

AVEL VIETNAM

Newsletter - July/August 2022

Finding Peace

by Gene Giunta

Spit at, called baby killers, identified as scum for serving our country, it happened to me and to others as we came home from Vietnam. This was another huge emotional millstone hung around the neck of each veteran.

Behaving this way was popular and trendy, and the thing to do. To vilify the veteran for the perceived transgressions of our nation, to make them the sacrificial lamb, it was in vogue. This lasted for a while and then faded when we abandoned the people of South Vietnam.

The collateral emotional damage was huge and a nagging burden to those of us who suffered the experience of that war.

It was over in 1975 for those who taunted us, we had given into the Jane Fonda academic mentality and the world began to pass us by. I know I tried to keep up, it wasn't easy. School, raising a family, a job, success, it all became a part of the chemistry of who I needed to be.

Deep inside, in a place no one else gains access, lies an ember of unabated anger, mistrust, and uncertainty. It calls to me at times and now that I'm older with more time to reflect, I can hear it more clearly.

As I think back, I remember after I left Vietnam, focusing on the societal injustices doled out every day and in countless ways. I aimed my anger and hostilities towards it. I know now that my anger had deeper roots. The culture of politics, that of the anti-war movement, the fuzziness of our purpose to be in Vietnam, the absurd rules which applied as we fought the enemy, the carnage, all those things factored into my being.

I longed for the life I knew before I went off to war, but it was only a memory now and I struggled with that, still do at times. It stole my innocence, it made me face things I never knew I might have to face. It challenged my beliefs and my faith, it confused me to my core.

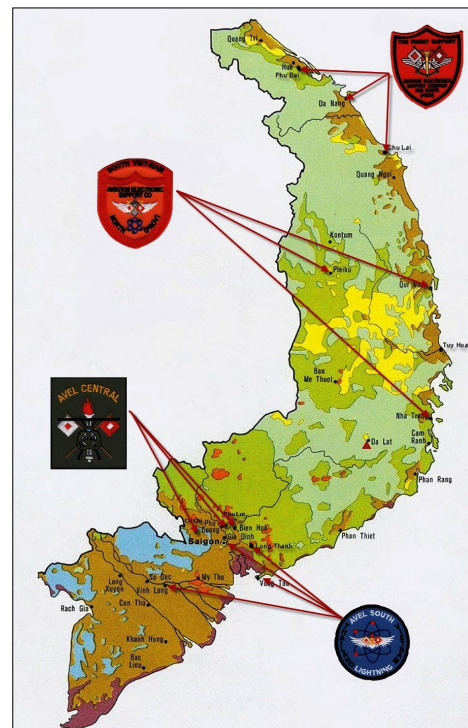
There is no happy ending, it will always be the way I see it. I know this to be true. I find bits of solace in what I do these days and tighten my bonds with others of like kind.

In general, life has been good to me and I will accept what it offers...but I will always wonder if complete peace will ever come to my spirit.

July 5, 2016

(Gene joined the Navy in 1966 as part of the Seabees. He had received his draft notice and decided to join the Navy instead. He was trained as a construction mechanic of heavy equipment. He was sent to Vietnam and joined Mobile Construction Bn. 3 in I Corps. He safely completed his tour.

He received orders to Vietnam a second time during his four years in the Navy. Before MCB 3 could get to Vietnam Nixon began troop withdrawals and they were sent to Okinawa instead.?



Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)

The end is near. The Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) will be dissolving in 2028. Who knows how many of us will be left then?

There was a vote of the governing board in March of this year and they decided it was time.

Feeling abandoned and isolated by the government and the citizens for whom we had served, and in need of services, some of which did not yet exist, we decided to band together to help ourselves. In 1978 we formed Vietnam Veterans of America, and we took as our mission statement, “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.”

We are no longer the current generation of veterans. Now we have become the Past Generation, the Old Guys—dad and granddad. Now our children and their children are serving their country, and we find ourselves facing a decision: Are we going to be there for the generations of veterans who follow us, for our children and the country they serve?

We know that many of our members are uncomfortable with the idea of opening up VVA to another generation of veterans. We have decided that as an organization we wish to end the way we started—as ourselves.



V.A. Disability

There are vets among us who feel that they should not receive disability, there are others who deserve it more. That isn't the point. It isn't a competition. If you have any issues that are service connected then you should file. If you don't want the money then donate it to a veteran help charity. The important thing is that you are counted. We have to make sure there is a complete record of what happened to us over there. The only way you will be counted is to file a claim.

We are all like rental cars and the military rented our bodies for the term of our service. Now they have to return us in the same condition they received us, or they have to pay for the damage. Nothing that is wrong with us the day we are discharged is going to get magically better. Don't be afraid to prioritize your VA claim process.

