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Veterans Policy

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 7/23/82 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 7/27/82

SUBJECT: H.R. 4688 - MILITARY PERSONNEL AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES' CLAIMS ACT

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	GERGEN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEESE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HARPER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BAKER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	JAMES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEAVER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	JENKINS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
STOCKMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MURPHY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CLARK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROLLINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WILLIAMSON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DOLE →	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEIDENBAUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DUBERSTEIN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BRADY/SPEAKES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FIELDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FULLER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks:

Please provide any comments/recommendations by Tuesday, July 27th.

Thank you.

*OK
M. Blahwell
7/26/82*

Richard G. Darman
Assistant to the President
(x2702)

Response:



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

JUL 23 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Enrolled Bill H.R. 4688 - Military Personnel and
Civilian Employees' Claims Act
Sponsor - Reps. Danielson (D) California and Moorhead
(R) California

Last Day for Action

July 30, 1982 - Friday

Purpose

Increases to \$25,000 the maximum reimbursement the Government may make to military and civilian personnel in settlement of their claims for loss of or damage to personal property incurred as a result of Federal service.

Agency Recommendations

Office of Management and Budget	Approval
Department of Defense	Approval
Department of State	Approval
Department of Transportation	Approval
Office of Personnel Management	Approval

Discussion

The Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claims Act of 1964 authorizes Federal agencies to compensate their civilian employees and military personnel when they incur losses of or damage to personal property arising out of their Federal service. H.R. 4688 would increase the current \$15,000 limit on settlement of property claims to \$25,000, as recommended in a draft bill submitted to the Congress by the Department of Defense (DOD) in October of 1981.

In recommending the increase in the maximum, DOD pointed out that the purchasing power of the current limit, which was set in 1974, is roughly equivalent to \$25,000 at today's prices. DOD urged enactment of the increased limit as necessary to meet the rising costs of repair and replacement of personal property.

Most of the property loss and damage claims of Government personnel stems from moves of these personnel and their families to new duty stations. These moves occur most frequently in the military services, and in the Department of State and other foreign affairs agencies, where required change-of-station moves are a regular feature every few years.

The Claims Act has been amended periodically to keep pace with price changes, as a matter of fairness and equity, to maintain the same level of protection for employees. In reviewing the DOD proposal, agencies indicated that only a small number of claims exceed \$15,000, so that the cost of the increase to \$25,000 would not be significant.

In addition to the increase in the ceiling on settlement of claims, the enrolled bill makes technical corrections in the Claims Act. The changes would reflect the fact that the Coast Guard is now a part of the Department of Transportation instead of the Department of the Treasury.

H.R. 4688 passed the Senate by voice vote. In the House, the vote, under suspension of the rules, was 370 to 11.

James M. Frey
Assistant Director for
Legislative Reference

Enclosures

EHD
Red
~~Morton Blackwell~~
Diana


Document No. 065509SS

*Veterans
Policy*

WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 7/7/82 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: Friday, 7/9

SUBJECT: ENROLLED BILL H.R. 6451 - MILITARY CONSTRUCTION CODIFICATION ACT

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	GERGEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEESE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HARPER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BAKER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	JAMES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEAVER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	JENKINS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
STOCKMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	MURPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CLARK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROLLINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/> P	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SS	WILLIAMSON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DOLE 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEIDENBAUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DUBERSTEIN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BRADY/SPEAKES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FIELDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FULLER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Remarks:

May we have your comments on the attached Bill by c.o.b. Friday, July 9.
Thank you.

No objection

Richard G. Darman
Assistant to the President
(x2702)

*M. Blackwell
7/23*

Response:



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

JUL 7 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Enrolled bill H.R. 6451 - Military Construction
Codification Act
Sponsor - Rep. Brinkley (D) Georgia

Last Day for Action

July 13, 1982 - Tuesday

Purpose

Revises and codifies existing law relating to military construction and military family housing in a new chapter of title 10, United States Code, and transfers related military construction provisions of title 10 to the new chapter.

Agency Recommendations

Office of Management and Budget	Approval
Department of Defense	Approval
General Services Administration	Approval (Informal)
Department of Transportation	No objection (Informal)
Department of Energy	No objection (Informal)
Department of Housing and Urban Development	No objection (Informal)

Discussion

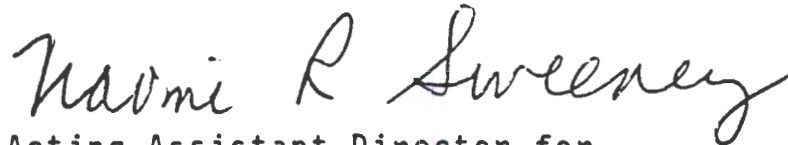
H.R. 6451 codifies under a new chapter of title 10, United States Code, the diverse and separate authorities affecting military construction and military family housing currently in law. In addition, the enrolled bill revises current policy and procedures to permit more flexibility in carrying out certain provisions of law related to military construction and family housing programs, and makes certain other technical and clerical changes. More specifically, H.R. 6451:

- decentralizes the administration of military construction and military family housing projects, thus affording the services greater flexibility in the management of these programs;
- updates and consolidates numerous reporting requirements, in part to ensure improved quality and utility of the information being reported;

- standardizes cost variation allowances for minor construction, regular military construction, military family housing, and land acquisition projects; and
- requires the authorization for lump sum appropriations for design of military construction projects and construction of defense access roads to be included in future military construction authorization Acts.

H.R. 6451, the result of close cooperation between the Department of Defense and the Congress, will provide unified treatment of existing law relating to military construction and military family housing. It should greatly simplify the Administration's annual review of future draft military construction authorization bills.

The enrolled bill passed both the House and the Senate by voice vote.



Acting Assistant Director for
Legislative Reference

MEMORANDUM

File

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TODAY'S (JUNE 3) MESSAGE FROM JOAN MAIMAN
VETERANS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

According to Joan's sources, Terzano, Chris Noel and Muller are telling their membership that they worked with EHD staff to end initial hunger strike. They do not trust the Administration "worth shit" and they have a feeling that the government is playing "fuckie, fuckie with them!"

Richard Boyle, described by Joan as an author who was in Vietnam, is having a press conference this afternoon saying nasty things about the Administration.

Joan also told me, confidentially of course, that many members of Muller's group are calling her and wanting to join her organization. She says that this is being reported in the West Coast papers.

She would like to know if she should call whoever is in charge at Wadsworth hospital to offer any assistance that they might deem necessary.

That is the end of message at 1 PM, I am sure there will be more.

PS. She claims that 15,000 postcards were sent to the Pres. recommending that Vincent Rios be considered for a position at the VA . He is a triple amputee and active in the Hispanic community

Re Joan Maiman:

Please get me a
copy of a position paper
on Veterans' issues which
the RNE issued in

October.

MB

6/1

Position Paper on
Vietnam Veterans
Bill Ayres/VanderClute

484-7606

Elizabeth Heff

486-7662

Call for appointment 1st thing
June 2, Does not want to make a definite
appointment just yet, due to present
situation with hunger strikers

JOAN M MAIMAN
300 NORTH STATE ST
CHICAGO IL 60610

western union Mailgram



4-074010S149 05/29/81 ICS IPMBNGZ CSP WSHB
3128289563 MGM TDBN CHICAGO IL 34 05-29 0744P EST

MORTON BLACKWELL, SPEC ASST ON PUBLIC
INFORMATION
WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON DC 20500

THIS WILL CONFIRM OUR REQUEST FOR A MEETING REGARDING VETERANS ISSUES
AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE.
JOAN M MAIMAN, CHAIRMAN VETERANS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

19:45 EST

MGMCOMP MGM

*contacted by
phone 6/1
Invited to meet
here. MB*

RNC -

VETERANS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

300 NORTH STATE STREET, SUITE 3409
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

JOAN M. MAIMAN

30 May, 1981

Ms Mayselle Shapley
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mayselle:

As per our conversation of yesterday, I am forwarding some of the clippings regarding the Veterans Leadership Conference.

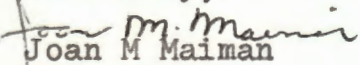
I sent a mailgram to Morton Blackwell yesterday to make our request for a meeting a matter of record.

In speaking with many of the members of the coalition, I find that there is great interest in the possibility of a meeting to be held here in Chicago. This would enable greater participation for many of the members.

We would be of course, happy to confine the issues discussed to a written agenda, and to limit those invited to a realistic working number.

Once again, we sincerely appreciate your efforts to see that we are directed to the proper source and we shall look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,


Joan M Maiman
Chairman
Veterans Leadership Conference
(312)828-9563



Guest Editorial

The Sound Of Silence

Joan M. Malman

Who will speak for the World War I Veterans....living a life of dog food suppers...he who fought on that long ago field, and gave of his strength and his youth.

Who will speak for him as his strength fails?.....

"Not I," said the Official. "I am in charge of giving priority treatment to the refugees. After all, they deserve the best this nation has to offer. They came seeking freedom."

Who will speak for the veterans of World War II...their country degraded in foreign lands and the flag for which their friends died, a mockery. Who will speak for them?...

"Not I," said the Official. "Our foreign policy must be strong and we can not afford to risk offending our allies or our foes in these troubled times. We talk, but we dare not act."

Who will speak for the veterans of the "police action" in Korea.

Who will remember that this was a cause for which Americans died. A land which now can not "afford" to be free...Who will remember that this was a matter of national honor?...

"Not I," said the Official. "I am in charge of balancing the budget and everyone will have to sacrifice: Veterans should set the example as they have in the past by giving for their country."

Who will speak for Vietnam Veterans. Who will care that they have never really come home. It was a "bad war" so perhaps the whole thing is best forgotten. Who indeed will speak for them?....

"Not I," said the Official. "We are satisfied that we have created programs and the reconciliation has happened. The draft evaders are pardoned and those who did not serve are well adjusted."

Who will speak for them and who will care? Only you...because without you there is no sound, only silence.

Thursday, April 23, 1981,

Chicago Plans Vets Memorial

The Office of the Mayor, City of Chicago, has announced plans for the dedication of a memorial for Vietnam and Korean veterans on May 15, 1981.

The memorial will consist of a bronze plaque mounted on a three foot high marble base. It will be erected immediately adjacent to the eternal flame in the Daley Center Plaza.

"This memorial is a gesture of appreciation to the brave and loyal men and women who served in our Country's armed forces during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts," Mayor Byrne said. "Their sacrifice must not be forgotten or ignored."

Joan Maiman, Chairman of the Veterans Leadership Conference and a member of the committee to coordinate the activities for the May 15th ceremonies, spoke with Alderman Louis Farina, a World War II vet and Chairman of the Committee.

Farina told Maiman that he is behind this memorial as he feels that the veterans of the Korean and Vietnam conflicts have never received the recognition they deserved for their service.

Farina, a combat vet, is well aware of the situations men face in combat, and he agreed that the stress of combat deserves special recognition and honor. Farina also stated that he feels it is essential that the veterans of all eras work together as there is strength in numbers."

The 81st Airforce band will play and a Black High school chorus will sing prior to the dedication of the plaque. A parade is planned after the dedication ceremony in conjunction with Armed Forces Day.

