



# PERIMETER REPORT

Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc.

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Together Then – Together Again

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The Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc., established in 1986 in Brevard County, Florida is a non-profit, non-partisan organization of veterans, their families and supporters dedicated to perpetuate the spirit of patriotism, service and remembrance to and for those who have served our nation honorably, risking life and status to insure its principles endure.

## Legacy

**Passings-** Medal of Honor recipient Col. Robert L. Howard (USA, Ret.) passed away in Waco, TX last month. He rivaled Audie Murphy in military honors having been recommended for the Medal of Honor three times for three separate incidents in Vietnam where he served 54 months. One of the recommendations was downgraded to the Distinguished Service Cross due only to the covert nature of the operation.

Col. Howard still found time to work for veteran's causes and make periodic trips to visit troops overseas while his cancer treatments were continuing. He was 70 years-old. He is to be buried at Arlington.



**Col. Robert Howard**

**Reunion-** The older we get, the quicker it gets here. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Vietnam and all Veterans of Brevard Reunion will shortly be upon us. Reunion Chairman Ralph Earrusso told me last year that practically anywhere you go in the country, veteran communities have heard of our reunion. Ironically, many locals haven't. That may be due to an influx of newcomers or maybe we don't get the word out soon enough around here. But I noticed this also.

Well, our reunion posters are out now and it's time to get them posted. If you can help, give us a call and we'll get you some.

I remind you that many large corporations have policies against postings and this should be accepted without questioning their support of our veterans. We have their support. Most that have turned me down do so with regret. But for those that do allow postings, I recommend you keep a log so that you can remove them after the reunion. The privilege we receive from these businesses deserves our courtesy in return.

Our legacy has been restored partly by time and in large part by the veterans who came after us. We have community support today that few of us who served during the Vietnam Era ever imagined. Let's keep it that way.

**Phony's on Line-** No doubt times have changed. From an era forty years ago when many active duty stateside servicemen were advised by their COs not to wear their uniforms off base we now have stateside civilians running amok in uniforms complete with rare decorations from army-navy stores. Among this group are legitimate veterans who have decided to award themselves combat ribbons they never earned from imaginary battles they never fought.

It is indicative of the resurgence of honor the American people now bestow on their veterans but it also insults those who earned the uniform and the decorations they display.

AMVETS has set up a new website to call more attention to the problem and expose the phonies. ReportStolenValor.org is the place to go to see if your local hero ever made it to boot camp or to inquire about his Navy Cross with the four stars on it.

## President's Message

Congratulations to President-Elect of the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Sergeant Major (ret) Floyd Merckle! You have elected a great and highly capable leader.

Thank you for allowing me two years of service to the VVB as President; I have learned and experienced a great deal and will never forget the experience. I look forward to working and serving closely with Floyd and the VVB Executive Board in the future.

I hope you all had a wonderful Holiday Season and you have my continued Best Wishes for a Happy and Blessed New Year!

**Brevard Stand Down** appears to be coming together well. It will be staged at the Cocoa National Guard Armory on March 20, 2010. The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at Sonny's Barbeque on Wickham Road near I-95 at 6 pm.

My how time flies! It has been twenty years since the establishment of the VVB Transitional Housing facility for Homeless Veterans. While we are still assembling more precise figures; it is estimated that the VVB has housed over 10,000 homeless veterans during that time and fed and clothed countless other veterans in need. A worthy celebration in Commemoration of these VVB accomplishments is under development.

Speaking of recognition; the annual **VVB Awards Presentation and 2010 Officer Induction Ceremony** will be held at the Brevard Veteran's Memorial Center on Merritt Island on Sunday, March 21, 2010. You may notice that is the day after the annual Brevard Stand Down, so it should be a busy weekend of veteran services and recognition. The event begins at 1300 hours and refreshments will be served.

The next event is a VVB supported event that occurs January 22, 2010. The Center for Drug Free Living will be staging a ground breaking for a **VA Homeless Female Veteran Transitional Housing Facility**. The White House has confirmed that Tina Tchen, Deputy Assistant to the President, Director of Public Engagement and Executive Director of the White House Council on Women and Girls will be attending.. Deputy Tchen will be accompanied by Director Gil Kerlikowski of the White House Office of Drug Control Policy and Tammy Duckworth, Deputy Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs.

The 8,486 square-foot, \$1.7 million transitional housing facility, slated for the Center's 10-acre campus in Cocoa, will provide housing and mental health/substance abuse services for 28 homeless female veterans.

Several local dignitaries are expected to attend. I serve on the Board of Directors for the Center for Drug Free Living and also Chair their VA Services Subcommittee.

Also I will be attending the Vietnam Veteran of Florida State council meeting the end of this month.

And finally, our capstone event, there is the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Florida Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion, April 22 – 25, 2010. So expect lots of Veteran-related activities in the upcoming months.

Thank you all for your service to America and to our great organization. And thank you once again for allowing me to serve as your President.

Semper Fi!



