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TENNESSEE VIETNAM VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM, INC.

*John
Adison*

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3d Mar Div
Exec. Dir., TVVLP
John Furgess
America's Div
Admin. Dir., TVVLP

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Chairman, TVVLP

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Harold Dortch, Jr.
7TH Air Force

Judge James R. Everett
79TH ENGR GP
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John R. Gregory
11th Mar

Comm. Francis S. Guess
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38th Air Rescue SQDN
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Robin Hood
1ST CAV DIV
Carter A. Howard
America's Div

Jack Hutchison
4TH INF DIV
J. Travis Irvin, III
173RD ABN BDE
Dr. A. Everette James, Jr.
93RD EVAC HOSP
Ennis B. Jordan
America's Div

October 11, 1983

Ed Rollins
Assistant to the President
for Political Affairs
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Rollins:

This is a follow-up to Sam Bartholomew's letter of September 30, 1983, regarding tentative plans for the "Forgotten Man Jam."

Enclosed please find a copy of Tommy Cash's recording of "The Forgotten Man," one of the best songs about Vietnam, in my opinion. Artist's royalties are being donated to our Memorial Fund.

Also enclosed is a clipping from the 10-6-83 edition of the Nashville TENNESSEAN, which includes General William Westmoreland's opinion of the record and plans for the "Forgotten Man Jam."

Prior to Sam's discussion with you and others regarding the "Forgotten Man Jam," we (TVVLP) reserved Nashville's Municipal Auditorium (seating-9,000 plus) for Sunday, December 18, 1983, for a 2:00-10:00 P.M. concert.

To date, Johnny Cash, Tammy Wynette, Tommy Cash, Jan Howard (Grand Ole Opry star who lost a son in Vietnam), General William Westmoreland, General Lewis Walt and several mid-level Country Music performers have committed to participate on December 18.

We are pursuing Dolly Parton, Bob Hope, the Gatlin Brothers, Tom T. Hall and several other "headliners."

As more stars commit to participate, we will publicize this as a national event through the media, Country Music channels, the VVLP and Veterans organizations networks.

MG Orris Kelly (Ret)
4TH INF DIV
Kenneth W. Kromer, Jr.
H-2-S, 1st Mar Div
Judge Walter C. Kurtz
1ST INF DIV
James S. Lattimore, Jr.
18TH MP BDE
Dr. John Lippincott
MACV ADV TM
Dennie H. Littlejohn
85TH EVAC HOSP
Bobby T. Logue
178TH ORD Co
Ronald W. Lollar
3d Mar Div
Ken Looney
1ST CAV DIV
Bob Lynch
24TH EVAC HOSP
Donald L. Marlatt
729TH ACW SQDN
Thomas W. Martin, Jr.
1st Mar Div
Allan McArtor
12TH TAC REC SQDN
Dan A. McDougal
4TH INF DIV
Stafford McNamee
VP-16, USN AIR DET
James C. Meyer
101ST ABN DIV
George M. Miller
315TH AIR WING
GEN William G. Moore, Jr.
834TH AIR DIV
Rep. Mike Murphy
563RD QM Co
Timothy J. Myers
25TH TAC FTR SQDN
Mary Lou Nichols
21ST CSF
Judge George C. Paine
1/50TH INF BN
Michael W. Patrick
1ST INF DIV
George Pearson
1ST INF DIV
Tom Ragsdale
III MAF
William B. Raines, Jr.
1/44TH ARTY
Thomas M. Reeves
1ST CAV DIV
William H. Rodgers
101ST ABN DIV
Eddie Scott
CARR DIV 14
Scott Shaw
1ST INF DIV
Fred Smith
1st MAF
Gerald A. Smith
1ST AVN BDE
James I. Spain
50TH ORD Co
Harry P. Stephenson
21ST TASS
E. C. Stone
4TH INF DIV
Jon K. Thompson
21ST RECON Co
Rep. David L. Ussery
USN EOD
Jerry Washington
MACV
James A. Webb, III
USN ADV GP
Julian B. Wells, Jr.
12TH FTR WING
James E. Wilson
25TH INF DIV
William M. Wilson
USS CAMDEN
Dr. Taylor M. Wray
USCG MINNETONKA
William R. Young
173RD ABN BDE
William G. Youngblood
199TH INF BDE

The "Forgotten Man Jam" will be sponsored by the TVVLP, with assistance from Country Music entertainers. We feel an appropriate sub-title would be "Country Music's National Tribute to Vietnam Veterans." Proceeds will go to the TVVLP Memorial Fund to erect a monument to Tennessee's 49,000 'Nam vets, and to memorialize the 1,287 from this state who gave their lives in Southeast Asia.

As Sam indicated, the exposure should be tremendous. Also, if necessary, we can rearrange the event around the President's schedule, but we will need input on potential dates as soon as possible.

I respectfully request that, initially, consideration be given to the feasibility of the President attending on December 18, as entertainers will begin their tour schedules shortly after the first of the year.

However, we are prepared to regroup and plan around another date, if December 18 is an impossible date for the President's participation.

Sincerely,



Fred Tucker
Executive Director

FT/c

cc: Sam Bartholomew
Joe M. Rodgers

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR FRED RYAN

FROM: MARGARET TUTWILER *m076*
DATE: October 18, 1983
RE: ATTACHED REQUEST FOR TENNESSEE VIETNAM
VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM, INC.

Fred, would you handle this? We have sent an "fyi"
copy to Morton Blackwell.

Thanks much.

✓ cc: Morton Blackwell



ACTION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20525

October 14, 1983

Morton Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

As you know, the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program (VVLTP) is a federal initiative administered by ACTION, the national volunteer agency. The program encourages successful Vietnam Veterans nationwide to volunteer their time, effort and creative leadership to help solve some of the problems still faced by some of their fellow veterans.

Since the beginning of the program in September 1981, 50 local programs have been established around the country. Close to 3,000 unpaid volunteers, almost all of whom are Vietnam veterans, have stepped forward and given well over 100,000 hours of volunteer time to solving the problems of their fellow veterans and demonstrating the leadership ability of Vietnam veterans.

Approximately two months ago we began circulating an information sheet periodically to the key members of this volunteer network. The most recent copy of the news sheet is enclosed along with a digest of items contained in earlier editions. To help keep you informed of VVLTP's progress, we will send you copies of upcoming editions as well.

We thank you for your support and look forward to continued cooperation in our efforts to benefit veterans and the country they served.

Sincerely,

Edward T. Timperlake
National Director
Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program

Enclosures

VIETNAM VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE

ARKANSAS VVLP IN JOB-A-THON

The Arkansas VVLP, in conjunction with the local Vet Center, State Employment Security division, and the ABC TV affiliate in Little Rock sponsored a three-hour job-a-thon on August 16, 1983. It was reported that over three hundred contacts were made during the broadcast and that at least one hundred and fifty jobs were secured.

NEW YORK VVLP COMMEDED BY SBA

The New York City VVLP was recently commended by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for its support and "substantial contribution" to an SBA Veterans Small Business and Networking Conference.

On the first day, the conference attracted 400 Vietnam veterans who were interested in starting their own businesses. On the second day, about 300 Vietnam veterans who are already business owners attended.

SBA LOAN APPROVAL

Guidance and support provided by the Massachusetts VVLP enabled a disabled veteran to obtain a \$105,000 Small Business Administration loan (at 3% interest) to start a moving and storage company. The business plans to hire Vietnam veterans exclusively, if possible.

JOB SEEKERS SEMINAR

An unemployment/career development seminar organized and presented recently by the Georgia VVLP attracted an audience of 250 unemployed Vietnam veterans, most of whom had not previously been in contact with the program. Mr. Phil Ross, an experienced professional in the personnel consulting field, gave an inspiring lecture well received by all present. The local Atlanta media provided full coverage before and after the event. VVLP also was credited for providing the seminar (free to approximately 600 members of the public).

TEMPORARY HOUSING FOR VIETNAM VETERANS

The Seattle VVLP obtained a \$10,800 account from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to cover temporary housing for Vietnam veterans. The money will be used, for example, to provide a veteran a place to live while he is seeking employment.

NIAGARA VVLP DEVELOPS INNOVATIVE RELOCATION PROGRAM

The Niagara VVLP in Buffalo, New York, has developed a relocation supplemental payment plan with their local Private Industrial Council (PIC). The allowance will pay for a veteran's travel expense to attend a job interview not to exceed a total of \$600 per participant. Some of the requirements include the following: (1) a bonafide job interview must be confirmed by submitting a complete employer verification form; (2) the distance of the interview must be a minimum of 50 miles from the veteran's home and has to be within the United States. VVLPs interested in developing a similar financial support system should coordinate with their local PIC.

