th of November at the American Legion Hall.

President Howe praised George and Jerry for their quick and efficient work to bring everything together for the raffle.

Poker Run: The day of the run will be 9 October. The route is being worked out. A flyer for the Poker Run will be coming out soon. Marie showed everyone the revised

picture of the T-shirt for the run. It was approved by the members present. The total cost of the shirts will be \$955.21. We have acquired enough sponsors to pay for them.

Football Tickets: Still being working on.



Watch Fire: Bob Robbins will be out of town on 18 September due to work obligations and will be unable to chair this event. We are looking for a new chairman for the Watch Fire and hope a member will step forward. David Harris will provide the wood.

Fall Chapter Picnic: Bill Sanders reported that he would like to do a pot luck lunch again this year. Bill asked that the chapter pay for the meat. Bill volunteered John Howe to cook it. Motion was made by George White. 2nd by Marie Mayo. Motion carried. John Wiles will obtain the soda. Bill will have a sign up sheet and directions (map to his house) at next meeting. The date for the picnic is 23 October. The time will be set at the next meeting.

New Business:

A rumor about a member's health was dispelled. The chapter asks that rumors like this be stopped. **Get the facts!**

Kay County Fair: After a lengthy discussion on the merits of having a booth at the fair, a motion was made and 2nd to do so only if the cost of the booth does not exceed \$75.00. Several members volunteered to work the

booth during the fair. Those members will be contacted as needed.

President Howe presented Ron Privett with a past president plaque.

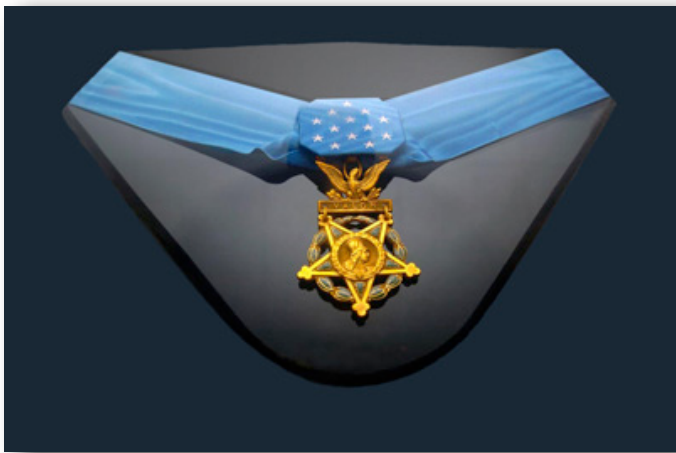
President Howe showed several items that could be used as fund raisers. Several members stated they would like to buy a few of the items for their own use. An order list will be provided at next meeting.

President Howe read a letter from the American Legion Home about sponsoring a child at a cost to the chapter of \$400.00. Bob Hart made a motion. 2nd by Marie Mayo. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn by Bob Hart. 2nd by John Wiles. Motion carried

Next meeting: **16 September 2010.**

MARTINI, GARY W.



Rank and organization: Private First Class, U.S. Marine Corps, Company F, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division.

place and date: Binh Son, Republic of Vietnam, 21 April 1967.

Entered service at: portland, Oreg. Born: 21 September 1948, Lexington, Va.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. On 21 April 1967,

during Operation UNION* elements of Company F, conducting offensive operations at Binh Son, encountered a firmly entrenched enemy force and immediately deployed to engage them. The marines in Pfc. Martini's platoon assaulted across an open rice paddy to within 20 meters of the enemy trench line where they were suddenly struck by hand grenades, intense small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire. The enemy onslaught killed 14 and wounded



