



# THE OUTPOST

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787, Tampa Fl.

**NATIONAL CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2001, FLORIDA STATE COUNCIL,  
CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005  
FOR INFORMATION CALL (813) 597-1326, FAX: (813) 737-4929.  
WEB SITE: MEMBERS.AOL.COM/VVA787/INDEX.HTML**



## President Jim LaGarde announces that Chapter 787 has won “The Chapter of the Year” award from the Florida State

### Council for 2005!

See details in an open letter to membership from the President on page 5



### V.V.A. Chapter 787 Christmas Diner

Chapter President, Jim (Rambo) LaGarde worked long and hard to put on this big year end event! We all want to thank Rambo for this fine effort along with chapter Secretary, Bob Silmsler.

#### Chapter Officers

President: Jim LaGarde  
Vice President: Dale Wagner  
Secretary: Bob Silmsler  
Treasurer: Kevin Ruhl

#### Board of Directors:

Ron Schott  
Carl Harris  
Tom Hall  
Jon Mueller

#### State Council Delegate:

Kevin Ruhl

OUTPOST Publisher & Editor: Jon Mueller, E-mail: JonMue@aol.com

#### Meetings

Chapter Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month.

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Brandon Veterans Hall, 115 W. Clay Brandon Fl. 33510. See Map on last page.

E-mail addresses are on the last page.



In the above picture, we had to merge two photo's into one since the camera was not able to capture the entire group with one shot. In the center, AVVA member, Beverly Wagner is holding a giant post card, which will be mail to Sgt. Zack Mueller, once again serving his country in Iraq. It was signed by all in attendance.

## Chapter Christmas Party Continued.....

Chapter President, Jim (Rambo) LaGarde coordinated the invitation and welcoming of Our **Gold Star** Mothers!

Shown below, Chapter President Jim LaGarde, presents the Gold Star Mothers with flowers and hug's. Chapter VP Dale Wagner and Board of Directors member, Carl Harris, escort them to the head of the table.



## V.V.A. Chapter 787 T-shirts for sale, very cool!

### Chapter T-Shirts

\$15.00 for size Large & X-Large, 4 in stock now.

\$17.00 for size XX-Large 5 in stock now.

**We can mail the shirts to your home for an additional \$4.00,**

**Or pick them up at the next chapter meeting, and save the \$4.00.**

**Contact Bob Silmser by e-mail: rafkirk64@verizon.net or phone: 813-685-3483, to order, or if you have questions.**



3-1/2" Iron on Patches are \$5.00



Do you have a family member currently serving in the US Military. We want to hear about them. Please send their name, rank, branch of service, duty station, etc., to Jon Mueller. E-mail: JonMue@aol.com. Please include pictures.



## Chapter Member of The Year: Carl Harris

Former Marine, Carl Harris, currently serving on the Board of Directors for chapter 787, and who always steps up when the chapter calls, was honored on December 8th with a USMC Flag and plaque by Chapter President Jim LaGarde, as the Chapter Member of the Year, 2005. Carl, who is normally a very quiet man, was too choked up to give much of a speech. That's okay, since Carl has proven his worth many times over by his actions.



## Chapter President Jim LaGarde, honors those members who have helped out in many areas during the year.



Pictured with Rambo from top (L-R), Ron Schott, Richard Nye, AVVA member Eddy Ortel, Herman Rainey, Mickey Taylor, Bob Silmsler, Dale Wagner, Carl Harris, Ken Leland, Luther Lassiter, Don Wallick and AVVA member of the year, Joyce Koprowski.

**Christmas Party Continued.....**

By: Luther Lassiter



**Left:** Kevin Leland awarded "Best Speaker" by Bloomington High School Teacher, John Eames. **Right:** Chapter Secretary Bob Silmser (L) and Carl Harris ponder the big Christmas package in the background, which turns out to be Luther's new bumper. Shown below.