TENNESSEE VVLP RESTORES HOME

VVLP Project Director, Fred Tucker, and ten other members of the Tennessee VVLP pulled off their coats and ties to restore the home of a disabled veteran of World Wars I and II. The Davidson County (Tennessee) program is sponsored by the Mayor's office as a way to get volunteer organizations to assist older and disabled citizens with home maintenance as well as contribute to the well being of the community. On August 4, 1983, the Tennessee VVLP received a commendation from the Mayor for fine work.

GEORGIA VVLP RECEIVES GRANT

The Georgia VVLP has received a grant in the amount of \$11,555 to set up free model workshops for SBA loans, basic job skills and sales techniques. They also have hired an employment representative for five months to coordinate the program. They are meeting now with the Governor's staff to try to get monies for a full-time employment office through the Job Training Partnership Act.

U.S. PERSONNEL OFFICE OKs VVLP INITIATIVE

Responding to a memo from ACTION Director, Tom Pauken (initiated by VVLP staff), the Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Donald J. Devine, has agreed to begin work to revise the federal personnel handbook to more accurately reflect the supervisory experience of former Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs).

It was pointed out that often former NCOs are not given adequate credit for military supervisory experience when they apply for government jobs. Modifications to the personnel handbook were suggested which would help correct the situation. Mr. Devine responded, "While the current handbook does not contain the specific guidance you have suggested, we believe that trained examiners and agency staffing specialists are well aware of the need to consider military and supervisory experience in terms of the duties performed and the responsibilities exercised. Nevertheless, we are beginning work now to make revisions to Handbook X-118 along the lines of your suggestions."

He also said, "You have also suggested the issuance of a pamphlet which would provide advice and instructions to veterans on the importance of including, in their application forms, complete information on their military experience. We think your suggestion is a good one and we will move ahead to develop a pamphlet in consultation and cooperation with the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program and veterans service organizations."

BUFFALO RECEIVES NEW GRANT; BROADENS PROGRAM

The Niagara VVLP (Buffalo, New York) recently received a \$40,000 grant from the state of New York which enables them to expand their program from Buffalo and Erie County to eight additional counties.

The expansion of services includes their job seminar service that has been ongoing since February 1983. By buying a "LEADERSHIP VAN" equipped with a

computer terminal and telephone and hiring one additional staff, they are able to provide significant VVLP job referral services. They also refer veterans with other concerns to the Veterans Helping Veterans Center in Buffalo (DOL Program) through their computer system. They are also working with 14 area DVOPs in this inventive project. To date 100 resumes have been matched with potential employers.

HOUSTON MEETING ON PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES

Houston VVLP recently met with the Houston Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives which includes a 22-member Subcommittee on Employment and Job Training. The local task force is comprised of top community and business leaders.

INDIANA VVLP CO-HOSTS STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

The Indiana VVLP along with the Vietnam Veterans Civic Counsel of Indiana and the Civic Counsel of Madison in Anderson, Indiana, recently co-hosted the first Vietnam Veterans Statewide Conference.

The two-day event featured workshops and presentations that provided Vietnam veterans with information on the various services available to them through organizations such as the Vet Centers, the Veterans Administration, and the PICs (formed to allocate JTPA funds).

The activity had over 100 participants and resulted in the formation of a Vietnam veterans roundtable with representatives from each Indiana county.

The roundtable intends to act as a "clearing house" on Vietnam veteran issues to ensure that the veteran is represented as a single, coordinated voice before the media and concerned organizations.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WORKING WITH VVLP

At 11 a.m. (EDST) Friday, May 27, the United States Chamber of Commerce aired a one-hour program about the VVLP on BIZNET, its cable channel. The show is entitled "Vietnam Veterans." VVLP worked closely with the producer, John Eddinger, a Vietnam veteran. The first half of the program featured the VVLP documentary, "When Their Country Called" and the second half included a discussion with Jim Webb and Tom Pauken as well as highlighting Vietnam veterans in politics, business and around the nation.

The Chamber invited 200 guests to be present at their studios and the Paralyzed Veterans of America hosted a wine and cheese hour following the show.

The Chamber of Commerce cable channel currently has 7-million subscribers and is also subscribed to by many corporate headquarters.

Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program

An ACTION Program
September 30, 1983

JOB BILL MOVING TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

On August 15 President Reagan signed into law the Emergency Veterans Job Training Act of 1983. The act will provide \$150 million a year for two years for training long-term unemployed (15 out of the last 20 weeks) Vietnam era, disabled and Korean War veterans in occupations requiring the use of new technological skills, or in occupations in which the demand for skilled workers exceeds the supply. The job training act will provide up to \$10,000 per veteran in on-the-job training or institutional training directly related to needed job skills. The training time must not be less than six months (three months with special approval from the VA).

The new job training program will be administered primarily by the VA which will have responsibility for eligibility determination, program approval, and payment to employers. The Department of Labor will have primary responsibility for outreach, job development and other supportive roles.

Past employment and training programs for Vietnam veterans have been developed and implemented in the context of social welfare initiatives, far below the abilities and aspirations of Vietnam veterans and their rightful social and economic status in society. VVLP can play a crucial role in the program by working with employers to develop meaningful career opportunities and assisting veterans in realizing the full potential of the program.

Forrest (Rusty) Lindley will be coordinating the Emergency Veterans Job Training program at the National office and will provide technical assistance and training to anyone who needs assistance or information with the new program. Enclosed to project directors is a VA summary of the new job bill.

PROGRAMMATIC NOTES

New Mexico VVLP recently conducted a three-part TV series on GI benefits and veterans affairs. Contact John Garcia for further information. Minnesota VVLP has also had experience with similar TV programming.

New Mexico VVLP has also had considerable success in showing "When Their Country Called" at schools in the state. The presentation is accompanied by VVLP volunteers who talk about their own experiences and perceptions and answer students' questions.

Southern California VVLP, as part of their volunteer network, has established a "One-on-One" program in which VVLP volunteers meet on a regular basis with fellow veterans who have been unsuccessful in their efforts to reenter civilian life. Southern California has also developed a volunteer legal committee which is able to provide legal services on a pro-bono basis to most veterans seeking such help. For more information, contact Roland Cinciarelli at 213/381-5079.

Kentucky VLP, based in Louisville, recently held an art show sponsored by Liberty National Bank to kick-off the establishment of the program. The art was provided by the U.S. Marine Corps from its combat art collection. For more information, contact Jim Lundgard at 502/589-4549.



Idaho VLP has gained the support of Governor John Evans in an effort to reach out to employers throughout the state. A letter signed by the governor was mailed to 2,000 businesses in the state encouraging them to support the VLP. For information, contact Max Brown at 208/342-7876.

MUSIC CITY TRIBUTE TO VETERANS

"Country Music's Nationwide Tribute to Vietnam Veterans" will be held December 18th in Nashville, Tennessee. The concert will be called "The Forgotten Man Jam." Top entertainment figures will be performing and proceeds will go to the Tennessee VLP Memorial Fund. You are invited to attend. Information on the tribute is enclosed. Call Fred Tucker, Tennessee VLP program director, for details.

Also enclosed with this newsletter are two copies of a 45 rpm record by Tommy Cash, brother of Johnny Cash, called the "Forgotten Man." Sales of the record will benefit the Tennessee Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. It is suggested that you call local record stores to ensure the availability of the record before taking any steps to encourage radio stations to play the song.

LOUISIANA VLP SPONSORS RACE TO BENEFIT VETERANS

The Louisiana Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, a project of the Louisiana VLP, is sponsoring a 10-kilometer race on Sunday, November 13th to raise money for the memorial to be built on the grounds of the Superdome in New Orleans. The race and the memorial have gained the complete support of local and state government officials and veterans representatives, active and reserve military and private businesses including Converse. For additional information, contact Dave Flint, Louisiana VLP at 504/522-3994.

ATC POSITIONS OPEN FOR VETERANS

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has opened competition for GS-7 (\$16,559 per year) Air Traffic Control (ATC) positions. The age limit under this competition is 35 or under for applicants who have prior experience in ATC. Without prior experience, the maximum age is 30.

FAA has also announced a "Pre-Developmental Program for Air Traffic Control Specialist Trainee--GS-5." This training program according to the announcement, is specially targeted at women and minorities. Applicants, however, must be eligible for "noncompetitive placement" under one of several programs including the Veterans Readjustment Act. Ironically, the age limit is 30 in spite of the fact that the FAA realizes that few, if any, VRA-eligible Vietnam veterans are now under 30. They say that the 30-year-old age limit is mandated by Congress. Information is enclosed.