Farina said that he believes Chicago is the first major city in America to honor the Vietnam and Korean veteran in this manner and that Mayor Byrne is hopeful that other cities will follow the example of Chicago.

Maiman remarked that she is hopeful as are many of the Chicago area vets that much needed action in terms of veterans programs will follow this ceremony. Only if recognition leads to action will it be of use to us. *

The Stars and Stripes

The National Tribune

VETERANS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

300 North State Street, Suite 3409
Chicago, Illinois 60610

Duty, Honor And Country

By Joan M. Maiman

The responsibility of any citizen of a Republic is to serve the nation when called upon to do so. It is perhaps simplistic, but bears repetition that if one is to enjoy the blessings of liberty, one must be willing to serve to secure and preserve these blessings. Indeed, historically, in any society, the rights of citizenship have been co-existent with the obligation of service.

In the United States many types of service have evolved. The military has been the most common, but other forms include missionary service, the Peace Corps, the Red Cross, the United Service Organization, and lay church service. To date, the military has been the only service which guaranteed

benefits upon completion of tour or incapacity.

Perhaps the time has now come for us to look closely at the system which has evolved out of this concept. The enormous cost of supporting the Veterans Administration has now come under fire from many groups. The inequity of one group of persons receiving benefits at cost to the taxpayers, while another group or groups who served, many times in the front lines of combat, are without any such benefits is pronounced.

A case in point is the issue of Agent Orange. Those who served in Vietnam at the invitation of the military, such as the Red Cross, the

See Maiman, Pg. 10

Maiman From Pg. 2

USO and the church groups, are without any testing and treatment programs, as it now exists.

The need for readjustment programs for some of those who served in the Vietnam conflict is well documented. However, the treatment centers which now exist are open to all who served in the Vietnam era, whether or not they were in the combat zone, while excluding the civilians who saw extensive combat.

The hostages and their families were given educational benefits, while again many others who served in combat in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam are without any such benefits. Certainly, we went into the combat zone knowing that we were doing so without any repayment in terms of benefits or services. The knowledge that we had served was and is payment enough.

However, it might be worth considering in light of the inequities which exist and the move toward a form of national service, that perhaps the criteria for benefits should be for those who served in combat and those who were injured in service of country in any location or capacity.

As it stands now, some forms of service are apparently more lucrative than others. Persons who never saw combat are rewarded more than those who served under fire.

If we are to recognize our citizens for fulfilling their obligation to serve, let us look at the many forms of service available, and make the system more equitable and just for all. It is an honor to serve and we should honor all those who served under fire. ★

By CARLA MARINUCCI
Times Staff Writer

MARTINEZ — The days, the years in the tanks and the jungles are gone. Packed away are the photos and memories of Vietnam.

They have tried, for a decade, to forget that war. But it has never gone away.

Out of the nightmares, the cold stares and put-downs that followed the coming home, came frustration and the terrible sense that no one listened or cared.

Finally, there was anger and it was then that some of the soldiers said they'd had enough.

In Contra Costa, it was one year ago today that four Vietnam vets declared a war of their own — one against their countrymen.

It was a war on the attitudes that were gradually adding the surviving Vietnam vets to an already-long list of casualties. And it has been fought by the Contra Costa County Chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) — one of two state chapters, and three nationwide — that many observers say has become the most politically active local group of Vietnam veterans in the nation.

"We're dealing with the White House, and the input of the Contra Costa vets is invaluable in terms of giving a local perspective," says Joan Malmen, head of the Chicago-based national Veterans Leadership Conference. "They have been very, very helpful."

The county's Vietnam vets group hasn't had it easy. One of the founders is dead — his family and friends say it relates to serious health problems from his exposure to Agent Orange.

There has been a series of angry battles with the Martinez VA Medical Center after many vets counted their problems with delayed stress and Agent Orange were being ignored.

And there are countless local vets who have had continuing difficulties with health, unemployment and personal traumas — some have threatened suicide as a way out.

But, despite its problems, VVA continues to grow and attack the issues important to its members.

Two of the local VVA's original founders each have taken different roads in tackling the problems of their fellow vets, but they agree the past year has been one of encouraging strides in the treatment and awareness of their concerns.

Pete Tiffany, group president, in the beginning often raised eyebrows with his outspoken, often fiery approach to veterans problems.

"Sure I was radical," he says now. "When this thing started, I was angry. But I've begun to look at broader issues, to raise those issues in a thoughtful manner and provide solutions to the problems. As a good citizen, that's something I've got to do."

Tiffany works at the grass-roots level — and as the Northern California director for the Veterans Leadership Conference — to bring problems to the forefront. He spends hours weekly on the phone and in his living room, listening to those who still can't find work, or stability, almost a decade after the war has ended. On that subject, he is just as angry and outspoken as ever.

Tiffany has led monthly veterans meetings, organized demonstrations, marches and letter-writing campaigns, and now wants to tackle the Reagan budget cuts — which he says are a "hatchet approach" to services "that has betrayed veterans" who supported Reagan in the last election.

Art McGowan, an ex-POW who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, four Bronze Stars and four Purple Hearts, is the national legislative director for the Legion of Valor, an honor group for veterans.

His aim is to bring about change through political channels.

McGowan has taken the lead in working with legislators like George Miller, D-Martinez, as chairman of the Veterans' Advisory Committee, and on the state legislature's Agent Orange committee. This month, McGowan will testify in Sacramento to help promote support for Assemblyman Patrick Nolan's Agent Orange bill.

He spearheaded discussions between the Martinez VA officials and veterans when they voiced deep frustration with the hospital, and worked directly with VA director Clarence Nixon to smooth out difficulties.

McGowan is in contact with top Washington officials, inside and outside the VA, in his continuing concern over Agent Orange, the chemical defoliant used in Vietnam, which many vets insist is the source of health problems — and which McGowan and his wife were exposed to.

Membership of the self-funded VVA has grown in one year from four to more than 200 people throughout the Bay Area, including supportive wives, friends and children.

Veterans Problems Are 'Largely Untreated, Poorly Understood'

By CARLA MARINUCCI
Times Staff Writer

Years after the war has ended, Vietnam veterans — especially minority veterans — live with a deepening pain, confusion and problems readjusting to normal life.

And, according to a national study just released, their problems could be getting worse.

"Legacies of Vietnam," developed after eight years of study and interviews with more than 400 Vietnam veterans, was released this month by the New York-based Center for Policy Research. It is a center staff effort directed by Robert S. Lauder, Ph.D., director of the Vietnam Era Research Project.

The study points out problems of Vietnam veterans "have remained largely untreated and poorly understood" and Veterans Administration hospitals must place priorities "on appropriate research, training and treatment innovations" to help them.

About half of all Vietnam veterans "remain troubled by war experiences that are unresolved." But so far, "the overwhelming majority of Vietnam veterans ... seem little disposed to utilize" the VA services, which don't meet their needs, the report indicates.

Outreach centers — those threatened by the Reagan cutbacks — provide a valuable service by giving vets a chance to meet with peer counselors and overcome their trauma.

Clarence Nixon, director of the VA Medical Center

"We get together and there's all those guys saying, 'What's the damn VA doing for us?'," says McGowan. "It's dynamic."

VVA membership is continually sounded out on national issues, and Tiffany supported the nomination of Vincent Rios, one of the Contra Costa members, to head the Veterans Administration.

"We've picked up support from some of the old line veterans groups, like the Mt. Diablo Disabled American Veterans, and the Pleasant Hill Veterans of Foreign Wars."

Local vets, along with their families, have been featured in television investigative reports, and on radio shows. The resulting attention has aroused public conscience, and the interest of legislators.

"I've worked with George Miller, Boatwright, Sunne McPeak," says McGowan. "Now we're recognized in local politics, at least."

Perhaps the biggest change is the noticeably improved relationship between the local VA hospital and the vets.

Says Martinez VA Medical Center Director Clarence Nixon: "No one is happier about it than we are," and better communication has resulted in "growth on both sides. I have come to understand better some of the problems that they faced, and also their frustrations."

in Martinez, says that a veterans outreach center in Contra Costa County could be "very beneficial" to local vets, and would probably be highly utilized. "There's a much higher level of awareness here," he says. "I would certainly support it, publicly and privately, provided the local veterans support it."

The study reveals some gloomy statistics about the conditions of many Vietnam vets:

- They showed a marked "disadvantage in educational and occupational achievement," and generally lose out in the competition for better jobs

- Combat veterans report more anger and hostility, stress symptoms and alienation than their non-vet peers, and have a higher arrest, alcohol and drug abuse rates than any other group.

- The problems are markedly intensified for black veterans, 70 percent of whom report serious stress problems, and who have higher rates of unemployment and drug abuse problems.

- But men with many Vietnam veteran friends — with whom they can discuss common problems — have fewer symptoms of stress.

"This is the kind of stuff we've been saying all along," says Art McGowan, a local veterans' leader.

"The emphasis on readjustment programs, on mental health, job services — that is what we've asked for."

States the report: "If the country as a whole, wishes to derive important lessons from its experience in Vietnam ... it would do well to acknowledge and encourage Vietnam veterans as among those leading the way."

The drawn-out battles with the VA brought concrete changes, McGowan says, among them the establishment of a patient assistance center and telephone hotline — an idea suggested by vets; some personnel changes; and a greater sympathy toward vets who come in for Agent Orange examinations.

Tiffany, who was highly critical of the facility, agrees: "They (Martinez VA Hospital) had an image problem, all right. There's a hell of a lot more upbeat attitude there now, and that spells something upbeat for all vets."

But, Tiffany stresses, there is much to be done: "Now is our new beginning."

"There is a tremendous amount of potential for us to make some substantial contributions to this country," he says. The key lies in adequate "delayed stress and psychological services for the veteran in Contra Costa County."

Tiffany says a "major objective" is the establishment of an outreach center in Contra Costa County for the vets, a visible center for readjustment.

"It's absolutely critical. We've got to take all the resources available and focus on it. There's proven volume and need."

McGowan says more than 33 percent of all veterans are Vietnam vets — yet they still feel outside the system, as evidenced by the fact that they are not utilizing VA health programs. "We would like to know what services are being offered to the Vietnam veteran. Are they getting their 33 percent? We know they're not."

That could change with the introduction of legislation like AB-14 introduced by Assemblyman Patrick Nolan. It would direct the California Department of Veterans Affairs to institute an outreach program on Agent Orange.

McGowan and veteran Rand Miller are also studying the possibilities of a bill to "use veterans in employment in parkland and forestry areas, as an aid to readjustment," McGowan says. That idea "emphasizes all the strengths of Vietnam vets — our responsibility and integrity," and has support from Congressman Miller, he says.

The changes have been "a step in the right direction," says Tiffany. But Vietnam veterans are still chronically unemployed, have higher divorce, suicide, alcohol and drug-related problems than the rest of the population, "and the gap is widening. If it's unaddressed, their downward trend will continue."

Says McGowan: "This county gets more than \$10 million income a year" from financial returns generated from its 91,000 veterans. But the county is putting out only \$20,000 annually toward services for those vets — "about 25 cents per veteran."

"We don't get a hell of a lot of county service for those dollars," agrees Tiffany.

