

# — THE POINT —

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*The First VVA Chapter in the State of Maryland - The Gold Standard*

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## They said they would call if they needed him

Jim Goldsworthy, Columnist

Cumberland Times-News

“He loved America,” his sister said.

Yes, I replied he did. As much as anyone I’ve ever known - and a small, but significant, segment of America loved him in return. I know, because I was part of it. You might have been part of it yourself. If you spent much time in downtown Cumberland around the Liberty Street parklet, you’ve seen him. On warm ever not-so-warm days, when his health allowed it, he sat across from the fountain in a white plastic chair.

“I hate the cold weather,” he told me each year as it grew closer. That’s when he had to stay home.

Home was a considerable hike away. When I asked how long it took him, he’d say “Forty five minutes or so.” I never believed this, because it would have taken me far longer, and my legs were considerably better than his.

He walked with a four footed cane. On its shaft were an American Flag, a U.S. Army flag and a POW/MIA flag.

His jacket bore patches that said Dec. 7, 1921, June 6, 1944, Sept. 11, 2001 and other dates and one that was, “In memory 58,479 Brothers Who Never Returned From Vietnam” Elsewhere you could read some of their names. It irritated him when people didn’t know what the dates meant.

His sister said someone had read about him and asked if he was the guy that fed the birds.

That was him, a loaf of stale bread at a time, and he caught hell for it more than once. Didn’t faze him anymore than it did the birds, “What are they gonna do?” He asked me with a grin. “Send me to Vietnam?”

His sister said they would have dressed him in his Army uniform, but it burned up in a fire that destroyed his home a while back.

I never expected to see him in a suit, but he looked good in it. He also looked at peace and vigorous; a lion, just resting a spell. It pleased me that they didn’t shave off his whiskers. He’d done that a few times for medical reasons, and I always told him he looked naked.

“Won’t take long to grow it back,” he’d say and it didn’t.

When he started calling me “Brother” I called him “Little Brother.” He was by no means a tall man.

Before long I decided there was nothing little about him and changed that to “Brother.” (Goldy’s rule 147 - The size of the body does not reflect the size of the person who lives in it.) If he ever noticed he never let on.

He asked me about my neckwear- - A POW/MIA choker that consists of alternating black and white beads with a POW/MIA pin hanging from it. I’d bought the pieces from the store operated by Chapter 172 Vietnam Veterans of America on Liberty Street, and a jeweler friend of mine put them together. I told him I’d worn a POW/MIA pin since I went to Arlington National Cemetery for the burial of a man Missing in Action in Vietnam for more than 30 years.

“I like it,” he said, “and I like the reason you wear it.” A few day later, I gave him one like mine, and he began to wear it.

Once when we were by ourselves, he said he didn't think anybody cared about him. I told him he had no idea how many sets of eyes were watching out for him, including mine. If he didn't show up for a few days, regulars to the downtown would ask me or his other friends if anything was wrong with him. They hadn't seen him and they were concerned.

I asked if he remembered the night he had to carry a bunch of money to such-and-such a bar and noticed that four guys he didn't know were following him. He did..

"And do you remember that when you got to the bar, one of them came up to you and asked if this was where you were going and would you be alright now?" He did.

He let it slip that he wasn't receiving any benefits from the Veterans Administration even though he was qualified. We asked him, "Why not?"

"Other guys need it more than I do," he replied. It took a while, but his friends at the VVA Chapter convinced him that he was wrong and helped him get what he had earned.

We called him "The Rat" because he was a tunnel rat in Vietnam. That means they gave him a flashlight and a pistol and sent him down into tunnels to see if the Viet Cong were hiding in them.

He said he'd done it three times and volunteered each time. From what I've heard, this was one of the fastest ways to get yourself killed in a land where death waited at every corner. I asked him why he would do such a thing.

"All my buddies had wives and girlfriends back home, and I didn't," he said.