18 marines, pinning the remainder of the platoon down behind a low paddy dike. In the face of imminent danger, Pfc. Martini immediately crawled over the dike to a forward open area within 15 meters of the enemy position where, continuously exposed to the hostile fire, he hurled hand grenades, killing several of the enemy. Crawling back through the intense fire, he rejoined his platoon which had moved to the relative safety of a trench line. From this position he observed several of his wounded comrades lying helpless in the fire-swept paddy. Although he knew that 1 man had been killed attempting to assist the wounded, Pfc. Martini raced through the open area and dragged a comrade back to a friendly

position. In spite of a serious wound received during this first daring rescue, he again braved the unrelenting fury of the enemy fire to aid another companion Lying wounded only 20 meters in front of the enemy trench line. As he reached the fallen marine, he received a mortal wound, but disregarding his own condition, he began to drag the marine toward his platoon's position. Observing men from his unit attempting to leave the security of their position to aid him, concerned only for their safety, he called to them to remain under cover, and through a final supreme effort, moved his injured comrade to where he could be pulled to safety, before he fell, succumbing to his wounds. Stouthearted and indomitable, Pfc. Martini unhesitatingly yielded his life to save 2 of his comrades and insure the safety of the remainder of his platoon. His outstanding courage, valiant fighting spirit and selfless devotion to duty reflected the highest credit upon himself, the Marine Corps, and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.



Petraeus: Burning Quran Endangers Troops



The top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan warned Tuesday an American church's threat to burn copies of the Muslim holy book could endanger U.S. troops in the country and Americans worldwide.

"Images of the burning of a Quran would undoubtedly be used by extremists in Afghanistan -- and around the world -- to inflame public opinion and incite violence," Gen. David Petraeus said in an e-mail to The Associated Press.



His comments followed a protest Monday by hundreds of Afghans over the plans by Gainesville, Fla.-based Dove World Outreach Center -- a small, evangelical Christian church that espouses anti-Islam philosophy -- to burn copies of the Quran on church grounds to mark the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States that provoked the Afghan war.


Muslims consider the Quran to be the word of God and insist it be treated with the utmost respect, along with any printed material containing its verses or the name of Allah or the Prophet Muhammad. Any intentional damage or show of disrespect to the Quran is deeply offensive.

In 2005, 15 people died and scores were wounded in riots in Afghanistan sparked by a story in Newsweek magazine alleging interrogators at the U.S. detention center in Guantanamo Bay placed copies of the Quran in washrooms and flushed one down the toilet to get inmates to talk. Newsweek later retracted the story.

At Monday's protest, several hundred Afghans rallied outside a Kabul mosque,

burning American flags and an effigy of Dove World's pastor and chanting "death to America." Members of the crowd briefly pelted a passing U.S. military convoy with stones, but were ordered to stop by rally organizers.

that said "Islam is of the Devil," has been denied a permit to set a bonfire but has vowed to proceed with the burning. The congregation's website estimates it has about 50 members, but the church has leveraged the Internet with a Facebook page and blog devoted to its Quran-burning plans.



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Two days earlier, thousands of Indonesian Muslims rallied outside the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta and in five other cities to protest the church's plans.

Petraeus warned images of burning Qurans could be used to incite anti-American sentiment similar to the pictures of prisoner abuse at Iraq's Abu Graib prison.

"I am very concerned by the potential repercussions of the possible [Quran] burning. Even the rumor that it might take place has sparked demonstrations such as the one that took place in Kabul yesterday," Petraeus said in his message. "Were the actual burning to take place, the safety of our soldiers and civilians would be put in jeopardy and accomplishment of the mission would be made more difficult."

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul also issued a statement condemning the church's plans, saying Washington was "deeply concerned about deliberate attempts to offend members of religious or ethnic groups."

Dove World Outreach Center, which made headlines last year after distributing T-shirts

A surge in troop deployments has brought the number of U.S. forces battling the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan to about 100,000 and Petraeus is asking for 2,000 more troops to join the 140,000-strong international force here, NATO officials said Monday. It was unclear how many would be Americans.

Also Tuesday, authorities confirmed the ambush killing of a district chief by suspected insurgents in the northern province of Baghlan on Monday afternoon. Nahrin district chief Rahmad Srur Joshan Pool was on his way home after a memorial service for slain anti-Soviet guerrilla leader Ahmad Shah Massoud when rocket-propelled grenades hit his vehicle, setting it on fire, said provincial spokesman Mahmood Haqmal.

Pool's bodyguard was also killed in the attack, and one militant died and two were wounded in the ensuing firefight with police, Haqmal said.

