Another POW/MIA Flag Flies in Florida
This will be my final article as president and I wanted to make sure I thank everyone who has made this one of the most enjoyable, challenging and rewarding times in my life.

Many years ago I was watching TV and the most valuable player of the Super Bowl was interviewed and the first thing he said was “I want to thank the Lord my God for blessing me today and bringing us to victory.” While I had heard athletes before say similar things this was the first time I truly realized what they were all saying. Since then I pray daily and thank God for the blessing of all the gifts that he has given me, and I go about each day trying to share these with everyone around me. Often in our lives others find it necessary to judge or slander us for reasons we may never know, but I have found that God’s judgment is the only one that really counts. I have learned to forgive each and every person struggling with anger or resentment and pray that God will find a way to touch each and every one of them.

In my presidency I have been able to share many of my gifts as well as those of my family with each and every one of you. I can leave knowing that I have done my best, and while not pleasing everyone I have made a difference in the lives of many veterans, and made this community a better place. In doing this, I have pleased our God.

Next to God, my next priority is my wife and family. While many of you only see Joanne at special events, she has been a big part of this chapter’s success. She is not only my wife, but my best friend and confidant and the editor of all my articles. She also has taken thousands of pictures for the chapter and framed countless pictures for members of the chapter. Many of her pictures have been in the newsletters, on our TV show, and used at a state and national level, and she is currently working with the 25th Anniversary group with their picture fundraiser. In times of personal struggle and doubt she has helped me to remember God’s power and has helped me to find strength and guidance in his love. Joanne, you are truly a blessing to me and I love you with all my heart.

I also want to thank my children and grandchildren who, while you don’t see them often, have helped in many ways and provide me with the love and support to continue on.

I especially want to thank my son, Matthew, who spent countless hours doing legal work for the chapter under both Nick and myself. His work was all pro bono and has been captured as an asset on the balance sheet of the chapter. Above and beyond that, he has provided guidance and wisdom beyond his years. As many can confirm, Matt started his work for the chapter when he was a very young boy and has never forgotten the sacrifice Vietnam Veterans have made to allow him to pursue his life, and the ultimate sacrifices others made to make that possible.

I know for sure we could not have accomplished as much as we have without the tremendous knowledge, wisdom, and support of my executive committee, made up of Nick DeLeo, Rich Isaman, Pat Pudetti and Larry Schulman. They are four of the most honest, open and compassionate people I know. They work as hard as anyone in the chapter and in many cases harder. They do their job silently and do it well. They do not seek notoriety for what they have accomplished, and have somehow been able to ignore the very negative behavior of a small minority within the chapter. Some people’s ideas of secrecy is what is considered confidentiality, that each board member swears to uphold, and these four do their job well. They do not seek notoriety for what they have accomplished, and have somehow been able to ignore the very negative behavior of a small minority within the chapter. Some people’s ideas of secrecy is what is considered confidentiality, that each board member swears to uphold, and these four do their job well. They do not seek notoriety for what they have accomplished, and have somehow been able to ignore the very negative behavior of a small minority within the chapter. Some people’s ideas of secrecy is what is considered confidentiality, that each board member swears to uphold, and these four do their job well. They do not seek notoriety for what they have accomplished, and have somehow been able to ignore the very negative behavior of a small minority within the chapter.

The Board of Directors, made up of Pete Galle, Dan Corona, Dave Hooker, Skip Snell, Wally Gekoski, Tom Gleason, Dick Oleksyn, Ralph Pascale, Jack Prinzing, Kathleen Ryan, Joe Harkness and Meg Lewczyk, has been extremely strong. They have dealt with very difficult issues and were not afraid to question any issue. They have been challenged by many very difficult choices and withstood the heat and made the right decisions, while maybe not the most popular ones, and the chapter is a far better organization because of their wisdom and leadership.

Several individuals stick out as

Going forward I will be completing my masters this fall, and I am hoping to go on and possibly work for the VA helping veterans, or in one of our local hospitals or nursing homes. I am currently doing my internship at the VA in Canandaigua and I am enjoying it very much. I also plan on doing special projects in the chapter and spending a lot more time with my family.