Bill Vagianos, Outgoing President  
Viet Nam and All Veterans of Brevard



## Chaplain's Message

### Making the New Year Worthwhile

The New Year affords us a fresh start, a new opportunity to make our lives worthwhile. Whatever expectations we hold for the future, we set out hoping for the best for ourselves and others, by wishing each other, "Happy New Year!" Exchanging greetings with our friends and neighbors is noble and fitting. I wish you happiness; you do the same for me.

But each of us must find our own dream and fulfillment according to the way we want to live the remaining moments of our lives. You are responsible for adjusting your attitude to the realities of life to find contentment, joy and peace. God created us to be free to make our own choices. Abraham Lincoln revealed a deep understanding of human nature, when he said, "Most people are about as happy as they want to be."

On January 1<sup>st</sup> when we entered into the New Year, we began a new decade which affords us the opportunity to begin a fresh, new phase, leaving behind mistakes of the past and make the future count. January derives its name from Janus, a pagan god in Roman mythology who had two faces – one looking forward, the other looking back.

Precious moments of your life are now flowing past you. Make each moment count. Living in the present moment is wise. People who realize they can improve their lifestyle by dealing with their personal problems, usually make New Year's resolutions. Let's take a person who wants to be healthier. To be trim and fit a person needs to take action by setting up and adhering to a regimen of diet and exercise that can result in the desired weight change.

Whatever may be your dream and hope for the New Year, take action, do whatever it takes to make it happen. As Johann von Goethe said, "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it." To turn a dream into reality, set up a plan of action that will put you on a path to achieve it. A realistic plan that sets clear, positive, achievable action steps, will take you across the goal line. Whatever your aspirations and hopes are for the New Year now is the time to take action.

Jim Peterman

## POW/MIA

**Last Chance-** January marks the 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the VVB. This year also brings us the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Vietnam Era. But for some 600 or more Vietnam veterans, the era dragged on and on. These men were left behind in captivity in Southeast Asia; and it was and still is a top priority of the VVB to do whatever we can to account for their whereabouts.

One of the first projects of the VVB was to keep the POW/MIA issue in the public eye. Tony Cartlidge led the VVB's efforts to post POW/MIA billboards all over the State of Florida and more than 100 went up in 1986.

At that time there had already been one Congressional investigation on the issue with no resolution and a decade had already passed. Surviving POWs, had they been rescued would have had some things to say, no doubt. But as we mentioned in the 'An Enormous Effort' article last month, one of them did come home in 1979. Marine PFC Robert Garwood was prosecuted for collaboration. From the moment he entered American custody he was ordered to keep silent. His ordeal once he returned home is well documented. His fourteen years in captivity are less so.

We can consider collaboration in two forms; cooperation with captors to survive and cooperation to solicit special privileges at the expense of fellow captives. Garwood was charged with the latter; an unforgivable sin among military men.

But we must also consider his captives. Garwood spent most of the war in Southern camps, the most brutal of a brutal system. His captors were also masters of disinformation, deceit and psychological torture. The communists have mastered the art of pitting one against the other. All surviving POWs concede this point.

Some of the POWs imprisoned with Garwood were witnesses against him at his trial. They saw him carrying weapons, accepting special privileges and in one case claimed he struck another POW. Garwood spoke fluent Vietnamese, a suspicious trait among his fellow prisoners but taught to him as a survival tool by Army Special Forces Captain 'Ike' Eisenbraun. Eisenbraun died in captivity.

Another Marine POW spent some time in the southern camps with Garwood. He is a known rouge who escaped from the brig and got himself captured by the VC; Earl Clyde Weatherman. But his fellow prisoners are divided about his loyalties while in captivity. He was reported killed after an escape attempt then sighted numerous times thereafter. In the late 90s there was a report that Weatherman passed a note stating he wanted to return to the US with his family. In the Wonderland of POW issues confirmation is hard to come by. Several activists claim to have asked a Congressional aid about Weatherman's return and were told, "I don't know. I just don't know", instead of, "Who's Weatherman?" But again, "reportedly, allegedly and a host of other misty terms surround these allegations.

If there are any American servicemen still alive in Southeast Asia then they all must be collaborators just to survive. The combat experience breeds a unique brotherhood. Those of us who have not experienced it can have it explained to us and make efforts to imagine what we are being told; and in fact, there are different degrees of combat experience. But we should be extremely cautious to condemn actions taken in combat situations by our troops that appear to offend us. There are even fewer in the POW brotherhood. It is doubtful that their experience can be adequately explained to even the most imaginative listener. So if Weatherman or any other Garwoods are waiting to come home it is time to make that happen. If there are a few supermen who lived decades without collaborating, then they should be held in the highest esteem for super ceding a Code of Conduct written with a civilized enemy in mind. For the rest, they should be considered our substitutes, for anyone of us could have drawn their short stick.

Col. Millard Peck was head of the Pentagon's POW/MIA Office for only eight months in 1990 before resigning in disgust over the 'debunking' mindset which attempted to dismiss any reports of live POWs that permeated every level of his office. In his departure statement he made a prediction.

