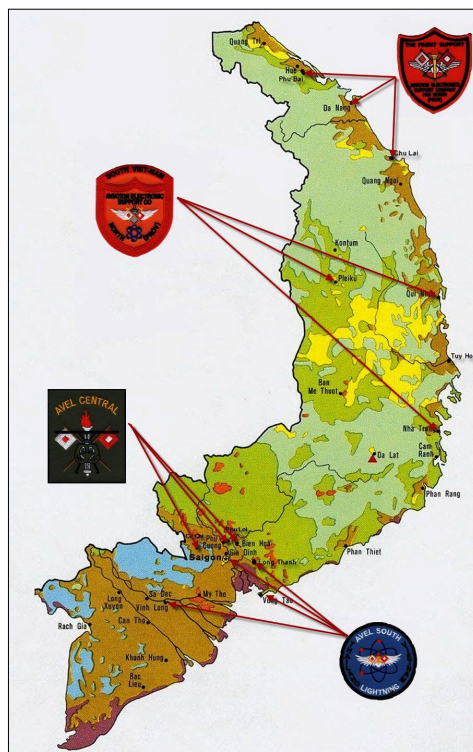
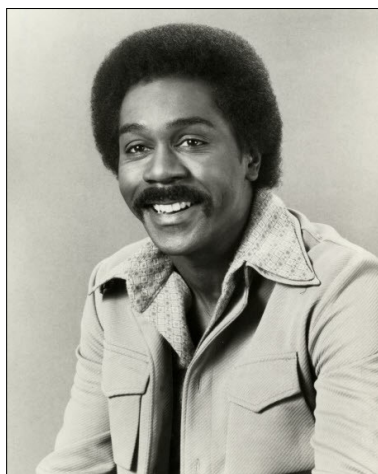


Celebrity Vietnam Vets

Demond Wilson

Demond Wilson grew up in Harlem, New York. At the age of 12, Wilson's appendix ruptured, almost killing him. At that time the young Wilson vowed to somehow serve God as an adult in some ministry capacity.



Wilson served in the US Army from 1966–1968 and was in the 4th Infantry Division in Vietnam where he was wounded. He was discharged as a Sergeant E-5.

Upon returning from Vietnam as a decorated veteran in the late 1960s, Wilson was featured in several Broadway and Off Broadway stage productions before moving to Hollywood where he performed guest roles on several television series such as *Mission: Impossible* and *All in the Family* and acted in films such as *The Dealing* in 1970 and *The Organization* in 1971.

Millions around the world know Demond Wilson for his starring roles in programs such as, “*Sanford & Son*” (NBC), “*Baby I’m Back*” (CBS), “*The New Odd Couple*” (ABC), and “*Demond Wilson and Company*” (BET Network). Demond also starred in the long running TV series “*Girlfriends*.”

Wilson lived in Conroe, Texas for many years until 1983, when he became an ordained minister, fulfilling his childhood vow. Later, in 1995, he founded Restoration House, a center that helps rehabilitate former prison inmates by providing mentoring, spiritual guidance, and vocational training.

Demond has written eleven children stories and his book, “*The New Age Millennium: An Expose of Symbols, Slogans and Hidden Agendas*”, is in its second printing. He has written two screenplays titled “*Nat Tyler Freedom Fighter*”, and “*Bay City Blues*”, and has written a sitcom titled “*Hawkins for the Defense*”. His latest book is titled “*Second Banana: The Bitter Sweet Memoirs of the Sanford and Son Years*”.

I spoke with Demond in an attempt to interview him but he wanted to leave Vietnam in the past.

WELCOME HOME, DEMOND WILSON

Vietnam Boat People Memorial



Westminster, California

The Vietnamese Boat People memorial commemorates the victims of an all-too familiar collateral effect of war or drastic regime change -- fleeing your homeland in the hopes you won't be killed. The monument, in the corner of a large cemetery, centers around a bronze sculpture.