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Several individuals stick out as
having gone the extra mile. Beverly and Jack Prinzing, even through all their difficult times, have continued to make a difference in veterans’ lives with their work at the Canandaigua and Batavia VA, their work with the Pirate Toy Fund and the delivering of over 40 baskets on Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. They took this program, restarted it and made it successful, and I apologize for those who were not aware of the job you had done in the past.

Dick and Sue Oleksyn are another couple who have gone the extra mile to make a difference in veterans’ lives. Very often their work is quiet and behind the scenes, but it is always there. They have run countless parties, trips and charity functions where catering was needed. Dick sits on the board at the Batavia VA and Sue spends countless hours researching Agent Orange and, like Jack and Beverly, doing it all while struggling with cancer. Dick also picked up the slack for Jack when Beverly was going through chemo.

How could I ever forget Bruce McDaniel, and all he has done to improve the communications of the chapter? He not only did every BTL and won four out of five National Newsletter Awards, but he also wrote up new detailed policies and procedures and found multiple ways to reduce cost and retain the quality of the BTL, so other areas could have more funding. He is a true role model for others to follow. Great job, Bruce!

Chuck Macaluso, Barry Culhane, and Gary Beikirch stepped forward in making the dream of a veterans walk a reality. They found ways to communicate and forged a bond between our organizations to make the Vets Walk not only a success, but also a beautiful place to visit, and one that compliments the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Dave Hooker has been someone who was always there to help. He is our chapter Historian; he helps out as a volunteer at the Thrift Store, and is always there when someone needs help. Dave has suffered through the loss of his wife, Fay, and his brother, and now his sister recently had a heart attack. Through it all he has shown a tremendous strength and confidence in himself as he has moved forward in his life. I am honored to call him my friend.

Kathy Stone and Tom Gleason have spent much time working on developing a volunteer base, helping with the newsletters and updating the website. Tom also is there at each event to offer prayers and remind us of our need for faith. I wanted to be the first to congratulate them on being husband and wife as they make a great team together. May God Bless you both!

Dan and Sherry Corona are always there for our returning veterans. It is a huge job and they have spent many of their hours making it happen. Kathy Ryan, though a new board member will never let any of you forget how important it is to sign up with the VA. She is a great veterans’ advocate and will make a difference in our chapter in the future.

Ray and Gail Melens -- who can say enough about their work and time commitment they provide to the Marching Unit, Honor Guard and the POW/MIA movement? They have done an exceptional job and never allow any of us to forget the importance of serving veterans.

Ralph Pascale is a great membership chairman and has increased our membership significantly. Contrary to others’ beliefs, membership and health need to be our number one priorities as we are responsible for
all veterans, not just those in our organization or at a membership meeting. Ralph also eats more than any of us and gains no weight and is a strong member of our marching unit and a national convention representative. Peter Galle and Cecil Young seem to be Ralph’s ambassadors in the field, helping to share the success of the chapter with others, and encouraging new membership through the traveling display and poker runs. They have done a great job.

Alice Popen and Rich Ruscio have very quietly kept the Jerry Popen Scholarship going, and are now moving into a new area of scholarship endowment, which will not only perpetuate Jerry’s name and the chapter’s involvement long into the future, but will bring new life to the scholarship and potentially a larger group eligible for the award.

Another big accomplishment over the last four years is the Veterans Emergency Relief Fund. Originally written by Phil Litteer, this entity was finally set up, members selected and policies and procedures created by a long list of long time VVA members. They have developed a very successful reputation and have helped countless veterans. Fred Elliott now chairs the group that meets monthly and continues to serve needy veterans.

Also special thanks go out to all the volunteer organizations that work with us and help us to be successful. Groups like the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, the Pirate Toy Fund, Operation Welcome Home, The Veterans Outreach Center, the VA in Canandaigua and Batavia, Irondequoit Cable TV, the Junior ROTC and others who have helped us to make our organization successful.

A final letter would not be complete without thanking the VVA Thrift Store, LLC, made up over the year of many very qualified Vietnam veterans like Mike Tedeschi, Bob Novgrod, Igor Shukoff, Jim Viscardi, Mark Keogh, Brian Wirpsa, Angelo Piccone, Rich Ruscio, Phil Litteer, John Coy, Bob Frantz, and our two most recent appointments, along with Rich Isaman and Pat Pudetti. They have taken a major burden off of the board of directors and have given our business a solidity they have not experienced before, as well as security to the entire chapter. I would also like to thank all of the workers and volunteers at the store and in the car business for the hard work and dedication that they provide day in and day out. Finally a special thanks to Barb DiVico and Karen Ballard for their support, concern and compassion for all of our veterans who visit our office. You are priceless.