Nationwide, a greater awareness continues to grow, veterans say. "Now, no one has to explain what Agent Orange is anymore," says McGowan. "The press has covered the issue virtually completely," and "the publicity nationwide over the hostages" highlighted what happened during the Vietnam vets' homecoming — and the lack of it.

"I'm looking forward to the future with a lot more hope and positive feeling," says Tiffany. "We're going to be able to work directly with government agencies that have responsibility for veterans, and we're going to get results."

Contra Costa Times, California, April 10, 1981

The talking wounded

Horror festers in Viet Nam vets

By Steven Morris

AS THE LAST of the departing office workers trickled into battered elevators of the Federal Building on Clark Street south of Congress Parkway, about a dozen men arrived, one by one, in an office on the 4th floor.

Though their dress was casual, they nonetheless seemed vaguely to retain — in the directness of their speech, the economy of their movements — the efficiency of a military squad, ready, upon a long-remembered command, to snap instantly to rigid readiness.

In the wide aisle between vacated government-issue desks they pulled chairs into a rough circle. A few minutes later Curtis Colin, who works down the hall for the Veterans Administration, came in.

Colin, a pleasant faced black man with a slow smile, began staying after work every other Wednesday night early last year. Guys would come in to rap, to exchange information about jobs, or maybe just to sit and listen. Once in a while a guy would bring his wife, a way to let her know a few things that the guy by himself hadn't been able to make her understand.

COLIN KNEW THE GUYS needed the sessions, as did he. At least a decade after most had returned from the war, these survivors of Southeast Asia gathered to talk mainly about how they had made it through another two weeks in the U.S.

"I study at U. of I. Circle," said a swarthy, slender man in a blue sweatshirt who in Viet Nam drove trucks loaded with dangerous helicopter fuel. "I'm surrounded by children who have the nerve to look down on me. The media have stereotyped us, telling people that, 'those mothers are crazy, doped up.' You've got movies like 'Taxi Driver.'

"If you go for a job and put down that you're a Viet Nam vet, you're not getting any job. I want to go out and walk proud. I don't want to feel I have to hide what I've done."

A heavy-set man, with lively brown eyes, spoke sardonically about job discrimination, a common topic.

"A high school kid can get a job. I happen to have a good aptitude for computer programming, but nobody will hire me. Those people who ran to Canada and renounced their citizenship were all pardoned, and they've got jobs making decent money. Ten per cent of those guys maybe had a religious reason not to fight. The other 90 per cent were cowards, chicken."

FOR SOME OF THE guys, though, the problem is not merely job discrimination, but a seed planted in Viet Nam that seems to prevent them from holding a job once they get it.

"I'll work a couple of days," said a mustachioed man in a brown suede shirt. "Then I'll have a spell . . . and there I am."

Another, blond and Nordic, detailed in a quiet, gentle voice a kind of odyssey from horror.

"In Nam I smoked grass so that when my buddies got hurt I could stand it; I could just walk away. There were times over there when the incoming (enemy artillery fire) was falling and I wouldn't take cover because I just didn't care. I feel guilty coming back alive.

"The first two years after I got out, sometimes I would just sit there and shake and scream. I used to walk around like a bomb. Everywhere I went I was

afraid of talking. I used to beat up my wife, my kids. I gave them punishments like I had in boot camp. In boot camp the sergeants say, 'I'll tell you when you can go to the bathroom.' That's what I was doing to my kids. (Tears formed in his eyes, and his voice became heavier.)

"I SLEEP BETTER NOW because I'm off the stimulants that the VA doctors were giving me. But I still get tense. Saturday night I was going to a dance. I froze at the door. I'm afraid to sit in classes. I want to be something for my parents, but I'm afraid to achieve the things that I know I deserve.

"Ever since I've been back from Nam I've felt like an alien from another planet. And when I would get depressed, I would look at the pictures and the articles that my mom had saved from when I was over there. I would see a few people I knew, who got wasted. A couple of days ago I tore up all the pictures and the articles. I feel a lot better to have let it go."

"I talk to friends I had over there. They're like me. We try to care, but we don't know how. They took away our love and gave us hatred. I never felt love until 10 months ago with this woman. I want to hang onto this love."

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV), a private group, has known for a long time that some — though by no means all — Viet Nam combat veterans suffered severely from a clump of symptoms called the delayed stress syndrome, not as common to veterans of the nation's previous wars.

THROWN INTO GUERRILLA war in which some had seen their buddies killed by women and children, in which massacres such as at My Lai were numerous, in which the "fragging" of American officers by their subordinates symptomized growing distrust and alienation, and then wrenched home with disorienting swiftness to meet indifference or hostility from their neighbors, often unable to get jobs, thousands of vets remain today a psychologically wounded army.

Last year the DAV published a report suggesting that the suicide rate for Viet Nam combat veterans, which in 1975 was 23 per cent higher than that of the general population, had grown to 33 per cent higher by 1980. Of vets who were married before going to Viet Nam, 38 per cent were divorced within six months after returning home.

The DAV asked Colin, a VA benefits counselor, to hold the sessions because of his training in counseling and, as important, his experience in combat. A member of the Special Forces, a Green Beret, he was wounded three times and, not unusual for men in that unit, had signed up for additional combat tours. Instead of the standard 13 months, he had fought for three years. Like others in the session, he has worked with the Viet Nam Veterans Against the War and the Veterans Leadership Conference.

"OFTEN VETS WILL only talk to vets," Colin said. "They avoid people who haven't been in it. I know. It was difficult for me to even talk to anybody about my feelings from the war. I wanted to forget about it, block it out of my mind. But that defense is damaging. You become numbed. Your emotions start dying."

In the meetings, Colin said, "the guys can feel

Continued on page 13

Continued from first Tempo page

secure and know that they can express their feelings to other people who know what they're talking about. You're not just talking at someone. It's a dialog because the others have been through it, too. If you feel like crying here, nobody is going to look at you like you're crazy. There are times when we find ourselves crying together. When we see somebody else coming out of his shell, it helps the rest of us to do the same."

Often when a vet returned home, his family seemed surprised that he had changed, Colin said.

"Of course, we changed. I was 17 when I enlisted. In high school I had been the class clown, always in the middle of everything. I played football and baseball, and I was good. I was an artist, too. I devised a technique called blow-painting. I would draw the outline of the figure, then wet the paper and redraw it in ink and blow on the paper to spread the line. No one else had done that as far as I know. One of my pictures was entered in a citywide art contest.

"Now I don't paint anymore; a nerve problem in my arms and hands won't let me."

COLIN DOESN'T PLAY sports anymore, either. Physical problems, which he thinks are caused by exposure to Agent Orange, have stopped that and in addition have prevented him from attending the sessions recently and prompted him, at age 36, to apply for medical retirement.

Since 1971, five years after he returned, Colin has had problems with his digestive system. Last year his gallbladder was removed. In the last two years he has had pneumonia five times. He has ulcers that will not heal. Because of his breathing difficulties, doctors have advised him to move away from

Chicago to a better climate.

Colin also is familiar, firsthand, with some of the psychological aftereffects that can burden combat vets:

"Sometimes I would flash back to a time when about 12 of us were walking through the jungle. We were a mobile team, and our job was to harass the enemy's supply lines and territory. It was dusk; in the Special Forces we did a lot of our hunting at night. We had men out on the flanks, but were basically walking in a line."

SOME MEN CARRIED Russian-made AK-47 automatic rifles, Colin said. Americans often took AK-47s from fallen enemy because they considered it a more rugged and reliable weapon than the M-16 issued to U.S. soldiers. Capable of spewing either Russian or American bullets, the AK-47, like war itself, didn't seem to care whom it killed.

"That mission became a classic case of the hunter becoming the hunted," Colin said. "Our radio man was walking directly ahead of me. The VC's first shot hit him, and his head exploded backward into my face. I got shot in the stomach. I grabbed the radio and started shouting for the choppers to come in and cover. The whole key to a successful guerrilla force is to hit and run. Inflict as much damage as you can, and get the hell out. It was a quick fire fight. We never knew how many VC had attacked us. For years I would wake up at night shouting, 'Kilo 1, this is Kilo 2. We are being overrun.' It's not like a dream. It seems real."

During his first two years back home Colin felt as if his life were in constant danger.

"I STILL CAN'T sleep much of the time. Even now if I go anywhere, I will not just walk into the

room. I'll kind of stop, and if the door is closed, I will stand off to the side and push it open and wait a few seconds. In Nam they booby-trapped doors.

"I also will not sit near the front window of a restaurant. Once I was eating in a place in Saigon, fortunately in the back, when a VC threw a bomb through the door. Quite a few people were killed."

When Colin returned home from the war, some friends gave a party for him in a bar in Hyde Park.

"A woman in the bar asked what we were doing. Someone told her, and she came over and spat in my face and called me a baby killer. People back home have tried to make the vets feel as if the war was our fault. They had become ashamed of the war so they blamed us for going to fight it. That seemed logical to them, I guess.

"A lot of people are still trying to ignore us. If we hadn't had each other, I don't know what would have happened to most of us."

ANGERED AND GUILTY over what he came to view as the immorality of the war, Colin burned his green beret and threw away his three Purple Hearts and other medals. Later, though, he found another green beret in a store and bought it.

"I have talked to other vets, and I realize that we have no reason to be ashamed of having fought there. We were young men who were trained and sent to Viet Nam, a place we'd never heard of, to defend our country. It wasn't us who had committed a crime, it was our country, the people who sent us there.

"It may be that someone should be blamed for throwing young men onto the garbage heap of devastation. But I am not ashamed for being very good at what I was trained to do, for surviving, or for doing my duty to the best of my ability."

(Curtis Colin is a consultant to the Leadership Conference.)

'Irreparable Harm' to Women Vets

In response to the March 25 article by Pete Earley ["Forgotten Women: Effects of War on Female Vietnam Veterans Are Only Now Emerging," front page], I wish to bring the following points to The Post's attention:

I served in an evacuation hospital with the American Red Cross from 1970 to 1971. Upon my return to the states, I continued to work extensively in military hospitals for a period of six years with Vietnam returnees.

As chairman of a coalition of 20 veterans groups, I speak for many of us when I say that The Post's article does a serious disservice to the Vietnam veterans movement by its sensational, un-

balanced and stereotyping perspective.

We do not dispute that there are many serious problems facing many of those who served in Vietnam, post-traumatic stress disorder among them. However, to focus on the minority who are suffering to the extent that the women in the article are mentioned, without giving coverage to those who are attempting to operate in a reasonable manner to find a solution to this situation, does irreparable harm to all of us, as our credibility is called into question by association.

JOAN M. MAIMAN,
Chairman,
Veterans Leadership Conference

Chicago

Washington Post, April 8, 1981

Journey: Impressions of a Year in Vietnam

I really do not remember thinking much about the war before I went to Vietnam. It was as if the war had always been there, a part of the background of my life...

My first day in Vietnam. The beautiful Oreaga hotel in the heart of downtown Saigon...the sheets had not been changed since the French left in 1954 (or so it seemed) the lizzards, the dripping fountain...Learning to weave garlands of flowers from the child-whores on the roof before they went on duty for a night of 'Saigon tea.'