GOLD STAR MOTHERS VISIT WLP

Mrs. June Everett, current national president of the American Gold Star Mothers and Mrs. Emogene Cupp, former president of the organization, visited WLP national office this week to receive a briefing on our progress. Eligible mothers should be encouraged to join this excellent and worthwhile organization which has done so much to help WLP. For information, contact Mrs. June Everett, National President, American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., National Headquarters, 2128 Leroy Place, NW, Washington, DC 20008 (202/265-0991 or 509/226-3896).

AUGUST UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES DOWN

Unemployment figures released by the Department of Labor for the month of August are down across the board and, in the crucial category of veterans aged 35-39, veterans' unemployment is a full percentage point below the rate for non-veterans in the same age bracket.

<u>AGE GROUP</u>	<u>VIETNAM ERA VETS</u>		<u>PERCENTAGE PLUS OR MINUS</u>	<u>NON-VETERANS</u>
	<u>May</u>	<u>August</u>		<u>August</u>
25-29	13.9	11.7	-2.2	9.5
30-34	11.0	9.7	-1.3	9.5
35-39	8.8	6.2	-2.6	7.2

According to the labor statistics, 2.7 million veterans are in the 35-39 year-old bracket within the "civilian labor force."

VIETNAM VETERANS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
Chairmen and Program Directors
July 1983

ALABAMA

Judge Wayne Thorn, Chairman - Served with U.S. Army in Vietnam as company commander. Won Bronze Star. J.D. from Cumberland School of Law at Stamford University. Now, District Judge, Jefferson County, Alabama.

Talmadge Foster, Program Director - A veteran of Korea and Vietnam. Was Battery Commander and won Bronze Star in Vietnam. Holds rank of Major. Graduate, Tuskegee Institute. Distinguished career in higher education including work with Alabama Center for Higher Education, a consortium representing seven colleges and universities within the State.

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

James Reichert, Chairman - Was military advisor to a Vietnamese armored cavalry unit. Within two weeks of returning home was in law school. Is now an attorney in private practice.

John Garcia, Program Director - Four months after high school graduation was in Vietnam with the 4th Infantry Division. Ten days after his return home he was married. Successfully opened and operated a retail store that employed 20 people. Before joining the VWLP, was an account executive with an insurance firm.

ARIZONA

Jim Hartdegen, Chairman - Was a fire team leader with 25th Infantry Division. Works with the Safety Department of the Noranda Mining Company and is a representative in the Arizona State Legislature.

Frederick E. Ferguson, Program Director - Served in Vietnam with the 1st Cavalry. Helicopter pilot. Medal of Honor recipient. Was benefits counselor with the Veterans Administration.

ARKANSAS

Leon Clements, Chairman - Drafted by Cincinnati Royals basketball team. First Team All American basketball player in 1965. Served with 1st Air Cavalry as company commander. Now, senior vice president of Simmons First National Bank, Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

Donald Grigg, Program Director - Was with 1st Battalion 12th Cavalry (Airborne). Lost leg in combat yet returned for a second tour as a hospital administrator. Earned M.A. in hospital administration, worked with hospitals and medical consulting firm. Was Director of Personnel at University of Arkansas.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

R. Keegan Federal, Jr., Chairman - Served with the Army Signal Corps in Vietnam. Law degree from Emory University. Now Superior Court Judge.

Ron Miller, Program Director - Served with 162nd Aviation (Assault Helicopter) Company. Received degree from Arkansas State. Charter pilot before joining VLP.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Mark Treanor, Chairman - Naval academy graduate, served with the 1st Marine Division as rifle platoon commander. Now partner with Baltimore law firm.

David DeChant, Program Director - Spent 31 months in Vietnam as a Marine scout and liaison between military and civilian leaders. Managed restaurant before joining VLP.

BOISE, IDAHO

Bernard Fisher, Chairman - Served with 1st Air Commandos, USAF. Sits on Pardon and Parole Board, Idaho. Farmer and pilot. Congressional Medal of Honor Winner.

Max W. Brown, Program Director - Served with 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam. Won two Bronze Stars. Owner of home appliance service business.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Kevin Danehy, Chairman - Was a Marine pilot in Vietnam. Received B.A. from Boston College. Now, Business Manager with Interactive Data Corporation.

Richard Ducey, Program Director - Served with 1st and 25th Infantry Divisions. Holds Associate Degree with honors. Sits on Governors Advisory Commission on Veterans Affairs. Has testified and lectured extensively in the area of Vietnam veterans affairs. Established Boston office of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

H. G. "Skip" Smith, Chairman - Was company commander of the 299th engineering battalion. Won two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. Earned B.S. from Southern Illinois University. President, Smith, Cantrell and Associates, a commercial real estate firm.

Al Lynch, Program Director - Served with the First Air Cavalry in Vietnam. Won Congressional Medal of Honor. Was Chief of Ambulatory Care at the Veterans Administration Medical Center, North Chicago.

COLORADO

Tom Eller, Chairman - Martin Marietta executive. Air Force officer in Southeast Asia. President of the Air Force Academy Association.

COLUMBUS, OHIO

Gene Watts, Ph.D., Chairman - Army Captain with 509th radio research group in Vietnam. Now Associate Professor of History and a Research Associate for the Study of Crime and Delinquency, Ohio State University. Holds several post-doctoral awards and is a book review editor.

David Aldstadt, Program Director - Flew reconnaissance missions as a sensor specialist with the Army in Vietnam. Has held executive positions in sales and planning analysis.

DALLAS

Pat Haggerty, Chairman - Was with the Mobile Riverine Force with the Navy in Vietnam. Holds M.B.A. from University of Dallas. Is industrial real estate broker.

Thomas Hartin, Program Director - Was a platoon leader with the 1st Air Cavalry in Vietnam. Holds Purple Heart. Earned B.S. from University of Texas. Was real estate broker and home builder.

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Max Patterson, Chairman - Served in Vietnam with the 1st Infantry Division. Earned B.A. and Master's degrees at Michigan State University. Now police chief, Windsor, Connecticut.

HAWAII

Lester M. Higa, Chairman - Graduated from Denver University with economics degree. Served with 1st Air Cavalry in Vietnam. Real estate broker.

Michael Wix, Program Director - Disabled. Winner of Bronze Star. Army helicopter pilot.

HOUSTON

Richard Kolb, Chairman - Was radio operator with the 101st Airborne in Vietnam. Works in the field of exploration in the petroleum industry. Free lance author—numerous articles affirming the integrity of service.

Stan Horton, Program Director - Was Navy Seabee and worked with 5th Marines in I Corps. After Navy he enlisted in Marines, became a pilot and earned college degree in aeronautics.

INDIANA

Ron Layer, Chairman - West Point graduate. Captain, fire support coordinator, 9th infantry division. Purple Heart. Graduated Indiana Law School, now trial lawyer.

John Szczepanski, Program Director - Served in Vietnam as infantryman. Received two Purple Hearts. Earned B.A. from St. Joseph Calumet College, Dean's list throughout. Paralegal.

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Ron Ray, Chairman - Served as infantry battalion advisor with the Vietnamese Marine Corps. Graduate, magna cum laude, University of Louisville School of Law. Partner in law firm. Lecturer, University of Louisville School of Law.

Jim Lundgard, Program Director - Served in the Mekong Delta with the 9th Infantry Division. Won Purple Heart. Earned degree from University of Louisville and was sales supervisor for Allan Aluminum.

MICHIGAN

John R. Todd, Chairman - Helicopter pilot in Vietnam. Blinded in action. Received law degree from Georgetown University. Now a law professor.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

James Main, Chairman - Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, State of Minnesota. Earned M.A. in public administration from the Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota. Served in Vietnam with the U.S. Navy.

Steven Markley, Program Director - Was a Marine infantryman with the 1st Anti-Tank Battalion and the 2nd Combined Action Group. Wounded. Owner, Markley Farms. Corporate executive with Equico Lessors, a subsidiary of Equitable Life Assurance Co.

MISSISSIPPI

Rhesa Barksdale, Chairman - West Point graduate; J.D. with distinction, University of Mississippi. Served in Vietnam. Won Purple Heart. Now, partner in law firm.

Arlin Ruthven, Vice Chairman - Graduate of West Point and earned M.A. at Georgetown University. J.D. from University of Mississippi Law School. Holds Purple Heart. Corporate attorney.

NEW ORLEANS

Bill Ryan, Chairman - Was a Marine platoon commander. Received three Purple Hearts, legally blind as a result of wounds. Is a businessman and attorney. Develops commercial real estate.

Bob Odom, Program Director - Was battalion level advisor to the ARVN 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam. Won Bronze Star. Since retiring as Sgt. Major has been active in veterans affairs in counselling and job placement.