Going forward I will be completing my masters this fall, and I am hoping to go on and possibly work for the VA helping veterans, or in one of our local hospitals or nursing homes. I am currently doing my internship at the VA in Canandaigua and I am enjoying it very much. I also plan on doing special projects in the chapter and spending a lot more time with my family.

Finally, I would like to thank Brian and Eileen Wirpsa, our dear friends in Atlanta, for their wisdom, support, and love. They are angels from God sent to Joanne and me to allow us to do our best and face any challenge. We love you both.

I wish the new board well and will pray for them. Their job going forward will become increasingly difficult as more and more veterans become older and their health starts to deteriorate. The board members they join are an excellent group of people and should make the transition relatively easy.

I also ask you to pray for all our members and their families suffering sickness and hard times, and for all our veterans serving around the world, that God keep them safe. Good luck, good-bye, and God bless.
As I read Nelson’s final President’s message this month, I was reminded of the many people who contribute to the success of Chapter 20. It truly is an honor to be part of such an outstanding group of people.

I want to add a word of thanks to Nelson. During the past year, I have had many occasions to exchange e-mails with Nelson about Between the Lines. Questions arose about the content, about meeting times, and about procedures and ways to control expenses. I always felt that Nelson believed in the importance of our chapter’s publication and was supportive of my efforts.

Nelson, thank you, and best wishes!

-Bruce McDaniel, editor

Fred Elliott, Gordy Lane, and Patrick Welch received the New York State Council Meritorious Service Award at the January 28, 2006 NYSC meeting. Pictured from left to right are Ned Foote, NYSC President; Patrick Welch, NYSC Membership Chairman and President of Chapter 77; Fred Elliott, Region II Director and Chapter 20 delegate; and Gordie Lane, President of Chapter 103 and NYSC delegate.

NYSC Meritorious Service Award

Memorial Day Family Picnic

Monday, May 29 2:30 PM
(after ceremony at Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Highland Park)

Don’t miss these upcoming meetings!

Please come and support your Chapter!
All meetings held at the Ira Jacobson Post unless otherwise noted.

Membership Meetings
2nd Thursday of the month
beginning at 7:30 p.m.

May 11th
June 8th
July 13th
No August meeting
September 14th
October 12th
November 9th
No December meeting

Memorial Day Family Picnic
May 29 at 2:30 p.m.

Ira Jacobson American Legion Post • 90 St. John Park (off Lake Ave.)
Open to all Chapter members and their families. Please e-mail or phone Barb at the Chapter office for a count NO LATER THAN Wednesday, May 24. The Chapter will provide everything. Bar will be open.
Marching Unit
Ray Melens, Commander

Here it is once again, the first of May. Birds are chirping, spring is in the air, and VVA Chapter 20’s Marching Unit’s parade season begins on Saturday May 13th. It’s the annual Lilac Parade. We will be forming again on Science Pkwy, which is just off of South Avenue near E. Henrietta Road. Parade starts at 10:30 A.M., so try to be there approximately 45 minutes before then. The 2006 parade schedule will be in next month’s BTL and also on the Chapter’s web page at www.vva20.org. Due to the fact that we have not had our annual meeting to vote on the parades as of this writing, I cannot tell you the schedule yet.

There are, at this time, two other parades for us in May. On Sunday May 28th, the Unit will be marching in the Irondequoit Memorial Day parade. That starts at 5:30 P.M. We will probably be forming in the same area as usual, Hudson and Titus Avenue by the plaza. Then on Monday May 29th we will be marching in the Downtown Rochester parade. This parade starts at 10:30 A.M. and formation will be at East Avenue and Strathallan. All Vietnam Veterans are invited and welcome to march in this parade. If you know of a Vietnam Vet and would like to see him get his WELCOME HOME parade, then try and get them to this parade. Also members of the Unit may have a son, daughter, or grandchild march with them in this parade. Let’s get a good turnout for this year’s Memorial Day parade and honor our brothers and sisters who didn’t return and those that still serve today.