The year at the 24th evacuation hospital at Long Binh...

The young man dying a slow and wondering death from burn injuries "Just wanted someone to be here, I won't be so alone" Death coming before the dawn...

The 19 year old just beginning to realize that he is paralyzed forever. "How will I support my wife and baby, miss. I was a farmer"...

In memory of a long ago Child of the manger, the orphans at Christmas...opening their gifts we realize that they do not know how to play.

The truce at midnight, the red and green flares celebrating the brotherhood of man...

Midnight Mass "Peace be with you, in case of rocket or mortar attack during this service"...

Silent night...

The cherry kool-aid, more cherry kool-aid...

Malaria pill Monday...

Mail call...

Peter Rabbit, the dying three month old orphan, held loved in the last few hours of his life. Godspeed, baby boy...

Mamma-san hanging my one pair of nylons on the barbed wire to dry...

The groups from the states, the athletes, the politicians .."Is this the war? Take my picture and lets go home"...

Saigon, the onion soup...

the Cathedral beggars dying on the front steps...I will go unto the altar of God...

Lunch on the Terrace of the Palace hotel...

Watching the flares from the rooftop bar of the Caravelle hotel, same time tomorrow night, folks...

R and R in Hawaii ..great bathtubs, good food, and love those shops, have to stock up for the next three months...

Australia, some poor town signed on the exchange program for a "fighting Yank" and got me...

The rocket attack on Camp Alpha, tacky...NO ONE

shoots at this place, anyway I have a card that says that I am not part of the war, so they can not shoot at me...

The feeling of a falling helicopter, eternity in two seconds. So this is what it is like to die...autorotation, the quiet of a rice paddy...I'm still here...

being shot at as we flew over the orphanage, active kids down there...

and always, my friends, my brothers, all their unfinished lives.

For God and Country...

Coming home...the wonder that I could be so changed and the world so much the same...as if the horror and the pain and the glory and the nobility had not happened at all...

How can I talk to you...

the young vets in the hospitals, the teenaged amputee. "How will I fit in at the beach this summer?" All of our youth left behind...

Service as service was asked and ridicule and scorn and puzzlement in return.

I fought - for you and reaped your hate...

Long years after, still all the hurt for many and the confusion and the pride of having served...

Wondering when the war will end...

Joan M. Maiman

Editorial

Joan M Maiman

News Items: More Vietnam veterans have died by their own hand since the end of the war than were killed during the entire conflict. (Post Traumatic Stress Disorders of the Vietnam Veterans, Edited by Tom Williams, Disabled American Veterans Cincinnati, Ohio, 1980, Page 11)

So who cares?

I care, said the VA official. Look at how hard I have worked on putting together programs designed for THESE PEOPLE. It is hard for them to realize that these things take time and after all, they are not the only priority of this place. How would it be if everyone wanted their problems to have priority. They will just

have to wait and we will get to them...we have programs on the drawing board.

I care, said the Department of Labor official. I work very hard to design programs that are useful and put THESE PEOPLE to work. They just have to realize that they have to fit the requirements and we can't possibly work any faster than we are. We have a department to run and funding is tight.

I care, said the senators and congressmen. After all, I have veterans working for me and I am always in favor of the vets programs, but it takes time to get programs out of committee and passed and there are many problems in this country. I do my part.

I care, said the state governor. I have a day for veterans if you check with my office they can fill you in. We honor and respect our vets here, make no mistake about that.

I care, said the mayor. I am always ready to refer them to the appropriate office. It really is not a CITY problem.

I care so deeply, said the family...but what can I do...It is just that there is nowhere for him to go. He has never been the same since he came back.

I care, said his buddy. Man, I am going through the same thing. I feel like a part of him.

I care, said the media. But face it, what can I do...If it isn't sensational we really can't use it. Try us around Memorial Day, maybe we can do something them...

I care, said the newly-dug earth. Come, child, be at peace...I will wrap you in my spring newness, cover you from the seasons, and I will cry the rains down as my tears...

News Item: Vietnam vet commits suicide, family asks why...

So who cares.....

Women Viet vets fight memories

By Rosalind Rossi

In Vietnam, they were called "round eyes." American men often lined up before them, seeking to perform some small chivalrous deed. The Vietnamese would stare at them quizzically, bewildered by their fair skin and round eyes.

They are the women who served in the Vietnam War, as Army nurses, Red Cross workers and volunteers. And though "the round eye was something special in Vietnam," as one woman veteran put it, that offered the women little comfort in coping with a daily bombardment of injured and a modicum of medical equipment.

On returning to the States, some struggled through their own private wars, fighting back images of agony and questions about a war vigorously rejected by many of their peers.

Noreen Gilroy, 45, of Wheaton, says even now she has flashbacks of Vietnam, where she served in a Vietnamese hospital for the U.S. Aid for International Development program. Every time a helicopter flies into Hines Veterans Hospital, where she now works, she is flooded with memories of the injured in Vietnam.

Becky Pietz, 33, of Falls Church, Va., says she has blamed Vietnam for long periods of depression riddled with crying jags, an emotional breakdown in 1975, the end of her marriage and, "probably every problem that I ever had." She was there four months as a Red Cross medical caseworker before she quit and returned to the states. "I just had one too many 17-year-old boys die on my ward," she said. "I don't know any woman who came back from Vietnam OK."

LYNDA VAN DEVANTER, 33, of Washington, says she experienced her first flashback eight years after her homecoming. When a siren sounded in a nearby firehouse, she fell to the floor screaming, crawled combat-style out to the livingroom, and asked her friends what had happened. The next morning, she awoke under her bed, where she had taken refuge during the night—one of the precautions she learned as an operating room nurse during red alerts for rocket and mortar attacks in Vietnam.

Van Devanter, head of the women's project of the Vietnam Veterans of America, says some of the women who served in Vietnam suffered many of the symptoms of the "Viet-

nam Syndrome" experienced by male veterans.

These symptoms—rage, guilt, flashbacks, nightmares, panic, depression and emotional numbing—can surface as many as 15 years after homecoming, a recent study by the New York Center for Policy Research shows. The difference, however, is that the Veterans Administration has almost ignored their existence in women, Van Devanter said.

"It's as if they think we really don't exist and that we'd come back and readjust with no problems," said Van Devanter, who has organized a training session for veterans' counselors on the unique postwar problems facing women.

"The government has almost a vested interest in not displaying us as vets because for so many years they have been saying that women will never serve in combat. As far as I'm concerned, that's a slap in the face. It denies the merit and worth of what we've done."

She credits a counseling program in which she "walked through" Vietnam with helping her soar above severe periods of depression.

IN THE LAST six months, Van Devanter has given similar training sessions, geared to the problems of women, to veterans' counselors and has visited nearly 20 percent of the 91 vet centers across the nation. However, she is concerned about the future of her program because all 91 vet centers have been targeted for elimination under Reagan administration budget-cutting plans.

Defense Department records estimate some 193,000 women served in the armed forces during the Vietnam era. More than 7,400 of them were stationed in Vietnam, with 4,500 of that number in the Army Medical Corps.

Joan Maiman, chairman of the Chicago-based Veterans Leadership Conference, estimates only a minority of women, and men, who served in Vietnam are seriously affected by the Vietnam Syndrome.

MAIMAN SAID her experience as a Red Cross worker at an Army evacuation hospital changed her from the "original American innocent" into a cynical realist. However, she said, she was able to surface emotionally intact by falling back on her sense of humor, her family, including her father, an admiral, and her work with veterans.

Maiman grew up playing on the decks of the USS Iowa, watching World War II movies and ingesting "a tradition of service." But she does admit to some residual effects from the experience. She no longer likes war movies and is startled by loud noises, which remind her of rocket fire in Vietnam.

"You realize you are so fortunate that you came through halfway physically intact and mentally intact that you have an obligation to



JOAN MAIMAN

Chicago
Sun Times
29 March, 1981

those who didn't," Maiman said.

But not all were so lucky. Problems cited by Van Devanter and other women who served in Vietnam include:

• **Emotional numbing.** "The experience of women is not one of standing in a front line and getting their head blown off but of standing behind them and trying to put the heads back together," Van Devanter said. "When someone is torn apart in front of you, the natural reaction is to break down but you can't do that because the guy in front of you will die. So you become imbued with this idea that 'I can be Atlas holding up the world.' You put a wall around yourself. You deny being a human being."

• **Flashbacks and panic.** Placida McGowan, 37, Oakland, Calif., said she is no longer working in a hospital intensive care unit because during emergencies, such as a cardiac arrest, she would be seized with the panic she experienced in Vietnam when an explosion sent respirators flying across a hospital room, killing one patient she had worked closely with.

• **Nightmares.** Pietz said she has nightmares and daydreams about her 9-year-old son dying, sometimes on a hospital bed, which may be linked to the men in Vietnam she saw dying or going off to their death. "Even when he comes home late from school and I can't

find him for a half-hour I get very, very hyper and I panic that he will disappear forever," she said.

• **Depression.** Pietz said she often spent days crying for no discernible reason. She cried for four days after seeing the Vietnam movie "Apocalypse Now," which she said triggered the realization that "Vietnam had had enough of a hold on me for one-third of my life." Since then, she says, she has settled into a new job and a new outlook.

• **Denial.** Van Devanter said for many years she refused to acknowledge that her nightmares and depression were linked to Vietnam and even hid her work in Vietnam from her therapist and friends.

Maiman urged that both men and women who served as civilians in Vietnam, such as Red Cross workers and volunteers, participate in Agent Orange testing and other benefits available to veterans. However, Van Devanter said, many women don't even realize the benefits they are entitled to under the GI Bill of Rights. "A lot of women never considered themselves veterans because the VA never considered them veterans," she said.

Van Devanter is seeking funding for a study on the readjustment problems of women veterans and says that since she started her training program, she has received letters from some 200 women Vietnam veterans.

WHAT IS AND...



THE AGENT ORANGE TRAVESTY

By Cheryl J. Koehler, R.N.
Biofeedback Clinician
Chairperson of Medical Board of Illinois
Veterans Leadership Conference

(First In A Series)

An Introduction . . .

A few years ago, while I was in College and the Viet Nam war was still raging, I recall asking my Biology Professor about the herbicides being used in Viet Nam. I asked what effect they could or would have on humans coming in contact with them? I received an off the cuff answer; that it would probably only affect plants, due to their genetic structure, and not humans, and if there was anything poisonous to man it would be in such small amounts it couldn't affect man or animals.

This same Professor likened the use of herbicides to that of insecticides, in that the insecticides only kill off insects not animals or humans.

Now, many years later, we, the worldwide society, are asking, what can this herbicide used in Viet Nam, called Agent Orange, (Dioxin) do to mankind?

During the last 3 years in my work with Veterans Organizations and in my private practice of Biofeedback, I hear repeated complaints of symptoms starting in Viet Nam or developing later. Many Veterans complain of mood swings from feelings of well being to those of deepest, darkest depressions. They also complain of a feeling of loss of control over their emotions, describing recurring episodes of rage and physical violence.