NEW YORK

William Schmick, Chairman - Joined Marines at 17 and served in Vietnam with the Combined Action Program. Decorated for valor and wounded in action. Wrote an award winning column for the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin while earning his journalism degree. Holds M.B.A. from New York University. Was Fulbright Fellow in Japan. Wrote for FORBES MAGAZINE and is now an institutional broker for Drexel, Burnham, Lambert.

Gene Gitelson, Program Director - Was support platoon leader and rifle platoon leader in Vietnam. Worked in marketing research for Joseph E. Seagrams Company. Directed drug prevention program in South Bronx. Earned M.B.A. with honors from New York University. Was second Vice President of Chase Manhattan and consultant to multi-national corporations. Is guest lecturer at N.Y.U. School of Public Administration and the American Management Association.

NIAGARA FRONTIER (BUFFALO, NY)

Joe Ryan, Chairman - Navy Lt., commanded team of professional divers. Founding partner of National Public Professional Associates, Inc. Degree in labor relations from Cornell University. Brother, Bill, is chairman of New Orleans VLP.

Terry Martin, Program Director - Drafted and served as a translator and information specialist with U.S. Military Command, Thailand. Doctoral degree in Political Sciences from State University of New York at Buffalo. Policy planning and analytical consultant.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

John Cummings, Co-Chairman - Served first tour with Special Forces. Was commander of A Company, 4/21st Infantry, 199th Light Infantry Brigade second tour. Wounded. Now an attorney in private practice.

Glen Kendall, Co-Chairman - Served in Vietnam with 196th Infantry Brigade as rifle company commander and battalion staff officer. Holds Master's from Dartmouth College and was White House Fellow. Was Director of Policy Planning for the Environmental Protection Agency. Now President of Terradata, Inc. and Kendall Associates, a consulting firm.

Jeff Wilcox, Program Director - West Point graduate. Was rifle platoon leader and company commander with 101st Airborne Division. Wounded in action; received Bronze Star. Worked with IBM selling computer systems to Fortune 500 corporations.

Vadon 'Mac' McIlwain, Program Director - Served with Seabee team in Vietnam. Received B.A. at California State College, Stanislaus. Early organizer of veterans support and civic action groups. Was Director of Veterans Affairs on several California college campuses assisting veterans interested in post-secondary education and worked with multi-service veterans outreach project in California.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Chuck O'Brien, Chairman - Was platoon leader with the 9th Infantry Division, airborne and ranger qualified. Lost part of his leg. Taught skiing to handicapped. Climbed Mt. Rainier July 1981. Is an attorney in private practice.

Doug Foster, Program Director - Enlisted in Army at 18, Retired as Major. Wounded in action. Degree in business administration.

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Don Bailey, Chairman - Was company commander with the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. Awarded a Silver Star and two Bronze Stars. Served two terms in the U.S. Congress and was the most highly decorated Vietnam veteran in the House of Representatives.

PORTLAND, OREGON

Charles Boardman, Chairman - Earned B.A. with honors, University of California. Received J.D., Northwestern School of Law. Editor of Law News. Practicing attorney. Enlisted, U.S. Army. Re-entered service as a Marine. Two tours. Wounded.

William Briot, Program Director - Aeromedical Evacuation Unit Commander in Vietnam. Won Silver Star and Bronze Star. B.S. from University of Oregon. Was self-employed before joining VLP.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Jerry Wamser, Chairman - Was a MACV advisor to the 23rd Vietnamese Infantry Division. Worked with Red Cross to help relocate South Vietnamese refugees after the war. An attorney in private practice, involved in variety of civic affairs including a gubernatorial appointment to the Board of Elections Commission, City of St. Louis.

Pat Schommer, Program Director - Army combat medic in Middle East. Founded Veterans Service Center in St. Louis. Chairman of Special Task Force for Veterans Affairs, St. Louis. Was consultant to Department of Medicine and Surgery for VA. Coordinator for training VA's Southeast Regional Medical Education Center.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Bill Stensland, Program Director - Naval Academy graduate, after 15 years of active Marine Corps service, Major Stensland retired due to wounds suffered in Vietnam.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Lee Raaen, Board Member - Served with 2/27 Infantry. Law degree from University of Oregon. Practicing attorney.

Joel Estey, Program Director - Won Bronze Star. Served with 196th Light Infantry in Vietnam.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Bobby Kinard, Chairman - Was a Sergeant with the 3rd TAC Fighter Wing of the Air Force in Vietnam. Graduated from the Citadel and University of South Carolina Law School. Presently in private practice of law. Serves as representative to South Carolina legislature.

Michael J. McDermott, Program Director - Was with the 1st/2nd Black Scarf Battalion, 1st Infantry Division ("Dracula Battalion") in Vietnam. Earned degree from the Citadel. Was with the W. W. Smith Company before joining the VVLP.

SOUTH DAKOTA

David Volk, Chairman - Served as journalist and photographer with 101st Airborne. Returned to South Dakota and was elected State Treasurer. Has held that post ever since.

Chip Bartron, Program Director - Served in Vietnam with Signal Corps. Paramedic before joining VVLP.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES

Leo Thorsness, Chairman - Flew 93 missions. POW six years. Ran against George McGovern for Senate seat in South Dakota. Earned Congressional Medal of Honor. Now corporate executive with Litton Industries.

Roland Cinciarelli, Program Director - Retired from Marine Corps as Brigadier General. Real estate investor before joining VVLP. Commanding officer of maintenance company in Vietnam.

SAN DIEGO

Jack Blum, Chairman - Decorated Navy doctor. Active in reserves. Maintains successful medical practice.

David Szumowski, Program Director, San Diego - Was tank platoon leader with 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Blinded. Graduated Denver Law School. Passed bar in Colorado and California. Was press secretary to Congressional campaign. Was veterans benefits counselor.

SOUTHERN FLORIDA

Max Cruz, Chairman - Was with U.S. Army infantry MCV advisor. Won two Bronze Stars. University of Nebraska degree. Is the Assistant Stadium Administrator, City of Miami.

David Blanchard, Program Director - Served with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam. Won Bronze Star. Holds Master's Degree from Hofstra College.

TENNESSEE

Sam Bartholomew, Chairman - Was with the 3rd Squadron 4th Cavalry after graduating from West Point. Was legislative assistant and campaign manager to Senator Howard Baker while earning law degree at Vanderbilt University. Is now an attorney in private practice.

Fred Tucker, Program Director - Enlisted in the Marines at 16. Served two tours of duty in Vietnam. After retiring earned Master's degree in Communications and taught college. Was general manager for Carpet Barn and managed ten stores in three states.

UTAH

Franklin Maughan, Chairman - Was platoon leader, 1st squadron 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division. Former County Commissioner of Weber County, Utah, and is now in private business.

Bill Galbraith, Program Director - Served with Army Field Artillery as Lt. Col. in Vietnam. Started two vocational training schools in-country for ARVN veterans. Degree in business administration. Was business manager of hospital, purchasing and personnel director of a savings and loan company and now owns a retail business.

VERMONT

Robert E. Rummel, Chairman - Machine gunner with 101st Airborne, wounded in action. President of Robert E. Rummel Construction Company and president of Green Mountain Futures, a development company.

William Fagginger-Auer, Program Director - Served in Navy as operations officer aboard "Franklin Delano Roosevelt." Was director of Project to Advance Veterans Employment (PAVE).

VIRGINIA

Phil Hough, Chairman - Was Navy operations officer and Assistant Senior Advisor and Team Leader in Vietnam. Naval Academy graduate. Master's in public administration from University of Southern California. Consultant to U.S. and European defense industries.

Stephen Brixy, Vice Chairman - Naval Academy graduate. Marine Officer. A-6 bombardier navigator in Southeast Asia. Now executive with Texas Instruments in Northern Virginia.

Carl White, Program Director - Served as advisor to Vietnamese Marines. Retired from Marines as major. Holds degree in broadcast journalism. Was magazine editor and had own publications design and editorial consulting firm.

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

Wayne Hanby, Program Director - Served with 2nd Battalion 3rd Marines. Lost an eye and a hand in combat. Was a Justice of the Peace for the State of Delaware.

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10/83

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10/83

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Mont Blackwell

22 Nov 83

How can VVLP criticize the
administration on the POW/MIA issue.
Aren't they working for the administration?
Or am I confused?

Dick Cullens

11/22/83 - Hand delivered.