Following the parade downtown is the Memorial Day ceremony. The ceremony begins at 1:00 P.M. and all are welcome to attend. The ceremony takes place at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Highland Park. I am still in need of Marching Unit members to volunteer to partake in the ceremony. I also need name readers. If anyone who is not a member of the Marching Unit wishes to read names, please let me or my wife Gail know as soon as you can. From what I understand again this year, immediately following our ceremony we will be having the annual Memorial Day picnic at IRA. They will be conducting their Memorial Day ceremony at 3:00 P.M. that day and our Color Guard will partake in it as well. So if you have not yet volunteered, please do so quickly so I can plan accordingly.

In March it was the Honor Guard’s sad but honorable duty to participate in the memorial service for Sue Oleksyn’s Dad, George Badgerow. We were there to render the Military Honors that he was deserving of as a veteran of WWII. The members of the Honor Guard that day were all glad to be able to extend this great honor to Sue’s dad, but I also know how saddened they are to have to do these kinds of duties. We were very honored that Sue thought of us for this mission. We just hope that we made that day for Sue and her family just a little bit easier to handle.

On Sunday April 2nd some members of the Marching Unit attended a surprise birthday party for Wally Gekoski! Did we ever surprise him!! Hard to believe Wally could be that old already. Better not say that he turned 58 on the 5th or he might get upset with me. So if you really want to know how old he is, you’d better ask him.

The Honor Guard will meet again at the May membership meeting, upstairs at Ira at 7:00 P.M. At the June meeting I will announce the names of those chosen for the DC trip this year. This year marks a special anniversary for this trip. It will be our 10th consecutive year of making this trip to help draw awareness to the POW/MIA issue.

On behalf of the members of the Honor Guard, I wish to welcome aboard our two newest members to the Honor Guard, Bruce Van Apeldoorn and Joe Peck. I am quite sure that they both will be a great addition to the Honor Guard and to what it represents.

Until next month..............AT EASE!!!!!!

POW/MIA
Gail Bologna-Melens, Coordinator

Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 20
Remembers our 1,807 POW/MIAs
on Memorial Day and Always

POW*MIA
YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

Veterans Incarcerated
Ron Trovato

The Vietnam Veterans Group
San Quentin is doing real well, averaging 40 veterans per meeting and continuing its good rela-
tionship with prison staff, the Vets Center there, and the Dept. of Veterans Affairs. The chapter’s next food sale is scheduled for the end of March and we wish Jeff Langnese and all the vets good luck with their fundraiser. Lockdowns at the facility and other prison groups starting up there are putting a crimp on sales but I have a feeling they will persevere.

We recently sent in some chapter stationary I had printed up for Chapter 205 into Auburn, along with two tapes donated by Ray Melens featuring our chapter’s illustrious Marching Unit. We also have a shipment of yarn that was supposed to go out so we hope the guys there hear from the package room soon.

On April 7th I attended the general membership/election of officers meeting at Auburn and what a meeting it was! I counted over 40 members present and after Chapter President Bobby Ahalt welcomed the five outside guests, everyone was treated to pizza, donuts and pop. It seemed like the meeting ran a long time but we actually left the facility at 9:30 P.M., and I can’t believe how much got done there. Paul Bunting oversaw the nominations from the floor and ran a tight ship. It was gratifying to see how many of the guys stepped up and ran for Board of Directors positions with no arm twisting needed. Congrats to Bobby Ahalt on his re-election as Chapter President and for his running the Monday BOD Meetings there and for maintaining the Wednesday PTSD rap group. In the middle of an update on vets incarcerated issues, I thought about and talked to the guys about people in my life as a result of going to Vietnam that were really important to me. It is so easy to talk to the guys there. I think it’s because the correctional facility is filled with barriers, but there are none between the people at the meeting.

When Nelson Peck and I made our first trip back to Attica’s Chapter 489 last fall we talked with the guys about starting up the chapter newsletter again. We know Chapter 489 is in a state of transition but we heard that attendance at chapter meetings was on the rise. The Veterans Affairs Office at Attica sent us copies of Volume One of their newsletter, which really reflects information and happenings of VVA Chapter 489. The newsletter contained a mission statement and general info on homeless veterans, disability claims, PTSD and volunteers active with the chapter. Congratulations on their first newsletter in years and on a job well done!