Others describe symptoms of anxiety; inability to sleep; feelings of fear and impending danger; and, gastrointestinal disorders such as esophagitis (Heartburn), stomach ulcers, ulcerative colitis, and bouts

of constipation and diarrhea. All of these contribute to poor nutrient absorption, which could lead to more complications such as malnutrition and electrolyte imbalance setting off a whole chain of physiologic changes in body functions.

A most common complaint is the recurrence of large red vesicals much like severe acne or sebaceous cysts.

The frequency of birth defects and miscarriages appears to be higher than that of the general population; there also appears to be an increase in various cancers among this group.

It is not just the Viet Nam Veterans who have been affected, but farmers and foresters and the general public alike, because dioxin-containing products have been used in commercial products such as weed killers and pet collars.

These products have been used on school and public grounds, home lawns and gardens, farms and forest. Only a little over a year ago the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) banned the use of dioxin in these commercial products. Agent Orange — Dioxin, is one of the most toxic and dangerous chemicals known to man. It has been found to be carcinogenic and multinagenic in 1-part per trillion.

At this time little research has been completed and it makes diagnosis and treatment difficult.

In a subsequent article, I will present current research on diagnosis, and the long term effect of Agent Orange, Dioxin.



WHAT COULD BE...

Wednesday, March 11, 1981



Discussing the effects of "Agent Orange" on servicemen in Vietnam during the '60s and '70s are (from left) John L. Paukstis, Past Cook County Commander of the American Legion; Bruce Neberieza, Commander of Darius-Girenas Post; Guest Speaker John Monaghan, of Veterans Leadership Conference; Casey Noga, Sr. Vice-Commander of Darius-Girenas Post.

Darius-Girenas speaker warns of dangers from Agent Orange

Are you a Vietnam vet?
How are you feeling?

The above question were asked by guest speaker John Monaghan, of the Veterans Leadership Conference, at the Darius-Girenas Post's monthly meeting.

Monaghan continued, "have you or someone you know who is a Vietnam vet, experienced any unusual or persistent skin rashes?"

"Have you, or someone you know who is a Vietnam vet, been feeling depressed or upset? Have you been feeling sick but don't know why? You may be a victim of "Agent Orange," he said.

Beginning in 1978, concerns were expressed by Vietnam veterans who

believed that they were exposed to the defoliant now commonly referred as Agent Orange.

Their concerns were based on the fact that this herbicide contained a minute quantity of a toxic contaminant called dioxin, and that exposure to this chemical might produce long-range adverse health effects.

Agent Orange was made of two chemicals — 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T which have been used widely throughout the world since the 1940's by farmers, foresters and homeowners to kill unwanted vegetation.

Spraying missions in Vietnam using Agent Orange were discontinued in the early '70s.

The federal courts have ruled that all Vietnam veterans may legally participate in a nation-wide class action suit to secure examination, diagnosis and treatment.

If you wish to be examined, diagnosed and treated, for any possible effects of exposure to Agent Orange, you should fill out Information Form No. 95, available at the Darius-Girenas Post, The American Legion, 4416 S. Western Av., or by calling the following Post Officers:

Commander Bruce Neberieza, 247-4438; Sr. Vice-Cmdr. Casey Noga, 471-2385; Service Officer Ray Mikalajunas, 545-6336; Service Officer J. Martikonis, 523-6507.

This article also appeared in:
The Community Reporter
South West News Herald
Brighton Park
Bridgeport News

The Daily Economist
Illinois Journal of the American Legion

Vets fight a new battle on the home front

By Mindy Fetterman

A GROUP OF Americans has watched the tumultuous homecoming of the former hostages from Iran with a mixture of irony and envy.

For even after a decade, the group's members consider themselves captives of a time America longs to forget. A time when no flags waved, and no young girls cheered: the Viet Nam War.

"I can identify with the hostages; the sensationalism is both good and bad," said former soldier Willie Collins, 32, of Aurora. "But we're still the group that's been lost in time."

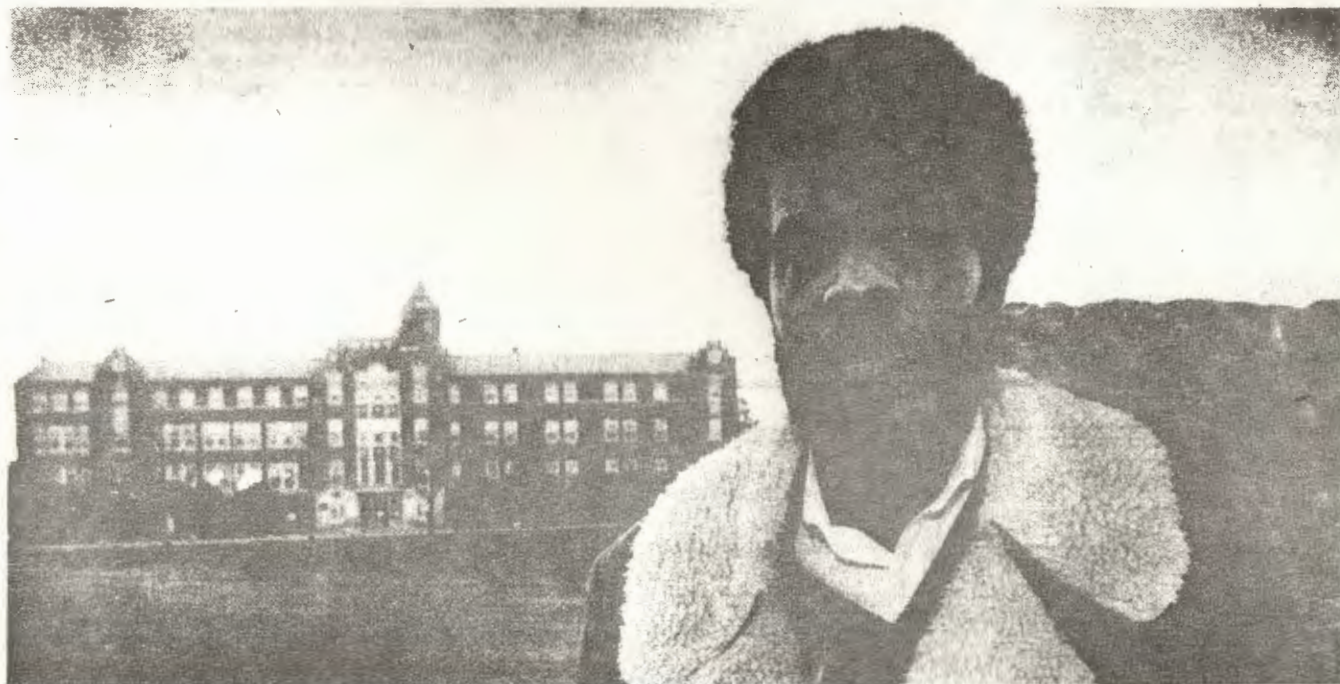
FOR MILLIONS of the young men and women who served there — many against their will — the terrors of that jungle war haven't faded with the passing years. The nightmares remain.

For others, cold sweats at midnight are the best part of their legacy from Viet Nam. Today, 2.4 million of them suffer serious physical problems they believe are linked to the U.S. Army's use of poisonous defoliant — Agent Orange — between 1965 and 1971.

"We're finding what we think are connections," said Dr. Gilbert Bogen of Highland Park. "It's kind of convincing when you see the same story over and over."

BOUTS OF MANIC depression, uncontrollable nervous tension, skin rashes, cancerous tumors, sterility, and "bizarre and abnormal" birth defects in their children are some of the symptoms now surfacing in the Viet Nam vets, Bogen said.

"We have fragmented bits and pieces, very intriguing findings, but we can't really



Trib photo by V

"We're still the group that has been lost in time," says Willie Collins of Aurora, a veteran of the Viet Nam War. Collins is trying to organize suburban vets to pressure Congress to aid veterans suffering from physical and mental disorders that he feels were brought on by the use of Agent Orange, a defoliant, during the war.

explain them yet," Bogen said.

The U.S. Army and Veterans Administration explain it easily. There is no connection between use of Agent Orange in the tropical jungles and these symptoms, they say. But no full-scale medical investigation has yet taken place, Bogen said.

Collins is one of the 2.4 million men represented in a class action suit filed Jan.

8 against the VA and the U.S. Department of Defense in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. He is trying to bring vets from Kane County into the Veterans Leadership Conference, a Chicago-based self-help group.

Collins himself had a cancerous tumor removed from his arm in 1976, and his 5-year-old daughter suffers from a brain disorder and sudden seizures. None of these

ailments was treated by the VA, Collins said.

Collins and an Elgin vet, Paul Blecke, are trying to organize groups of veterans in the suburbs to put political pressure on Congress to help the veterans suffer symptoms believed related to Agent Orange.

"The government is waiting for us to die off so the whole Agent Orange issue can be dropped," Blecke said.

Voice of the People

'A lack of honors for Viet Nam veterans'

CHICAGO—All of us who served in Viet Nam share the joy of the nation on the safe return of the hostages from Iran. However, we would like to take this opportunity to call to your attention the contrast with the treatment the nation has given to those who served in Viet Nam.

We have yet to see a true welcome home, let alone special privileges or benefits such as those being showered on the former hostages.

From my own experience based on a year in Viet Nam and seven years of work in military hospitals during the conflict, I am aware of many young men who came home and were unable to see their families for an extended period on their arrival. Families were unable to afford the trip. No special fares were offered to such families and no public-spirited group came forward to sponsor them.

We do not mean in any way to take away from the courage of the hostages, but it is very confusing to see such praise for their service to the country and compare it to the scorn which greeted those who served in Viet Nam.

It is long past time that we addressed ourselves as a nation to ensuring that the Viet Nam veterans receive the honor and recognition we are giving to the former hostages.

Joan M. Maiman

Chairman,
Veterans Leadership Conference

our readers write

Does Anyone Care?

We who served in Vietnam empathize with the recently returned hostages. They went through hell, obviously. But does anyone know or care what happened — is happening — to the us?

Joán Maiman, who chairs the Chicago-based Veterans Leadership Conference said it best:

They came home to the tears and the rejoicing of a nation — indeed, of the free world

We have made of them heroes, immortalized them with yellow ribbons.

The cities spoke of ticker tape parades. The Statue of Liberty shone for them.

Their families were kept advised and we watched with them and saw their joy.

Four-hundred and forty-four days of captivity and a lifetime of thanks. Not that they are undeserving but this situation was not of their making to serve this nation, thus, rather it was that they were victims of time and place.

Think for a minute of another soul who was sent to serve in a war which was seen as the way to defend the rightly cherished freedom of this nation.

He too came home without fanfare, without thanks, and without his legs.

His family was not able to afford the trip to come and see him so they waited. He spent his time with other very young men on an impersonal ward.

This gentle soul did not know that by all definitions he was a hero. He had served in the highest traditions of duty, honor, country. So he was quiet and the only monument he had was the tears of his family, who wondered why and where had all the heroes gone.

When he went out with the rest of the patients he was spit on.

Where were the patriots then, where were the parades, where was the compassion?

If we speak of inhumane treatment let us remember our own conduct.

His life was measured in less than 20 years. His youth became eternal.

I wish I understood why just one light could not have shown for him on the Statue of Liberty. It stood so black against the sky.

I hope he had a handful of stars to light his final journey home.