*Greater love no man hath than this...*

On September 12, 2001 the day of the terrorist attacks he went to the Army Recruiter's Office and tried to re-enlist. "They were polite," he said, "but they couldn't take me. They said they would call me if they needed me. Made me mad as hell I can still sit there and fire a Ma-Deuce (50 caliber Machine gun)".

"Tell you what, " I said, "If they decide they need you, you give me a call and I'll go with you as your crew." I would have too. Nobody else I'd rather have my back and I'd be damned proud to have his.

This isn't the first time I've written about him or mentioned him in a speech, nor will it be the last.

"I heard you wrote about me last Sunday," he once said. I told him that was true, But I hadn't said who he was. When I write about one of them, I'm writing about all of them...with the exception of times like today.

"Thank you," he said "I'm proud that you would do that. I'll have to get it and read it."

The only thing that you had to know about Bobby Divelbliss is that he had more guts and was beyond question tougher than any other human being I've ever met.

He probably should have been dead 30 years ago, but never stopped putting up a fight when he had to. He never gave up - - not on America or himself or any of the people he cared about to the point where he put them first... even if he didn't know them.

Most of all, he had a heart that was as big as the country he loved. That's why a small, but significant, segment of America loves him in return. I know because I am part of it.

Welcome Home Brother

### **Steak Feed AAR**

The annual adult steak feed was held at the Mt. Savage Fire Hall Saturday, September 21st and as usual was a great success. The attendance was down a little we had 177 members and guests attend. The weather had to have been a serious factor it was like a monsoon flashback. I was wondering if the people building the ark up there along I-68 were getting a little nervous. Still it was a good time and kudos to the cooks this was the best food we have had in a long line of great vittles.

## I'm just saying

I am not implying, I'm saying. It is about 1100 miles to Denver according to Google it is a 23 hour drive. Just go up to Washington, PA and catch I-70 and it is a straight shot. Why I am mentioning this is so your will know. There are 231 medical marijuana stores in the Denver area that's more than all the Wendt's and McDonalds combined, but that will probably change shortly. You see on January 1st 2014 the recreational use of weed becomes legal in Colorado. They have the regular bud style pot plus candy, baked goods and even "soft drinks" laced with the stuff and it will all be legal. Can you imagine the New Year's Eve party, probably will be disgraceful. This is just a heads up notice for all of our members, if you are traveling in that area stay away from the stores with the big green crosses on their signs.

*"A true outlaw finds the balance between passion in his heart and the reason in his mind. The outcome is the balance of might and right." John Teller*

## CHRISTMAS DINNER & DANCE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH  
CUMBERLAND OUTDOOR CLUB

The Chapter Christmas Dinner & Dance is fast approaching. The cost is \$25.00 per person this year (member and one guest). You must stop by or call the chapter office to purchase your ticket (301-777-7001 or 800-482-8387). Doors open at 5:00pm, dinner is at 7:00pm and after 7:00pm there will be a charge for drinks. The Chinese Bandits will be performing again this year starting at 8:00pm. You can reserve a room at the Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott. Cost is \$99.00 plus tax, which includes a hot breakfast. Cutoff date for the group rate is November 1st. So if you want to reserve a room don't wait. RSVP by Friday, November 22nd.

## FROM THE SKY PILOT...

Let me start by saying these very important words.

"True religion is to know the love that Christ imparts: True religion is to show this love to burdened hearts." Let me introduce you to the first book of the New Testament (Matthew).

### 1. Why read this Book?

Have you ever read a sequel to a novel without having read the original story? Trying to pick up the story line without can be difficult. The Gospel of Matthew serves as such a transition. It connects the story of the Old Testament with the story of the New Testament, helping us to understand how the life and teaching of Jesus built upon what had come before.

### 2. Who wrote this book?

Matthew as a tax collector who became one of Christ's twelve disciples.

### 3. Why was it written?

To offer irrefutable proof that the long-awaited Jewish Messiah had come to inaugurate God's Kingdom on earth.

