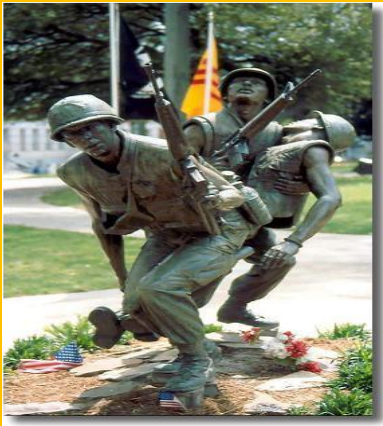


# North Carolina Vietnam Veterans, Inc. The Veteran's Voice



**NCVVI Website:**

[www.ncvvi.org](http://www.ncvvi.org)

**Bridge Back Foundation**

**Website:**

[www.bridgebackfoundation.org](http://www.bridgebackfoundation.org)

**President:**

*Ron Wagoner*

**Vice President:**

*Joe Harsch*

**Treasurer:**

*Bud Gross*

**Secretary/ Newsletter:**

*Bill Dixon*

*919-434-7345*

**Directors:**

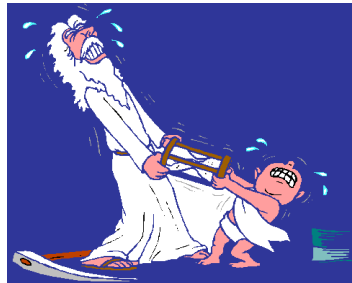
*Bill Dixon*

*Dennis Abels*

*Bo Williams*

*Lee Booher*

*Bob Allen*



**Merry New Year  
2012**



2011 Was a good year for NCVVI, several active new members, the NCVVI Casino nights did well, the exclusive NCVVI shirts and bracelets are going well, the coalition with NCVVI and the Vietnam American Community has been well received, NCVVI's "Bridge Back Foundation" and its mission to "Teach A Nation" and the current project to build a playground for the orphanage in Vietnam is near to been completed. 2012 looks like it to will be an exciting year for NCVVI and its members. Thanks to all members and supporters for their efforts.

**The 2011 Candle Lighting Service:** Was a success with good attendance and participation. The warm weather may have had something to do with that. Many thanks to the St. Bernadette choir for their participation and to all NCVVI members who stepped forward. Especially to the President, Commander Ron Wagoner, Bob White the piper, Ron Harris and Al Ely for the candles, Bob Matthews for the bags, Bud Gross for the names. And for the "after Party" the first lady of NCVVI, Jenny Wagoner for being a great hostess and preparing all the good food, ATTA GIRL.

**First get together of 2012:** The first time NCVVI will have an official function will be the monthly POW/MIA ceremony at the capitol grounds on January 7. The January meeting is January 24<sup>th</sup>. Put the dates on your calendar there is a lot going on in 2012 that will be discussed.

**Education:** Bob Matthews reported that he had called and spoken with Jan Scruggs on several occasions about incorrect information in his book about the wall. The book quote one of the many myths of Vietnam and the war, it says there have been 500 POW's that have committed suicide since they were released. Which is incorrect and needs to be corrected in future publications. Bob and members of NCVVI were recognized at the candle lighting for their efforts in spreading the "Story of Vietnam and its Veterans" in the Lenoir County School System by Eric Cantu who was chairman of the committee that recently had the Moving Wall in Kinston. NCVVI members have spoken in many classes the first semester. Athens Drive High School will have its first LOV class in the second semester. Both Cary and Athens Drive schools are participating with the Bridge Back Foundation and it's up coming trip back to Vietnam and the orphanage and schools by preparing personal introductions to the students of Vietnam. This was a big hit

with American and Vietnam students on the last trip back. Bob who taught a very successful LOV course through the Encore program at NC State has also been talking with Texas Tech. about a spring seminar at the university.

**TET 2012:** Below is NCVVI's invitation to the TET celebration. The president would like a list of those who would like to attend, tickets may be available. If you have not been you should go and enjoy. They put on a great show for adults and children. (Editors note)I celebrated my TET in Vietnam in 1968, and I can assure you this one will be a lot more enjoyable. See you there!