Ken Moore, Pat Pudetti and I went down to Attica on April 1st and met with members at their general membership meeting. Over 20 members were in attendance along with the chapter staff advisor Sgt. Schiefer and new chapter president, Francis Graham. We addressed the membership on a variety of topics and Ken and Pat answered a wide range of questions regarding veterans’ benefits and compensation claims. It was great to see the larger turnout there. Seems Chapter 489 is really making progress. A special thanks to Sgt. Schiefer who remained at the front gate long after our arranged arrival time. How we got lost going to Attica can best be explained by the onset of what I can only describe as “Road Dementia,” a condition that apparently afflicts Vietnam Veterans who are too busy telling tall tales to watch where they are going.
Vietnam Veterans of America
THrift Store, Chapter 20, LLC
1199 East Main Street, Rochester, NY 14609

Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm
Saturday 9:00am - 5:00pm

Car Donations 8:30am - 5:00pm
Truck Pick-up: 9am - 4:30pm
(weather permitting)

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Thrift Store #482-8036

All donations go to the Thrift Store at the address above.

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Veteran owned and operated full service flag company.
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Ride to the

913 ROOSEVELT HWY HILTON NY • JUNE 25, 2006
Ride leave the Dakota Grill at Noon. • Rider donation: $10
Support our veterans at the VA Medical Center

Honor Hilton’s men killed in the Vietnam War:
Gerald Wilson • Ronald Quinn • David Lemcke • John Waugh

save these dates....

13th Annual VOC Flag Day Campaign . . .
Wednesday, June 14, 2006 (June 10 & 11, too!)
Volunteers from businesses, organizations and schools are needed to celebrate Flag Day &
collect contributions for Veterans Outreach Center. Please volunteer a few hours of your
time at a location convenient for you!

12th Annual VOC Golf Tournament . . .
Monday, June 26, 2006 at Penfield Country Club
Sponsors, golfers and raffle prizes are needed. Registration and lunch begin at 11:30 a.m.,
followed by a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m.

Proceeds from these events support vital programs and services offered by the Veterans Outreach Center to our veterans and our returning servicemen and -women. The scars of war are deep, life-altering and slow to heal. The Veterans Outreach Center proactively reaches out to veterans in need who continue to suffer in silence—battling personal wars that can be won, with our help. The VOC’s collaborative approach to treatment cares for the whole person; veterans receive the breadth of services needed to regain their mental, physical and economic health; reconnect with themselves, their families and their communities; and resume productive lives. For more information on these events, please call Marina at 585/546-1081 or e-mail her at voc@frontiernet.net!
VVA Chapter 20 and the LLC
Rich Isaman

In recent years corporate law has been changed to allow the formation of Limited Liability Corporations (LLCs) which are sub-corporations under the parent corporation. The purpose of an LLC is to limit what assets are available for someone to recover in a lawsuit to only those that exist within that section of the corporation. VVA Chapter 20 membership approved the formation of a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) within the corporate structure of the chapter in 2002. The reason for the formation was two fold: (1) to protect the chapter from lawsuits and liability resulting from running our fundraising businesses, and (2) the structure of the LLC board was established in a way that Vietnam Era veterans with specific business skills could be recruited to assist in managing the businesses. The LLC then relieved the Chapter 20 board members of liability and having to deal with business and personnel issues at every board meeting, to concentrate on how to use our funds to support veterans and other causes.

In recent months there has been much confusion and innuendo regarding what the LLC and the management committee is. I will try to summarize some of the issues and why it exists in its current state:

1) Who are the LLC board members? They are Vietnam Era veterans that are required to be members of the chapter in order to serve on the LLC board. They may be recruited for their specific skills and knowledge to manage a business, so they are those of us who have chosen this role as their commitment to support the chapter.

2) Are VVA Chapter board members on the LLC? Currently two chapter board members are on the LLC board, and that is the maximum number allowed under the operating agreement of the LLC Corporation. The number is limited to demonstrate that this is not just a shell corporation completely controlled by its parent board of VVA Chapter 20.

