

September 2006



NORTHLAND VIETNAM VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 16975
Duluth Mn. 55816
WWW.NVVA.US



"Dignity Thru Unity"

Meetings 4th. Monday of month at the Depot 6:00 PM 4th. Floor

Notice Meeting Time Change to 6:00 PM

Board of Directors

- Kathy Camps** **President**
727 5740
 - Pat Maloney** **Vice President**
226 4741
 - Dwight Nelson** **Secretary**
6244362
 - Bob Woods** **Gambling Mang.**
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 - Paul Larson** **Treasurer**
626 2487
- Directors**
- Bob Gunnarson** **624 2573**
 - Durbin Keeney** **721 3980**
 - Dan Smestad** **525 3669**
 - Mike Hanson** **624 4474**
 - Dennis Marthaler** **525-7561**
 - Don McCormick** **525 4577**

Presidents Corner By Kathy Camps

With Bluesfest finally behind us for another year, including a lot of work, the outcome was great!

I want to thank all the great volunteers who helped make this event a success. There are two ladies I personally want to give a special thanks. These ladies worked behind the scenes no one knew how hard they worked and without them, my job would have been harder. The two great gals are Sandi Gunnarson and Rose Hanson. A million thanks ladies.

It's very sad to me that more of our members didn't chose to help. I hope when our membership receives their requests next year, more of you can find time to give back to this event. The Bluesfest is our largest fund raiser each year, and although it is a lot of work, it's a lot of fun too. I hope more of you will try to attend and find out just what a good time it truly is.

This year we had a photographer take pictures at the Blues, and Mike will be putting them on our web page.

On Sunday August 20th we held our annual Picnic at the Zoo. We had a pretty good turn out, but many of those who signed up didn't attend. The food was great as usual. IT seems that the hornets thought so to, as they brought their friends for a good time. A big thank you for the Hospitality Committee or a job well done.

Please don't forget the Vigil on Sept. 15th, 2006. Hope to see many of you there.

Kathy Camps



September 25, 2006

Is our annual meeting officers and board members will be elected

To add an article to this newsletter contact

Mike Hanson 624 4474
Noisyguy@chartermi.net

NWA Memberships
178 Members
131 Associates

Don't Forget Party **Barkers Island**

March 10, 2007

To be announced

Happy Hour 6:00 P.M.
Dinner @ 7:00 P.M.
Prizes and Fun for all

POW/MIA Vigil

Durbin M. Keeney

As we quickly move into fall NVVA's Color Guard looks back to the parades and other events. Now we have up coming event that is one of our most important events that has been identified in the community as the NVVA's POW/MIA Vigil this September 15th. Over the years we have been able to have two repatriation ceremonies, many wonderful speakers to kick off the Vigil, great music, and a loyal following of people that attend. The Jr. Navy ROTC has joined us in the last few years and has taken many of the shifts at the bunker. They have joined the USAF ROTC Det. 420 that has covered the hours from 12 to 4 am. God Bless them as they make it possible for us to who are there for the duration to get a little shuteye.

We are so grateful to these wonderful young people. But to tell you the truth it is a small core group of our member that are there year after year that keeps this going. That frustrates many of us. We are a country at war and this event, this vigil, is more important than ever. Maybe some of our members have forgotten why we do this in the first place. We all know that our country has left thousands of American soldiers prisoners of war in the past. There were over 2,000 men left behind from our war alone. Slowly because of the constant prodding by Vietnam Veterans we have been able to bring closure for families about their sons, brothers, fathers, and husbands. Over the last two years we did that the Vigil. We seen first hand what it meant to the families to know that their love one has been returned to them and that there is one less POW/MIA flag flying. We have been able to be part of that closure. Because of the work of Vietnam veterans Laos is where many of our soldiers have been returned from and now North Vietnam is responding as well as Korea, Russia, and other location have be found. These Vigils like ours are so extremely important to that effort.