## Vietnamese American Association of Raleigh

### *Spring Dance Party*

Convention Center, 326 Tryon Road, Raleigh, NC 27603  
*Saturday January 21, 2012 from 8:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.*  
*Admission Ticket: \$20*

### *Tet Celebration*

Convention Center, 326 Tryon Road, Raleigh, NC 27603  
*Sunday January 22, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.*  
*Admission Ticket: \$5*

*Children 10 and under 10 and seniors 70 and over: free admission*

Vietnamese American Association of Raleigh cordially invites you to its Annual *Spring Dance Party* and *Tet Celebration* which will be held at the Convention Center, 326 Tryon Road, Raleigh, NC 27603, *respectively* on Saturday January 21 from 8:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. and Sunday January 22, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Join us for fun and a rocking good time at the *Spring Dance Party* with the lively Sao Bãng Band and seasoned performers of the Raleigh-Charlotte areas.

The Tet Celebration Program includes Tet ceremony, dragon dance, spring music, dance, musical plays, Vietnamese martial arts exhibition... Traditional Vietnamese food, candies, cakes... will be sold at the Celebration by various social/religious groups in the Community.

Your presence at the *Spring Dance Party* and *Tet Celebration* will be of great assistance, pleasure, and honor for all of us.

Thien Dinh Truong, President Vietnamese American Association of Raleigh

**2012 is the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall:** 2012 will be a big year for Vietnam Veterans. NCVVI has talked about going as a group to DC to attend the anniversary ceremonies. If you would like to go to DC on a NCVVI road trip, (it is quite an experience in its self) please attend the January meeting to discuss the trip. Rooms are getting booked up for November in DC. Below is another recognition of North Carolina Vietnam Veterans.

## **North Carolina Broadcasters Join Forces to Fete Vietnam Vets: Statewide broadcast of "Welcome Home" event will salute local soldiers**

Broadcasters across North Carolina are thanking veterans of the Vietnam War for their service in a significant way with an **all-day event planned for March 31**, along with a telecast that most TV stations across the state, and the majority of radio outlets, plan to air live. "Welcome Home" will be held at Charlotte Motor Speedway, with perhaps 40,000 spectators checking out musical performances, a motorcycle parade, parachutists and speeches from war heroes and stars. A moment of silence will be observed to remember those killed in action.

The USO of North Carolina is crafting the live event. The inspiration for Welcome Home came from WXII Greensboro's Flight of Honor program, which saw the station reach out to the market's World War II veterans, and fly them to Washington to visit the War Memorial and meet with their elected representatives. Moved by the initiative, North Carolina Senator Richard Burr is working with the broadcast community to do something special for Vietnam veterans as well.

"North Carolina Association of Broadcasters, the USO of North Carolina and the Charlotte Motor Speedway, working with Senator Richard Burr's office, are coming together to give those who served our country a proper homecoming," says John Idler, incoming president of North Carolina Association of Broadcasters (NCAB) and WTVD Raleigh's president and general manager.

Some 200,000-plus North Carolina residents served in the war. The region is rich in military families; President Obama was at Fort Bragg Wednesday to thank troops and signal the end of the U.S. military's mission in Iraq. The state's broadcasters will reach out to Vietnam veterans, and invite them to the event, through a series of PSAs. The large majority of stations will then air the event live 2-3 p.m. March 31. "We plan to blanket the state with coverage," says NCAB outgoing president Danny Highsmith.

Organizers are in talks with A-list Hollywood talent about performing in Charlotte. Broadcasters have increased their efforts of late to thank Vietnam vets for their service, and help make up for the harsh treatment many received after returning home from the war. Wisconsin Public Television saluted its state's war veterans with a similar event at Lambeau Field in May of 2010, with several public and commercial stations across the state airing a documentary about Wisconsin's Vietnam veterans.

NCAB officials are hoping to have all NC TV stations on board with the program. "We've had terrific buy in from member stations," says Idler.

**Former member of NCVVI along with Nick Rowe. Dan Pitzer and Nick started the SEAR school at Ft. Bragg. This is an excerpt from an interview Dan gave for a book entitled "To bear any burden"**

**Dan Pitzer**

Prisoner of War U Minh Forest -October 1963-November 1967

Second Special Forces Detachment -Team Medic

Captured with Rocky Versace & Nick Rowe

I was a prisoner for four years in the U Minh Forest. They kept me in a bamboo cage all those years, four feet wide by six feet long, just enough to sit up in. When I think about the guys that died in captivity and the guys that lived, it was just the difference of two words: "IF" and "When." A guy saying, "If I go home" or "If I am released"-he's buried. But those who said, "When I go home" or "When I Escape" or "When the War is over"- We survived.

