



Vietnam Veterans In Canada

General Meeting (2005-18)

AGENDA 481

01 September 2005

*British Columbia Regiment (DCO)
Beatty Street Armoury
620 Beatty Street
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada*

Ten Minute Warning
1920 Hours
(Sergeant At Arms)

Call to Order
1930 Hours
(Sergeant at Arms)

Moment of Silence

United States Military Casualty Reports

Received since 18 August 2005

1st Lt. Laura M. Walker, 24, of Texas. Walker died on August 18, 2005, in Kandahar, Afghanistan, when an improvised explosive device detonated underneath her HMMWV during ground assault convoy operations. She was assigned to the Army's 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 555th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (Provisional), Fort Lewis, Wash.

Sgt. Robert G. Davis, 23, of Jackson, Mo. Davis died on August 18, 2005, in Kandahar, Afghanistan, when an improvised explosive device detonated underneath his HMMWV during ground assault convoy operations. He was assigned to the Army's 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 555th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (Provisional), Fort Lewis, Wash.

Sgt. Nathan K. Bouchard, 24, of Wildomar, Calif. Bouchard died on August 18, 2005, in Samarra, Iraq, where an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV following a mine assessing mission. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

Staff Sgt. Jeremy W. Doyle, 24, of Chesterton, Md. Doyle died on August 18, 2005, in Samarra, Iraq, where an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV following a mine assessing mission. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

Spc. Ray M. Fuhrmann, II, 28, of Novato, Calif. Fuhrmann died on August 18, 2005, in Samarra, Iraq, where an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV following a mine assessing mission. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

Pfc. Timothy J. Seamans, 20, of Jacksonville, Fla. Seamans died on August 18, 2005, in Samarra, Iraq, where an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV following a mine assessing mission. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

Sgt. Willard T. Partridge, 35, of Ferriday, La., died on August 20 in Baghdad, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Partridge was assigned to the 170th Military Police Company, 504th Military Police Battalion, 42nd Military Police Brigade, Fort Lewis, Wash.

Spc. Blake W. Hall, 20, of East Prairie, Mo. Hall died on August 21 near Baylough, Afghanistan, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during patrol operations. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vicenza, Italy.

1st Lt. Joshua M. Hyland, 31, of Missoula, Mont. Hyland died on August 21 near Baylough, Afghanistan, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during patrol operations. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vicenza, Italy.

Sgt. Michael R. Lehmilller, 23, of Anderson, S.C. Lehmilller died on August 21 near Baylough, Afghanistan, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during patrol operations. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vicenza, Italy.

Pvt. Christopher L. Palmer, 22, of Sacramento, Calif. Palmer died on August 21 near Baylough, Afghanistan, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during patrol operations. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vicenza, Italy.

Lance Cpl. Phillip C. George, 22, of Houston, Texas, died Aug. 18 from enemy small arms fire while conducting combat operations near Taleban, Afghanistan. George was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

Pfc. Elden D. Arcand, 22, of White Bear Lake, Minn. Arcand died on August 21, 2005, in Mosul, Iraq, where his M915A1 tractor pulling a 7,500-gallon tanker accidentally rolled over. He was assigned to the Army's 360th Transportation Company, 68th Corps Support Battalion, 43rd Area Support Group, Fort Carson, Colo.

Staff Sgt. Brian L. Morris, 38, of Centreville, Mich. Morris died on August 21, 2005, in Mosul, Iraq, where his M915A1 tractor pulling a 7,500-gallon tanker accidentally rolled over. He was assigned to the Army's 360th Transportation Company, 68th Corps Support Battalion, 43rd Area Support Group, Fort Carson, Colo.

2nd Lt. James J. Cathey, 24, of Reno, Nev., died Aug. 21 of injuries caused by an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations near Al Karmah, Iraq. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Pfc. Ramon Romero, 19, of Huntington Park, Calif., died Aug. 22 when the vehicle he was in was struck by an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations near Fallujah, Iraq. Romero was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, Calif. As part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, his unit was attached to the 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward).