Five children were killed and five wounded in Yaya Khil district in the southern province of Paktika when an insurgent rocket fired at an Afghan army base hit a home Monday evening, provincial government spokesman Mokhlais Afghan said.

Kidnappers also seized two electoral workers and their two drivers in the western province of Ghor, according to deputy provincial police chief Ahmad Khan Bashir.

Insurgents have waged a campaign of violence and intimidation to prevent Afghans from voting, especially in rural areas, while

some pre-election violence has also been blamed on rivalries among the candidates.



Vets Using Watchdogs Against PTSD



Falling asleep in the commons room at Brook Army Medical Center was all the evidence Jim Stanek needed that he should get a dog.

Stanek, a three-tour Iraq veteran whose wounds include traumatic brain injury, was on a multitude of antidepressants and tranquilizers, couldn't sleep without meds, and was feeling "like a zombie," he recalled. But as he sat watching TV early last summer with a yellow Labrador "therapy dog" named Chelsea, he finally relaxed.

"She would lay right there with me and I would be able to get about four hours of sleep three times a week," Stanek said.

Today, Stanek has his own dog, Sarge, and he credits her with helping him reclaim his life.

"I am completely off all of my medications," said the former Soldier who served with the 82nd Airborne, the 51st Long Range Surveillance Company, and the 1st Infantry Division. "I made the decision prior to

actually having Sarge around that I wanted to get off the medications, but once I had Sarge, it got easier. I can sleep at night. She sleeps right beside my bed."

Geneticist Joan Esnayra said people "have been using dogs since forever for emotional health," though the idea of the mentally ill having a dog trained to meet their needs the way the blind have seeing eye dogs is relatively new. Esnayra began developing the concept to train dogs to help the mentally ill in 1997, and she coined the now widely accepted term "psychiatric service dog."

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Esnayra, who in July took part in a roundtable discussion on post-traumatic stress disorder and TBI treatments organized by Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., estimates that there are about 175 veterans in the country now using psychiatric service dogs. There are an estimated 10,000 such dogs in the U.S.

Historically, service dogs are trained to perform tasks such as helping the blind to cross a street or getting things for a wheelchair-bound owner. While the psychiatric service dog may be trained to do some of these types of tasks, the dog's real "work" comes in responding to symptoms associated with the handler's mental health problems.

The dogs are trained to cue to changes in a handler's physiology -- something that advocates for the dogs say requires dog and

owner to train together from the start. It's the only way that the dog will learn a handler's "baseline physiology," which allows the animal to recognize when there's a problem, said Esnayra. If the handler is starting to feel emotionally overwhelmed, the dog will react by getting the handler's attention, thereby "interrupting" the dissociative spell.

\$10,000, according to Stanek. But Stanek said his organization is able to provide a dog for \$1,800. And usually that is paid by donations, so most vets in need don't pay a thing.

"Right now, we are at 10 veterans in the program," he said. "I have about 40 at the starting gate waiting for funding."



Airman Killed in Laos to Get Medal of Honor



Richard Etchberger died in Laos in 1968, saving fellow Americans at a top-secret radar station overrun by North Vietnamese commandos.

Etchberger, who grew up north of Reading, Pa., was nominated that year for the Medal of Honor. But there was a problem: The United States was not supposed to have troops in Laos. President Lyndon B. Johnson declined to award the medal.

On July 7 of this year, Etchberger's son, Cory, received a phone call. "Will you please hold for the president?" a woman asked.

President Obama then told Cory Etchberger that his father would finally receive the Medal of Honor.

"It's been a long time coming," Obama told Etchberger, 51, of Schwenksville, Montgomery County.



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In some ways, a dog is better suited than a person to warn a vet if he or she experiencing a PTSD or TBI-related symptom, according to Esnayra.

"A spouse might say, 'Gee, honey, you seem pretty depressed these days or ... your PTSD seems to be acting up these days,' " Esnayra said. "But when family members do that, sometimes there are hidden agendas, there are trust issues. You don't get that when you interact with a dog. So when a dog gives physiologic feedback, people tend to believe it. You don't tend to ask 'what's my dog's ulterior motive.' "

Stanek is not only a believer in psychiatric service dogs, he is now a provider. He and his wife, Lindsey, founded "[Paws and Stripes](#)" -- a nonprofit organization that raises money to provide the dogs to veterans suffering from PTSD and TBI.