We were in Jungle -Swamp areas where we were up to our waist in muck....Leeches....Snakes! I'm five feet eight and I weigh ninety-five to one hundred pounds. I had amoebic dysentery-I was going to the toilet ten, twenty times a day. I had Malaria. You learn to live day to day. When I got up in the morning, "If I can just make it to noon.... Now if I can just make it to the evening meal and then go to bed.

I've seen Mosquitoes so thick on my ankles that I thought I had on black socks. I got strung up once. The guards strung me up in the rafters outside my cage. They stripped me naked and tied ropes around my wrist and ankles. They let me hang all night. The next morning, my eyes were swollen shut from Mosquito bites. They stayed shut for a whole week.

The only way I can explain it -In the short time that I was a prisoner, four years, I learned to live with pain and the threat of death. It's the feeling of abandonment that destroys you. We were told "The War might end tomorrow. But we can keep you here forever." It was hard to drive ourselves on day after day when the guards showed us newspaper stories of protesters flying the VC and North Vietnam flag around the Washington Monument, while students burned American Flags.

### **National Personnel Records Center tips for DD214 requests and safeguarding information.**

The new address for the National Personnel Records Center is:

National Personnel Records Center

1 Archives Drive

St. Louis, MO 63138-1002 USA

The Majority of personnel have been moved to the new location and the military personnel records are in the process of moving. The entire moved should be completed by the end of the summer of 2012.

As a reminder, all retirees and Honorably Discharges veterans should ensure that their family knows the location of their military Separation Document (DD 214 from 1950 to present and WD (War Department) form 53-55 and other variations prior to 1955). Note that registering a copy at the county courthouse may make the document a public record. Separation documents issued after 1969 may contain a Social Security Number which could be used for identity theft. Storing the document in a safe deposit box may make it difficult to retrieve immediately upon the death of the retiree or the honorably discharged veteran. The better storage locations are: 1 - Fire safe in a secure location of the house (not in the bedroom, as it is where most thieves search first). Be sure Spouse/Next of Kin knows the

location and has key/combination. 2 – In a watertight food container (Glad, Tupperware, etc.) in the refrigerator. Most refrigerators are fire resistant. Additionally, a refrigerator is heavy enough to fall through the floor of a building into the cooler part of the fire in the basement and better survive. Finally, a refrigerator is large enough to be easily located in the ash and rubble of a fire or other serious incident. (As a bonus, everyone has a refrigerator, not everyone has a fire resistant storage box). Be sure to inform you spouse and relatives where to locate your Separation Document – and any other important papers.

As a reminder, the preferred method of submitting a request to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) is via the Internet. Please note that in some cases using a browser other than Internet Explorer may create problems with data entry. As you know, the NPRC provides copies of documents from the military personnel records to authorized requesters. Our web-based application will provide better service on these requests by eliminating our mailroom processing time. Also, since the requester will be prompted to supply all the information essential for us to process the request, delays that occur when we must go back for more information will be minimized. You may access the application at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

This improved on-line request should be used INSTEAD OF Standard form 180 for requests from the veteran or the veteran's next of kin, if possible. Your assistance with this initiative will allow us, and you, to better serve the needs of our veterans. If you do not wish to use the Internet, you should use Standard Form 180. You should print Standard Form 180 as you need it, not in advance because the form is periodically revised and updated. It should not be available on your website. You can have a link to the NPRC web page. The link is: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>

Since the Standard Form 180 is updated periodically, it is NOT recommended that large quantities be printed/photocopied and stocked. The form will be updated with the new address within six months. The US Postal service will forward mail if requests are mailed to the old location until February 2012.

**Military activities upcoming:** There are several noteworthy items to report on for our first Happenings email of 2012. **VOTE on January 12!** Mark your calendars on **January 12** to go to [www.fuelinggood.com](http://www.fuelinggood.com) and vote for one of our partners who have entered the competition for a \$5000 CITGO gift card. It would be great for one of us to be selected. There are a lot of agencies entered, so make sure you get through all to find one of our partners. Then vote! Hope I did not miss any, but I found (of course!) **Military and Veterans Resource Coalition (MVRC), and Military Missions in Action (MMIA), Rebuilding the Triangle Together, and the Military Racquetball Federation.** Please get your friends, family and neighbors to vote for one of our local organizations and help us fund our local efforts!