3) Why does it appear that the LLC is somewhat disconnected from the Chapter? Corporate law has allowed this structure to be created to isolate and protect assets and limit liability. In order to comply with this law the LLC must demonstrate that it operates independently of the parent with only high level guidance from the parent corporation, which in our case is VVA Chapter 20 and its board of directors. If the LLC were to be sued, the first thing the person bringing suit would try to do is to prove that chapter members or board of directors are directly involved in the day to day operation and decisions of the LLC. If they can demonstrate that this is happening, then all protection of the LLC is thrown out, all chapter assets are now available to the party suing and the VVA Chapter board members now have potential liability issues for activities that occurred within the businesses.

4) Are there any controls by VVA Chapter 20 and its board

Volunteer Opportunities at NYS Veterans Home

The NYS Veterans Home at Batavia provides quality long term care to veterans and their dependents. Volunteers are needed in all areas of the facility: nursing, therapies, recreation, social services, clerical, volunteer office, deli and gift shop. Opportunities include working closely with residents, clerical tasks, reception, and assisting with gardening and groundskeeping. Interested individuals, families and/or groups can benefit from volunteering on a weekly, monthly, or episodic basis. Evening and weekend opportunities are available. Most schedules can be accommodated. Contact Connie Caselli, Volunteer Coordinator, at 585 345-2053.

People are needed to help at a resident/guest picnic on June 24, 10:00-3:00 P.M., and on September 10, 2:00-4:00 P.M., for a tea/open house. Any questions? Contact Dick Oleksyn, roleksyn@yahoo.com or 663-5255.

RAFFLE

Get your raffle tickets for two 8 x 12 walnut and bronze plaques of the flag raising at Iwo Jima, commemorating the 230th anniversary of the Marine Corps. Tickets will be sold at the membership meetings and other Chapter functions for $1.00. Winners of the plaques will be drawn at the Memorial Day picnic. Additional tickets may be purchased by contacting Meg Lewczyk at 381-3036. All proceeds will go to the 25th Anniversary fund.
over LLC activity? Yes, but at a higher level. A person can not be on the LLC board until he or she is approved by the VVA Chapter 20 board. A simple majority puts them on the LLC board, but it requires what is called a super majority of the VVA Chapter 20 board to remove a member. This is to demonstrate legally that the LLC can not easily be manipulated by the chapter, thus making it a valid LLC. But if the activities of the LLC management committee or a member were deemed to be detrimental, the VVA Chapter 20 board does have the ability to remove them if they can get a super majority vote in favor of such action.

5) How is LLC spending and budgeting controlled? The LLC has to prepare a budget annually and present it to the VVA Chapter 20 board of directors for approval. If the LLC deviates from the budget by a stated percentage they must come back to the Chapter board for approval. Under this arrangement VVA Chapter board members have the opportunity to review spending levels within the organization. Additionally, any major decision, such as starting a new business activity or lease arrangement would have to be approved by the VVA board.

6) Can the LLC be eliminated? Yes, the LLC can be eliminated, but it would require a unanimous vote of all standing members of the VVA Chapter 20 board. The reason for this is that with the elimination of the LLC all standing VVA Chapter 20 board of directors would now have responsibility for something that did not exist when they ran for their position. It is only fair that someone else could not impose legal responsibility on them.

7) Can the chapter members have the LLC members come to a membership meeting? The LLC board would be happy to address the membership in regard to how we are managing the businesses. We will, however, not get into personnel or discuss any other sensitive issue in an open forum such as a membership meeting.

In summary, I would like to say that the LLC is like any other group that has come together in our chapter to help and support the purpose for its existence. The only difference between it and the marching unit, honor guard, or community service committee is that we needed to put a legal structure around us to protect the organization.

I am always willing to answer and discuss anything in regard to the LLC.

Flight 33 Productions
Brittany Graham, Associate Producer, Flight 33 Productions

My company, Flight 33 Productions, is currently producing the second season of “Shootout” for the History Channel. “Shootout” is an hour-long, 13-episode documentary series that depicts the bravery and heroism of US Marines, Navy, and Army from World War II to the present. This season, one episode will be dedicated to Tet Offensive ‘68, and we are concentrating on the battle for Hue.