"From what I have witnessed, it appears that any soldier left in Vietnam, even inadvertently, was in fact, abandoned years ago, and that the farce that is being played is no more than political legerdemain done with smoke and mirrors to stall the issue until it dies a natural death."

That was two decades ago. Another decade surely closes the book on any live Americans in southeast Asia..

The Bill currently in Congress to set up another probe on the issue has been accumulating co sponsors for over a year. HR111 has yet to be introduced. With Congress pre-occupied with a supercharged agenda, the POW/MIA issue doesn't seem to be anywhere near a priority. HR111 is the only avenue open at this point. The government is only looking for remains. So what can we do to fulfill one of our primary missions to get the ball rolling? Well, every possible effort, including private rescue missions in Southeast Asia and Congressional probes have all failed. What hasn't been done is to force the release of *all* records pertaining to the issue. If HR 111 ever becomes law, that should be its only mission.

## In House

**Election results are in** and your new officers are listed on the back page.

**VTF Report** for December shows a very generous community in these difficult times donating to help the 19 veterans and spouses currently at the facility. Seven residents are looking for work to help contribute to their progress as six others are now doing. Six new residents were admitted last month.

The individuals and organizations contributing last month are: Thomas Depaoli, Lillian Banks, Jack Jackson, The Ladies' Auxiliary for VFW Posts 10131 and 10210, Women of the Moose, Henry Patrick Cradick Chapter UDC, Melbourne Area Federation of Republican Women, PAFB NCOA, The Peace Coalition of Brevard, the Merritt Island Publix Supermarket which made Thanksgiving possible and J. J. Cwinlinski brought the Christmas gifts for the residents.

Director Paul Whitmore reported to the membership at the December meeting that he was overwhelmed with the generosity by the community lately. The Veterans Transitional Facility provides an opportunity for veterans and family members suffering hardships to regroup and get back on their feet. It was one of the first programs pursued by the VVB at its founding in 1986 and wasn't an easy task to get off the ground. However, its track record is measured by those residents who took advantage of the opportunity to move past their difficulties, some of whom are still active there by volunteering their time.

**Sickness and Distress**-The VVB wishes the following members and their families a speedy recovery. For privacy reasons, details will only be disclosed with permission. If contact information appears, you may inquire.

**James Gann, Steve Silverman, Deer Feher, John John Steer, Robyn Cavalera and John Barrett**

**Our President's Message** contains information on the Brevard Stand Down, the VVB Awards Presentation and Induction Ceremony and news on a new VA facility to assist female vets. Let's not be redundant.

## Brevard News/Events

**The Tico Air Show** will be coming up in March. Located in Titusville at 660 Tico Road (Space Coast Regional Airport) this year's theme is "Honoring the Memory" dedicated to those that served in Vietnam. The event is on for the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> but the Museum is open 7 days a week from 9 to 5. We'll have more information in next month's issue but to reserve your tickets no contact the Valliant Air Command at 321 268 1941 or visit the web site at [www.vacwarbirds.org](http://www.vacwarbirds.org).

**Astronauts Honored**- Saturday, January 30 at the Astronaut Memorial at Sand Point Park: 10 a.m.--honor all astronauts who have given their lives for the space program. We honor Apollo 1, Challenger, and Columbia....program lasts about an hour. All are welcome and it's a wonderful program. --Bob Socks

**WMEL 1300 AM** radio hosts "For Those Who Served" on Saturdays at 8:30 AM. The program answers questions on a variety of veteran issues.

**Spread the Word**- Please encourage your civic organization and church to publish this or something similar in their newsletter or weekly bulletin:

**Did you know that the Pentagon does not meet every need of our troops fighting to protect our freedom? The Brevard Veterans Council collects and distributes needed items overseas. You can help by contacting Emma Meisner at 321 453 1776.**

**Honor Flights** are to honor our most senior veterans by arranging trips for them to Washington, D.C. to view our newest monument, the WWII Memorial. Florida Today ran an article Dec. 29 about the efforts of Terri White, the daughter of a WWII vet to get a local chapter started here in Brevard County. We all know how the Vietnam Memorial Wall touched a part of us few of us knew existed. It is amazing that the WWII Memorial took fifty years to construct—well after many of its survivors departed. The Honor Flight concept is a last chance for many of these veterans to say goodbye to their lost friends and White reported that after her own father's return from Washington, he cried and opened up about more of his experiences. Sounds familiar.

Right now the Brevard effort is just starting and little information is available as to how it will organize and raise money. But head's up, everyone. It's in the works. We'll keep you informed.

**Coalition Ride**- Well Riders, it's that time of year again. [On Sunday, **January 30,**] we are headed back to the Bunker for our annual ride [to the National Vietnam War Museum, 3400 N. Tanner Rd., Orlando] and this year we will be ending at Camp Holly on 192 in Melbourne. With live MUSIC, vendors, food and drink specials. Hope everyone can make this ride. We had a great turn out last year and I'm looking for more riders this year. Tell your friends and let's ride.