It is important to keep the pressure on our government. Like it or not we are a country at war. The reality is that with little or no effort our government could do as it has in the past and leave men and women behind. We need to remember for the first time in our history up to 40% of the boots on the ground are female in battle zones. While we do not know what impact we will have by being putting on this annul Vigil we believe that if this event and similar events are not done across the nation we will most certainly see our government do as it has in the past. Personally we all should be very concerned about those men and women that are serving us today. Who should know better than us how easily our government and our country can forget?

What can you do? Start with the right thing. Take part during the 19th Annual POW/MIA Vigil. Be there for the opening ceremonies at 1800 hrs on Friday night. We have six wonder ladies "Accord" singing, and the founder of *Freedom Flight*, Dr. Jim Tuorila, Ph.D. will be our speaker. "Big Jim" received the outstanding national VA employee of the year this summer and he will retiring from the St. Cloud V.A. where he has been a Psychologist for over twenty years. He has been a long time friend of NVVA and professionally has worked with a number of our members and friends. The after the final prayer, taps, most go home for the next 24 hours there will be fifteen minute shifts of guard in the Memorial. Come take a shift. Saturday from 4:00 am though mid-day and on to closing the numbers gets thin and this is an NVVA event. This event is not just the few, and that few is getting smaller in ranks every year. God Bless those who come out year after year. Please join us.

This Vigil is not for us it is for those men that have not returned. It is for those going to war right now and in the future those who will put on the uniform and will be putting themselves in harms way just as we once did. We own this much so that some day there is not a Vigil for fellow Americans.

Think about it...See you there...It is the right thing to do!

Veterans Day 2006

Durbin M. Keeney

It has been sense prior to WWII that there has been a Veterans Day parade in Duluth. This year for the first time we will have one. The Memorial Day Parade committee has taken on this special event. We are planning to have a parade of Veterans leaving from the old Armory on London Road down Superior Street to the DEPOT and then be part of the City-wide Veterans Day event. Those that cannot walk the distance can enjoy a troop train. There will be special activities all day long for veterans and their families. Keep you looking for more information to follow, but plan to be part of the parade. This will be a veteran's only parade. We will line up by branches with military vehicles, separating the branches. There will be no commercial or none military units taking part. In other words this is ours and we need to get all the veterans to be a part of this special event. We are hoping that veterans from all over Northeastern Minnesota, and Northwestern Wisconsin to be a part of the parade. You really do not want to miss this so come join us.

Remember form up is 0845 hrs by the Armory on London Road November 11th. Step off is 0930 hrs. Wear your uniform (if it fits) unit patches, and march, or walk, with your branch, just be there. Be a part of what we hope will become a Veterans Day tradition.



Stand Down North 2006

This year was the best ever and we want to thank all that participated for your support. Each year we try to tweak the services to better serve the veterans that come to the event. This year we had participation from 145 veterans. There were 71 returnees, and most importantly 74 new veterans.

As always we had more males 138 than females 7, but that is to be expected. Here are some other stats that you might find interesting:

Ethnic Org. White 116 Black 8 Native Amer. 18 Hawaiian 1 Asian 2

Age Group

66- older	65-61	60-56	55-51	50-46	45-41	40 – 36	35-18
18	10	36	27	25	22	4	3

Disability 73

Legal Problems 14

Branches of Service	USA	USN	USAF	USMC
	79	24	22	20

Hair Cuts 25

I.D. Cards 58

We had seventeen providers from medical, housing, legal, VA and many more along with over \$25,000 value of clothing along with a good meal. This year the Ryman from Clear Channel presented MACV with a \$1,000 check from his donations for “Clap for the Ryman”

Thanks again to all volunteers, providers and the veterans that we were able to serve.

Sincerely,

Durbin M. Keeney
MACV Regional Director
Stand Down North Chairman

Greetings From Silver bay

By Ward C. Wallin

MINNESOTA VETERANS HOME - FALL 2006

Not only is Fall a beautiful season, but also a busy one. Our Recreation Calendar is packed full with activities in September, thanks in part to the NVVA for the monthly contribution to the Recreation Department. In September alone, we have 8 "Club Car" rides scheduled, 5 luncheons, 3 pontoon outings to Lax Lake, 2 evening campfires and many other regular events such as bingo, baking, and birthday parties to name a few. One special event includes a trip to the Bong Museum in Superior. After enjoying the museum, we will then go out for lunch. This is a day that many of our veterans look forward to each year.