I was wondering if you might know of Vietnam veterans who would be willing to participate in our program. We are looking to interview men (and women) who were involved in firefights, shootouts and close combat in Hue. I want to assure you that this documentary series will show the veterans in a positive light, focusing on their honor and dedication that they demonstrated during their time of duty. If you are interested in speaking to me more about this, please feel free to contact me. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Brittany Graham can be reached at: bg@flight33.tv 818-505-6640 x138.
**Another POW/MIA Flag Flies in Florida**

Chapter 20 member Dick D’Imperio recently presented a POW/MIA flag to Mike and Wendy, owners of the Paradise Tiki Hut, in Cape Coral, Florida. Here is Dick’s story:

The POW/MIA flag was placed alongside the “A” flag inside the hut (see the picture of the ceiling). I got to know the owners as well as the group called the “Del Prados,” five guys who sing at the Paradise Tiki Hut every weekend. They bring back memories of 50s and 60s music, as well as some songs we would listen to while over in Vietnam (sometimes at the USO Clubs).

Mike and Wendy are so proud of this presentation as well as us becoming good friends. So I’d like to take this time to “salute” Mike and Wendy for allowing me to present this flag and also for their support by displaying it and NOT FORGETTING our lost comrades.

Display of flags inside the Tiki Hut (top). Mike, Wendy, and Dickie Dee at presentation of POW/MIA flag to Tiki Hut (bottom).

**The “Italian Stallion”**

What is the story behind this helicopter—and which Chapter 20 member can tell it? Answer in the June issue of *Between the Lines*. Hint: “It’s a story from Florida.”

**Board Meeting Location Change**

Please be advised that the May 1, 2006, Board meeting will be held at Ira Jacobson Post. Executive members will meet at 6:00 P.M., with the Board meeting following at 7:00 P.M. Thanks in advance for your cooperation. Ken Moore, President, Chapter 20
The escalation of the Vietnam War meant that many supplies had to be transported by ship. Very little cargo could be carried on combat ships and as a result there was a tremendous buildup of merchant vessels under Military Sealift Command (MSTS) contract. The some of the seamen manning these vessels got into trouble both on board and ashore.

The merchant officers and shipping companies complained about the lack of a merchant marine detail and, finally, in August 1966 MSTS requested MACV to provide Coast Guard Merchant Marine Detail personnel. In December that year a marine inspection officer was assigned to Saigon.

Coast Guard officers assigned to merchant marine details have considerable authority when dealing with merchant vessels and personnel. They have authority to remove sailors from ships, order violations corrected, or stop a ship from sailing. To perform those duties successfully, the Coast Guard officer needed to be a diplomat, a judge, and also have a sense of humor.

Cases investigated by the marine inspection officers included suicide, missing at sea, assaults, marijuana use, desertions, gross misconduct, stabblings, drownings, pilfering cargo, sodomy, drunk on duty, incompetence, flag desecration, murder, sabotage, expired licenses, violation of statutes and regulations, hard narcotics, malingering, racial incidents, and verbal abuse to a Coast Guard officer in the performance of his duty.

A constant problem was merchant seamen who got into trouble ashore. The authority of the army to arrest and prosecute merchant seamen often complicated matters. Courts—martial were not the normal procedure because of many legal problems. Any matter could normally be resolved by shipping advisor or the union representatives. In many cases the seaman voluntarily surrendered his license to avoid prosecution and was repatriated back to the United States. One man was given a General Court-Martial for murdering a shipmate. The following are a few thumbnail sketches:

- A radio operator refused to fly from Saigon to Cam Ranh Bay because he should have had first class jet travel all the way from the Continental United States (CONUS) to his ship. There was no jet service available.
- A 77 year-old first mate voluntarily surrendered his license because he could not see other ships close by in daylight.
- The master of a vessel was relieved because he was intoxicated during ammunition handling.
- A flag desecrator was removed from his ship.
- A military guard was provided for a merchant vessel whose crew had not been paid in several months and planned to leave the ship. In a similar case in 1964, 150 sampans stripped a liberty ship clean within 24 hours of abandonment.
- A seaman was accused of running a ‘house of ill-repute.’
- An abusive seaman with a prosthetic leg woke up to find it had been thrown overboard.

The cases described above were routine, but others were more unusual. In August 1969, the MMD officer received word that a seaman was sailing on an altered license. Investigation showed that he was sailing as Chief Mate on a forged Master’s license. In his possession were twenty-one blank counterfeit Coast Guard merchant marine licenses. He was also wanted by federal and local authorities for theft of a half million dollars.