### 4. When and to whom was it written?

Matthew possibly wrote this book in the A.D. 70's (though some believe he may have written it in the 50, or 60's) primarily for the Jewish readers. He offered a persuasive account of the Good News of Jesus' citing Old Testament evidence that claims believers had been making about Jesus.

I notice Matthew's frequent use of the Old Testament and how his Jewish orientation flavors his deceptions. For example, he frequently uses son of David instead of the Son of God (as in the Gospel of John). One of Matthew's major themes is of the Kingdom of heaven. Note Jesus' teachings about what it means to be a citizen of that kingdom.

I thank God for these words of knowledge!

Chaplain Rodger Long

## VIETNAM VETERAN STATISTICS

*"Carved on these walls is the story of America, of a continuing quest to preserve both Democracy and decency, and to protect a national treasure that we call the American dream."*

President George Bush

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial stands as a symbol of American's honor and recognition of the men and women who served and sacrificed their lives in the Vietnam War. Inscribed on the black granite walls are the names of more than 58,000 men and women who gave their lives or remain missing. Yet the memorial itself is dedicated to honor the "courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country" of all who answered the call to serve during the longest war in US history.

The first American soldier killed in the Vietnam War was Air Force T-Sgt. Richard B. Fitzgibbon, Jr. He is listed by the US Department of Defense as having a casualty date of June 8, 1956. His name was added to the wall on Memorial Day 1999.

There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall.

The youngest Vietnam KIA is believed to be Dan Bullock at 15 years old.

The oldest person on the Wall is Dwaine McGriff at 63 years old.

At least 5 men killed in Vietnam were 16 years old.

At least 12 men killed in Vietnam were 17 years old.

There are 120 persons who listed foreign countries as their home of record.

At least 25,000 of those killed were 20 years old or younger.

More than 17,000 of those killed were married.

Veterans killed on their first day in Vietnam 997. (unconfirmed)

Veterans killed on their last day in Vietnam 1,448. (unconfirmed)

Number of Chaplains on the Wall - 16 (2 Medal Of Honor)

8 Women are on the Wall - (7 Army, 1 USAF - 7,484 served)

There are 226 Native Americans on the Memorial.

There are 22 countries represented on the Memorial.

Most common name on the Memorial "Smith" with 667 veterans.

The most casualties for a single day was January 31, 1968 - 245 casualties.

The most casualties for a single month was May 1968 - 2,415 casualties.

39 sets of brothers are on the Wall.

During the Vietnam War, 245 men were awarded the Medal of Honor. 154 of those are listed on the Wall.

Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 gained unwanted attention between 1966 and 1971 by having suffered the largest per-capita loss of life for such a small town.

West Virginia had the highest casualty rate in the nation. The state had 711 casualties - 39.9 deaths

per 100,00 people. Oklahoma had the second-highest casualty rate.

Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia sustained the largest number of casualties of any high school in the nation with 54 deaths.

The Marines of Morenci - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses along the Coronado Trail, stalked deer in the Apache National Forest. And in the Patriotic camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.

The Buddies of Midvale - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, and Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They lived only a few yards apart. They played ball at the adjacent sandlot ball field. And they all went to Vietnam. In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed. LeRoy was killed on Wednesday, Nov. 22, the fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Jimmy died less than 24 hours later on Thanksgiving Day. Tom was shot dead assaulting the enemy on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

For most Americans who read this they will only see the numbers that Vietnam War created. To those of us who survived the war, and to the families of those who did not, we see the faces, we feel the pain that these numbers created. We are, until we too pass away, haunted with these numbers, because they were our friends, fathers, husbands, wives, sons and daughters. There are no noble wars, just noble warriors.



### Holiday Office Closings

*Veterans Day* - Monday, November 11, 2013 closed

*Thanksgiving* - Wednesday, November 27th closing at 2:00, Thursday & Friday, November 28th & 29th, 2013 closed

*Christmas* - Tuesday, December 24th closing at Noon, Wednesday & Thursday, December 25th & 26th, 2013 closed

*New Years* - Tuesday closing at Noon, Wednesday, January 1, 2014 closed