



**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA  
Darwin J. Thomas Memorial Chapter 201  
San Jose, California**

**April - June 2018**

**Vietnam Armed Forces Ceremony 2018**

On May 27, 2018, VVA Chapter 201 was invited to attend a ceremony hosted by the Republic of South Vietnam Armed Forces Association. The celebration was dedicated to honoring all of the countries that assisted the South Vietnamese Army in their struggles to save their country. The nations honored were Australia, Korea, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and the United States. Chapter 201 past president David Sanders and Chapter 201 Secretary/Treasurer Steve Thompson represented the Vietnam Veterans of America during the ceremony.



Vietnamese Armed Forces Association Ceremony Honoring Countries That Assisted  
The Republic Of South Vietnam During The War

The ceremony was held on a beautiful day at the Vietnamese Heritage Garden in San Jose. Various celebrations were held including a Vietnamese solo drum celebration, dancing and recognition of the attendees from each of the countries being honored.

Dave Sanders and Steve Thompson were presented with a plaque expressing the deepest gratitude of the South Vietnamese Army for their assistance during the war. Steve Thompson, upon graciously receiving the plaque, expressed gratitude for the honor and the opportunity to fight alongside such a wonderful group of men and women fighting for their country.



Chapter 201 Secretary/Treasurer Steve Thompson Receives Vietnamese Armed Forces Association Recognition Plaque

After the presentations were completed, the remainder of the day was devoted to a celebration to include more regional dances, food and music. It was a tremendous honor to be a part of this celebration and we thank the Vietnamese people for their warmth and friendship.



## Memorial Day 2018

The annual United Veterans Council (UVC) Memorial Day Ceremony at San Jose's Oak Hill Memorial Park on May 28, 2018 began with the flyover of the Veterans Section by a Vietnam Era UH-1 Huey helicopter, in 25th Infantry Division colors. Following the opening ceremony, the Huey landed at the Field of Honor and was on display for spectators during the VVA afternoon service.



Vietnam Era 25th Infantry Division Huey made three flyovers during the opening ceremony on Memorial Day in San Jose, California

Chapter 201 members participated in both the United Veterans Council (UVC) Memorial Day Ceremony at Oak Hill's Veteran Section and the VVA service at the Oak Hill Field of Honor. The Chapter's National and VVA Colors were posted during the UVC opening ceremony Dennis Whittaker and William McCorquadale. Stephen Thompson, Chapter 201 Secretary/Treasurer and Dennis Whittaker, Chapter Director, placed the Medal Of Honor Wreath.



Chapter 201 Member Mike Frangadakis accepts the Medal Of Honor Wreath from Director Dennis Whittaker and Secretary/Treasurer Stephen Thompson

Linn Malaznik, an Army Sergeant with the 5th Special Forces in I Corps in Vietnam, recipient of a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his actions around Da Nang during his time in Vietnam, assisted USMC Vietnam War Veteran Ron Wecht, with multiple Purple Hearts, in placing the Purple Heart wreath.



Chapter 201 Member Linn Malaznik, Dressed in Civil War Attire In honor of the 150th Anniversary of Memorial Day, Assists Ron Wecht in Placing the Purple Heart Wreath

AVVA Chapter 201 President Cang Kim Dong and Joseph Tran placed the Prisoners Of War in Vietnam and Missing In Action (POW/MIA) wreath. Both were Prisoners Of War in Vietnam.



Cang Kim Dong and Joseph Tran placed the POW/MIA wreath



Former UH-1 Huey helicopter Pilot, Warren Finch (Chapter 201 President), having received the Distinguished Flying Cross for actions during the War in Vietnam, and Air Force Veteran Rose Herrera (Chapter Director) placed the Vietnam War wreath during the UVC Ceremony.



Chapter 201 Member Mike Frangadakis accepts the Vietnam War Wreath from Chapter President Warren Finch and Director Rose Herrera

Following the UVC Ceremony, Chapter 201 members and Associates held their annual ceremony at the Field of Honor, including the Missing Man Table Service. With President Warren Finch performing as Master of Ceremonies and Randall Richmond acting as Chaplain. The Chapter's Colors were placed by Stephen Thompson (National Colors), Gerald Arnold (POW/MIA Flag), Gene Fanucchi (VVA Flag) and Rose Herrera (Chapter 201 Flag).



Chapter 201 President Warren Finch conducts the VVA service at Oak Hill Memorial Park Field of Honor

The Missing Man Table Service was conducted by U.S. Volunteers of America Major Scott Cassell. Assisting at the Missing Man Table were Stephen Thompson and Dennis Whittaker.



Chapter 201 Secretary/Treasurer Stephen Thompson and Director Dennis Whittaker Assist in the Missing Man Table Service

AVVA Chapter 201 President Cang Kim Dong led AVVA Members in the posting of the Vietnamese and AVVA Colors following the posting of the Chapter Colors. AVVA members placed the Vietnam War and POW/MIA wreaths, fired the honor volley and played of Taps during the Field of Honor ceremony.