Joan served in military hospitals in Vietnam and was awarded the highest civilian medal for working with the military in combat.

PETER TIFFANY

views

Forgotten heroes

All of us who served in Vietnam share the joy of the nation on the safe return of the hostages from Iran. However, we call to your attention the contrast with the treatment the nation has given to those Americans who served in Vietnam.

We have yet to see a true welcome home, let alone special privileges like those being showered on the returning hostages.

It is long past time that we addressed ourselves as a nation to ensuring that the Vietnam veterans receive the honor and recognition that we are giving to the hostages.

Joan M. Maiman, chairman
Veterans Leadership Conference

4 THE STARS AND STRIPES—THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, Thursday, January 29, 1981



Honor And Recognition Long Overdue

All of us who served in Vietnam share the joy of the nation on the safe return of the hostages from Iran. However, we would like to take this opportunity to call atten-

tion to the contrast with the treatment the nation has given to those who served in Vietnam.

We have yet to see a true welcome home, let alone special privileges or benefits such as those being showered on the returning hostages.

From my own experiences based on a year in Vietnam and seven years of work in military hospitals during the conflict, I am aware of many young men who came home and were unable to see their families for an extended period of time as the families were unable to afford the trip. No special fares were offered to such families and no public-spirited group came forward to sponsor them.

We do not mean in any way to take away from the courage of the hostages but it is very confusing to see such praise for their service to their country and compare it with the scorn which greeted those who served their country in Vietnam.

It is long past time that we addressed ourselves as a nation to ensuring that the Vietnam veterans receive the honor and recognition we are giving to the former hostages.---Joan M. Maiman, Chairman, Veterans Leadership Conference, 300 North State St., Suite 3409, Chicago, IL 60610. ★

the column

by mike erickson

If you want to radicalize someone: treat them unjustly. It is a maxim that is too often overlooked by those inside of Government; whether it be the White House; the vast seemingly unending mindless "Bureaucracy" that goes to make up Washington D.C.; the Military; the businessman (big and small) and John C. Citizen on the street. How do YOU feel when you work your butt off for an organization and when cuts are made: you are the first to get your walking papers? A minor example of injustice but it should enable us to obtain some insight into the much greater injustices facing young Vietnam Veterans today. They could be your sons; daughters, nieces or nephews; grandchildren. Perhaps you were lucky and none of your family members were affected by Vietnam. But like it or not: you ARE affected by it directly and indirectly! Our children are being radicalized: not by some Communist-inspired revolutionaries: but by our total indifference to them and to the problems we — you and I — created for them. And if you think this is nonsense: take a look at the situation. When the propoganda of the enemy is more appealing to our young than the Freedoms they fought and bled to uphold something is terribly wrong with our Society, with us.

Being a gutter fighter from way back I am the kind of an individual who has little patience with bureaucrats and the lace pantalooned government types who sip tea with digitalts extended and "comment" about the "beastly riff-raff" who can't get jobs after being discharged from military service. Government officials have a way of destroying people's morale and patriotism that is as efficient as a bacon slicer. They exhibit no sensitivity to others' problems. To them: people are just a number; a statistic from birth to death. To them: what they do is "just a job" and if they can make it through the day without letting their consciences bother them too much about the maimed; the sick; the elderly or troubled then they are on Easy Street. CONTINUED ON REVERSE-----

Mr. Erickson may be contacted by writing or calling the following addresses or phone number.

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OVER

Well, my conscience bothers me one hell of a lot because for fifteen years now I have turned my back on them . . . these Vietnam Veterans, in the belief that our "Government officials" would see to it that they got the finest of medical care which was due to them and that they would be rehabilitated and treated compassionately. We pay considerable tax dollars to the Veterans Administration for just this purpose. We ASSUME that it is being done. Well . . . it isn't! The biggest proof of this is to be found in the dry statistics published in a report issued in 1980 by the Disabled American Veterans Organization. That report — in gory detail — outlines how more young Vietnam Veterans have committed suicide than were killed in the entire war! The report only came to our attention after some enterprising investigator dug it out from among the stacks of other reports which outline other statistics which need some translation so that the human mind can absorb the fact that behind every number in that report is a real live human being. The figures are so enormous. The lackadaisical attitude of the Veterans Administration so grossly criminal that the mind can not fully comprehend the magnitude of the problem. And we are only now . . . 15 years after Vietnam . . . seeing the tip of the iceberg. The problems are coming home to roost and burying ones head in the sands of apathy is not going to save our hides one bit. It is time to face the music. Time to take stock of the problem and do something aggressively about it. The first step of course is to completely revamp the Veterans Administration and fire the bureaucrats responsible for the above cited statistics and for the conditions within the Veterans Hospitals. Hire fewer "administrators" and more honestly "compassionate individuals" who are willing to do a little leg work to find out if notices are posted in hospital reception areas informing veterans of treatment and help for those exposed to Agent Orange. The Veterans Administration has been rapped on the knuckles more than several times to clean up its act in this regard but nothing seems to get done about it. A full scale hearing in the Congress into VA's activities and conditions at VA hospitals would be a good place to start. Veterans and other patriotic support groups throughout the nation should certainly become involved - and certainly those concerned over our dwindling military manpower resources. For it is obvious that today's recruit is going to scrutinize those of us in the armed services to find out how we have treated previous generations of recruits. If we do NOT show concern; if we do NOT get involved with the very real problems of Vietnam veterans and their families: it will have a domino effect whose consequences will be far reaching for this nation's defense system in the years ahead. So if we are unable to show concern and compassion from the heart; we should at least show some common sense.

I do know that the Army National Guard's support groups here in California are—along with those within the Guard—doing what they can to ease the problems of these Veterans. But it takes active public support. It takes public expressions of concern and it takes your personal involvement in insuring that all of those in our armed services receive the appreciation and respect due to them for their years of loyal service to

this nation. March 8 has been set aside by Vietnam Veterans organizations to pay tribute to those who served, and to those who fell in battle. A green ribbon affixed to one's clothes is the outward sign of appreciation and respect. Inwardly, we can but hope that they will understand they are not alone.

A couple of weeks ago Major Peter Tiffany, an army veteran/reservist sent us the following item published by the Disabled American Veterans of America; Cincinnati, Ohio and written by Vietnam Veteran Joan Maiman. It is something one wishes one had the eloquence to write oneself.

NEWS ITEM: "More Vietnam Veterans have died by their own hand than were killed in combat in all the years of the conflict."

SO WHO CARES?

"I care" said the V.A. Official. "Look at how hard I have worked on putting together programs designed for these people. It is hard for them to realize that these things take time. After all they are not the only priority of this place. How would it be if everyone wanted their problem to have priority? They'll just have to wait and we will get to them. We have programs on the drawing board . . ."

"I care" said the Dept. of Labor Official. "I work very hard designing programs to give these people work. But they've got to realize that they have to fit certain requirements and we can't possibly work faster than we are. We have a department to run and funding is tight."

"I care" said the politician. "After all, I have veterans working for me and I'm always in favor of veterans programs. But it takes time to get programs out of committee and passed and besides there are many problems in this country. Sure, I do my part."

"I care" said the state Governor. "I have a day for veterans. Just check with my office and I'll have them fill you in."

"I care . . . So deeply" said the family. "But what can we do? It is just that there is nowhere for him to go. He has never been the same since he came back."

"I care" said his buddy. "Man—I'm going through the same thing. I feel like a part of him."

"I care" said the Media Editor "But face it: what can I do? If it isn't sensational we really can't use it. Try us around Memorial Day. Maybe we can do something then . . ."

"I care" said the newly dug earth. "Come, child, be at peace. I will wrap you in my Spring newness, cover you from the seasons and I will cry the rains down as my tears."

NEWS ITEM: "Vietnam Vet commits suicide. Family asks why."

So—WHO CARES?

Reagan to act on Agent Orange: vets

By Sam Smith

A STUDY OF Agent Orange's effects on veterans will be undertaken by the Reagan administration, a Viet Nam veterans group said Saturday.

Several veterans groups have claimed that the toxic defoliant used widely during the Viet Nam War has caused cancer in servicemen exposed to it and birth defects in their children.

The study would mark a major breakthrough in the veterans' fight to examine the chemical. So far the government has not admitted that Agent Orange caused any illness. The issue is the subject of a class action suit on behalf of thousands of veterans.

SPEAKING AT a Daley Center pre-Veteran's Day rally Saturday, Joan Maimon, chairman of the Veterans Leadership Council and a Red Cross worker in

Viet Nam during the war, said officials of the Republican National Committee said last week that Reagan intends to support an independent commission to investigate and will order treatment for veterans suffering from any side effects of Agent Orange.

Spokesmen for Reagan and the Republican National Committee could not be reached for comment by The Tribune.

Sunday Sun-Times

Chicago, November 9, 1980

Vets expecting aid from Reagan

By Sarah Snyder

A leader of a national veterans organization said Saturday she is confident Ronald Reagan as president will offer medical benefits for the first time to Vietnam veterans suspected of suffering from Agent Orange.

The defoliant is blamed by Vietnam veterans for causing cancer and for birth defects in their children. But its effects have not been proven, and the Veterans Administration does not now provide benefits to those allegedly suffering from its effects.

At an advance Veterans Day ceremony at Daley Plaza, Joan Maimon, chairman of the Veterans Leadership Council, said she had a written commitment from the Republican National Committee supporting temporary medical benefits to suspected victims of Agent Orange.

The position paper that Maimon received from Bill Ayres, chairman of the Veterans Division of the Republican committee, states: "Although the effects of Agent Orange have yet to be scientifically proven . . . pending final determination, it would be appropriate and responsible to grant temporary VA medical care to veterans suspected of suffering from Orange toxicity."

She told the assembled veterans that Ayres assured her last week that Reagan supports such benefits.

"Reagan's people are very much more interested in Agent Orange. Carter's people were abominable," she said.

But Barry Romo, a national coordinator for the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, said, "Carter said those same things. When I see it, I'll believe it."

The Republican statement given Maimon also endorses an independent commission to investigate the effects of Agent Orange, and linking veterans' benefits to inflation.

(Chicago Sun-times)

Agent Orange: Reagan Supports Aid to Victims

By CARLA MARINUCCI
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Ronald Reagan's national campaign veterans' affairs advisor has contacted leaders of the Contra Costa County Vietnam Veterans of America to tell them that the candidate supports "temporary Veterans Administration medical care" for Vietnam veterans who say they suffer from the effects of Agent Orange.

"This is the least we owe to veterans who may be suffering irreparable damage due to a government-sponsored program," he said.

The call from Congressman Bill Ayres came in the wake of a controversy between local veterans and the VA Martinez Medical Center regarding treatment of vets who say they now have major health problems because of exposure to Agent Orange.

Local and national Vietnam veterans leaders say those statements from Reagan's top campaign advisors constitute the first solid position taken by any presidential candidate on the Agent Orange issue.

Said Joan Maimen, head of the Chicago-based Veterans' Leadership Conference: "We haven't heard a blessed thing from Carter. Anderson spoke out on Agent Orange some months back, but hasn't said a thing since then. This means quite a bit to the veterans."