The officer-in-charge also investigated cases where merchant vessels were fired upon while transiting the Saigon River and other waterways. After the merchant ship Columbia Eagle mutiny, the three MMD officers took testimony from the twenty-four crewmen that had been put off in lifeboats.

The signing of the peace treaty lessened the amount of U.S. flag merchant vessels arriving in Vietnam. This reduction eliminated the need for a Merchant Marine Detail and their duties were returned to the United States Consular Missions.
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 20
Membership Application

Return this application, along with a copy of your DD214, to:
Vietnam Veterans of America, 1199 E. Main Street, Rochester, NY 14609

Name: ___________________________________  Date of Birth: ____________________  Sex: M / F
Address: __________________________________ Home Phone: (_____) _______________________
City: _____________________________________  Work Phone: (_____) ________________________
Zip: _______________ Country: ______________  E-mail Address: ______________________ W / H
Chapter # ________ (if known) _______________  Sponsor: __________________________________

I am not a Vietnam veteran, but I want to help Vietnam veterans and their families.
Please accept my donation: ___________________  ❑ AVVA Membership

❑ $10  ❑ $20  ❑ $50  ❑ Other ($_______)

Eligibility: Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Military (for other than training
purposes) between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975 (in-country Vietnam), or between August 5, 1964 and May 7,
1975 (for Vietnam-era veterans).

Term: _____ 1 year ($20) _____3 years ($50) _____ Life Membership: $250 (ages 49 and under)

$225 (ages 50-55)

$200 (ages 56-60)

$175 (ages 61-65)

$150 (ages 66 and over)

Payment Option: _______ Check _______ Money Order

VVA is a non-profit veterans service organization.
Programs and services are funded by member dues and public donations.

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We welcome letters to the editor, poetry, original articles, and suggestions. Submissions can be sent to: Between the Lines, 1199 E. Main Street, Rochester, New York 14609. If you want to submit something on disk, call the office (585-482-7396) to check on compatibility. If you want your manuscript returned, include a self-addressed envelope with postage. We reserve the right not to use materials we think are not appropriate for the publication, and to edit for space and clarity. We'd also like to have a phone number as well as your name in case there are any questions.

The deadline for submissions intended for a particular month's issue is the 5th of the preceding month. If the 5th falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline is the first business day following the 5th.
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WEB SITES/E-MAIL ADDRESSES
Veterans Widows International Network
members@aol.com/vetwindows

NYS Department Health:
www.health.state.ny.us/nyvets

Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Highland Park:
www.vietnammemorial.org/grvvm1/

Operation Welcome Home:
www.operationwelcomehome.org

VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION
Ira Jacobson American Legion Post #474 ....663-7030
VA Clinic - 465 Westfall Road.................463-2600
Veterans Outreach Center ..................546-1081
 Vet Center ........................................232-5040
Veterans Administration ...............800-827-1000
NYS Council ..................................888-678-VETS
Monroe County Veterans Service Agency ..753-6040
e-mail: serviceofficer@yahoo.com

Veterans Benefits Hotline ........800-827-1000
“Veterans Bill of Rights” ........800-342-3538
VA Hospital in Batavia ...................343-7500
VA Hospital in Buffalo ....................716-834-9200
VA Medical Center in Canandaigua ....394-2000
VA Medical Center in Bath ...............607-664-4000
V.V. of America in Washington ....800-VVA-1316
V.V. Memorial Fund “The Wall” .......202-393-0090
Nat.’l Lge. of Fam. MIA/POW Updates 202-223-6846
Richards House Cabinet ..................506-9060
The Resource Center ......................546-4250
Stars & Stripes ................................546-3524
Persian Gulf Vets, Inc. .................385-4097
Operation Welcome Home ..........234-4694

MISCELLANEOUS
VVA 20 Thrift Store, LLC Mgmt., Gary Smith 482-8036
Donation Pick-up, Beth Affeldt 482-8016
VVA Vehicle Donations, Beth Affeldt 224-8484
VVA Chapter 20, Barb DiVico 482-7396
bdivicov20.org

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<th>NAME</th>
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