All groups are to meet at County Line Saloon on 192 & I-95 in Melbourne, Kickstands up at 11:00am from this location. Ending Location: CAMP HOLLY, US#192. Biker Discounts on food and drinks will be available.

Any Questions call me @ 321-216-6120, [rbailey44@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rbailey44@cfl.rr.com) or Bear @ 321-298-6046  
Thanks and hope to see everyone out for this ride.  
Bear & Bob Founders, Biker Coalition

## Regional News/Events

**Free Theme Park Admission-** for active duty, active reserve, ready reserve and National Guardsmen at any Anheuser-Busch park. The 'Here's to Our Heroes' program will go on for the entire year. Register at their website, [www.herosalute.com](http://www.herosalute.com) or at the gate. The program lets you bring as many as three direct dependents.

## Veterans News

**Health Care** - Although we admitted last month that we were unable to find any reliable information as to the effects of the proposed health care legislation on veteran's benefits, we did mention that there was plenty of information out there. At this writing both the House and Senate versions, more than 4,000 pages total, have yet to be reconciled. To show just how convoluted the research is, a small sampling below pits the "Myths" as the questions posed by some veterans groups are labeled in DoD updates, against the "Facts" as provided by government agencies and fact check websites. There is also a third category titled 'Ask Yourself' which we added and is what we do with information we receive prior to sending it out in published form.

Before any questions can be posed a premise is necessary to frame the issue. So here is the premise we are working from based on the assurances from Congress and the agencies charged with oversight of health care:

*The Affordable Health Care for America Act (H.R.3962) states in Section 311 that "nothing" in the bill shall be construed as affecting authorities used by the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to provide Tricare programs or VA health care benefits.*

With that premise, consider the following:

MYTH: "Enactment of the House health insurance reform bill would undermine the health care that veterans and military families are receiving now."

FACT: Veterans' health care and Tricare for military families would not be impacted by passage of the Affordable Health Care for America Act. Nothing in the bill would affect, change, or undermine the health care that veterans enrolled in VA health care and military families enrolled in Tricare are currently receiving.

ASK YOURSELF: Why should we have VA health care operations at all if all Americans are to receive health care, including veterans, under federal oversight? What are the chances that the two systems would merge as a cost saving effort at some future time? What about veterans who are not currently enrolled? Will an agency separate from the DoD or VA decide which veterans are to be enrolled thus making a moot point of this Section 311 assurance once it's discovered that we can't pay these bills?

MYTH: "Veterans and military families enrolled in VA health care and Tricare will be penalized for not having acceptable coverage – being forced to pay the penalty of 2.5% of adjusted income."

FACT: The Affordable Health Care for America Act recognizes VA health care and Tricare as acceptable minimum coverage, so enrollees are already meeting the shared responsibility requirement and will face no fee or penalty. --- Specifically, the bill contains a section that states that 1) individuals enrolled in the veterans' health care program; and 2) individuals and dependents enrolled in Tricare will be considered as having acceptable minimum coverage – meaning they have met the Bill's shared responsibility requirement for individuals to purchase insurance if they can afford it. In other words, individuals enrolled in VA health care or Tricare will never be subject to the Bill's 2.5% fee for those who choose not to purchase affordable health insurance.

ASK YOURSELF: What is 'acceptable minimum coverage', 'affordable' health insurance and what panel, tribunal, czar or institution decides? If you can't afford health insurance, then by definition it is unaffordable and you will be 'fined' (as opposed to taxed). If you can't afford the 'fine/tax' then the Bill offers incarceration as a tax cheat where presumably your health care is free. Can the federal government constitutionally charge you 2.5% of your income for *not* purchasing a service? If so, can it one day charge you 6.8% of your income for *not* purchasing a product—say, a radon detector or something that may contribute to your good health? What is the status of a VA enrolled veteran and his non-veteran spouse? Does she pay a 1.25% 'fee' or is the couple liable for the full 2.5% which would essentially negate any VA benefit for the veteran? What is "acceptable minimum coverage" for Priority 8 vets or the acceptable minimum income that allows access to the VA?

The 'myths' above are legitimate questions which the government agencies and fact check websites attempt to dismiss. As you can see, those 'facts' only lead to more legitimate questions. Moreover, neither the House or Senate Bills even mention tort reform and the Senate version contains a clause that the Bill may not be amended or altered by any future Congress. This clause essentially infers that the Bill has Constitutional power since it would take a Constitutional amendment to change it. Medicare is already bankrupt. In Fiscal Year 2009 \$47 billion in Medicare claims were fraudulent. FY 2008 about \$17 billion; but that didn't include claims with incomplete documentation. If your private doctor overbills you \$47 billion, are you going to pay it? The government will. That's why the fraud reaches inconceivable amounts and the system is bankrupt. But it doesn't come out of government pockets; the government produces no wealth, we do.

