



# the WARRIOR

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June 22, 2008

President Wolf Biedenfeld... Vice President James Leonard... Secretary Carlos Uresti...Treasurer Steve Jaffe  
Directors: Chan Sharpe... Henry Rutledge... Jim Dennis... Stephen Brady... Sgt-in-Arms... Bill Meeks, Jr.

**ARMY** **MARINES** **NAVY** **AIR FORCE** **COAST GUARD**

## VVA Texas State Council Meeting.....



Chapter Vice President James Leonard represented the chapter as a delegate during his first TSC Meeting in Denton, Texas on June 6-8, 2008 and quickly volunteered for a leadership position at the state council level. VP Leonard was sworn in by VVA Texas State Council President Luther "Buster" Newberry as the new "Minority Affairs Committee Chair" for the VVA Texas State Council. The WARRIOR was recognized as the VVA Texas State Council Chapter Newsletter of the Year for 2008 and this award continues the outstanding tradition for excellence by our former editor Steve Blumenthal.

After all of the VVA Texas State Council Officers were elected by acclamation by the delegates present for another two year term, the meeting agenda continued where chapter delegate Bill Meeks, Jr. noted that VVA Chapter # 343 still wanted to host the June '09 meeting of the state council and the TSC delegates approved that motion, but the delegates noted that they would like the meeting location on the North side of Houston if at all possible. VVA Region 7 Director Allen Manuel presented Bill Meeks, Jr. with the Region 7 "Point Man of the Year" award for Texas and Bill accepted the award on behalf of all the hard working VVA/AVVA members who make the VVA Texas State Council such a success.

## "MEMORIAL DAY 2008".....



The Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on "Memorial Day 2008" (photo taken by B. Meeks)



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## President's Corner.....The Pres



Another month has passed with the highlight of May being Memorial Day. This is always an event marked by the VVA Color Guard and the Roll Call of fallen Chapter Members. This year, unfortunately, there were sick and absent Chapter Members and, due to the absence of the Colors we could not form a “pick up” Color Guard. This year we had Chapter Members present but no Chapter presence. It was a situation we all expect but hope to put off until another time. Chapter life member Leo Perez was honored, publicly, by Bill Balleza another Chapter life member for his actions in Vietnam. He should be proud of his actions and the

public acknowledgement.

In the field of Veterans’ benefits we are still fighting an up hill battle for Mandatory Health Care for Veterans. The increasing Budget Deficit, the cost of the war in Iraq and the economic meltdown are all causing Congress and the Administration to look for groups to sacrifice. Veterans, because we have served, are now expendable. I have heard NO Campaign Plank that addresses the needs of those “that have borne the battle.” Our votes are taken for granted. We, obviously, are expected to vote for the candidate wrapped in the biggest Flag. My suggestion is: we have an opportunity, Election time, to ask the candidates – House, Senate and Presidential – to speak to our needs while they are campaigning. If we vote for ourselves, for a change, perhaps we can be heard above the sound of campaign contributions. Look at their actions not at their promises.

The Court of Appeals has acted on Haas. Navy Veterans have to wait a while longer for rule of law to prevail. As I expected, the VA used the Appeals Period to change their internal procedures. This means that Navy Vets who filed late are definitely “out of the presumptive.” All can still apply under the “in country” rule but proving that remains tough. I see the future for Navy Vets will include a “line in the water” that will be presumed in-country and everything else – good luck.

