



MAY 2015
VOL 1 NO 2

“Welcome Home” **NEWSLETTER**



Notes from the President

Lee White

VVA Chapter 1106 participated in the chapter's first community event on April 9, 2015. We were invited by Jason Culpepper, Home Depot Foundation, and Mr. Richard Sauer, representing the City of Lone Tree, to volunteer for the Community/Veteran Garden Project at the Lone Tree Elementary School. Our chapter members Gary Fortner, Bob Rotruck, and myself worked alongside Home Depot employees building raised beds and spreading ground cover. The "garden" will be available for community use and a special dedicated veteran plot.



Richard Sauer – part of the magnitude of the project.



LtoR Lee White, Jason Culpepper, Andy Fortner, Bob Rotruck, Richard Sauer

A very satisfying relationship building event.

Memorial Day – May 25, 2015

Memorial Day is a federal holiday in the United States for remembering the men and women who died while serving in the country's armed forces. The holiday, which is observed every year on the last Monday of May, was formerly known as Decoration Day and originated after the American Civil War to commemorate the Union and Confederate soldiers who died in the war. By the 20th century, Memorial Day had been extended to honor all Americans who died while in the military service. It typically marks the start of the summer vacation season, while Labor Day marks its end.

Many people visit cemeteries and memorials, particularly to honor those who have died in military service. Many volunteers place an American flag on each grave in national cemeteries.¹

¹Wikipedia – Memorial Day United States

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 1106 S. METRO DENVER, CO

Feature Article – Chapter 1106

History

The idea and groundwork for the future Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1106 was started with a conversation with Joe Plant, Treasurer, Chapter 1071, and myself, as current member of Chapter 1071 in September 2014. Our first "advertised" meeting was held in October 2014, and netted our "start-up" board members, Lee White, President, Gary Fortner, Vice President, Hazel Simeon, Secretary, Joe Plant, Treasurer, Milt Omoto, Pat Surrena, and Jack Hunter, board members. All were very instrumental in the development of Chapter 1106.

February 12, 2015, Chapter 1106, the South Metro Denver chapter of the non-profit Vietnam Veterans of America, was formally chartered by the national organization. The Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), with nearly 75,000 members nationwide, is the only national Vietnam Veterans' organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam era veterans and their families.



Manuel "Manny" Pedraza (LEFT), President, Colorado VVA State Council and President, VVA Chapter 1075 (Colorado Springs), presents the national charter to Lee White, President of the new Chapter 1106 South Metro Denver at the new chapters monthly meeting on Feb. 7, 2015.

The new South Metro Denver Chapter 1106, is the third chapter of the national organization to be formed in Colorado and primarily serves veterans in Denver, Arapahoe, Douglas, and Elbert Counties.

Lee White, founder and president of Chapter 1106 says, "There are approximately 146,000 Vietnam-era veterans in Colorado and a majority of them are in the Denver metro area. As this population gets older, more and more health issues including, mental, physical and other effects that begin to evidence themselves which just a few years ago we didn't know about. Now, our vets and their families need to know how to handle them and where to get help. Today, we can connect the dots to the health issues where a few years ago, we couldn't."

"For instance", White continued, "many of today's major health issues, such as diabetes, a variety of cancers, kidney failure and others have now been traced back to the dioxin Agent Orange as the 'presumptive cause'. Agent Orange was sprayed heavily in the jungles and around the airbases in South Vietnam. Homelessness, among all vets, including Vietnam Vets, continues to be an area where we want to help. We want to let those suffering from the issues know there may be a service related reason and cause for their health issues and how to get assistance."

The Vietnam Veterans of America can assist their member vets recognize health issues, and direct them to where they can get help. Today, the disability known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), is widely recognized and treatable. During Vietnam, many service men were given less than honorable discharges, eliminating them from benefits because they were thought to be disruptive, not knowing it was really what we now know as PTSD.

Added White, "For those reasons we started Chapter 1106 to help our vets and their families in the South Metro Denver area work their way through these issues which maybe they didn't realize were attributable to their Vietnam service. To do this, and to help our brothers and

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sisters, we want to gain as many members as possible and will work to build our base.

"Vietnam Vets typically are not joiners, but we hope they realize, many of their current or upcoming health issues just may have a connection to their service. We want to show them how to get assistance, support, medical help and possibly, compensation," said White.¹

¹Part of Press Release developed for Chapter 1106

Military Trivia

What does **No Joy** mean? See answer at the end of the Newsletter



Never Left Behind under any conditions!

Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 9, 2015 - Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting, American Legion Post 161, Arvada, CO.

June 6 Member meeting location change. This meeting will be held at: **Fire Station, 8871 Maximus Drive, Lone Tree, CO.**

The Saturday, July 4, 2015 meeting date has been change to Saturday, July 11, 2015. Same time, regular place!

Membership Drive!

Do you have a VVA1106 Business Card? Send an email to: bobrotruck73@gmail.com and he will send you a template to print 10 business cards. When you see some folks that look like they could be Vietnam Vets, give them a card! Step up to the plate and ask them to join VVA1106? **Do it!** The worst they can say is, "I was a '60s love child!" Please **do not hit** them!! Grit your teeth, smile, and walk away!!!

Membership Total as of 4/15/2015: 36

New VAA Members

March	April
William Blackstone	Merle Gast
James Koucherik	Marvin Lich
Bob Rotruck	Michael Messenger
Robert Schlesier	
Stan VonFeldt	

New AVVA Members

Mary Haddon

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Suzanne Sigona
Barbara Rotruck
Linda Messenger
Cookie White
Wendy White

Facts about the Vietnam Veteran

Vietnam Veterans faced rejection, verbal, and sometimes physical assault when they returned stateside. That's why many veterans quickly discarded their uniforms after returning home. It was easier than facing humiliation in public places. The Vietnam vet became a scapegoat for our country's involvement in an unpopular war.¹

¹The Bitter Homecoming, Dennis J. Stauffer, Dec. 5, 1982 edition Grand Rapids Press

Board of Directors/Officers

Lee White - President
Gary Fortner - Vice-president
Joe Plant - Treasurer
Hazel Simeon - Secretary
Board Members – Milt Omoto, Patti Ehline, Patrick Surrena



New board member Patti Ehline with somebody we all recognize! (circa Dec 1968)

Working Committees

(Folks are needed to fill some spots!)
Agent Orange/PTSD -
Membership - Gary Fortner, Lee White
Newsletter Editor - Bob Rotruck
Fundraising/Grants - Milt Omoto
Marketing/Media/Events - Pat Surrena
POW/MIA – Mike Messenger
Webmaster - Hazel Simeon
Women Veterans - Patti Ehline

Book/Articles Published by Members

"Thank You, America" Autobiography of a Naval Career – By CWO Robert Rotruck, allows readers to experience the glorious opportunity afforded to a small town boy when he decided to choose the Navy for his future. *Thank You, America* includes true short stories and vignettes that describe:

- Aspects of a military career
- Many wonderful people who served their country
- Both humorous and dramatic events

"Vietnam War: Defining Moment for America – Remembrances and Reflections of an Army Intelligence Officer" - Joe Dileonardo

"Hamfist Trilogy" – Books of Fiction – George Nolly served as a pilot in the United States Air Force, flying 315 combat missions on two successive tours of duty in Vietnam, flying O-2A and F-4 aircraft. He was the last Air Force pilot to complete 100 missions over North Vietnam. While in the Air Force, George received the Tactical Air Command Instructor Pilot of the Year Award.

Trivia Answer

No Joy – No radio contact, or no visual contact. Sometimes used to say "it didn't work."