National Vietnam Veterans Review

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This Issue
56 Pages

"Strength in Unity"

Vol. 3 • No. 9 & 10

"Voice of the Vietnam Veteran"

September/October, 1983

San Antonio VVLP Views on POW/MIA Issue pg 24

By Wm. C. Stensland
Director, San Antonio VVLP

During his campaign for the Presidency Ronald Reagan voiced concern about the Vietnam POW/MIA issue. He has reiterated that concern since his inauguration, including a positive, supportive speech to the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia in January 1983. President Reagan has informed the League members and the American public that his concern over the POW/MIA issue will receive the "highest priority" of our national concerns.

During his term as President seventeen or eighteen MIAs have been identified or returned to the United States. Yet, a Vietnamese mortician has sworn under oath to US officials that some 400 bodies of the nearly 2500 missing Americans are warehoused in Hanoi, awaiting return to their proper burial place in the United States.

Our government has admitted that such a possibility exists. National League members have been encouraged that action is imminent. Yet, they are also encouraged to have patience -- our government is acting on their behalf, but it must conform to diplomatic expediency.

Baloney. If Henry Kissinger or his or President Nixon's representative agreed to a commitment to an accounting of POWs MIAs, and the then "North" Vietnamese government agreed to it, our POWs MIAs should be accounted for. If Hanoi has in its possession the remains of some 400 of our servicemen, the remains should be returned now.

They should have been returned in 1973. Allowing for bureaucratic or other such delays, they should have been returned by 1975.

Granted that President Carter's interests were other than the POW/MIA issue (his interests in 1976/77 centered on deserters and draft dodgers, not unaccounted-for warriors), and that the ensuing four years saw our government ignore the issue, President Reagan and his supporters have reinvigorated the idea that our missing should be accounted for.

Yet, where are they? What have we done to demand an explanation or accounting for the 400 shelved in Hanoi? Where, for example, is the recoverable body of Kay, Jeff and Suzanne Marker's loved one? Is it on a shelf in Hanoi, or has it rotted away

in the jungle a mile or two above the Demilitarized Zone?

We don't know, but they do. Captain Marker was on a special, highly classified mission in March 1971. His aircraft was destroyed, his and his crew's bodies were not recovered by American forces. His aircraft had highly classified electronics equipment on board.

I assume, as would most rational beings, that the electronics equipment was important to our enemy. The aircraft no doubt was inspected, and one or more bodies of deceased crew members was recovered. Based on military and political considerations of the circumstances, one or more bodies were recovered and preserved. Yet, none of the five crew members is accounted for.

The circumstances of Captain Marker's death have been recorded as "classified". His death, nor the fact of his death, is classified -- rather, the classification is based on the means by which his death was verified.

Are Mrs. Marker and the Marker's children being told simply that our government/military intercepted some

cryptographic transmission by the North Vietnamese that verified the demise of her husband and his crew members? If we continue to harass Mrs. Marker and her family for that simplistic reason, then our ideas of classified information need to be reevaluated.

Meanwhile, classification or not, what if Mike Marker's body and those of his fellow crew members, are among those preserved in Hanoi? The 400 bodies have been there for 10 or more years. We recently received nine of those bodies: where are the rest of them?

Mrs. Marker and the survivors of nearly 2500 other unaccounted-for Americans deserve an explanation by our government for its reticence. She and others have been told for 10 years that our nation is doing something to alleviate their distress. In Mrs. Marker's case, a simple revelation of the "classified" information about her husband's death probably would suffice. In many other cases an admission of "we don't know" would be adequate.

In the case of the 400, a return of the remains would show our citizenry that our government cares. Forcing such an action also would inform Hanoi and Moscow that we intend to make public our issue. If that issue is "Western romanticism", we should inform our Eastern friends that we so admit, but that the stipulation was part of our deal and we intend to pursue it.



October 21, 1983

HOUSTON WVLP SURVEYS STUDENTS ON VETERANS IMAGE

In an informal survey of 178 junior high school students, the Houston WVLP has developed evidence that many young people believe the stereotyped images of the Vietnam veteran are true. When asked, "What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of the term Vietnam veteran?", Houston received the following responses. Of the students surveyed, 34 percent responded with answers such as "unstable," "a little crazy," "people in need of help." Only 7 percent responded with answers such as "someone who served his country," "brave men," and a "good soldier." Twenty-eight percent blamed the veteran for the loss of the war and 28 percent believed that 50 percent of Vietnam veterans use drugs currently. At the same time, most students felt that draft evasion was wrong and 71 percent said they would serve our country in a situation similar to the Vietnam war.

The survey was taken prior to a speaking appearance by the Houston project director at a junior high school in the area. Student responses were anonymous and they were asked not to discuss the questions with their fellow students.

AGENT ORANGE WORKING GROUP REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES

The Agent Orange Working Group of the federal government recently made public a report on current activities. One item reported which may be of interest is an interagency agreement between the VA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to undertake a study to "determine the levels of TCDD dioxin in fat tissue from a selected group of U.S. males of the Vietnam era veteran age group. The study will measure the levels of TCDD dioxin and other related chemical compounds (Furans) in available fat tissue samples collected by EPA as part of the National Human Adipose Tissue Survey." Analysis should begin in January 1984 and final results are expected in early 1985.

VERMONT TO HOST NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Vermont WVLP is hosting a northeastern regional conference October 31 - November 3, 1983, in Waitsfield, Vermont. The conference will focus on specific issues such as fundraising, employment initiatives, small business development and volunteer motivation and direction and provide ample time for informal discussion.

NEW WVLP POSTER PRINTED

A new four-color 8 1/2" x 11" poster has been produced by WVLP. Copies are enclosed in this mailing and each program will be receiving several hundred copies of the poster in the near future. Please let us know how you use the poster so that we can inform other programs of the most effective strategies.

**Vietnam Veterans
Leadership Program**

A Program of ACTION
Washington, DC 20525

file

MOVEMENT ON THE FRANCHISING FRONT

The San Diego VVLP, in close cooperation with the Southern California VVLP in Los Angeles, is working to develop franchising opportunities for veterans with three operations--Burger King, Seven-Eleven, and Midas Muffler. All three corporations have expressed a keen interest in working with VVLPs in their franchised markets and we hope to have some pilot franchises up in the near future. Additionally, Chicago VVLP is working with Burger King, Hardees and Popeyes with the same goal of starting veterans in business financed by other veterans. Any program which can identify local financing sources and qualified candidates should contact Pat Gilstrap at the national VVLP office to explore these possibilities.

WASHINGTON POST AND WASHINGTON TIMES ACCLAIM "FOR SELF AND COUNTRY" BY RICK EILERT

A book review in "The Washington Post" praises For Self and Country, VVLP'er Rick Eilert's memoir, as a "remarkable account of what it took to put his body, his mind and his life back together in the years between his wounding and (his latest operation). It is free of cant or bitterness It is a painful and wholly rewarding experience to learn about that journey home." The review favorably analyzes the effects of Rick's straightforward style and concludes: "Eilert's book is about how it was for him and his friends, not about statistical abstracts. It is not about the reasons why the war was fought . . . it makes a point that must be remembered: Wars are fought by people who are real and unique. They are not the same as the policies they serve and for which they are not responsible. The policies may be wretched, the soldiers may be admirable. But this distinction has escaped many Americans in connection with Vietnam."

Tom Carhart, project director of the Connecticut VVLP, reviewed For Self and Country in "The Washington Times", calling the book an honest telling, "and as pure and as true as a laser beam." According to the review, "Eilert attempts no political pontification, builds no fictional straw men through whom to project a pet ideology. Rather, he just recounts what happened to him and allows the reader to draw his own conclusions. The book is a natural."

Copies of both reviews are enclosed with this newsletter. Rick was the first project director of the Chicago VVLP and is now a member of the board of directors of the Chicago program.

"A COUNTRY SUCH AS THIS"—ANOTHER BLOCKBUSTER BY JIM WEBB

Jim Webb's eagerly awaited third novel, A Country Such as This, was recently released by Doubleday and Company. Webb, author of Fields of Fire and A Sense of Honor, is a national VVLP advisor. An early review of the third book says, "It will provide inspiration to all age groups," A copy of that review and publisher's announcement is enclosed with this newsletter. We will continue to provide you information and reviews as they become available.

* * * * *

Reviewed by J.Y. Smith

The reviewer is a staff writer for *The Washington Post*. He served in the Marine Corps in the Korean conflict.

On Nov. 26, 1967, Rick Eilert, a 19-year-old private first class in the Marine Corps, was point man on patrol in Vietnam. During a break, he made what troopers regard as a serious mistake. He became the third man to light a cigarette from the same match. Among the protocols by which soldiers live is one which says that being third on a

Book World**FOR SELF AND COUNTRY.**

By Rick Eilert.