Spc. Joseph C. Nurre, 22, of Wilton, Calif., died on Aug. 21, 2005, near Samarra, Iraq, where an improvised explosive device detonated near his M916 tractor during convoy operations. Nurre was assigned to the Reserve's 463rd Engineer Battalion, Weirton, W. Va.

1st Lt. Carlos J. Diaz, 27, of Juana Diaz, P.R., died on Aug. 23, 2005, in Baqubah, Iraq, when enemy forces detonated an explosion near his position. Diaz was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Ga.

Staff Sgt. Victoir P. Lieurance, 34, of Seymour, Tenn. Lieurance died on August 22, 2005, in Samarra, Iraq, when he was conducting patrol operations and an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV. He was assigned to the Army National Guard's 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Sparta, Tenn.

Sgt. Joseph D. Hunt, 27, of Sweetwater, Tenn. Hunt died on August 22, 2005, in Samarra, Iraq, when he was conducting patrol operations and an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV. He was assigned to the Army National Guard's 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Sparta, Tenn.

Master Sgt. Chris S. Chapin, 39, of Proctor, Vt., died on Aug. 23, 2005, in Ar Ramadi, Iraq during combat operations when he was attacked by enemy forces using small arms fire. Chapin was assigned to the Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion (General Studies), 124th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), Colchester, Vt.

Spc. Hatim S. Kathiria, 23, of Fort Worth, Texas, died on Aug. 22, 2005, in Baghdad, Iraq, where an enemy rocket impacted near his position. Kathiria was assigned to the 703rd Forward Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

Sgt. 1st Class Trevor J. Diesing, 30, of Plum City, Wis. Diesing died on August 25, 2005, in Husaybah, Iraq, of injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his position. He was assigned the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Master Sgt. Ivica Jerak, 42, of Houston, Texas. Jerak died on August 25, 2005, in Husaybah, Iraq, of injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his position. He was assigned to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Cpl. Timothy M. Shea, 22, of Sonoma, Calif. Shea died on August 25, 2005, in Husaybah, Iraq, of injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near their position. He was assigned to the Army's 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Fort Benning, Ga.

Staff Sgt. Damion G. Campbell, 23, of Baltimore, Md., died on August 26, 2005, in Khayr Kot, Afghanistan, where an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during a combat patrol. Campbell was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, Vicenza, Italy.

Sgt. 1st Class Obediah J. Kolath, 32, of Louisburg, Mo., died on Aug. 28, 2005, in Landstuhl, Germany, of injuries sustained on Aug. 25, 2005, in Husaybah, Iraq, where an improvised explosive device detonated near his position. The incident involved three other soldiers whose deaths were announced on Aug. 27, 2005. Kolath was assigned to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Spc. Joseph L. Martinez, 21, of Las Vegas, Nev., died on Aug. 27, 2005, in Tal Afar, Iraq, where his dismounted patrol was engaged by enemy forces using small arms fire. Martinez was assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Carson, Colo.

This brings the total U.S. deaths to 1978 plus those who died prior to 29 May 2003.

Perimeter Check (Sergeant At Arms)

Introduction of Scheduled Guests, New Members, and Visitors

None scheduled

Announcements and Acknowledgements

President's Remarks

(W. Carmack, USMC, Ret.)

1st Vice President's Remarks

(K. Payne, USN)

2nd Vice President's Remarks

(K. Lang, AUS)

Chief of Staff's Remarks

(S. O'Grady, AUS)

General Collection

Minutes of the previous VVIC General Meeting

Chief of Staff.

The Minutes for VVIC Meeting 480, held 04 August 2005, were not recorded.

Administrative Items (S-1)

1. Main VVIC Address ownership reverting to CFT, effective 02 September 2005
2. Discussion of the effects of Southern Cross III on VVIC operations.
3. Operation Lazarus

Firebase Canada 2006 (Nelson)

Senior Chief Mac McInness has been appointed VVIC Representative to the City of Nelson

This is his report:

Visit to Nelson 16-17 Aug 2005

I arrived in Nelson at 1030 and went straight to a meeting with the Mayor, Dave Elliott, who I found to be a personable guy, in shorts and sandals when I had dressed in slacks and a dress shirt.