**Please donate the following clothing items to our Military men and women in Afghanistan and Iraq.**

Reprinted from a Special Forces Association e-mail dated 11/15/05.

We are looking for shirts and pants (clothes). We run the theater 4-day R&R Pass Program for Iraq, AFG, HOA and Kuwait. Most of our Pass Program participants do not have civilian clothes to "decompress" or participate in "off-post" venues. My address is as follows.



**Major Ben H. Dennis, ASG-Qatar, Dir. MWR, Box 529, APO AE 09898.**

Submitted By: Jon Mueller

**Quote**

" All our officers and senior NCO's were dead or dying so I took over command of what was left of Bravo company at 0325 hours. We had 29 men left, able to stand. We used the last of our food and water two days before, and most men were down to 10 rounds per weapon. I remembered the strong confident faces of the men who jumped in with me, what seems like a hundred years ago. The 29 Para's left, had those same faces. I told the men to fix bayonets. We are going to attack, attack, attack!"

*Sgt. Ben Harris, 503d Parachute Infantry, US Army, Feb. 23 1945, Battle to retake Fortress Corregidor, as reported in Life Magazine.*





## An Open Letter from Chapter President Jim LaGarde to membership.

Dear Members, AVVA Members and friends:

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787 has once again led the State of Florida, by being honored as the Florida State Chapter of the Year (2005). I want to take this opportunity to thank all the individuals who have given up their personal time and energy to make this award possible. I want to thank those men and women who help out during fund raisers, Holiday Meal distributions, and Hurricane relief. I want to thank those of you on the Board of Directors who attend those monthly work sessions. I want to thank those of you who support the History Of the Vietnam War in our local High Schools by volunteering as Speakers, and the Oral History Project. Finally I want to thank those of you who take time out to attend our monthly chapter meetings.

Like any enterprise, our success is based on the people who give of themselves with no thought of compensation other than that feeling of pride in helping your fellow Veterans who have given so much already.

James (Rambo) LaGarde  
President, Chapter 787

## Membership

### Vietnam Veterans of America

Send to: VVA Chapter 787, P.O. Box 89247,  
Tampa Fl. 33689-0404

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male: \_\_\_\_\_

Female: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt.  
# \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter #787 Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ ID \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Type:

Individual 1 year \_\_\_\_\_ \$20      3 years \_\_\_\_\_ \$50

Individual membership is open to all Vietnam Veterans who served on active duty for other than training purposes from 1/1/1959 to 5/7/1975. Individual members must submit a copy of their DD-214 with their application and payment.

Associate 1 year \_\_\_\_\_ \$20      3 years \_\_\_\_\_ \$50

Life Member \$250, payment plan, \$50 down, and 8 monthly installments of \$25.

Payment Method: Check \_\_\_\_\_ Money Order \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_

If using a credit card: Card # \_\_\_\_\_



Submitted By: Jon Mueller

## Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq Connection

### 25th Infantry Division, Tropic Lighting

In early 1963, the 25th Infantry Division provided 100 helicopter door gunners to South Vietnam at the request of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. Known as "Shot gunners" the door gunners represented the first committal of troops to the Vietnam War by the division. In August 1965, C Company, 65th Engineer Battalion was deployed to South Vietnam to assist in the construction of port facilities at Cam Ranh Bay. By late 1965, over 2,500 soldiers of "Tropic Lightning" were deployed to the Southeast Asia country.



In December 1965, "Tropic Lighting" deployed in force to South Vietnam at the request of MACV. In a massive airlift, 3rd Brigade deployed to the central highlands at Pleiku, while the rest of the division was transported by sea. The Command Group of the division had established their base in Cu Chi district, 20 miles northwest of the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon. By April 1966, the entire division had arrived in country and ready to strike.



Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division was called to arms to fight the Global War On Terrorism in March 2003, when 107 soldiers representing eight units from 25th ID(L) and USARHAW were deployed to U.S. Central Command in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Tropic Lightning soldiers served in various capacities in support of CENTCOM and many saw combat while attached to the 3rd Infantry and 101st Airborne divisions.

In support of the Global War On Terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, the 25th Infantry Division was called to arms in July 2003 to prepare for deployment in 2004. This deployment would mark the first time the division deployed as a whole outside the Pacific region.

The Second Brigade Combat Team deployed to Iraq in January 2004, under command of Colonel Lloyd Miles. The brigade was stationed outside the city of Kirkuk, where they engaged in peacekeeping operations and nation building projects. Rebuilding and security missions were dangerous, as insurgent forces relied on the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and ambush tactics to attack Coalition forces. The "Warrior" Brigade fought and destroyed insurgent forces in various cities and towns including Najaf, Huwajah, Samarra, and others. The culmination of their deployment occurred just before they were relieved, when they helped support the first free elections in Iraq held in over 50 years. After a year of hard fighting, the 2BCT returned to Schofield Barracks by March 2005.

---

### Vietnam Veterans Needed

Submitted By: Tom Hall

With the new school year starting, the "History of the Vietnam War" classes will again be producing Volume VII, Oral Histories of Vietnam Veterans.

We are in need of Vietnam Veterans who are willing to share their experience in Vietnam with the students. The students will ask the questions. You will need to bring a photo of yourself in Vietnam so they may scan it for use in the book.

**All those interested, please contact Tom Hall as soon as possible at (813) 655-7129.**

This newsletter is not the official publication of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida. All opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of Chapter 787, the VVA State Council, the VVA National or the Chapter members.

You can receive a copy of the OUTPOST each month at no cost. Contact Jon Mueller via e-mail at [JonMue@aol.com](mailto:JonMue@aol.com) and provide your e-mail address. You will need to have an Adobe Acrobat Reader on your PC to open the newsletter each month. You can also receive it by US mail. The cost is \$12 per year. Make your check payable to V.V.A. Chapter 787 and mail it to P.O. Box 89247, Tampa Fl. 33689-0404. Make sure you identify the payment for the OUTPOST.



# Miscellaneous pic's from the Christmas Party



Submitted By: Jon Mueller, Pictures By Luther Lassiter and Jon Mueller

## **Annual Chapter Christmas Meal Delivery**

Our Chapter once again funded Christmas dinners to the less fortunate this year. 60 Holiday meals were purchased and delivered to the Veterans Industries on 46th St. in Tampa. Pictured below left, (L-R), Bob Silmser, Jim LaGarde, Wendy, Eddy Ortelt, Tony Towers, Richard Nye, Carl Harris and Don Wallick. Right picture, (L-R) Tony, Santa, and Carl.



### **FREEDON'S RING**

Another day another death; another life put to rest.  
Men and women fight at war; as loved ones at home watch that old flag soar.  
As grandpa tells the story to us, the drafter men go to camp on a bus.  
That is why all of freedom rings; as men at war to there faith cling.  
Of strength, courage, and dignity; our faith and trust is all that I see.  
Men at war a fighting for you and me; while we both think of freedom's ring.  
To all the people all out there; to God we are as useless as a lock of hair.  
But instead he uses us in all ways around; to bring up smiles; to put that frown upside-down.  
From a dog locked up in a cage; to some king back in the Middle Age.  
God has purpose for me and for you; even if you don't have a clue.  
You may seem useless but you're not; you have tons of people out there that care for you a lot.  
All of a sudden nations will sign; we shall never forget freedom's ring.  
All of these people with their obsession for power and lust; brings to my heart only disgust.  
For all the people who think of you and me; of all the soldiers in Iraq celebrating a victory.  
World Wars of big pig-like boars; all these things are without a clue.  
And what of World War II bangalors; God will show us the use of you.  
Time comes and time goes; why do you think it was you He chose.  
Another day another death; another life put to rest.  
Of a soldier's beating chest; another life is put to rest.  
Another day another will die; as all the time goes by and by.  
All of a sudden nations will be ruled by a King; all because of freedom's ring.