**Speaking of MMIA,** they are holding monthly MMIA volunteer meetings and listed below are three times still available in the month of January open to anyone who has expressed an interest in volunteering their time or talents to MMIA. This first meeting series in January is for reviewing various volunteer tasks that can be done as well as getting to know one another and learning more about Military Missions in Action. You are only required to be at **one** of the meetings to discuss tasks, dates, and hours that you are available to volunteer. If there are any further questions that you may have, please contact me at [whopper@militarymissionsinaction.org](mailto:whopper@militarymissionsinaction.org) (919-552-1603) or Mendy Rausch at [mrausch@militarymissionsinaction.org](mailto:mrausch@militarymissionsinaction.org) (919-552-1603).

**January 26th, 2012** at 5:30 p.m. OR 7:00 p.m. (you choose) at MMIA office There are a lot of opportunities for you to give back to our military and veterans through volunteering at MMIA or a number of other organizations in our area. If you want to find out who else could use volunteers, let us know and we will help you get connected. 2012 is a good year to start, and folks like MMIA are a good place to start with.

**MVRC and Wake County Schools** are revitalizing the **Military Youth and Family** committee. Our first meeting was small in number but there were a number of others who could not meet then but wanted to attend the next meeting. Perhaps you are interested but we missed getting an invitation out to you specifically. If so, respond to this email and let Randy know you would like to join this committee. We will be holding our next meeting on Wednesday **January 18, 2012** at 9 am. Randy will give you location directions if you want to attend.

**Durham VA Medical Center has expanded its parking with a new garage** that adds 436 parking spaces to help Veterans easily access the medical center. The new structure, called Parking Garage B, provides convenient access to the medical center from its Erwin Road entrance. It features light-emitting diodes (LED) lighting, security cameras, and a covered walkway from parking area to the medical center. Parking Assistants are available to assist Veterans from vehicles to their medical appointments.

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT for veterans who receive care at Durham VAMC: Effective April 1, 2012, the Durham VA Medical Center will use Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to reimburse Veterans for their Beneficiary Travel claims.** This change will eliminate cash payments on the same day of treatment. There are many factors determining travel eligibility and it is important Veterans with questions get accurate information. Veterans may call (919) 286 – 0411, extension 6237 with questions that are not answered on their website. A notification letter of these changes is attached to this newsletter.

Durham VAMC is also sponsoring a **Veterans Recruiting Event for available jobs**, in Raleigh on **January 17** from 9 am until 2 pm. For veterans only.

--  
Randy Marsh  
Chair Military and Veterans Resource Coalition  
[919-267-3690](tel:919-267-3690) ext 3 [contact@mymvrc.org](mailto:contact@mymvrc.org)

### **Up date letter for the Playground Project for the orphanage in Vietnam being done by NCVVI Friends, Supporters and Members,**

A little over a year ago The North Carolina Vietnam Veterans, Inc. through its Bridge Back Foundation made a commitment to again reach out to the children of South Vietnam as we did in 2009. We would like to take this time to, “Thank You,” those who have already helped, those who are going to help, and those who would like to make a donation but just can’t. We appreciate you, your thoughts, prayers, and support. We have come a long way in realizing this commitment only through the generosity and greatness of our friends, supporters and members.

With the outstanding assistance of Colonel Hien Vo and his guys, the Vietnamese American community, Wood Play of the Carolinas, students of Athens and Cary High School “Lessons of Vietnam” curriculum and those supporters who have contributed, we are well on the way. Approximately \$15,000 in playground equipment has been purchased with a very heavy discount and is to arrive in Vietnam the last of January 2012. A team of Bridge Back volunteers are scheduled to return to Vietnam in March 2012 to put up the equipment and deliver the additional items. Funds are still needed to cover the delivery cost of the equipment to the orphanage, yard work, concrete preparation, concrete, landscaping, clean up and several pieces of play equipment to be manufactured there. Blind aids as well as funds are being collected also to go to a home for the blind children at the Quang Tri Province Home for the Blind.

The students at Athens and Cary High School are participating with their packets of personal and local memorabilia that will be delivered by the returning veterans to high school students of Vietnam. ***Over 600 children’s lives will be affected in a positive manner.*** The Orphanage serves 75 hearing impaired, and other handicapped children along with 300 additional children served by the orphanage, the Home for the Blind that serves 50 students and the Vietnam High School students will all be touched by your generosity. The local students who will be impacted by being able to correspond, learn and share with Vietnamese students. This will give our children an opportunity to appreciate our country and the freedoms we enjoy.