(Morrow, 304 pp. \$13.95)

match, whether it's dark or daylight, is to put oneself in the way of death or injury.

A few minutes later, a booby-trapped hand grenade went off at Eilert's feet. He saw it and knew what was about to happen and could do nothing to escape. The blast shredded his legs. A Viet Cong soldier stood over him and pointed a rifle at him. A medical corpsman shot the Viet Cong in the throat. The enemy soldier put a bullet in Eilert as the soldier fell dead. Within a couple of days, Eilert was in the Great Lakes Naval Hospital in Illinois. He had made it home.

Sixteen years later, on Jan. 4, 1983, he checked into Great Lakes

to undergo his 40th operation since he was wounded.

"For Self and Country" is Eilert's remarkable account of what it took to put his body, his mind and his life back together in the years between his wounding and that operation. It is free of cant or bitterness.

"The war had brought men as close together as any friends could ever be," he writes. "But our friendships in the Nam were dissolved by death, time after time. In the hospital, we made friendships based on a common denominator of pain and a different kind of courage, which up to that point none of us had ever needed before. It was frightening to go into combat. Sometimes, the journey home required far more bravery."

It is a painful and wholly rewarding experience to learn about that journey home. For this book is informed by an extraordinary candor about the war and the people who had to fight it: death and wounds, families and girlfriends, the loss of old hopes and the acceptance of new realities, the miracle of med-i-vac helicopters and modern medicine, about what Eilert and his friends had to do to get better.

It is told in a homely kind of plainsong that draws its strength from repetition of the details of life on Ward Three South: agonizing dressing changes three times a day; pain shots; trips to the operating

room; occasional visits from families and loved ones (and, incredibly, a few who opposed the war and called the wounded "baby killers"); a medical corpsman and a physical therapist who enjoyed inflicting pain; wheelchair races and outrageous pranks; betting about which patient had the most holes in him. And there was a conviction that it could be worse, that the loss of limbs was not as bad as facial disfigurement, as in the case of Al, who was horribly burned and blinded and whose nickname was "Longtime No See."

"Al really believed that he would see again," Eilert writes. "His naive understanding of anatomy and body functions was not his alone. Almost all the horribly wounded and deformed patients believed that they would fully recover, at least in the early stages of their hospitalization. Al believed that his injuries would heal like all the wounds portrayed on TV and in the movies. Admittedly it was unbelievable, but the wounded in the movies were never portrayed as crippled and maimed for life. They never even hinted at what being wounded really meant ... Now all this pain and terror was real, and forever. Just think of it ... forever."

For most people in this book, the pain eventually passed or at least became a somewhat tolerable part of life. Of course, they are not the only ones. From Aug. 4, 1964, to Jan. 27,

1973, there were 47,752 Americans killed in Vietnam and 155,419 wounded and admitted to hospitals. In earlier wars, many of these would have died. The helicopter and new medical technology made the difference.

In World War II, the hospital death rate was 4.5 percent. In Korea, it was 2.5 percent. In Vietnam, it was about 2.6 percent. A Department of the Army study attributes this slight increase over Korea to the fact that many hopeless casualties reached hospitals before they expired, whereas in earlier times they would have died where they fell. A more realistic measure, according to the same study, is the "deaths as a percent of hits" ratio. In World War II, 29.3 percent of those hit died. In Korea it was 26.3 percent, and in Vietnam it was 19 percent.

Eilert's book is about how it was for him and his friends, not about statistical abstracts. It is not about the reasons why the war was fought. Like "All Quiet on the Western Front" and other classics, it makes a point that must be remembered: Wars are fought by people who are real and unique. They are not the same as the policies they serve and for which they are not responsible. The policies may be wretched, the soldiers may be admirable. But this distinction has escaped many Americans in connection with Vietnam.

Rick Eilert has told an admirable story. A glance at the dust jacket of his book tells how it comes out. But to start the book is to be compelled to finish it.

BOOK REVIEW /

Tom Carhart

Vietnam: an honest telling

A flood of books on Vietnam has hit the market this fall, most seeking to explain and offer their variously "true" accountings of America's Indochinese torture and pain. Unfortunately, many of these books are self-indulgent or ideo-

For Self and Country.

By Rick Eilert

Morrow, \$13.95, 304 pages

logically slanted in such a way as to only confuse matters further; they offer neither satisfactory explanations of the war nor reliable guideposts for moral action in the future.

Out of this clamoring crowd, Rick Eilert's tale of his combat duty, serious wounding and the aftermath emerges as pure and as true as a laser beam.

Eilert attempts no political pontification, builds no fictional straw men through whom to project a pet ideology. Rather, he just recounts what happened to him and allows the reader to draw his own conclusions. The book is a natural.

Writing with raw, even unnerving honesty, the veteran begins with his provincial teen years: nothing special, just another young man from the Midwest who went to the local college and quickly flunked out. That was in the middle 1960s, when America was building up its military strength in Vietnam. Eilert never hesitated. His country was at war, and he joined the Marines to offer his life — an offer that was very nearly accepted.

He tells us up front about how he got his ghastly wounds, quickly and concisely painting the background that allows us to move cautiously, attentively down that jungle trail with him. Together, we look down and see the naked grenade. And then he takes us through the curious slow motion that envelops him, his mind racing for survival as his body drags. The grenade explodes, blowing the flesh from his legs.

The agony is almost palpable, and the subsequent rescue washes over the reader in a great wave of relief. But the passion play has only just begun. For a year, Eilert lived through a torture most Americans wouldn't understand. The bones of his legs were crushed, the skin and flesh stripped away, exposing raw nerves and muscle. Each day, the bandages were changed three times, and every change called for scraping of the wounds to force bleeding and eventually restore life to his limbs. Eilert describes passing out from pain, or approaching that point, as a daily occurrence.

He was badly injured, but he tells of the reality all the wounded soon learned: If you start to feel sorry for yourself, or think you've got it bad, look to your left or your right, and you'll soon see someone with whom you wouldn't change places. Even for Eilert, there were many: the Marine, for instance, shot through the neck and paralyzed, unable even to speak — able only to blink his eyes and weep.

For his part, young Eilert accepted his suffering and tried to get on with life. He became in the process a man.

One of Buddha's Four Noble Truths was that "Life is suffering." Benjamin Franklin said, "Those things that hurt, instruct." The sign in Eilert's hospital ward read: "No pain, no gain." Unlike many young Americans of the Vietnam era, Eilert truly learned that wisdom. He took the hand dealt him and he flourished, not in spite of the suffering, but rather because of it. He did join the Marines to offer his life to his country, but in accepting and absorbing the brutal pain from his wounds that dragged on and on, he grew as a person. That is clearly the meaning of the title, "For Self

If takes courage to read this book. This is one warrior's answer to the anti-military smear projected by such as the movie "Coming Home," and one cannot read it without being powerfully moved. Rick Eilert is a man's man.

Tom Carhart was awarded two Purple Hearts for wounds suffered in Vietnam in 1968.

ON BOOKS

BY COLIN WALTERS



Alexander Hurd

Telling the Way We Were

A Country Such As This

By James Webb

Doubleday, \$17.95, 534 pages

It is February, 1973, and our POWs are coming home from Vietnam. Red Lesczynski, a Navy flyer, steps onto American soil at Andrews Air Force Base, someone offers him a microphone, and he says: "I thank God that there is a country such as this." The author has built his narrative carefully toward this moment and, as he intended, we are deeply moved. The war to which this tortured, half-starved officer has had to give too much of himself is lost, the country with which he has kept faith is a shambles and the triumphs he aspired to in youthful dreams have mostly given way to tragedy.

James Webb, celebrated for his two previous books, "Fields of Fire" and "A Sense of Honor," has used the lives of three young Annapolis graduates — class of 1951 — to document and dramatize American history during the 25 years beginning with the Korean War and ending in the 1976 Bicentennial. One result of this device is to make the book a celebration of continuity — of friendship between, and faith kept by, the three young officers as they variously traverse their times.

Lesczynski, a Polish-American from Ford City, Pa., and a college football hero, marries right after leaving the Naval Academy. Sophie, his bride, who will spend so much of her life waiting for Red to come home, is the most attractive female character in the book: sexy, mothering, loyal — your traditionalist's dream of a wife. The description of the young couple's steel town wedding provides the book's first sustained example of Webb's considerable descriptive power, so visual in its effect — like a painting by Canaletto, or the tech-

nique used by certain contemporary painters called photo-realism.

As Lesczynski goes through flight training, Webb's descriptions are just as impressive. The same is true for the depiction of Judd Smith, second of the youthful trio, as he arrives in Korea to lead a Marine infantry platoon. Lesczynski checking out his plane before take-off, or Smith drawing his combat gear before being driven up to the front near the 38th Parallel, these are real infantryman's and pilot's checklists, and Webb seems to command both all the particulars and the feelings that went with service life in the early '50s.