**Written By: Austin Mendoza Age 13, grandson of Chapter member Don Wallick.**



Submitted By: Jon Mueller

## Calendar of Events

Page 9

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Event and Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
<u>January 2006</u>			
12th	Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's house	6:30 PM
26th	Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Veterans Hall, Brandon	7:00 PM
<u>February 2006</u>			
9th	Thursday	Board of Directors Meeting, Jon's house	6:30PM
23rd	Thursday	Chapter Meeting, Veterans Hall, Brandon	7:30 PM
TBD		Fund Raiser	
<u>March 2006</u>			

## Speakers Needed

Submitted By: Tom Hall

On June 8-9, 2005, ten high school teachers from the Hillsborough County School District went through a workshop training session conducted by Ron Dyches, Ross Webster, Bruce Burnham and Tom Hall on teaching the high school elective course "History of the Vietnam War."

Many of the teachers will be teaching the History of the Vietnam War course next year at their high school for the first time and adding to the growth of the number of high schools that will need speakers each week for their course.



With the increase in the number of high schools offering the course and the growth of class at existing schools **our Chapter's Speaker's Bureau is going to need additional speakers to meet the demand.**

Any member who is interested in becoming part of the Chapter's Speaker's Bureau should contact **Tom Hall as soon as possible at 655-7129**. This is a community service project that the Chapter has undertaken for over seven years and grows each year. If you are willing to share your personal experiences in Vietnam and how Vietnam affected your life, this is the opportunity to keep the legacy of Vietnam veterans alive through informing the students about the Vietnam



Submitted By: Kevin Ruhl

## U.S. IDs Remains From 1968 Vietnam Attack

By **ROBERT BURNS**

*.c The Associated Press*



WASHINGTON (AP) - Nearly four decades after 11 American servicemen were killed by North Vietnamese commandos at a secret radar site in Laos, U.S. investigators have made the first identification of remains - with the help of two of the commandos.

The breakthrough is one of the most remarkable achievements in the U.S. military's decades-long effort to find and identify the remains of hundreds of U.S. servicemen missing in action from the Vietnam War.

Yet the recovery and identification of the remains of Air Force Tech. Sgt. Patrick L. Shannon, of Owasso, Okla., also created a new mystery. On the mountain ledge where his remains were found, U.S. investigators discovered boots, clothing fragments and other personal items that indicated that some of the other missing Americans had been on the same ledge. None has been seen or heard from since the attack.

Eight of the 19 Americans at the radar site when it was attacked in the early morning of March 11, 1968, were rescued several hours later by CIA helicopters. One of the eight died en route to a base in Thailand.

The capture of the mountain facility marked the start of a major communist offensive in then-neutral Laos. The CIA said in a 1995 study of the episode that it was the beginning of the end for the noncommunist forces in Laos, which today is one of the world's last communist countries - and one of its poorest.

In 1966, the U.S. installed a navigation radar atop Phou Pha Thi mountain, above a landing site known as Lima Site 85. In 1967, it was upgraded with a bombing-control radar to direct U.S. bombers to their targets in North Vietnam. The site was guarded by about 1,000 local Hmong troops advised by CIA paramilitary officers.

The Americans who operated the site were known as Circuit Riders, Air Force technicians operating under civilian cover. The 1995 CIA study said the men proved to be no match for the North Vietnamese commando team that attacked the site, apparently by scaling a 5,600-foot ridge line to reach the radar site.

With the help of the Vietnamese government, two of the commandos were located, interviewed and taken to Lima Site 85 with U.S. investigators in March 2003. The two showed the investigators three places atop the mountain where they said that after overrunning and killing the Americans, they threw the bodies off the cliff.