After reading on the net about his views, and his interviews, I was apprehensive but he assured me that he was VERY misquoted. He came across as a peacenik type and was more interested in the security of the event. I assured him that we would take care of our own but he stated what would we do if Hells

Angel types showed up. I had to go back to "we can take care of our own" and any dissenters or problem makers that were not part of our group, would be a problem for the RCMP. I also stated that the Vietnam Veterans Motorcycle Club may arrive but they are only vets on bikes and are the same as vets in motorhomes. I said that I would see him next summer but he stated that he had an election to go through before then.

Then I met with Roy Heuckendorff, the Executive Director of the Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce. We had a very cordial meeting and was assured that the C of C will participate in any way possible to make this a great event.

I met with Fred Easton who is a member of the Our Way Home committee. Fred gave me a tour of the city and took me to possible camp sites, well out of town, and to the ice rink that Our Way Home has reserved for the stage and final concert. This has a 800+ seating capacity and will be a great venue.

Fred and I got along very well and decided that him and I would be the conduits from each group for the logistics of the event.

CONCLUSIONS:

The Mayor stated that there was no place downtown that we could hold this event (camping and motorhomes) but Fred stated that in the past the airport has been closed to hold events like ours. Fred also stated that the Our Way Home contingent, for the most part, would be "hotel" types versus us that would be mostly motorhome/camper types.

The airport is right downtown and is within two blocks of the ice rink and restaurants. If closed it could hold more than 200 camper units. I estimate that we will have 50-100 units.

Fred showed me farmers fields more than 6 miles out of town but if we went there we would have as much punch as holding the event in the Carmack back yard in Maple Ridge.

If we cannot get the airport cite then it would be a logistical nightmare. I would offer that the Our Way Home committee, whose members live in Nelson, put pressure on the city to open the airport for the weekend.

Fred stated that there are groups in town that do mobile pancake breakfasts in the morning and hamburgers etc. in the afternoon.

Nelson is a small town that is being assaulted by the 2005 era hippies and reminds me of Whistler 25 years ago. There are tons of young people who are trying to outdress (outgross) each other, but there are lots of good restaurants and lots of expensive hotels.

We can pull this off, but only if we can get the airport site.

Mac

Copy to: Roy Heuckendorff, Fred Easton, Isaac Romano

Motion to endorse Senior Chief McInnes as the VVIC Firebase Canada 2006 Representative with authority to act fully in the name of the group.

Quartermaster Activities

(Senior Chief Mac McInnes, USN Ret)

Veteran Outreach

Update: Stivers, John (USMC) 1971-75 6064 Flight Equipment Spec, NDSM, Vietnam Era. Follow up.

Director Motions

Put forth by Don Sinclair:

Propose that at next meeting a motion to have a questionnaire put on the web site to reach out and inform all former, current, lost contacts, and non-attending members that the VVIC is the pre-eminent veterans self help group in Canada. This group has done so much for those that have come to its table. However, now with lingering membership this great organization will go to dust.

Therefore, we who are left owe those still out in the cold to do all we can to keep fighting for Veterans causes.

New Business from the Floor:

The next General Meeting is 15 September 2005 at 1930 hours at the British Columbia Regiment.

Vet Stress Might Rise With Review of 72,000 PTSD Cases

By Tom Philpott
Military.com 18 August 2005

Ronald Nesler of Las Cruces, N.M., a Vietnam veteran rated 100-percent disabled by post-traumatic stress disorder, learned this month that his case, as decided in 1997 by the Department of Veterans Affairs, lacked documents to support the finding of service-connected PTSD.

The VA regional office in Albuquerque advised Nesler in an Aug. 11 letter that he has 60 days to provide evidence he was exposed to the stressful wartime incidents described in his claim papers years ago.

"Otherwise, benefits, if confirmed entitlement is not established, may result in a change in your disability claims compensation," the VA letter warned. The sentence was set off by bold-face and underlined type.