An Annapolis graduate himself, Webb led Marines in Vietnam and was twice decorated for gallantry. In addition to his own experience, he has drawn on that of

James Webb has used the lives of three young Annapolis graduates to document and dramatize American history during the 25 years beginning with the Korean War and ending in the 1976 Bicentennial.

numerous other officers, of his wife's family in Ford City, and of his cousins in southwest Virginia, where Judd Smith is from in the book.

Webb's third man is Joe Dingenfelder, who seems to his future wife, "this quiet moon-eyed scientist with a penchant for classical music." Not built along such heroic lines as the other two, Dingenfelder

Continued on Page 10D

On Books

Continued from Page 2D

flunks out of flight school. Then, after becoming one of the early experts in the American missile program, he leaves the service to accommodate his wife's militant demands for a career of her own. At book's end, he has for years been living far out in the Pacific and has pretty much given up on civilization. But in the process of his alienation, this long-suffering man discovers and raises to the level of consciousness a fine anger that makes him the most complex and interesting character in the novel.

Characterization is not Webb's strong point, his great gift being the drawing of landscapes — spacial and temporal. His characters rarely have much depth, and the shallowness is only aggravated when their creator lets them argue over the race riots, marches on Washington, war in Southeast Asia and other political-moral issues of the day. The polemicist is not an easy character to execute in fiction, as Aldous Huxley found out.

At the finish of "A Country Such As This," James Webb's young Americans still have a mighty nation to serve — if that nation only knows how to make use of them.

The novelist as social critic may argue any angle he likes, his conscience the only guide he needs. But to be effective as novelist he must build his arguments through dramatic development that claws at the heart — Dostoyevski and Dickens providing obvious examples, and Lesczynski coming off the plane at Andrews showing that Webb can do it on occasion. Most of his characters are straight shooting, god-fearing, traditional Americans of the sort we used to like to be; and their conservative values are more effectively depicted by what the author has them do than by what they get to say.

For Webb's three young men throwing their caps into the air at Annapolis in 1951, the world would change a lot, almost before they knew it. At about the same time, across the Atlantic, my generation of schoolboys, soldiers, sailors and airmen, was being brought up to live in and serve a Great Britain that effectively would go out of business in about 48 hours at Suez in November, 1956. England was an extreme case, of course: we seemed to have been raised to function in a world that was gone before we could hardly get to it. At the finish of "A Country Such As This," James Webb's young Americans still have a mighty nation to serve — if that nation only knows how to make use of them. Still, it is the rapid rate of change and loss in their lives that they seem to be confounded by more than anything else.

If you are old enough, read "A Country Such As This," and remember. If you are younger than that, the book will tell you how we were. It will provide inspiration to all age groups.

"Fields of Fire" was for Webb an act of personal exorcism deriving from his Vietnam experience and his anger at what he found when he came home. In "A Sense of Honor," he took on the U.S. naval establishment as being insufficiently loyal to the traditional premises of the service. Now he has tried his first big narrative. It will be interesting to see what this exciting and still developing writer does next.

By 1951, we had grown invincible. By 1976, we had begun to grow up.

"James Webb is one of the four or five most important young writers in the country," says Tom Wolfe. His epic novel of post-World War II America begins with the graduation of three close friends from Annapolis. Judd, Joe, and Red have separate dreams for themselves and their country—and share the conviction that there's nothing they, or America, can't do.

From the innocence of the fifties through the drama and turbulence of the sixties and seventies—years when America would reach out and touch the heavens, only to be torn apart by war in Asia and conflict at home—we follow these men, the women they love, and their children. Judd, an irrepressible mountaineer, has the most flamboyant personal life and career: in the Marines, as a charismatic preacher, in Congress. Red, a football hero from a Pennsylvania factory town, is a Vietnam POW for seven years, while his wife Sophie raises their children and strives to get him released. Joe, the most sensitive and intellectual, becomes important in the

space program. His wife Dorothy studies law, is elected to Congress, and has a vital impact on the lives of the others. By the year of America's bicentennial, all of them have changed. And so has their country.

James Webb is uniquely qualified to write a novel of this scope and power. Reporting on his recent withdrawal from politics, *The New York Times* said: "James Webb, marine, veteran, lawyer, Congressional aide had, after all written *Fields of Fire*, considered one of the finest novels to come out of the Vietnam War. He had written *A Sense of Honor*, which rocked the Naval Academy. He had another book in him, as writers so often put it, and he wasn't going to let Capitol Hill or [an appointment as head of] the Veterans Administration keep him from freeing it."

In *A COUNTRY SUCH AS THIS*, James Webb involves us in a dramatic story of men and women we care about deeply. And he makes our recent past come alive in ways that instruct, even as they entertain; fascinate, even as they heal.

A COUNTRY SUCH AS THIS

a novel by the author of
FIELDS OF FIRE

James
Webb

A Literary Guild Alternate Selection

 DOUBLEDAY



Jim Webb, author — and more

Book took precedence over Presidential offer

By Kent Biffle
Staff Writer of The News

I'm on the third floor. My ego is deep in an inky corner of some forgotten basement. My rattled macho is down there, too.

I just met James Webb. To start at the start, Vietnam veteran Clyde Chappell, the chief director of WFAA-TV, dropped by for a chance to renew handshakes with his old friend James Webb, the author.

If you've seen *PM Magazine*, you've seen Chappell's work. If you've read *Fields of Fire* or *A Sense of Honor*, you've seen Webb's work. Webb, who lives in Arlington, Va., was in Dallas for an interview that just might include mention of his new book, *A Country Such as This* (Doubleday, \$17.95). It's powerful. The novel is more than a novel. Webb's vast research and eye for detail make his historical saga ring "true."

Waiting for Webb, Chappell, who had some kind of filth in his mouth, and I began talking about vile oral habits. There was crud in my mouth, too.

"I have given up those killer pimp sticks for toothpicks and devil dirt," I told Chappell around a mouthful of tobacco. I shoved a fresh lid of Levi Garrett chewing tobacco across the desk to him.

"Take it. Too tuf so mah mouf," I explained.

"Thanks, but I only chew Red Man." Around a wad of dark leaf the chief had wrapped a grin as fierce as a warrior who is clamping a knife blade between his teeth while notching an arrow on his bowstring.

"I eat Copenhagen snuff," he said modestly.

Real men don't spit. The Webb-Chappell friendship didn't date from Nam. They'd met years ago over a bottle of bliss in some state-side barroom claimed by Marine officers and other frustrated tigers.

I showed Chappell a clutter of clippings on Webb's background. Nobody really could be that good at everything. But Webb's *Fields of Fire* is often rated the best novel to come out of the lost war.

A Country Such as This is an impeccably structured dramatization of a period (1951-1976) shared by many Americans and survived by some of them.

I conceded to Chappell that Webb's drama probably will be another megasomething of the kind that imprisons readers first and later whole families of TV-viewers in their homes night after night. We might see it become another *Winds of War* phenom.

Speaking of phenoms, Webb, judging from the clippings, is a live one, a real talking-writing-fighting phenom.

He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1968 with the Superintendent's Letter of Commendation for outstanding leadership while a midshipman.

He chose Marine Infantry Officers' Basic School, where he was graduated

Webb said 'no' to the President because he had a book to write

Continued from Page 1G.

first among 243 lieutenants. He wanted to fight for the First Marine Division in Vietnam. He led a rifle platoon and later served as a company commander.

He earned two Purple Hearts for wounds. For heroism, he won the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, and two Bronze Stars. He was promoted to captain a year ahead of his peers. Returning to the States, he served on the secretary of the Navy's immediate staff. Then he retired from the Marine Corps because of secondary infections in his wounds. For his work at headquarters, however, he was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal.

Wait. Stay tuned.

Webb then studied law at the Georgetown University Law Center, where he won the Horan Award for excellence in legal writing. While a student, he wrote his first book, *Micronesia and U.S. Pacific Strategy* (1974). For several months he was special consultant on military land use to the governor of Guam.

Then came *Fields of Fire*, both a Book-of-the-Month Club and a *Playboy* Book Club selection. Webb was meanwhile serving as the assistant minority counsel for the Veterans Affairs Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives.

At the end of that year, he returned to the congressional position of minority counsel to the House Veterans Affairs Committee. He was the key Republican staff member in the congress for all issues regarding veterans, including employment, Agent Orange, post traumatic stress disorders, studies on former prisoners of war, and the workings of the VA hospital system.