The New Mexico-based program requires handler and dog to work together for at least six months. Traditional service dogs are trained for up to a year and cost upward of

Cory Etchberger, who recounted the conversation with Obama, was 9 when his father died at Lima Site 85, which directed bombing missions into North Vietnam and Laos.

His family will attend a White House medal ceremony on Sept. 21.



VA Publishes Final Regulation to Aid Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange

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Richard Etchberger, a chief master sergeant in the Air Force, was selected to work at the radar station and was converted into a civilian employee of Lockheed so his presence in Laos would not technically violate that country's neutrality.

The radar station directed 507 strike missions against North Vietnamese targets from November 1967 until March 11, 1968, when enemy soldiers engaged the facility in a fierce battle, according to the Air Force.

Under withering fire, Etchberger loaded wounded comrades into slings to be raised into a rescue helicopter before coming aboard himself. He was mortally wounded by an armor-piercing bullet that had ripped through the chopper. He was 27.

Etchberger was posthumously awarded the Air Force Cross in a secret Pentagon ceremony. His family, except for his parents, who were sworn to secrecy, was not told what really happened.

The mission was declassified years later, but Etchberger was not eligible for the Medal of Honor because of a time limit. In 2008, Congress approved a waiver.

Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in Vietnam and other areas will have an easier path to access quality health care and qualify for disability compensation under a final regulation that will be published on August 31, 2010 in the Federal Register by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The new rule expands the list of health problems VA will presume to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures to add two new conditions and expand one existing category of conditions. "Last October, based on the requirements of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 and the Institute of Medicine's 2008 Update on Agent Orange, I determined that the evidence provided was sufficient to award presumptions of service connection for these three additional diseases," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "It was the right decision, and the President and I are proud to finally provide this group of Veterans the care and benefits they have long deserved."

The final regulation follows Shinseki's determination to expand the list of conditions for which service connection for Vietnam Veterans is presumed. VA is adding Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease and expanding chronic lymphocytic leukemia to include all chronic B cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness don't have to prove an

association between their medical problems and their military service. By helping Veterans overcome evidentiary requirements that might otherwise present significant challenges, this "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process and ensure that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

review period, VA can begin paying benefits for new claims and may award benefits retroactively for earlier periods. For new claims, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the effective date of the regulation or to one year before the date VA receives the application, whichever is later. For pending claims and claims that were previously denied, VA may pay benefits retroactive to the date it received the claim.

VA encourages Vietnam Veterans with these three diseases to submit their applications for access to VA health care and compensation now so the agency can begin development of their claims.

Individuals can go to a website at <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm> (<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm>) to get an understanding of how to file a claim for presumptive conditions related to herbicide exposure, as well as what evidence is needed by VA to make a decision about disability compensation or survivors benefits. Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services for Veterans exposed to the chemical is available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange (<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/>).


The regulation is available on the Office of the Federal Register website at <http://www.ofr.gov/> (<http://www.ofr.gov/>).



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The Secretary's decision to add these presumptives is based on the latest evidence provided in a 2008 independent study by the Institute of Medicine concerning health problems caused by herbicides like Agent Orange. Veterans who served in Vietnam anytime during the period beginning January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides.

More than 150,000 Veterans are expected to submit Agent Orange claims in the next 12 to 18 months, many of whom are potentially eligible for retroactive disability payments based on past claims. Additionally, VA will review approximately 90,000 previously denied claims by Vietnam Veterans for service connection for these conditions. All those awarded service-connection who are not currently eligible for enrollment into the VA healthcare system will become eligible.

This historic regulation is subject to provisions of the Congressional Review Act that require a 60-day Congressional review period before implementation. After the

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GREAT TRUTHS ABOUT GROWING OLD

- 1) Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional...
- 2) Forget the health food. I need all the preservatives I can get.

- 3) When you fall down, you wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- 4) You're getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.
- 5) It's frustrating when you know all the answers but nobody bothers to ask you the questions...
- 6) Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician
- 7) Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.