Any contribution to this amazing international project is a tax deductible opportunity for you to participate and be part of “The Bridge Back.”

Thank You,  
*Bill Dixon, Secretary North Carolina Vietnam Veterans, Inc.*  
*Bob Matthews, Chairman of Bridge Back Foundation*  
*Joe Harsch, Board Member of Bridge Back Foundation*

**After some delay with satisfactory specifications and work scope the go ahead has been given for the contractor to proceed with the site work and concrete in preparation for the play equipment to be installed by the returning NCVVI veterans in March, 2012. Funds are still needed for shipping, storage of the play equipment, fabrication of additional items, final landscaping and miscellaneous items in country. Also items for the Quang Tri Home for the Blind.**



**North Korea's participation in Vietnam War specified in new dossier:** In late October or during November 1966 North Korea would send Vietnam enough specialist to man a Vietnamese MiG-17 company (a company consist of 10 aircraft) with enough for a second company in 1967. They were called "Group Z"

**Your 2012 Dues are due:** To keep it simple, the membership voted to change membership dues to run from January to January and to raise them to \$25.00. Elections of Officers are coming up, all offices are open for new leaders. If you would like to serve in any position please let the election committee know. If you would like to vote in the elections or serve as an officer or board member you must be current on your dues. I know the secretary position will be open and you can run for any office.

**Scholarships:** Bud Gross announced that the 2012 essay topic had been selected by vote of the membership. If you have a child, grandchild, or great grandchild encourage them to participate. Ron Harris's daughter won one of the first scholarships now one of his grand sons will be applying. The essay subject is, "Why was the transition from Vietnam to the United States a major problem for many veterans and still lingers to this day?"

Go to [www.NCVVI.org](http://www.NCVVI.org) to see the rules and who can apply.

**February POW/MIA Ceremony:** Will be Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> and traditionally the North Carolina Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association are the guest readers. You may wish to put that day on your to-do calendar along with the 28<sup>th</sup> which is the general membership meeting.

**Membership:** NCVVI is a unique group of men and women, with very unique credentials. They all served in Vietnam. Who do you know that fits this exclusive requirements? Share a good thing with them. Tell them dinner is on you and bring them to a meeting. The Marines are looking for a few good men, NCVVI is looking for a few good Vietnam Veterans like you. NCVVI is also honored to have a great hard working auxiliary membership, if you know a man or woman who like to be a member but don't have that one item DD214 with Vietnam service. Invite them to visit and join. NCVVI has a lot of opportunities for members to participate to what ever degree they wish. Every member is important in their own way. **If you are a new member and have not received your membership card, patch and pin please see President Wagoner.**

**The February Chef:** Bill Dixon. The menu has not been announced yet it depends on the road kill for the day or what the special is at the kennel.

**2012 events:** If you know of an opportunity for NCVVI to participate in a community event, we are always looking for a fund raiser or anything that will highlight the Vietnam Veteran in a positive light contact the president about discussing it at a meeting. If you have a child or grandchild in a private school or a civic organization and they would like to have a group of Veterans come in and put on a program, talk with the president.

Dragon at 2011 TET celebration





# Membership Renewal and Application

NCVVI is proud to have you as a member.

**Note: DD214 showing Vietnam service required for Full Membership**

(Print) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last Name) (First Name) (MI)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Spouse's name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Street Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City) (State) (Zip code)

( \_ \_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Home Phone) (Work Phone) (Occupation)

\_\_\_\_\_ Full Membership (\$25 per Year) \_\_\_\_\_ (check amount)

\_\_\_\_\_ Associate Membership (\$10 per year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(E-MAIL ADDRESS :) {Need this to send the unit's monthly newsletter}

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Signature)** **(Date)**

***Reminder: NCVVI holds a remembrance service on the Capital grounds, Raleigh, NC, the first Saturday of each month (12:00 noon) and the monthly business meeting on the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Tuesday of each month at VFW 7383, 522 Reedy Creek Road, Cary, NC. (Dinner at 6:00 PM)***

Mail to: North Carolina Vietnam Veterans, Inc.  
601 Compton Road  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

Member of: N.C. Vietnam Veterans Council, Wake County Veterans Council, National Vietnam Veterans Coalition