After the Vietnam War mess and America's military exit, a large chunk of South Vietnam's population was in hot water. They'd sided with their failing government and the U.S., and dreaded punishment that might be meted out by the victors. Soon after the fall of Saigon to communist forces on April 30, 1975, the first refugees started climbing into boats in search of hospitable (non-communist) landing spots.

What started as a trickle of refugees soon ballooned as the new regime put its management plan into effect. In late 1978, when larger ships jammed with refugees were denied entry into countries in the region, people resorted to smaller, less seaworthy craft. Many thousands of Vietnamese drowned, starved or otherwise succumbed en route. Some estimates put boat people deaths in the hundreds of thousands before they finally ceased in 1992.

Over 400,000 eventually resettled in the U.S., and part of Westminster, California is known as "Little Saigon" because of its large community of Vietnamese refugees. Cam Ai Tran and Hap Tu Thai barely made it out alive in 1979 (their boat capsized), but once in the US they vowed they would build a monument to all those who died in the journey. The pair, publishers of the Saigon Times, finally saved enough to do it right, commissioning the sculpture by artist ViVi Vo Hung Kiet. The monument was unveiled in 2009.

The monument is in the remote southwest corner of Westminster Memorial Park. In the center of a fountain shaped like a ship's hull, desperate bronze figures clump on a stone raft: a man helps an elder woman, a young mother holds a baby. The figures face the ship's stern, and the mother, with a tear on her cheek, stretches her hand back towards Vietnam.

The fountain is surrounded by 54 stone blocks chiseled with the names (written in Vietnamese) of more than 6,000 dead boat people.

IN-COUNTRY

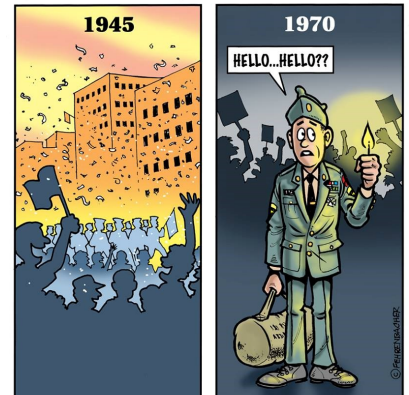


THE LAST NIGHT IN-COUNTRY JITTERS!"



"Half of it's good."

IN-COUNTRY



WELCOME HOME!

AVEL “Gathering”, Charleston 2017

We are having a Gathering of AVEL Vietnam vets in Charleston this October. We are not having a formal Reunion this year but will have a much more relaxed, informal get together. We will have a Hospitality Room as a meeting place to talk, share a cocktail and look at the slide show to bring back all those fond (for the most part) memories.

There will be NO Reunion cost. There will be no banquet or guest speaker. Just enjoy each others company and the beautiful city of Charleston. You will pay for your own room, meals and libations. We will most likely have a group dinner for those interested.

PLEASE REGISTER ON THE WEBSITE! There is no obligation but if you think you are coming **PLEASE REGISTER** so we have an idea of the size of the crowd.

Go to www.avelvietnam.com website to register.

RESERVE YOUR ROOM! We have a room block which can be increased so **PLEASE RESERVE YOUR ROOM IF YOU THINK YOU ARE COMING!**

Dates: 9 October - 12 October 2017

Room Rates: \$101.00/night. We have a rate for the weekend before and after the Gathering at \$139.00/night.

Location: Town & Country Inn and Suites
2008 Savannah Highway
Charleston, SC 29407

Reservations: Call the hotel at 800-334-6660. Tell them you are with the **AVEL Group** and quote the rate. Once again, if you have any problems call Jack at 847-778-3473.

I hope you can make it! Looking forward to seeing you in October!

A Draft Dodger Memorial??? Huh???

Yes, in 2004 there actually was plans to build a memorial to draft dodgers during the Vietnam War!!!

In 2004 activists in Nelson, British Columbia had planned to erect a memorial to honor the roughly 125,000 Americans who fled to Canada to avoid the US military draft during the Vietnam War. Many settled in Nelson for the remainder of their lives. The memorial was to be unveiled in July 2006 as part of a festival fondly celebrating the anti-war movement.