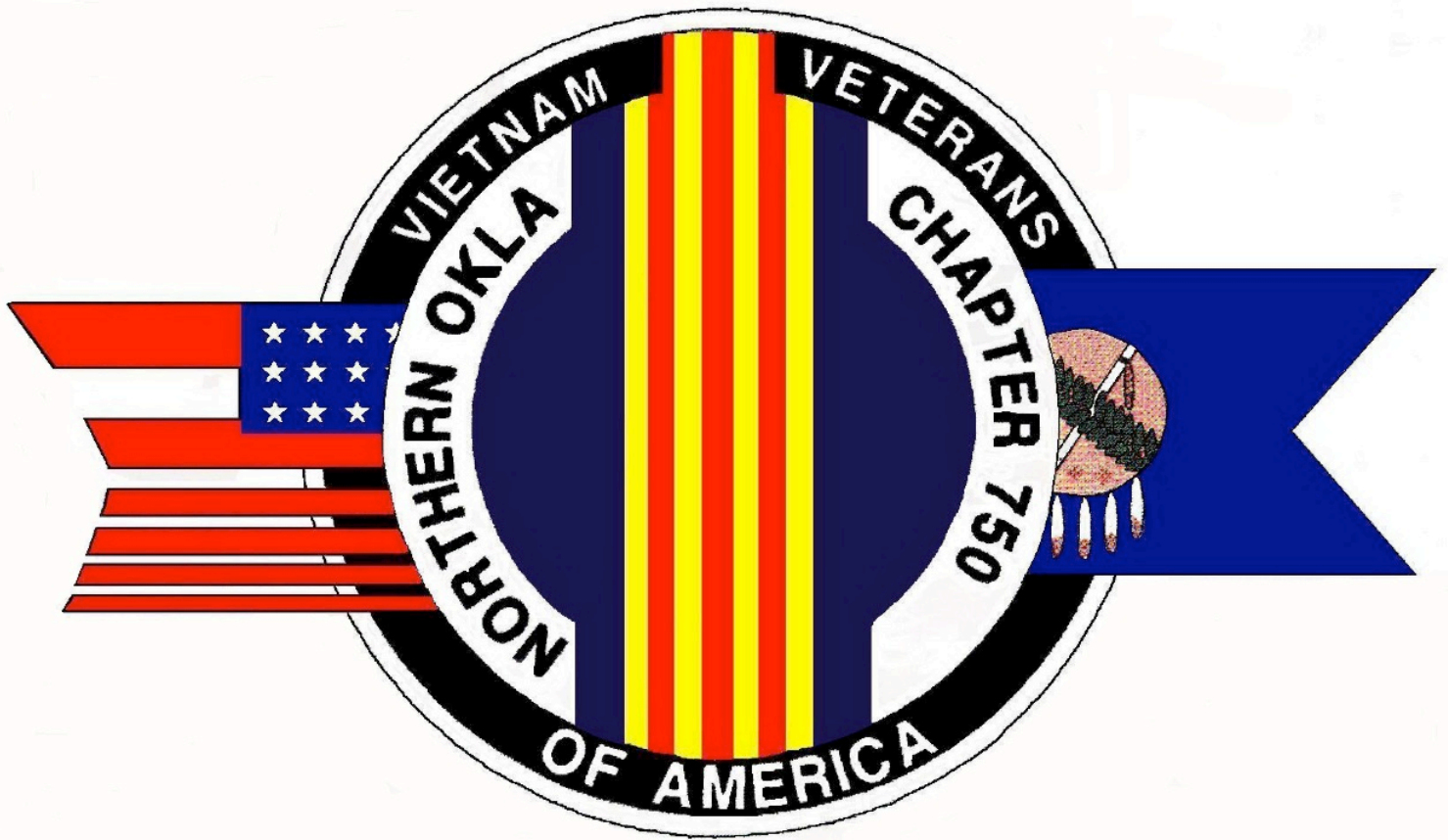


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Thanks Rod Kutz, Membership

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SEPTEMBER 2010 LOCK AND LOAD

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