Chapter 201 AVVA Honor Guard Places the Vietnam War Wreath at the Field of Honor



Chapter 201 AVVA Honor Guard Prepares to Fire the Salute



## California State Council Convention (CalCon 16)

The 16th Biennial Vietnam Veterans of America California State Convention (CalCon 16) was held in Fresno from 22 through 24 June, 2018. Chapter 201 delegates to the convention were Past Chapter President David Sanders, Secretary/Treasurer Stephen Thompson and Sergeant At Arms John Hassenplug.

During the Installation Banquet, at the conclusion of the convention, Chapter 201 Secretary/Treasurer Stephen Thompson was honored to receive a 2018 California State Council Image of Bravery Award.



Stephen Thomson Receives the CSC Image Of Bravery Award

Steve Joined US Navy in September 1965 and trained as a Hospital Corpsman. He was reassigned to the US Marine Corp in August 1966 and ultimately served with 3rd Force Recon in Dong Ha, Vietnam. While serving with this unit, he was awarded the Silver Star for his actions during the 1968 Tet Offensive. There were eight men on the patrol and by the time they were extracted by helicopter, five were killed in action and two were wounded. Steve was the only one not wounded. His unit commander was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor when he jumped off the helicopter to go back to look for one of his men who was unaccounted for. Steve is Lifetime member of VVA Chapter 201 and was elected as the Secretary/Treasurer in April 2018.

# THINGS MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT WAR VETERANS

By SGT. Clyde R. Horn (Combat Veteran, 1967-68, Vietnam)



Dr. Clyde R. Horn  
VVA Chapter 201 Member  
Author, Photographer & Veteran Advocate

I'm a Vietnam War Combat Veteran who survived the TET offensive along with being in numerous firefights. I served with the Army 199<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade, Company E. My unit fought in the Iron Triangle of Vietnam. I'm the recipient of the Purple Heart for wounds received in action, Combat Infantry Badge, and Army Commendation Medal.

Here are some things most people don't know about combat veterans:

**One, we are reactive to loud sounds and noises.** Many of us cannot enjoy the 4<sup>th</sup> of July firecrackers and such due to the noise sounding like gunfire.

A sudden loud noise can make us jump, create anxiety, often causing us to have a Post-Traumatic Stress reaction. Please don't insist we go to events on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July that includes fireworks or flyovers.

**Two, we can be obsessive about safety.** Many of us scan the environment looking for exits, observing people for high risk profiles, out of place dress, checking in our home that doors, windows and entrances/exits are locked. Some of us do not like to sit in a café unless our backs can be toward a wall. We are hypervigilant being attune to quick movements, sounds, with an acute sense of the environment.

**Three, it's common for us to have sleep disorders that include night terrors/nightmares and sleep deprivation.** Our biology is on sensory overload. We can get locked into traumatic dreams. We can thrash about in disturbed sleep waking up in a drenched sweat. Sleeping is difficult for us.

**Four, we generally have trust issues.** In war, you must trust your fellow soldiers to watch your back. It's a life or death time. When we return to a peace time setting our trauma doesn't trust "normality". Turning off the signals to our brain stem is next to impossible. The chemical cortisone in the brain stem is activated. This means the fight, flight or freeze dynamic of survival doesn't turn off for many combat veterans and we are in a constant state of feeling danger around us. One of the consequences is we don't trust "normal".

**Five, we have a tendency to isolate.** We can be perfectly happy to be by ourselves, avoid crowds, get anxious around gatherings and move away from our loved ones. Trauma robs us of intimacy meaning isolation is easier than facing hard questions or treatment.

**Six, we can have anger issues.** War can make us emotionally explosive. How can a war veteran explain to someone that has not been in life or death situations with death all around what it's like? How can someone who lives when others die around them, when we witness acts of violence that no one should ever experience not be angry? Many returning war veterans need treatment to address reactivity and inner rage.

**Seven, we tend to "zone" out easily.** We can be very focused and then not be present. We can seem to change our personality instantly. This is often called displacement where we



remove ourselves from the present. This is a defense mechanism that we used to escape some of the terror we experienced.

**Eight, there can be a tendency to become addictive to alcohol abuse, drugs, gambling or overdo hobbies, exercise to extreme or do things that interfere to the normal functioning of life.** We need escapes to temper the demons within us. Without proper treatment, we seek out substitutes that hinder rather than help us.

**Nine, we can have feelings of being unlovable.** If we can't love ourselves how can we love others? We can have survival as well as moral guilt over our combat experience. We know we have changed from the person we used to be never to return back to the innocence we once knew. These feelings can attack us internally creating a lack of joy in life along with diminishing our ability to love.

**Ten, we are vulnerable to be re-traumatized.** It's not uncommon for others to compare us to who we were before our war experience. Family might demand we "forget" our experience and move positively into the future. Some people in our lives may degrade our war experience and others may want us to tell war stories or question the morality of war. These actions may seem to be in our best interest, but they are actually abusive. We experienced significant trauma that lives in our cells, imprints in our brains, and requires appropriate treatment, interaction with other veterans, and solutions to self-soothe along with interventions to resolve the moral battle that swirls in our souls.

These ten examples of things you may not know about war veterans are not all inclusive. There are many more factors I have not included. The ten examples are critical points you should understand. One of the failures of understanding veterans is most of what people think they know is seen in movies or entertainment. Veteran families need education along with the veteran. Treatment must include education not just medication or therapy. When we can treat the veteran along with the family healing can begin.