The proposed monument was called "The Welcoming," and was also known as the "Draft Dodger Monument." "A 60-foot Peace-Sign base of rock & pools of water, with the '3-fingered' end of the Peace-Sign indicating the journey from all parts of the US, & where the 'Water Arches' indicate the US/Canadian border, where there is an American man & woman being welcomed by a Canadian with outstretched arms & welcoming hands."

The plan came under fire from Americans, veteran's groups & some Canadian politicians. Because of the criticism, the city of Nelson, afraid of alienating US tourists distanced itself from the proposal and the town's mayor halted the plans for the bronze statue.

NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTER

Now that I am settled I find I have missed seven veterans who previously registered. I am sorry and hopefully I haven't missed any more. In addition to the seven we have two new vets joining us.

Kidder, Ronald (SP/4)

17 Crescent St
Brewer, ME 04412
207-989-7253

720th M.P. Battalion, Long Binh, Phu Loi, Phouc
Vinh and Quan Loi: Oct. 19, 1966-Oct. 30, 1967

ronkid@rocketmail.com

MOS 95B20

Also served with the 1st. Infantry Division

AGENT ORANGE

Garcia, Frank L. (SGT)

974 Orange St
Yuba City, CA 95991
530-434-1385

611th Trans. Co. (DS), Vung Tau: Feb. 1964 – Feb.
1965

spiritwarrior46@yahoo.com

MOS 36K/76Y

Also served with: 12th Evac Hospital (8/66-8/67) Cu
Chi, RVN

Army Retired: SFC

Pederson, Wesley (SP/5)

391 Hallberg St. SW
Warroad, MN 56763
218-343-4201

813 Sig. Det, B Troop, 3/17 Air Cav, Dian: 1969-
1970

wesped47@gmail.com

MOS: 35L20

AGENT ORANGE

Rabon, Robert (SP/5)

37 Sasser Rd
Monticello FL 32344
850-524-4911

Avel Central, Phu Loi: March 1969 – March 1970

Rgrabon@gmail.com

MOS: 35L20

Stevens, Charles T. (SP/5)

416 W Young St
Morganfield, KY 42437
270-748-0210

Avel Central, Phu Loi: July 1970-July 1971

c48stevens@yahoo.com

MOS: 35K20

AGENT ORANGE

Martin, Richard S. (SP/4)

3258 SW Crumpacker St.
Port Saint Lucie, FL. 34953
816-377-0929

317th Light Equipment Maintenance Co. (LEM),
Vung Tau: 1971-1972

martin.richard47@yahoo.com

MOS: 72C20

AGENT ORANGE

Morse, Brad (SP/5)

4050 Alt Rd.
Eureka, MO 63025
314-960-2822

Avel South/317th LEM, Vung Tau and Phu Loi: Oct.
1969 – Oct. 1970

morseb@sbcglobal.net

MOS: 35M20

Kirk, James B. (SP/5)

1007 Kirk Air Base Rd
Lancaster, SC 29720

Avel South, 3rd Platoon, Vinh Long: Nov. 1968 –
Nov. 1969

kirkairbase@comporium.net

MOS: 35K20

Military Retired after 3 years in the Army and 18 in
the Air Force

Hoffman, Leon (SP/5)

3463 Lily Bay Road
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

317th Light Equipment Maintenance Co. (LEM),
Vung Tau: May 1970-April 1971

k9aawstb@gmail.com

MOS: 26N26

AGENT ORANGE

The website is out of date. I will be updating the rosters in the next couple weeks.

Please be patient!

TAPS

William (Bill) Harlo Newton passed away on 2 August 2015 in Provo, Utah. He served with the 317th Light Equipment Maintenance Company (LEM) at Vung Tau.

PHOTOS

Tom Goetz sent his Signal School Graduation photo. 35L20 graduated 27 January 1967.

Photos are posted on the website: www.avelvietnam.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Dave D'Alonzo

E-mail: dpdalonzo@optonline.net

New address: 10 Magnolia Ct
Spring Lake Heights, NJ 07762



AVEL VIETNAM



March 2017 Newsletter