The investigators then threw mannequins off the cliff at each of those three locations and videotaped the path of the mannequins from a helicopter hovering nearby. That led them to the ledge, about 540 feet below the radar site, where they found human remains later identified as those of Shannon.

"It's a miracle, it's amazing news," said Pamela Shannon, 48, of Oklahoma City, who regards her father as a hero - a 13-year Air Force veteran who was 30 years old at the time he was killed. She said her family was notified of the identification the day before Thanksgiving.

"It was a great holiday. It was shocking," she said in a telephone interview.

Since the end of the Vietnam war in 1975, 771 missing American servicemen have been accounted for, including 199 lost in Laos. There are 1,812 still listed as missing from the war.

On the Net:

Defense POW-MIA Office: <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/>

Pentagon: <http://www.defenselink.mil>



If you are a wartime veteran with a limited income and you are no longer able to work, you may qualify for a Veterans Disability Pension or the Veterans Pension for Veterans 65 or older.

Many veterans of wartime service are completely unaware of the fact that if they are 65 or older and on a limited income they may qualify for a VA Pension without being disabled.

**Eligibility:**

You may be eligible if:

- you were discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, AND
- you served 90 days or more of active duty with at least 1 day during a period of war time. However, 38 CFR 3.12a requires that anyone who enlists after 9/7/80 generally has to serve at least 24 months or the full period for which a person was called or ordered to active duty in order to receive any benefits based on that period of service. With the advent of the Gulf War on 8/2/90 (and still not ended by Congress to this day), veterans can now serve after 9/7/80 during a period of war time. When they do, they generally now must serve 24 months to be eligible for pension or any other benefit. But note the exclusions in 38 CFR 3.12(d), AND
- you are permanently and totally disabled, or are age 65 or older, AND
- your countable family income is below a yearly limit set by law

Family Income Limits (effective Dec 1, 2005)	
If you are a...	Your yearly income must be less than... *
Veteran with no dependents	\$10,579
Veteran with a spouse or a child	\$13,855
Veterans with additional children: add \$1,806 to the limit for EACH child	
Housebound veteran with no dependents	\$12,929
Housebound veteran with one dependent	\$16,205
Veteran who needs aid and attendance and you	\$17,651
Veteran who needs aid and attendance and you	\$20,924
* Some income is not counted toward the yearly limit (for example, welfare benefits, some wages earned by dependent children, and Supplemental Security Income. It's also important to note that your medical related expenses are considered when determining your yearly family income.	

**The VA Payment Rates:**

VA pays you the difference between your countable family income and the yearly income limit which describes your situation (see chart above). This difference is generally paid in 12 equal monthly payments rounded down to the nearest dollar. Call the toll-free number below for details.

**The Application Process:**

You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-526, Veteran's Application for Compensation Or Pension. If available, attach copies of dependency records (marriage & children's birth certificates) and current medical evidence (doctor & hospital reports).

You can also apply on line through the [VONAPP website](#).

For More Information Call Toll-Free 1-800-827-1000.

## THE OUTPOST

### Help Your Chapter Grow

Bring a New Member to the Next Chapter Meeting.

Come and Join Us. Give us your Ideas.

Chapter meetings are held at the Brandon Veterans Hall. 115 W. Clay Ave, Brandon Fl. See map below.

#### Contact E-mail Addresses:

President Jim LaGarde:

cLaGarde@tampabay.rr.com

VP Dale Wagner: g.gator2@verizon.net

Secretary Bob Silmser: rafkirk64@verizon.net

Treasurer Kevin Ruhl: MSgtMCRet@aol.com

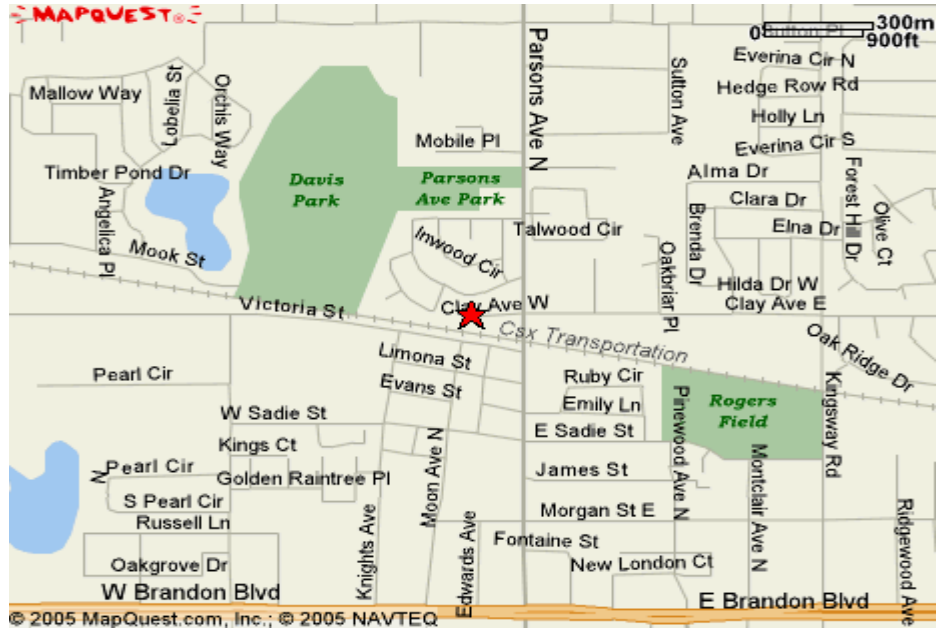
#### Board of Directors

Ron Schott: RonD1120@aol.com

Tom Hall: MarineDI@aol.com

Carl Harris: c\_e\_harris@ij.net

Jon Mueller: JonMue@aol.com



## Important Web Sites

Vietnam Veterans of American, Chapter 787, Tampa Bay Florida.....	<a href="http://members.aol.com/vva787/">http://members.aol.com/vva787/</a>
Vietnam War Statistics.....	<a href="http://my.eiis.net/cmart/vietwarstats.html">http://my.eiis.net/cmart/vietwarstats.html</a>
Vietnam, Yesterday & Today.....	<a href="http://servercc.oakton.edu/~wittman/chronol.htm">http://servercc.oakton.edu/~wittman/chronol.htm</a>
Vietnam Veterans Legacy Foundation.....	<a href="http://www.vvlf.org">www.vvlf.org</a>
National League of Families of American POW's/MIA's.....	<a href="http://www.pow-miafamilies.org">www.pow-miafamilies.org</a>
V.V.A. National Office on the World Wide Web.....	<a href="http://www.vva.org">www.vva.org</a>
U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs.....	<a href="http://www.va.gov">www.va.gov</a>
OPM Veterans Hiring Preference.....	<a href="http://www.opm.gov/veterans">www.opm.gov/veterans</a>
Uniformed Services Family Health Plan (USFHP).....	<a href="http://www.usfhp.com">www.usfhp.com</a>
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.....	<a href="http://www.vetapp.uscourts.gov">www.vetapp.uscourts.gov</a>
Children of Vietnam Vets.....	<a href="http://www.geocities.com/pentagon/9125">www.geocities.com/pentagon/9125</a>
The Center for Women Veterans.....	<a href="http://www.va.gov/womenvet">www.va.gov/womenvet</a>
Vietnam Women Memorial Foundation, Inc (formerly "Project").....	<a href="http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org">www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org</a>
The Moving Wall—Vietnam Combat Veterans LTD.....	<a href="http://www.themovingwall.org">www.themovingwall.org</a>
The Virtual Wall.....	<a href="http://www.virtualwall.org">www.virtualwall.org</a>
Get a Copy of your DD-214 on-line.....	<a href="http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html">http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html</a>