There are however, veterans with more knowledge and prestige than this writer who see no negative impact to veterans benefits should the IRS enter the health care system as this excerpt from a DoD update implies:

*"The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), the Fleet Reserve Association of America, the American Legion and other veterans' service organizations have studied the legislative language of both bills. Their own reviews, and assurances they've received from relevant committees, give them confidence that the bills won't impact benefits or fees charged by Tricare or VA, nor will these beneficiaries be exposed to any new tax liabilities."*

*"We have not talked to anybody — Republican, Democrat, anyone in the [Obama] administration or serving in Congress — who is trying to do anything to affect military people" as part of national health reform legislation, said Steve Strobidge, MOAA's director of government relations.*

One of the most well known provisions of the Bill is the intent to cut \$500 billion from Medicare. Tricare is a Medicare supplement and where one goes, so goes the other. It is one example of how intertwined the civilian entitlement system is with VA benefits. When the federal government takes over one-sixth of the economy and 100% of the country's health care it doesn't seem likely that *anything* escapes impact much less a VA health care system already in place. Assurances from those who wish to control the country's health care industry that they will not affect your health care are hardly credible; in fact, it's ridiculous.

VA medical care is not without its faults. But there is an alternative—private care. If you don't like the wait, the redundancy or the rationing, you can always forego your benefits and pay a private physician. You may wait there also. You may get redundant billing and they may not offer the care you need but you can go elsewhere too. If your doctor overbills you \$47 billion, you complain and refuse to pay. If the government is overbilled \$47 billion, they'll look into it but they'll pay it, or rather, you'll pay it. If you don't like your VA treatment there exists now a private sector alternative even if it is increasingly under federal thumbs. Once the IRS is introduced into the health care of both veterans and non veterans, will any health service at all be private?

Currently the VA is holding back health coverage for what they call "gray area military retirees". These veterans were promised health care coverage under Tricare but may have to wait a year or longer for coverage to begin. Retired Navy Captain Marshall Hanson, Legislative Director for the Reserve Officer's Association said, "I suspect the Pentagon is slowing implementation to coincide with the next generation of a Tricare contract to avoid change order costs." Prioritizing spending is sound economic policy that also has another name—rationing. In fact, rationing is the base *law* of all economic activity. Rationing has become a bad word recently when it applies to health care. However, it is a *law* rather than an *option*. The health care debate is not about rationing; it's about who decides.

Last year the National Defense Authorization Act became law which made it easier for wounded soldiers to be rated and treated by the VA. This included those wounded in training. But the wording in the law allowed Bush Administration Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, David Chu to interpret training injuries out of the law. One man decided the fate of many veterans injured in training by simply interpreting the law the way he wanted.

In an even more bizarre move President Obama seriously considered forcing a veteran's private insurance to pay for his war wounds. Although the results weren't immediate, the meeting between the President and veterans and military service organizations last March was enough to back the president off this absurd idea. On March 18<sup>th</sup> White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs announced the change of heart.

"In considering the third party billing issue, the administration was seeking to maximize the resources available for veterans; however, the President listened to concerns raised by the VSOs that this might, under certain circumstances, affect veterans and their families' ability to access health care."

The key phrase, "maximize the resources available for veterans" is politispeak for rationing. What would the private sector premium cost to insure a grunt in a combat theater? After all, he's a volunteer, right? The "certain circumstances" would be "combat theater" which would affect the ability of all combat veterans to access health care. Doesn't anyone think these things through?

The Defense Department also has some problems. They've lost 72,000 post deployment health reassessments (PDHRA) or about a quarter of those from returning vets. These assessments track health issues to determine larger trends such as Gulf War Syndrome. A private company might fire its CEO for a blunder of this size. Ellen Embrey, the acting assistant defense secretary for health affairs, said, "We must be more aggressive."

Vietnam era vets remember the promises made at enlistment. Were they the same after end of active service? The VA home loan was offered at 1% *above* conventional loans because it offered a no down payment option. But for two decades civilians were getting home loans with no down payments with government supported Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae guarantees at rates below the VA loan. How attractive was that benefit?

It was during the Clinton Administration that VA health benefits opened up for a host of veterans who were not promised those perks. Today Priority 8s enjoy that generosity. For how long, though? Just a quick look at the newspapers and our own paychecks (or for retirees, the disappearance of COLAs) over the last year tell us that thousands of OIF/OEF vets need the care and treatment that they were promised and that the funds to support them are just not there. Are Priority 8 vets willing to give up those perks for our younger brothers? Are Priority 8 vets willing to give up their perks so that retired vets can get the full share they were promised? Are priority 8 vets willing to give up just *some* of their new bennies so that retirees can have *most* of theirs? Obviously these kinds of questions make veterans uncomfortable because there's only so much pie to go around. It pits one subset against

another in the same brotherhood whose fates are in the hands of a third party; a party empowered to make arbitrary decisions rather than the contract which set in stone who gets what. To understand this is to understand the welfare state. The health care reform as proposed will be a massive one. Any veteran who thinks his benefits won't be affected by people who do not respect contracts is in for a big let down.