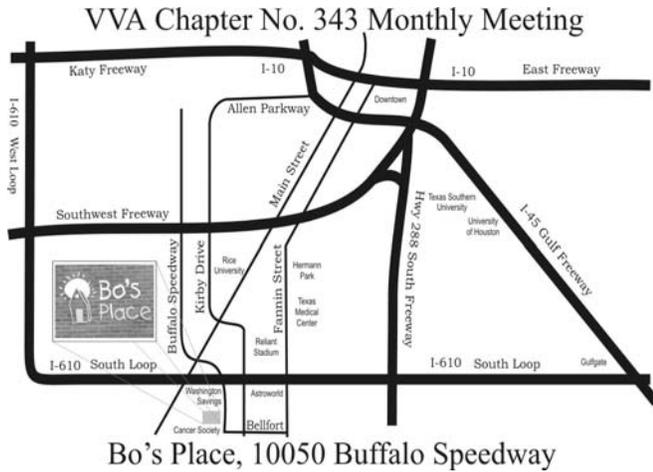
Again, good health to all. Hope to see you Veterans Day if not earlier.

## The In Memory Plaque.....



Is this how the Men and Women who served in the Vietnam War and later died as a result of their service to be honored at the Vietnam Memorial? **Honor and remembrance of their sacrifice.....** it seems more like another stepping stone relegated to foot traffic near the “Three Men Statue” to me. Join the fight to correct this injustice, contact your legislators today and voice your displeasure about the current condition of the “In Memory Plaque.”

## **Get involved today... by attending the VVA Chapter No. 343's July 11th meeting on Friday night, 7:30 PM at Bo's Place.....**



## **\$1 Million in Vet Scholarships.....**

Week of June 09, 2008

Sessions Online Schools of Art and Design announced the \$1 million Louis H. Schilt Memorial Scholarship program to help physically and mentally injured servicemembers or their spouses build new careers in the graphic and web design fields. Sessions has joined forces with Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) to champion the program and build awareness for the scholarship among the tens of thousands of enlisted personnel and veterans in its network. All applicants must complete the online application form, provide the necessary disability documentation, write and submit an essay on the topic, "Creative Inspirations in My Life." All documentation, essays and transcripts must be received on or before July 31, 2008. To learn more about the program or to apply, visit: [sessions.edu](http://sessions.edu).

Remember: Not applying for scholarships is like turning down free money. Get started on your search for scholarships today - visit the Military.com [Scholarship Finder](#).

**Article taken from the Veterans Report – The Military's Largest Benefits Update.....**

## **War Casualties Under Reported?....**

Tom Philpott | June 12, 2008

### **Mental Wounds Said To Raise War Casualties Tenfold**

Rep. [Bob Filner](#) (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, charged Bush administration officials Wednesday with continuing to downplay the mental trauma and brain injuries suffered by veterans of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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Filner said an April RAND Corp. study, "Invisible Wounds of War -- Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery," justifies a tenfold jump in the U.S. casualty count versus the figure of 33,000 American dead and wounded used by the Pentagon.

RAND researchers extrapolated from a survey they conducted of 1,965 veterans to conclude that nearly 300,000 service members and veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan wars are suffering from [post-traumatic stress](#) or major depression. Filner told the pair of researchers, who had summarized their findings for his committee, that their work probably understates the problem.

"I personally think these are low estimates, just from my own studies," Filner said. "But if you take even the 300,000, [it's] 10 times the official casualty statistics from the Pentagon. Shouldn't this 300,000 be included?" Lisa H. Jaycox, a senior behavioral scientist and clinical psychologist who co-directed the [RAND study](#), embraced Filner's argument. "Well, they are [suffering] an injury condition resulting from combat deployment, and so it's a different kind of casualty," Jaycox said. "But, yes, they are very important numbers."

At the same hearing, Michael L. Dominguez, principal deputy under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said RAND had gathered solid data from its survey but then drew the wrong conclusions. The study, Dominguez said, "did not, and cannot, definitively say that there are 300,000 cases of clinically diagnosed cases" of post-traumatic stress disorder or depression among veterans who served in the two theaters of war.