In October, we have two big events in which many volunteers will take part in. We will have our annual Pheasant Dinner sponsored by the VFW and American Legion. Last year we had 40+ dignitaries from all over the state attend. At this point in time, a date has not been set due to the scheduled construction in the kitchen. It's normally held the third week in October. We close the month with our annual VFW 8th District Halloween Party. This slated for October 31st. Volunteers and residents alike dress up in costume vying for prizes!

Also in the news, both the VFW 8th District President (Penny Siven) and Commander (Mert Sedgeman) have recently announced that the Silver Bay Veterans Home will be their project for the year. This is great news for our residents and we are grateful for their ongoing support.

Fall is also a busy time for state-wide conferences, conventions, and monthly meetings. Upcoming Outreach for the Minnesota Veterans Home includes:

Dates:

Sept. 21-23 VFW Fall Conference – Moorhead

Sept. 25 NVVA Board Meeting

Sept. 29 Military Retirees Day - Duluth

Oct. 7-8 VFW 8th District Meeting - Duluth

Oct. 12-14 DAV Fall Conference – Brainerd

Oct. 13-14 American Legion 8th District Meeting – Two Harbors

Oct. 26-28 American Legion Fall Conference – Breezy Point

If you haven't been to the Vets Home lately, please give us a call and we would be glad to give you a tour of this great facility. On behalf of our residents and staff, I would like to thank the NVVA for the ongoing support.

Respectfully submitted,

Ward C. Wallin

Volunteer Program Administrator

Appointments not kept at the Clinic and what can we do to help!
Durbin M. Keeney

Jeff M. Hall, MSW, Rural Outreach Social Worker asked if we could get your assistance? What he is asking for is “**Requesting your input and thoughts so we can do a better job of reaching this group of veterans.**” This is an important request as the Twin Ports Out Patient Clinic (TPOC) is noticing a higher "no show" rate with this group of veterans. If they do show for the initial appointment, many are not showing for ensuing appointments. Here are some of the concerns that veterans have expressed:

Will my unit find out I'm coming to the VA for care? The VA will not disclose medical information without the veterans consent. The tricky part here is if the unit sends a veteran over on a *line of duty*, and the veteran talks to the VA doctor about other issues than say his/her knee, those records will go back with the line of duty as part of the visit. I have purposefully tried to not access these units other than via the local chain of command. It does appear to shut down referrals if people see me as sanctioned by their major command.

If I am diagnosed with a medical or mental-health problem, it will end my military / civilian career. We are not automatically referring reintegration problems to mental health and then labeling these folks with post-traumatic stress disorder. I try very hard to keep their care with the primary care physician. Our primary purpose at the clinic is treatment. Service-connected issues are referred to their advocates such as the County veteran service officer, power of attorney, etc. We have many staff who served in different combat theaters and understand those issues well. Many of those staff continued to serve. If we identify a veteran with a condition that may harm his/her career; we are encouraging the soldier to consider reclassification to an MOS that would accommodate for that particular injury. We do encourage those soldiers to work with their full-time staff in that regard.

I work during the day and the VA doesn't have evening hours: This is a problem that we are talking about. Previously we did run an evening clinic which was pretty poorly attended. Any staffing to the evening clinic would be drawn from the day shift. I am going out to the units in the field, on the weekends, in the evening, et cetera. I don't want to hear about a soldier going to drill, talking about suicide, on a Monday. Call me @ home if need be.

I am getting bills for my VA Care: Advocates please watch this one closely. There are problems here.

I have noticed a difference in components - WI Guard, MN Guard, Reserve, Army, Navy, etc. Some of the components are extremely centralized and not allowing the unit commanders or first sergeants to make a determination on who can come in and present at a drill, others are very open. This is unfortunate as the VA, has the life long responsibility for these Veterans, and we are losing access to them at a critical time.

If you have information, questions, or ideas on how to make this better please call Jeff Hall (715) 398-2951/2902