Pete Tiffany, president of the Contra Costa chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America — who has been outspoken on veterans' rights and their treatment at the Martinez VA hospital — said, "This is the first time anyone, to my knowledge, has come out and made a forceful statement in the campaign concerning Vietnam vets. It's been a good thing."

Reagan's staff — with input from Reagan, his advisors, and veterans around the country, including those from Contra Costa County — has developed a "position paper" on the treatment of Vietnam veterans who

may have been exposed to Agent Orange, said Ayres.

Reagan and his staff have taken the position that "although the effects of Agent Orange... have yet to be scientifically proven, efforts should be made to determine the possibility of such side effects on veterans. Pending final determination, it would be appropriate, and responsible, to grant temporary VA medical care to veterans suspected of suffering from Orange toxicity."

Ayres said Reagan supports the position that a special commission be established to determine exactly how Agent Orange exposure may be affecting Vietnam veterans, but that "this would be an independent group, not VA-sponsored. We feel that the VA and some of their people are career people, and might be prejudiced" in the findings of such a study.

Joan Maimen, head of the Chicago-based veterans' rights group, said Reagan's veterans' affair coordinator Jack Kelly met for hours with her group to outline concerns.

Kelly this week contacted the Contra Costa veterans' president, Pete Tiffany, saying that Reagan wants to study the issue of compensation for veterans and their children who may have been harmed by direct or indirect Agent Orange exposure, according to Tiffany.

The Veterans' Administration is presently undertaking a "registry" of all Vietnam veterans which will help identify vets and "document their current health status," said Layne Drash, assistant to Dr. Barclay Shephard, who heads the VA's Agent Orange program in Washington.

Shephard contacted all of the national VA medical centers this week to discuss the Agent Orange program and outline systems and criteria for testing in each of the facilities.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *Agent Orange*

We read with interest the article regarding the victims of Agent Orange written by Carla Marinucci.

John Smyrni, along with many other American young men, enlisted in the Armed Services during the Vietnam conflict when it was not popular to do so to say the least. These men were exposed to Agent Orange, some forewarned, others not.

We wish there was more concern for those unfortunate enough to have been exposed. Whether some of them contracted cancer, rashes, etc., as a result of exposure to Agent Orange or from other sources must be important only secondarily. To insist on proof that Agent Orange is responsible for each individual case of illness before committing the nation's loyal and total support to these veterans is callous to say the least.

To paraphrase a great American, Walt Whitman, "Let us not merely pity the suffering person, we must ourselves become the sufferer."

FREDRIC AND MIMI JOHNSON
Pleasant Hill



Letters to the Editor

Noble Cause

As one who spent a year in Vietnam serving in a civilian capacity with the Armed Forces of the United States, I would like to comment on the speech which Mr. Reagan made to the VFW in which he referred to the Vietnam War as a "noble cause."

I appreciate the courage which it took to make such a statement. Most of the young men with whom I was privileged to serve, showed a nobility of spirit which I have yet to see matched. They went to Vietnam, believing that they served their country in the highest tradition by literally putting their lives on the line for their fellow citizens.

It is not given to the soldiers of any war to define the "rightness" of their cause and, in so far as they were able, I believe that these young men served with extraordinary courage and maturity in a highly confusing and controversial situation.

In so doing, they set an example for their fellow citizens which deserves praise and respect, rather than ridicule and isolation.

In general, the treatment of those who served in Vietnam by their countrymen and elected officials has been, at best, indifferent and, at times, shameful.

Regardless of how history will stand in judgment of the issue of Vietnam, those who went and gave of their youth and their future, deserve the best this nation has to offer, as do the Veterans of all wars.

Perhaps the negative reaction to Mr. Reagan's statement can best be addressed by the realization that a large part of this nation has not yet come to realize that while a war,

per se, may not be noble, those who would lay down their lives for their country give definition to the word noble.—Joan M. Maiman, VLC No. 3409, 300 North State St., Chicago, IL 60601. ★

The Sunday Times

Contra Costa Times

"JUDGED BEST DAILY NEWSPAPER BY CALIFORNIA NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION FEBRUARY 16, 1980"

WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1980

1161

Exposure to the Herbicide Causing Health Problems

CC Vets Organize Over Agent Orange Issue

By CARLA MARINUCCI
Times Staff Writer

CONCORD—Pete Tiffany, a burly Army reserve major, stood up in front of the crowd of Vietnam veterans with tears in his eyes.

His voice was husky as he asked Friday for a memorial salute to Bob Gillespie, a Concord veteran who died in late July, his body riddled with health problems that friends and family believe were caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

"I'm tired," Tiffany says later. "I'm tired of always having to fight

for what we deserve as human beings."

Tiffany, and many other members of the Contra Costa County chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America, have been active in a war that they've taken up in the years since they returned from Vietnam.

They are still facing higher unemployment, suicide, and divorce rates than other veterans. And they are still trying to deal with psychological and physical problems that relate to their war service.

For some, past exposure to herbicides like Agent Orange are now re-

sulting in severe health problems for both vets and their children.

Thousands of Vietnam vets say they are still fighting to get the government, and the Veterans' Administration, to help them.

Frustration "is at an explosive point," says Tiffany. "I've talked to too many vets who are ready to pick up a gun and go shooting."

But Tiffany and others say veterans have learned some hard political lessons in the past decade. Members of the Contra Costa group are becom-

ing part of a nationwide network of Vietnam-era vets who are getting politically organized, working through legislators and hoping to reach the public conscience.

"Up until now," says Tiffany, "there's been nothing but a Band-Aid approach" to the problems of the Vietnam vet.

Nationwide, veterans' groups are starting to form under an umbrella group called the Veterans Leadership Conference, to wield more political power.

And locally, the Contra Costa

group is working with legislators like Congressman George Miller, D-Martinez, in an effort to see change.

Art McGowen, a Vietnam veteran and ex-POW who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, four Bronze Stars and four Purple Hearts, is a liaison to Miller's Veterans' Advisory Committee, which is studying and acting on veteran-related issues.

Says McGowen: "I envy the organizations like the Urban League that

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CC Vets Seeking Reforms



'We might as well forget the VA. All they are doing is closing down (hospital) wards. And they are top heavy with management' — veteran Rand Miller.



Members of the county chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America meet regularly to discuss common problems and organize campaigns for reform.

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have helped create a solid articulation and consensus of ideas. We don't have that. We've tried all the organizations, we touched all the bases, and we failed."

But McGowan — who was exposed numerous times to Agent Orange and whose son is a hemophiliac — sees hope in working closely with legislators to construct a political movement.

"We're finally learning that we have to build up a foundation, brick by brick, with social programs, psychiatric care, specific plans to get things done," McGowan says.

Local Vietnam vets meet regularly at Concord's Queen of All Saints Church to discuss common problems and organize campaigns for reforms they maintain are sorely needed — such as treatment given to vets in local VA hospitals, especially with regard to tests on Agent Orange.

The Contra Costa group Friday hosted Vic Krohn, the executive director of the Veterans' Advisory Committee to the state Assembly and an aide to Assemblyman Patrick Nolan, R-Los Angeles.

"The course is changing," says

Krohn. "You've got individuals coming together for the first time and getting things done. (Congressman) Miller's committee is not just window dressing. As we get more sophisticated, we're going to get somewhere."

McGowan says that a few local politicians — Miller, Assemblyman Dan Boatwright and County Supervisor Sunne Wright McPeak — have all shown a sincere interest in recognizing the specific problems facing the Vietnam-era vet.

But there are still important hurdles that hamper the veterans' groups in their quest for better health care from the VA and services from government agencies.

Says Toby Miller, who served in Vietnam 14 years ago: "The vets won't come out of the woodwork. They tell me, 'I've had it with the war. I don't want anything else to do with it.'"

But, says Tiffany, "you've got to identify them. They're out there hiding in the closet. But the stuff they went through is burning inside."

Tiffany estimates that 75 to 90 percent of all Vietnam vets are suffering in one way or another from "delayed stress syndrome," a psychological problem which can manifest itself in depression, flashbacks, blackouts or even suicidal or violent tendencies.

Those vets, and others who have been exposed to toxic or chemical herbicides such as Agent Orange, must be officially tallied by government agencies first, so the extent of their problems can be formally recognized, Tiffany says.

"We want to identify every Vietnam vet, and send them letters to tell them that the Veterans Administration will give them Agent Orange exams free of charge," Tiffany says.

The VA must determine how many vets may be suffering from problems related to exposure, and how many others suffer from service related health problems, says Krohn. Once

that is done, a "data bank" should be established to follow up on problems of the estimated 5 million Vietnam-era vets, he says.

But one of the overwhelming problems, says Tiffany, is that many vets are reluctant to get help from the VA because they have received "less than humane" treatment at VA hospitals, including the local Martinez facility.

McGowan, who went into the VA's Martinez hospital for his Agent Orange test last week, says he was told, "Don't you think this Agent Orange thing has died out?" by one hospital staffer. McGowan waited for nearly an hour, then was given a test that the VA's Washington office says is out of date. He had a special biopsy done through the VA last October to determine any damage that may have resulted from his exposure to Agent Orange.

"We've asked time after time for the results," he says. "But they will not release the information to me. I'm convinced that the stuff is deadly, and that the only reason they're withholding information is because it is unfavorable."

Says active veteran Rand Miller: "We might as well forget the VA. All they are doing is closing down (hospital) wards. And they are top heavy with management."

In the past, public perception of the Vietnam vet has hindered the movement's progress, says Tiffany. "They tell us, 'You've lost your war,'" he says. And they frequently see the Vietnam vet as a "drug addict, a crazy, a killer" because they fought an unpopular war.

Now, "there's public recognition of our problems," says Tiffany. "But we need to make the connection between recognition and action. The situation demands to be cleaned up."

As more and more veterans work for political and health care reform, says McGowan, more may be accomplished.

OVER

Coalition waiting to hear from government

Joan Maiman would just like to see a definitive statement from the U.S. government about Agent Orange. So would the leaders of other Vietnam veteran's groups.

The Veterans Administration has ducked the issue for years, she said. But recently Congress ordered the VA to study the health of thousands of GIs to see if they are suffering any effects from contact with Agent Orange.

Ms. Maiman, who served with the Red Cross in Vietnam, is the chairwoman of a national coalition of veterans groups which is dealing with the Agent Orange issue. The government keeps postponing the issue, she said, because of possible liabilities.

"We have to draw the public's attention to Agent Orange and get the news out," said Ms. Maiman, who is suffering a respiratory problem she

attributes to exposure to Agent Orange.

"Once we get a definitive statement, we would like to see funding set aside for immediate treatment of those veterans who have symptoms of Agent Orange-related problems."

Some 12 million gallons of the herbicide were sprayed on Vietnam jungles during the war to destroy the hiding places of communist troops.

The spraying was eventually stopped following reports that Vietnamese women were giving birth to unusually high numbers of children with birth defects.

Agent Orange contains traces of dioxin, which is considered one of the most toxic chemical substances ever made. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has banned many domestic uses of the prime ingredient of Agent Orange, a substance

known as 2,4,5-T, which contains dioxin.

Veterans groups have been arguing for years that GIs who were in areas sprayed with the herbicide were suffering in disproportionate numbers with a variety of disorders, including cancer, emotional problems, and kidney, liver and nerve disorders.