The Obama Administration increased the VA budget by 25%. Thanks, China. But it also increased the budget for everything.. The VA's budget as well as every other federal agency's budget is coming out of the future. The present we are living in now is the future of the last three decades and the consequence of promises then to be paid for now. Unfortunately, we're broke. Moreover, that's *why* we're broke.

Assurances from the Administration, Congress and the relevant committees are comforting but do not change the fact that two plus two equals four. Regardless of how much America or its government respects or even owes its veterans; mathematics is governed by a law with no emotion or appreciation for services rendered. And all federal benefits are a numbers game. We've been breaking that law for three decades and if we're not careful, our grandchildren may resent 80% of their paychecks going to service the debt we leave them.

History as well as current events however, show that no matter how the government treats its veterans, there will always be those willing to serve the country it governs.

**Agent Orange**-still haunts Vietnam veterans and a recent report reveals that the manufacturer, Dow Chemical knew of the risks in 1963 but told no one. A process was discovered to reduce the risk in 1965 but Dow did not tell the military about it until 1967 when the DoD decided to produce its own Agent Orange. The herbicide was withdrawn in 1970 and may be a top contributor behind the birth defects suffered by children of Vietnam veterans.

Naval personnel, particularly those who served inland assignments or patrolled inland waterways were also vulnerable to the defoliant. Dow Chemical settled their claims in 1984 far too early to determine the extent of damage to future generations. The Vietnam Veterans of America were unsuccessful in court in trying to get the 1984 settlement amended. It remains an unresolved issue.

**Gulf War Syndrome** research was halted at the University of Texas Southwest Medical Center. The VA ended the five year \$75 million contract in its third year citing "performance deficiencies". The university will be allowed to finish its work now in progress and there is no word on punitive action. The VA research budget for GFS which it called "substantial" was \$7 million in 2008.

**Buddy Finders**- Every once in a while we get requests from veterans looking for help in finding old buddies. This month we're looking for those who served in the 101<sup>st</sup> MPs in Vietnam in 1968. If you served in that unit during that time someone's looking for you and the memories. Contact Perimeter Report by e-mail (back page, subject line: 101<sup>st</sup> MPs) and we'll put you in touch. For the rest of you hunting old friends, check out Military.com. They have a buddy finder process. There are also numerous web sites for military units. Check to see if your old unit has one.

**A Nobel Peace Prize** nomination for 2010 goes to the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, an organization founded in 2006 to combat religious fundamentalism in the U.S. armed forces. Headed by Mikley Weinstein, a former Air Force lawyer and Academy graduate, he also worked in the Reagan White House. He went to court against his Alma Mater because his two Air Force cadet sons couldn't fend off the "fundamentalist Christian, military para-church-corporate proselytizing complex".

While Weinstein's group was working hard to rid the military of Christians he missed the proselytizing, fundamentalist Muslim Army Major who murdered 13 soldiers at Ft. Hood only a week or so after the Nobel Committee received the nomination.

**Disciplinary action** awaits eight Army officers who failed to report the Muslim proselytizing of the Ft. Hood murderer. How intense their punishment would have been for reporting it will never be known but had they done so there may not have been the carnage we saw on November 5<sup>th</sup>. Don't look for a rash of reports about radical Muslim proselytizing in the military just yet. There's no Peace Prize nomination for it.

**South Korea** never forgot. Since 1975, the Republic of Korea has been inviting Korean War Veterans, and family members, to return to Korea on a subsidized visit to thank them for their sacrifices that saved their country from Communism. Thousands of veterans, from all the Allied Countries that participated in the war, have enjoyed this sojourn to the "Land of the Morning Calm."

The Korean government pays for hotel rooms and meals for 5 nights and 6 days plus in country tours. Accommodation is based on two persons per room. Commencing in JUN 2010, the Revisit Korea tours will be increased "three fold" and, for the first time, the ROK government is planning to subsidize the airfare of both the veteran and his family member/companion. A veteran is allowed to bring one family member.

The eligibility requirements will also be relaxed in view of the age of the veterans. The exact dates have not been published. However, they are planning on five major commemorations, the first being the Invasion Anniversary, 25 JUN. This will be followed by the Pusan Perimeter, the Incheon Landing, the Liberation of Seoul and the Northern Winter Campaign of 1950.

Applications are available at: [www.kwva.org/graybeards/gb\\_09/gb\\_0912/gb\\_0912\\_revisit\\_korea\\_application.pdf](http://www.kwva.org/graybeards/gb_09/gb_0912/gb_0912_revisit_korea_application.pdf). A \$400 deposit per person is required to be included with the application and payment in full must be made prior to 60 days of the tour departure. Participants are required to have a valid passport. A visa is not required for 15 days or fewer in Korea. Registrations will be date stamped and will be "First Come - First Served"! To register, call (800) 722-9501 or (703) 590-1295. Check the KWVA web site

at [www.KWVA.org](http://www.KWVA.org) or [www.miltours.com](http://www.miltours.com) for tour dates. You can also mail the Revisit Coordinator at [mhtours@miltours.com](mailto:mhtours@miltours.com) to request a brochure. Those eligible to participate include:

- . Veterans who supported ground, naval, or air operations between 25 JUN 50 and 25 OCT 54.
- . A widow or family member of a veteran killed in action during the war.
- . A family member of a Korean War veteran physically unable to travel.
- . Anyone who has previously participated in the Revisit Korea program

## Danger Close

**The new UK budget** is set to accommodate Sharia financial practices. The UK Daily Express reported on Dec. 13 that the “UK Government was one of the first Western countries to issue a state-backed sukuk, an Islamic bond. It now wants to rewrite tax laws to stop Muslim businessmen being unfairly taxed when they try to raise money on their companies.