Filner angrily interrupted him, telling Dominguez that RAND didn't claim to show 300,000 clinically diagnosed cases of PTSD or depression. "It was an extrapolation to the possibility" of 300,000 cases, Filner said. With over 1.6 million U.S. service members having served in Iraq or Afghanistan, Dominguez said, a finding that 300,000 veterans "have experienced some kind of mental health stress is very consistent with our data. And those people do need to be discovered [and] to get help." But, he continued, "many of them will, with very little counseling or assistance, resolve those combat stress issues themselves. A few -- a few -- will in fact manifest a clinical diagnosis of PTSD and they'll need much more sustained intervention by medical health care professionals."

"How many is a few?" Filner snapped. The results so far, Dominguez said, show "less than one percent will actually have clinical PTSD that will need treatment over..." "You believe that?" said Filner, cutting him off with sarcasm. "You believe that there are less than one percent of these deployed soldiers will have PTSD as a clinical diagnosis?" Dominguez was stunned into silence momentarily but finally managed, "So far this is the number that we are seeing." "That shows why you don't do anything," Filner said, "because you think there's only a few."

Another purpose of the three-hour hearing, which included testimony from retired Navy Rear Adm. Patrick W. Dunne, assistant secretary for policy and planning for the Veterans Benefits Administration, was to assess progress by DoD and VA in implementing Wounded Warrior legislation passed in January in response to the Walter Reed scandal last year. Dominguez and Dunne conceded that some congressional deadlines haven't been met, including a late April target for establishing a Wounded Warrior Resource Center to give recovering service members, their families and primary caregivers a single point of contact for assistance.

But Dr. Terri L. Tanielian, co-director of the RAND study, acknowledged to Rep. [Steve Buyer](#) (R-Ind.) that the Wounded Warrior initiatives have set the Departments of Defense and VA "on the right track" for addressing most war-related mental health challenges. The big hurdle now to proper care for many mentally wounded veterans is clinical capacity nationwide, Tanielian said. The pipeline for training mental healthcare providers in the most effective therapies for PTSD used by VA needs widening, she said, and that requires "transformation and system-level changes across the entire U.S. health care system." Filner, meanwhile, wants every servicemember and veteran who has served in Iraq or

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Afghanistan to receive a [mandatory examination](#), which should include at least an hour with a clinician trained to detect the symptoms of PTSD, depression and even mild cases of traumatic brain injury.

In his tirade at Dominguez and Dunne, Filner said that, between the two of them, "I think there's been a contest to see who can suck the humanity out of this issue better...I mean, we're talking about our children! We're talking about life and death! We're talking about [suicides](#)...[homelessness](#)...a lifetime of dealing with brain injuries! And you guys sit there without anything to say. This is absolutely unacceptable."

He asked Dominguez if he also disagreed with RAND that 320,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan have a probable traumatic brain injury. "Again," said Dominguez, "you don't have 320,000 brain injuries. You have 320,000 people who have been in or around a concussive event. Again, it's a spectrum of experience [versus] a spectrum of need that manifests itself. So, no, there is not 320,000 people out there with brain injuries." That attitude, Filner charged, encourages clinicians to misdiagnose conditions so veterans are denied the care they need and the compensation they deserve. Dominguez took strong exception to those remarks.

**Article taken from the Veterans Report – The Military’s Largest Benefits Update.....**

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## **Amerasians Honor Our Brothers and Sisters at the Vietnam Memorial...**

**By Bill Meeks, Jr.**

**Photo provided by the Amerasian Fellowship Association**

Over 58,000 American soldiers lost their lives in the Vietnam War, and there are still over 2,000 soldiers missing in action or that are unaccounted for. Not many people however, know that American Soldiers also left tens of thousands of their own children behind after the war. Most of these children were abandoned not just by both parents, but also by a closed minded society in Vietnam. Thanks to the "Home Coming Act" signed by President Ronald Reagan, there are over 26,000 Amerasians and over 75,000 of their natural and adoptive family members currently living in the US. Many Amerasian are still facing countless hardships because of discrimination, lack of education, and most of all, the absence of a loving and accepting family, thus reunions with fathers were rare.