Ms. Maiman said of the 2.9 million Vietnam veterans, probably 2.5 million have been affected in some way by contact with Agent Orange. She estimates there are some 250,000 such veterans just in the greater Chicago area.

About 3,000 veterans and their survivors have filed lawsuits against the herbicide manufacturers. About 150 lawyers from across the country who are representing these veterans are meeting in Chicago this weekend to discuss the cases.

Operation Push Supports Agent Orange Bill

At a meeting of Operation Push on August 23rd in Chicago, George Reddick, Vice President of the organization, told those assembled and the radio audience that he encourages them to support passage of HR 6377, the Agent Orange Bill introduced by Rep. Tom Daschle of South Dakota.

Rev. Reddick said that the new legislation is of critical import for both black and white veterans and their families and that his organization would be closely monitoring the bill's passage through the Congress.

Guests at the meeting were members of the Veterans Leadership Conference, Chicago, IL, whose Chairman, Joan Maiman had discussed veterans' problems at the Operation Push meeting in June.

"We are most appreciative of the support Operation Push has given us in attempting to reach Vietnam

See Agent Orange Pg. 10

Agent Orange

veterans in the community who have lost faith in traditional organization and the government," said Maiman.

"The community is beginning to realize that Vietnam veterans are 'out there' and the situation for them in terms of jobs, training, and health care in some cases is deplorable, with nothing being done by the government to

From Pg. 1

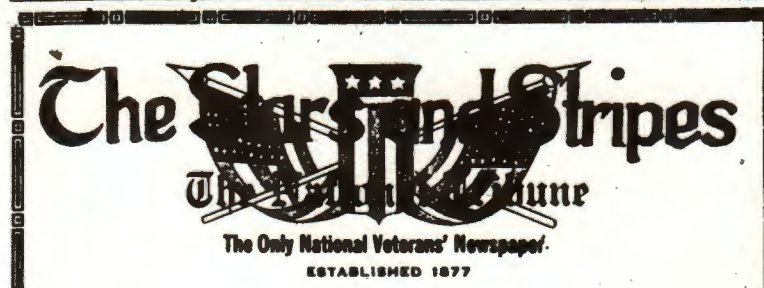
specifically and immediately address their problems, the negative image of the Vietnam war has, in effect, 'buried' many of these men and we hope to reach them through community agencies such as Operation Push," Maiman continued.

Maiman said that another important part of the Veterans Leadership Conference is their direct involvement with the community. "We will be working with the Urban League on 'Project Big Vote,' a voter registration and education program."

Project Big Vote is a coalition of

community groups which includes Operation Push, the NAACP and the Urban League, all members or supporters of the Veterans Leadership Conference.

"We realize graphically that only by encouraging veterans and all concerned citizens to become involved in the political process will we begin to make progress in community oriented solutions to the problems facing our veterans and their families." Maiman said.



A Republic That Has Endured

*Inscribed on the memorial to the
Confederate dead Arlington, Virginia.*

*Not For Fame Or Reward
Not For Place Or For Rank
Not Lured By Ambition
Or Goaded By Necessity
But In Simple*

*Obedience To Duty
As They Understood It
These Men Suffered All
Sacrificed All
Dared All - And Died*

Concord Hymn:

*Sung At The Completion Of
The Battle Monument
April 19, 1836*

*By the rude bridge that arched the
flood,
Their flag to April's Breeze
unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers
stood,
And fired the shot heard round
the world.*

*On this green bank, by this soft
stream,
We set to-day a votive stone;
That memory may their deed
redeem,
When, like our sires, our sons are
gone.*

*The foe long since in silence slept;
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which
seaward creeps.*

*Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children
free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and
thee.*

Memorial

Joan Malman

What memorial can we build for the honored dead more fitting than one which serves the living?

Our veterans grow old and they are alone.

Our veterans are disabled and we do not care for, or about them.

Our veterans are unemployed and we can not find jobs for them.

Our veterans are dying and we

research it.

Honor is a word out of vogue in this country but it is one which we need to address.

In the end, this is our Nation, our country. In its name, we served and our friends and families died. Yet, it is this same Nation which now gives empty ceremony and rhetoric to the dead and counts the living among the dead.



Guest Editorial

What Does It Take To Be Recognized?

By Joan Maiman

What does it take to be recognized as a deserving citizen? Obviously we are not going about it in the right way.

Remember last year when the White House declared a day honoring Vietnam Vets? We held a picnic that day in Chicago's Grant Park. Out of that huge gathering grew a hope that the White House program set up for Vietnam Vets might be of substance rather than another example of empty rhetoric.

For eleven months, 250,000 of Chicago's vets have been waiting. After almost a year of no response and no action from the White House Federal Veterans Coordinating Committee, a coalition of veterans met in Chicago on March 15, 1980, to put together their own concrete program of action covering five areas in which vets most need assistance.

Prior to that meeting we had submitted a proposal to the White House Committee and to the VA requesting funding for this community based organization. After two more months of no written response, an appointment was made with William Lawson, Chairman of the White House Committee, for April 22, 1980, 3:30 p.m. This appointment was confirmed in writing, and again by phone.

Three of the leaders of the coalition, the Veterans Leadership Conference, flew out to Washington at our own expense to keep this meeting, to relay to the Committee through Mr. Lawson the concerns of the Midwest veterans, and to

return with his response.

We were informed that Mr. Lawson would not be in when we called the White House to confirm our arrival early on the 22nd. We met with a reluctant Mr. Higgins, who advised us that he was sorry, Chicago had been dropped from the list of "Target cities." He was able to offer no explanation or remedy, "I can not do anything else for you."

We are still unclear what if, anything, the White House Coordinating Committee (WHCC) is supposed to do, but obviously it has nothing to do with the problems of veterans in Chicago.

Our meeting ended with no support or referral from the Committee, and a suggestion that if there was indeed a large membership of 250,000, then we ought to form a political base and put pressure on the City of Chicago where the CETA money is.

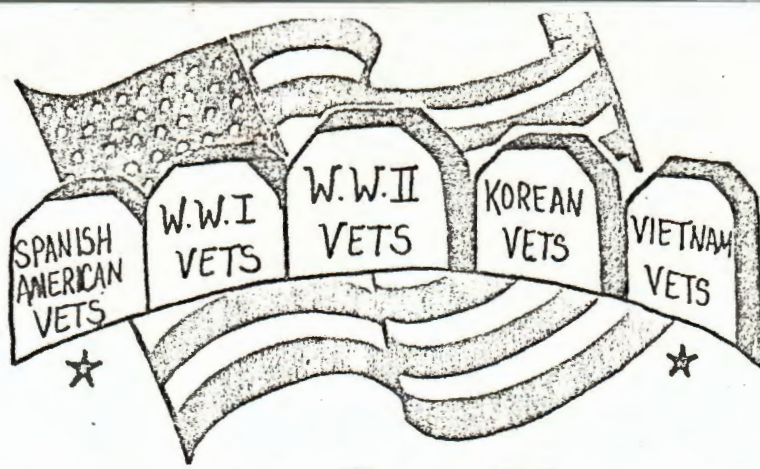
No, Chicago cannot be reconsidered for funding by the White House."

It is an appalling education to learn that the Chicago veteran is not one of the reasons for the existence of this Veterans Committee. It is also educational to learn, once again, that veterans must continue fighting; this time for the readjustment, retraining, and employment that has been pledged by their government.

We would really like to know who is deserving of the services of this White House group. Maybe after the next election we'll know.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Willie Collins
Black Liaison



Veterans
Leadership
Conference

Memorial Day Observance

Monday

May Twenty Five

Nineteen Hundred Eighty One

Golden Gate National Cemetery

San Bruno

San Mateo County

California

Remarks by Vincent Rios, Deputy Director, Western Region, Veterans Leadership Conference. Mr Rios is a disabled Vietnam Veteran

As citizens of America our responsibility is to willingly serve to secure and preserve the blessings of liberty we enjoy.

Today we pay special tribute to 57,000 who fell in battle preserving the blessings of liberty we enjoy.

When it was popular to say no, as those who fled to Canada or Sweden or other places did, and support at home was down, they had the spirit to say "yes" when asked to face the most appalling horror known as Vietnam.

I have a poem I'd like to read you. It is about the final thoughts as an 18 year old soldier as he lay dying in Vietnam. It was written by Joan Maiman (Vietnam, Red Cross, 1971) Chairman of the Veterans Leadership Conference...

REFLECTORS OF AN 10-YEAR OLD AMERICAN SOLDIER IN VIETNAM . . .

I was 17 when I graduated high school . . . The whole world ahead of me . . . My dad, he served in WWII, spent alot of time down at the Legion. My brother, he served in Korea, he really didn't talk about it much though . . .

I went down and saw the recruiter, my folks had to sign for me. Dad said it would "make a man of me". I was IN. My turn to serve . . .

Boot camp . . . dodging those real bullets. Man! this is neat, gonna get me a commie!

My mom and sisters wanted to come and see me off but it just cost too much. I didn't get a leave as things were too hot in the NAM.

I 'd been in country about six weeks. My best friend, Ace we called him, he was an old timer, been in country about seven months, almost getting short. He showed me the ropes as we used to say "dead is dumb but dead in the Nam is the dumbest of all".

Anyway, me and Ace, we were out on patrol. The sarge said "saddle up, the old man wants us to pacify this here village". Ace, he walked point . . .

Man, all of a sudden he was down and screaming. I went to him. Crawl, you jungle rat . . . Medic up! my buddy is down . . . Gonna help you man, got him on my back and started back . . .

God! what is this .. me and Ace here, we are on the ground... The mud and the sand . . . it is turning red. But I don't feel anything. Is this all I have, about a second to realize what I will miss?

I really had hoped to have a wife and kids some day . . . No more watching the seasons change, no more growing . . . No more Christmases... Man, I am only 18.

Me and Ace, we went together . . . nice to have my buddy on this trip . . .

Well, its been ten years now, we have watched things . . .

My grave is real nice, the ladies from the auxillary come and put a flag there on special days, and my folks, they bring flowers.

Ace, he is at Arlington, his folks thought that would be best.... Anyway, he has lots of friends there.

I am not sure why I died but in some ways I am lucky, all the hurt is over for me

So many of my buddies are still hurting . . . no one seems to care . . .

Well, that is all I wanted to say to you . . . I hope maybe you understand why Ace and me we died. It would help our families

Maybe if you have some time you might want to remember that we died for you. I guess we really did

Oh, our buddies need your help, if you are not too busy.....

There is nothing we can do here, its up to you.

Joan M. Maiman

..... The Vietnam War remains unfinished business for all of us and especially for those like James Roger Hopkins whose nightmare would not go away and died of suicide in Los Angeles a few days ago.

and today we show the world that we remember and appreciate our young warriors who lie buried in cemeteries like this one throughout the land.

These valiant patriots who so generously did their duty in such an unpopular war deserve nothing less.

In today's solemn ceremony let us reaffirm that no one buried here today, from the graves of our Civil War veterans to the grave of Sgt. Joe Artavia (died at age 19 in Vietnam) died in vain.

Thank you.