Conventional loans allow them to take equity out of their business, using the property as collateral, but to be Sharia compliant a Muslim “sells” the business to the bank and then rents it back. That leaves the businessman facing a bill for capital gains tax and the Treasury wants to level the tax playing field.

Mohammed Amin, head of Islamic finance at PricewaterhouseCoopers, said: “The UK has become the leading Western country in Islamic finance by taking a series of measures to ensure that Islamic finance is taxed no worse and no better than conventional finance.”

The Financial Services Authority says its policy is ‘no obstacles, no special favors’ for Islamic finance. But that’s absurd since removing obstacles for a special interest group is a special favor. The article didn’t specify if the proposed law would apply only to Muslims or if any rank and file Brit could jump in on it.

Jehovah’s Witnesses have unusual financial beliefs and no government accommodation.

**AIG, Sharia Compliant-** It’s not just the Europeans allowing the encroachment of Sharia law. In December, 2008 the American International Group (AIG) started offering Sharia compliant homeowner’s insurance policies. This was three months *after* the U.S. government provided \$150 billion in bailout money and took over 80% of the company. To be Sharia compliant, companies cannot earn interest and must agree to send a percentage of their revenue to Islamic charitable groups.

Even more disturbing was Bush’s Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Robert Kimmitt’s visit to Saudi Arabia in October, 2008 to learn more about ‘Sharia Finance’. On November 6, 2008 the Treasury Department held a ‘Sharia Finance 101’ course to educate government officials in the intricacies of the concept.

Frank Gaffney, president of the Center for Security Policy in Washington told Fox News that allowing Sharia compliant finance in the U.S. is green-lighting a seditious system that supports jihad.

“If you understand what Sharia is, you understand that it is a pretty awful system. Not something that you’d want insinuated in your society and becoming a major feature of your economic system.” Gaffney said.

“Sharia governs all aspects of life, from the personal practice of the faith to how you relate to your family to how you relate to your business partners; to your community ... all the way up to how the world is run, and it is all one seamless program. You can’t say ‘I’ll take the personal pietistic practice ... and skip the beheading and the flogging and the stoning and the global theocracy,’”

## Back Lines

**Hope and hate** was brought to mind in the aftermath of two recent Islamic terror attacks. Ted Whitlock sent a video of a half dozen or so New Yorkers dressed in Islamic garb handing out literature and praising the Ft. Hood murderer two days after the event. The head hater, a young white man spoke with a heavy New York accent and had some despicable things to say about the soldiers killed in that attack. What was most surprising about the seven minute video was that 1) he was not arrested immediately for ‘hate speech’ and 2) no one thought to kick his head in.

On the other hand, when the Christmas britches bomber made his first court appearance in Detroit, a group of about 50 Muslims appeared at the courthouse condemning his act and made significant efforts to show that there are Muslims willing to share the planet with others of different beliefs. This is a courageous move since their fundamentalist degenerates have killed far more Muslims than any other group.

Christian history is full of barbaric and murderous events officially sanctioned by corrupt popes and royal lackeys. In fact, that history is what the Muslim terrorists use to demonize ‘Crusaders’. But they have to reach back 500 years to do so. Martin Luther changed that with the Protestant reformation. Islam has never gone through a cleansing reformation. Martin Luther and his followers faced the same persecution that moderate Muslims now face. If there is a silver lining in the current conflict it could be in the opportunity for moderate Muslims to seize their faith from those who butcher it. It may very well be the women that do that.

## Quotes

Let's not forget, the infantry is a *terrain based* organization. We don't have to kill people in order to do our job; only if those people don't want us on that specific piece of dirt and wants to come get a taste. --anonymous Company CO, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marines.

**Perimeter Report** is published monthly by the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard, Inc. We welcome submissions from the members and others interested in the VVB. Please review the Submission Guidelines on the Website. All submissions, comments, delivery problems or other matters related to this publication should be forwarded to the Editor, Dick Lancaster at [hancrafters@bellsouth.net](mailto:hancrafters@bellsouth.net), or fax to 321 956 2115. All submissions are subject to editing.

Please note the changes in the publication dates. Deadlines will be the Friday prior to the General Membership meeting. The Perimeter Report will print on that weekend. This means that any event scheduled for the first two weeks of any month must be submitted **five weeks before the event**. For instance, events scheduled for the first two weeks of March should be submitted by the first week of February. The mailings go out on the day of the General Membership meeting. Net posting should be one week later.