When President Ronald Reagan took office, he offered Webb the job of heading the Veterans Administration. "Sorry, Sir." Webb was just too busy writing *A Country Such as This*.

The Marines might have a few good men, but nobody's perfect, I reflected.

I led Webb to a quiet room. I couldn't resist probing for imperfections in this young paragon. Not even a Shakespearean hero can escape a fatal flaw.

Did Webb's wounds from the two grenades bother him? Not much, he answered, although he had been ripped by fragments from top to toe, front and back. Well, truthfully, the shrapnel had thrown off his tennis game.

I bored on. How dare he be an achiever in a world filled with losers?

We talked about the book. "The research actually changed my mind about the Vietnam war," he said. "I had come away from writing *Fields of Fire* with ambivalent feelings."



James Webb

His research on the new book had synthesized a new attitude.

"I'm convinced that our attempt to help the Southvietnamese people was one of the most moral acts we've attempted as a nation. It's interesting that many historians are coming to that same view."

Moreover, the novelist-lawyer-warrior believes the United States could have transformed a no-win war into a victory of sorts — a negotiated victory.

"If President Lyndon Johnson had bombed Hanoi in 1965 the way President Richard Nixon did in 1972, that war would have been over in weeks. We could have had a negotiated settlement. It would have been necessary for us to maintain a military presence in South Vietnam, much as in South Korea. But we could have saved the nation of South Vietnam."

A consistent winner must have a tough time accepting a dismal loss, I thought. I again inspected him for flaws.

"Have you, personally, ever failed?" I demanded.

He answered with a quotation from someone: "Every successful life is a series of minor failures."

Could he detail any recent ones? Nothing sprang immediately to mind.

Finally, as he was about to depart, I fired my curve ball.

"Jim, do you have any vices?"

"Well, I chew."

Really?

"I chew tobacco."

"Do you spit?" I asked.

"Never," he said, "unless I have to."

You just can't fault a man like Jim Webb.

**WE HAVEN'T
MOTHBALLED OUR
EXPERIENCE . . .**



Design: George L. Skypeck

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SCHEDULE PROPOSAL

November 30, 1983

TO: FREDERICK J. RYAN, JR., DIRECTOR
Presidential Appointments and Scheduling

FROM: FAITH WHITTLESEY

REQUEST: Meeting.

PURPOSE: To receive from the author a copy of the book
For Self and Country.

BACKGROUND: Rick Eilert was the first program director of the President's Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program in Chicago. He is a Marine veteran who was seriously wounded in Vietnam. He has had 40 operations on his legs in the last eleven years. For Self and Country is the first book which tells the story of the recuperation of a wounded Vietnam veteran. His inspiring story of personal courage describes the supportive community wounded veterans formed in the wards of military and veterans' hospitals. This meeting was recommended by Thomas Pauken, the Director of ACTION.

PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION: None.

DATE AND TIME: December 12th or 13th. Time open.

DURATION: Five minutes.

LOCATION: Oval Office.

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Rick Eilert

OUTLINE OF EVENT: President is given copy of book, speaks briefly with Mr. Eilert.

REMARKS REQUIRED: Talking points.

RECOMMENDED BY: Faith Whittlesey

OPPOSED BY:

PROJECT OFFICER: Morton C. Blackwell

BOOK REVIEW /

Tom Carhart

Vietnam: an honest telling

A flood of books on Vietnam has hit the market this fall, most seeking to explain and offer their variously "true" accountings of America's Indochinese torture and pain. Unfortunately, many of these books are self-indulgent or ideo-

For Self and Country.

By Rick Eilert

Morrow, \$13.95, 304 pages

logically slanted in such a way as to only confuse matters further, they offer neither satisfactory explanations of the war nor reliable guideposts for moral action in the future.

Out of this clamoring crowd, Rick Eilert's tale of his combat duty, serious wounding and the aftermath emerges as pure and as true as a laser beam.

Eilert attempts no political pontification, builds no fictional straw men through whom to project a pet ideology. Rather, he just recounts what happened to him and allows the reader to draw his own conclusions. The book is a natural.

Writing with raw, even unnerving honesty, the veteran begins with his provincial teen years: nothing special, just another young man from the Midwest who went to the local college and quickly flunked out. That was in the middle 1960s, when America was building up its military strength in Vietnam. Eilert never hesitated. His country was at war, and he joined the Marines to offer his life — an offer that was very nearly accepted.

He tells us up front about how he got his ghastly wounds, quickly and concisely painting the background that allows us to move cautiously, attentively down that jungle trail with him. Together, we look down and see the naked grenade. And then he takes us through the curious slow motion that envelops him, his mind racing for survival as his body drags. The grenade explodes, blowing the flesh from his legs.

The agony is almost palpable, and the subsequent rescue washes over the reader in a great wave of relief. But the passion play has only just begun. For a year, Eilert lived through a torture most Americans wouldn't understand. The bones of his legs were crushed, the skin and flesh stripped away, exposing raw nerves and muscle. Each day, the bandages were changed three times, and every change called for scraping of the wounds to force bleeding and eventually restore life to his limbs. Eilert describes passing out from pain, or approaching that point, as a daily occurrence.

He was badly injured, but he tells of the reality all the wounded soon learned. If you start to feel sorry for yourself, or think you've got it bad, look to your left or your right, and you'll soon see someone with whom you wouldn't change places. Even for Eilert, there were many: the Marine, for instance, shot through the neck and paralyzed, unable even to speak — able only to blink his eyes and weep.

For his part, young Eilert accepted his suffering and tried to get on with life. He became in the process a man.

One of Buddha's Four Noble Truths was that "Life is suffering." Benjamin Franklin said, "Those things that hurt, instruct." The sign in Eilert's hospital ward read: "No pain, no gain." Unlike many young Americans of the Vietnam era, Eilert truly learned that wisdom. He took the hand dealt him and he flourished, not in spite of the suffering, but rather because of it. He did join the Marines to offer his life to his country, but in accepting and absorbing the brutal pain from his wounds that dragged on and on, he grew as a person. That is clearly the meaning of the title, "For Self."

It takes courage to read this book. This is one warrior's answer to the anti-military smear projected by such as the movie "Coming Home," and one cannot read it without being powerfully moved. Rick Eilert is a man's man.

Tom Carhart was awarded two Purple Hearts for wounds suffered in Vietnam in 1968.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 28, 1983

MEMORANDUM TO: ANNE HIGGINS
FROM: Morton C. Blackwell
SUBJECT: Presidential Letter to Rick Eilert

I would like to recommend that a letter from the President be sent to Mr. Rick Eilert. Mr. Eilert is the author of the just published book, For Self and Country. The book relates the experiences of himself and other seriously wounded Vietnam veterans.

The attached materials should provide what additional information you may need.

Thank you.

MCB:mmk



ACTION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20525

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

To: Faith R. Whittlesey, Assistant to the President for
Public Liaison

James K. Coyne, Special Assistant to the President for
Private Sector Initiatives

From: Thomas W. Pauken, Director, ACTION *Tom Pauken*

On September 26, the William Morrow Company will publish For Self and Country by Rick Eilert. Rick was the first program director of the President's Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program in Chicago. He is a Marine who was wounded in Vietnam and has had 40 operations on his legs in the last eleven years. His inspiring story is one of great personal courage and the supportive community wounded veterans formed in the wards of military and veterans' hospitals. For Self and Country is the first book which tells the story of the recuperation of a wounded Vietnam veteran. The book has been chosen as a featured selection by the Literary Guild and the Military Book Club.

I would like to request your help in arranging the following:

- (1) A letter from the President to Rick acknowledging his service and thanking him for writing the book and telling his story (draft enclosed).
- (2) A brief meeting with the President during which time Rick can personally present the President with a copy of his book.

Please let me know if you need any further information or if you have any questions.

DRAFT

Rick Eilert
577 Applegate Lane
Lake Zurich, IL 60047

Dear Rick:

I want you to know that you have my warmest thanks and congratulations for telling your story in For Self and Country. In thanking you personally I'd like to extend my thanks on behalf of all Americans to all the thousands of other severely wounded Vietnam veterans who, like you, brought such great courage and dedication to the task of overcoming your wounds.

You have given of yourself on the battlefield, in the rehabilitation ward, in writing this book and still give of yourself as a volunteer helping other veterans in the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program. Your example is inspiring. In your life you have embodied the American ideal of service. It is central to our democratic way of life that individual citizens see service -- both in the military if necessary and as civilians in everyday life -- as a means of exercising individual responsibility. Without this essential element of service and responsibility, freedom becomes a hollow abstraction. America is a better place because of your service For Self and Country.

Again, thank you. You have my best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

DRAFT