More Vietnam Statistics

HONORABLE SERVICE:

97% of Vietnam-era veterans were honorably discharged.

91% of actual Vietnam War veterans and 90% of those who saw heavy combat are proud to have served their country.

74% say they would serve again, even knowing the outcome.

87% of the public now holds Vietnam veterans in high esteem.

INTERESTING CENSUS STATISTICS & THOSE TO CLAIM TO HAVE “Been There”:

1,713,823 of those who served in Vietnam were still alive as of August, 1995 (census figures). During that same Census count, the number of Americans falsely claiming to have served in-country was: 9,492,958.

As of the Census taken during August, 2000, the surviving U.S. Vietnam veteran population estimate is: 1,002,511. This is hard to believe, losing nearly 711,000 between '95 and '00. That's 390 per day. During this Census count, the number of Americans falsely claiming to have served in-country is: 13,853,027. By this census, FOUR OUT OF FIVE WHO CLAIM TO BE Vietnam vets are not.



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The Department of Defense Vietnam War Service Index officially provided by The War Library originally reported with errors that 2,709,918 U.S. military personnel as having served in-country. Corrections and confirmations to this erred index resulted in the addition of 358 U.S. military personnel confirmed to have served in Vietnam but not originally listed by the Department of Defense. (All names are currently on file and accessible 24/7/365).

Isolated atrocities committed by American soldiers produced torrents of outrage from anti-war critics and the news media while communist atrocities were so common that they received hardly any media mention at all. The United States sought to minimize and prevent attacks on civilians while North Vietnam made attacks on civilians a centerpiece of its strategy. For the most part, Americans who deliberately killed civilians received prison sentences while communists who did so received commendations.

From 1957 to 1973, the National Liberation Front assassinated 36,725 Vietnamese and abducted another 58,499. The death squads focused on leaders at the village level and on anyone who improved the lives of the peasants such as medical personnel, social workers, and school teachers. – Nixon Presidential Papers.

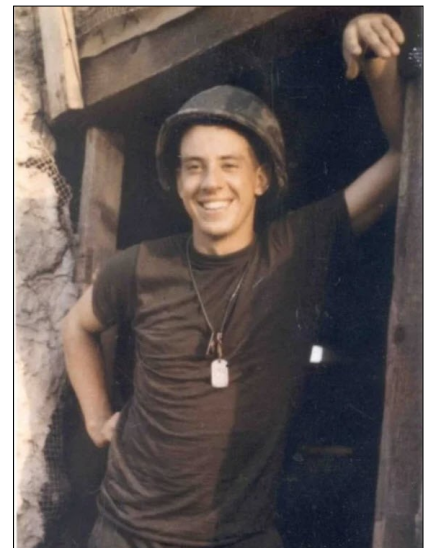
Jan Scruggs

On January 21, 1970, Jan Scruggs was having his morning cup of coffee, but he was far from his kitchen table at home. He was in Vietnam, serving in the 199th Light Infantry Brigade.

In the nine months since he'd been in-country, Scruggs had already seen a lot of action and had been wounded in a battle near Xuan Loc. He had spent three months recovering in a hospital before being sent back to fight with rocket-propelled grenade fragments permanently embedded in his body.

On that January day, "There was a big explosion," Scruggs recalled. "I ran over to see a truck on fire and a dozen of my friends dying." They had been unloading an ammunition truck when the explosion occurred. Scruggs would never forget the awful scene. He would never forget those friends.

In fact, he would spend a lifetime trying to honor their memory.



In 1979, Jan Scruggs conceived the idea of building the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., as a tribute to all who served during one of the longest wars in American history. Today, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is among the most visited memorials in the nation's capital.

Scruggs felt a memorial would serve as a healing device for a different kind of wound—that inflicted on our national psyche by the long and controversial Asian war.

Scruggs launched the effort with \$2,800 of his own money and gradually gained the support of other Vietnam veterans in persuading Congress to provide a prominent location on federal government property somewhere in Washington, D.C. After a difficult struggle, Congress responded, and the site chosen was on the National Mall near the Lincoln Memorial.

As president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund Inc., the nonprofit organization created to build and maintain the Memorial, Scruggs headed up the effort that raised \$8.4 million and saw the Memorial completed in just two years. It was dedicated on November 13, 1982, during a week-long national salute to Vietnam veterans in the nation's capital.

After the completion of the Memorial, Scruggs, along with author Joel L. Swerdlow, put to paper *To Heal a Nation*—the moving story of Scruggs' efforts to build The Wall. In May 1988, it became an "NBC Movie of the Week."

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Scruggs' mission to remember those who sacrificed in Vietnam continues on with the campaign to build the Education Center at The Wall. The Education Center will show the photos and tell the stories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War, as well as celebrate the values embodied by American service members in all of our nation's wars.