Submissions by e-mail must contain the subject line: 'VVB Newsletter' to be timely noticed. Your editor works out of town a lot and 200-300 e-mails is a lot to pour through when I return. Thank you for participating.

Editor: Dick Lancaster 321 693 1201

Publication Supervisor: Ken Baker Technical Assistant: Brenda Lancaster Webmaster: Bob Williamson

**This month's contributors:** Jim Peterman, Paul Whitmore, Ted Whitlock, Bill Vagianos, Tony Carlidge, Ken Baker, Bob Socks, Bob Bailey and Terri White.

With the Reunion just a few months away I'd like to get a stand out cover for the April issue. I am looking for a 'buddy photo' to enhance the cover. The photo must be an original, never published color or black and white image e-mailed or mailed to me prior to April 1<sup>st</sup>. The photo should contain at least three individuals in uniform from any time period. The background should not be too complicated. In the last decade the VVB has been transitioning from an exclusively Vietnam era centered organization to one that includes and invites all veterans. This has been evident at our reunions and in the projects the VVB oversees. Therefore, any group photo from any time period will be considered.

The 'Silly String Story' promised last month has been delayed. We want to make a few more contacts with the principles involved rather than rely on news articles already available.

We are still researching the story on female veterans. Some of those contacted didn't think they had an interesting story. But these women were the pioneers and trailblazing is always an interesting story when woven with the results we see today. If you know a woman who served, please encourage her to contact us.

There has been a change in the cover design this year. We've included the POW/MIA logo as a reminder that time is running out for these men. HR111 seems to have been lost in a year dominated by health care legislation. When my service ended in 1976 my interest in all things military was non-existent. When I took this job, all of that changed. For years I, along with many others considered the POW issue from the government perspective. Why would they lie about something so important? After a year and a half of research I am convinced there are American POWs in Southeast Asia. How we could leave them there and why so many in government could look the other way can be explained by considering the *institutional mindset* found in ordinary individuals caught up in atrocious events such as the Holocaust. For America, the POW issue is our Holocaust and we need to address it now and see to it that it never happens again.

---Dick Lancaster, January 2010

## 2010 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - CHANGE OF ADDRESS - RENEWAL FORM VIETNAM AND ALL VETERANS OF BREVARD, INC. 1125 W. King Street - COCOA, FL 32922-8505

Membership in the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard is open to all concerned at a yearly fee of \$15 (Jan-Dec).

After July 1 all new members \$10. You need not be a Veteran to join, but if you are, we need a copy of your DD-214. We also have a Life Membership for a non-refundable fee of \$175, prorated with age 55-64 \$125 age 65 and up \$75.

( ) - 2009 Membership \$15

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Marriage Anniversary Date \_\_\_\_\_ Recruited In VAVB By \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments \_\_\_\_\_ Member # \_\_\_\_\_

O - I Do Not Want To Join Now, Send Me Your Next Newsletter So I Can See What the VVB Is All About

## 2009 VVB Officers

**\*President:** Floyd Merckle 264 0581 **\*Vice Pres.:** Don Wassmer 726 6752 **\*Treasurer:** Ralph Earrusso 453 7498  
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## Contacts and Locations

**VVB Bunker:** (Veterans Assistance Program)- Ph. 321 690 0805; Fx. 321 690 0106; e-mail. [maximus0301@yahoo.com](mailto:maximus0301@yahoo.com)  
**VVB Transitional Housing Facility:** 700 Fee Ave., Melbourne 32901; Ph. 321 409 8167  
**Veterans Memorial Center:** 400 S. Sykes Creek Pkwy., Merritt Island 329953; Ph. 321 453 1776  
**Titusville Veterans Memorial:** Bob Socks [bobbysocks@cfl.rr.com](mailto:bobbysocks@cfl.rr.com); 321-848-1630  
**American Legion Post 22:** 241 Peachtree St., Cocoa 32022  
**Melbourne Vet Center:** 2098 Sarno Rd., Melbourne 32935; 321 254 3410  
**VVB Annual Reunion:** Wickham Park, Melbourne; (Entrance on Parkway Drive between Wickham Road and US 1). Ralph Earrusso Ph. 321 453 7498; e-mail: [Daydrmr333@aol.com](mailto:Daydrmr333@aol.com)  
**Brevard County Veteran Services Team:** 321 633 2012  
**Veterans Administration, Viera:** Benefits Information, Ph. 321 637 3693; Patient Advocate, Ph. 321 637 3788 X 3534  
**Rifle Team:** Bob Bodine; 321 794 0158, [kbob4wic@juno.com](mailto:kbob4wic@juno.com)  
**Color Guard:** Tom Hart; 321 254 3514.  
**School Speaker Program:** Rod Smith; [rsmith2580@bellsouth.net](mailto:rsmith2580@bellsouth.net); 321 632 6702  
**Perimeter Report:** (VVB Newsletter); e-mail; [hancrafters@bellsouth.net](mailto:hancrafters@bellsouth.net)



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