There are numerous striking parallels between the Amerasians who were born during the Vietnam War and the American troops who fought the Vietnam War. It was written that the Amerasians were referred to by the Vietnamese as Nguoi Lai meaning "mixed-race person" and this refers to the offspring of interracial unions. The Vietnamese had a fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners and this manifesto subjected the Amerasians to a very cruel existence in the formative stages of their young lives. It was written by the American media or Hollywood that Vietnam veterans were drug-crazy or baby-killers and that was a false stereotype of the American troops. This led to hatred being exhibited by the American public, distrust of our service during the Vietnam War and no other American veteran had ever been subjected to this type of treatment.

The Amerasians were outcasts from their native country (Vietnam), abandoned by their American fathers and without even a formal grade school education, their survival or possible future was in doubt. The Vietnam veterans were outcasts from their native country (United States), abandoned by

**Continued from page 5....**

many of their brother veterans, forced to fight for our duly earned benefits and toil years to restore our tarnished honor. The Amerasians were associated with the term Bui Doi or "dust of life" which referred to a criminal class in the Vietnamese cities and the misuse of the word Bui Doi in regard to the Amerasians was untrue, plus very unfortunate. The Vietnam veterans were associated with the term Wannabe or "phoney soldiers" and these individuals cast a dark shadow of dishonor towards the real Vietnam veterans which was undeserved, plus very unfortunate.

The U.S. government was not anxious to acknowledge the Amerasians paternity and assume responsibility for this new generation born during the Vietnam War. Nor was the U.S. government anxious to acknowledge the effects of Agent Orange or PTSD and assume responsibility for compensation or treatment for these ailments brought about by the Vietnam War. In 1986, Vietnam Veterans of America was granted a congressional charter as a veterans service organization and this acknowledgement came eleven years after the war officially ended. In 1988, after passage of the Amerasian Homecoming Act, the United States began airlifting the natural children of American soldiers out of Vietnam and this acknowledgement came thirteen years after the war officially ended.

There is not a day or night that goes by that the Amerasians and Vietnam veterans do not relive their experiences or scars from the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War is the bond we share and that piece of history ties our cultures together as a family.

I'm drafting a pilot program "Operation Binding Relationship" for the VVA Texas State Council along with the help of TSC Vice President Don Kennedy and TSC Secretary Jim Boyd to create more involvement with the Amerasian Fellowship Association. This new program will be presented to the delegates at the '2009 Winter Meeting in Tyler, Texas for their approval and hopefully benefit both organizations in the future.

**Special Notice:** If you are a veteran in emotional crisis and need help RIGHT NOW, call this toll-free number **1-800-273-8255**, available 24/7, and tell them you are a veteran. All calls are confidential.

**APPLICATION FOR VVA MEMBERSHIP**

(Return to: Vietnam Veterans of America San Jacinto Chapter No. 343, P.O. Box 280358, Houston, Texas 77228-0358)

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Sex** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_ **Chapter No. 343**

**Home Phone** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ **Work Phone** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type:** \_\_\_ Individual member – 1 year @ \$20 \_\_\_ Individual member – 3 years @ \$50  
**Life member:** \_\_\_ \$250 (ages 49 and under) \_\_\_ \$225 (ages 50-55) \_\_\_ \$200 (ages 56-60) \_\_\_ \$175 (ages 61-65)  
\_\_\_ \$150 (ages 66+) \_\_\_ Optional Life member time payment plan - \$50 down, \$25/month

\_\_\_ Incarcerated Veterans (IVI) \$0: TDCJ # \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_ Incarcerated Veteran Associate (IVA) \$20: TDCJ # \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Method:** \_\_\_ Check \_\_\_ Money Order \_\_\_ Credit Card (Visa, Master Card, American Express, Discover)

**Credit Card Number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Exp. Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Eligibility:** Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.

**New members and new life members must submit a copy of their DD-214 along with this application and dues payment.**