He has appeared on 60 Minutes, Nightline, Good Morning America, and The Today Show as well as C-SPAN, CNN, and FOX. He has written opinion articles for The Washington Post, USA Today, The New York Times, The Washington Times and other national and regional publications. A national speaker and author, Scruggs has written articles on a wide range of topics, including the Civil War and the battle of Gettysburg.

Scruggs is a native of Washington, D.C, and grew up in Bowie, Md. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from American University in Washington, D.C., and his law degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

None Submitted

TAPS

Butch (Mickey) Martin
Avel North/614th Maint. Co. (LEM):
1969 - 1970
He died on 29 May 2022.



PHOTOS

None Submitted

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/EMAIL/PHONE

Burland Brown has a new email: burland.brown@gmail.com

Send your change of address and email to jmccabe51@gmail.com



ALL AVEL & Veteran Reunion 2022
Huntersville (Charlotte), North Carolina
October 19 - 23, 2022

CEREMONY AT THE TRAVELING WALL!

Country Inn & Suites
16617 Statesville Rd.
Huntersville, NC 28078
704-895-6565

You can also reserve your room following the link below:

<http://Avel Vietnam Veteran Reunion Booking Link>

Room Rates are \$119.00/night plus fees and taxes

This special room rate is good for three days prior and after the event

To make your reservation call the hotel at the above number and specify the Avel Vietnam Veteran Reunion.

If you have any problems email Jack at jmccabe51@gmail.com

No mask restrictions

As of 30 June we have 31 vets registered and 27 guests. This is a great turn-out!

Early Bird, Wednesday, 19 October 2022

Early birds explore the Charlotte area on your own.
BBQ at the McCabe's house.

Thursday, 20 October 2022

The Hospitality Room will be open and well stocked with snacks and adult beverages.
Possible Carpool Event: Visit the Carolinas Aviation Museum in Charlotte
Possible Carpool Event: Piccione Vineyards

Friday, 21 October 2022

The Hospitality Room will be open and well stocked with snacks and adult beverages.
There will be a ladies luncheon at Red Rocks
John Veers Martini Golf Outing at Verdict Ridge Golf Club
A carpool group dinner will held. (Location to be determined)

Saturday, 22 October 2022

Busses will transport us to Charlotte Motor Speedway.
We will visit The Wall That Heals for our wreath laying and ceremony.
The Moving Wall is hosted by Duke Energy and Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF).
The final dinner will be at the hotel in the Hospitality Room.
Guest speaker: Grace Galloway, widow of renowned author Joe Galloway
The Hospitality Room will be open until 23:30

Sunday, 23 October 2022

Last goodbyes!

This will probably be our last formal reunion so please register, reserve your room and come.

All veterans and friends are invited. If you know anyone who would like to join us please ask them.



Vietnam War Dog Memorial

Riverside, California

March Field is a legendary Air Force base that has preserved bits of its history in the impressive March Field Museum. It's a fitting backdrop for the West Coast War Dog Memorial, saluting brave American pooches and their handlers.

The black obelisk/column is just past the entryway B-24 bomber. Funded and sponsored by Nature's Recipe Pet Foods, the 16-ft. tall granite and bronze statue depicts a soldier and a German Shepherd. It was sculpted by A. Thomas Schumberg and dedicated on Feb. 21, 2000.



Other somber military monuments and memorials are arrayed around the grounds, but the War Dog Memorial commands the plaza's central vantage. The sculpted soldier is half absorbed, Han Solo-like, by the slab -- but vigilant. His dog is alert, attuned to an impending jungle ambush, or maybe just a noisy weekend pass latecomer.

A bronze plaque at the base reads:
"They Protected Us On The Field of Battle.

They Watch Over Our Eternal Rest.
We Are Grateful.

The War Dog Memorial Is a Tribute
To All Dog And handler Teams
That Served Our Country So Proudly."

Most touching are the tiles around the Memorial's base, tributes to individual dogs, each marked with a symbolic black pawprint. Inscriptions are short and a bit cryptic, but hint at the adventures and trials these dogs must have undergone: "Hilda' My Hero Da Nang 66 B Martin" or "Team F Ban Me Thout 981st MP K9 Mort 69." Other tiles salute dogs from W.W.II and Korea.

One is a stark apology: "King Leaving you was sad and wrong Peace. "What's the story here? Was King the last dog on the American embassy roof in 1975, valiantly attempting crowd control as the helicopters fled Saigon? The Memorial doesn't explain, but you get the sense the remembrance of each canine, whether for valor or simple companionship, helps veteran handlers find closure on the relationship with their departed dogs.



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