Nesler's "permanent and total" disability award is suddenly at risk because of a VA inspector general review of 2,100 randomly-selected PTSD cases with 100-percent disability awards. The IG found that 25 percent, or 527 of them, lacked documents to verify veteran-reported evidence.

The IG review of PTSD cases was released in May, as part of a 200-page report on variances in VA disability compensation across the nation.

Many more than 527 PTSD cases are at risk, however. The VA has announced it will review documents of 72,000 PTSD cases, those awarded 100-percent disability ratings from Oct. 1, 1999, through Sept. 30, 2004.

Over those five years, the number veterans awarded compensation for PTSD jumped by 80 percent, from 120,000 cases in fiscal 1999 to 216,000. The planned review of the 72,000 cases likely won't begin until January, said VA spokesman Scott Hogenson.

"Everybody talks about how PTSD is a very subjective diagnosis. This is not about diagnosis," said Hogenson. This is about collecting the empirical paperwork that says, 'Yes, this individual was in this set of circumstances during this time in which these things happened, which may have led to post-traumatic stress.' "

Legitimate stressors in a veteran's service jacket might be descriptions and dates of combat engagements or "de facto" stress indicators like a Combat Infantry Badge or Purple Heart.

The aim is to verify exposure to conditions that might leave a veteran with PTSD. The IG study suggested that claim examiners have been lax in demanding documents.

From 1999 to 2004, the IG said, PTSD payments jumped by 149 percent, from a \$1.7 billion total a year to \$4.3 billion. To show the potential cost of not seeking evidence of stressors in PTSD cases, the IG said a 25 percent error rate would have caused "questionable payments" of \$860 million for VA in 2004 and \$19.8 billion over those veterans' lifetimes.

Nesler, who has a wife and handicapped step-daughter, receives PTSD compensation of a little over \$2500 a month. He said VA officials have assured him that a decision to lower his PTSD rating would reflect a VA mistake. It should not raise suspicion of fraud. They also have assured him, though not in writing, that his VA compensation won't fall.

They do so, most likely, because Nesler has a 100-percent rating for prostate cancer. The VA presumes this cancer, if suffered by Vietnam veterans, presumably is from exposure to Agent Orange, a defoliant used widely during that war.

Nesler said his disability for cancer is not "permanent and total" like his PTSD award. He knows of many veterans treated for cancer who have seen their rating, and thus their pay, drop sharply following treatment.

A 1967 draftee, Nesler reached Vietnam in 1970. He served for 13 of his 14 months as a meteorological observer for B Battery, 6th Battalion, 32nd Artillery, part of the 1st Field Forces Vietnam. The whole war experience was stressful, Nesler said, though his unit came under fire only seven or eight days while he was there. His most disturbing memories, he said, are of atrocities committed by soldiers. Nesler said he saw an American soldier detonate a directional mine toward a small bus, filled with Vietnamese women and children, near the town of Ninh Hoa.

The incident, he said, was covered up but the screams and faces haunt him still. Nesler said he also feels guilt for not having filed an official incident report.

Nesler, a staff sergeant, was discharged in 1975 after eight years. He wasn't feeling well and, as the years passed, he grew more anxious, had nightmares, insomnia and difficulty concentrating, all of which he VA later would tie to the war. In 1997, before VA approved his PTSD claim, Nesler gave to VA the names of a senior officer, two warrant officers and several senior enlisted soldiers who likely could verify the bus incident.

"I thought that was my proof," he said. A VA official told him only recently that the names were never contacted. Still, the VA ruled in 1997, based on "un-refuted evidence," that Nesler had served in a combat zone, had witnessed "a bus being bombed" and had a well-founded diagnosis of PTSD. It found "total occupational and social impairment" from a variety of symptoms.

Yet, Nesler said, he was in far better shape then than he is today. "I have emphysema. I have cancer. I have a torn ligament in my shoulder. I have severe arthritis. I have PTSD... And I get this [letter] dropped in my lap. Right now my life is on hold 'til I find out what's going to happen."

If the VA experience with 2100 PTSD cases is repeated in a review of 72,000 next year, one quarter of these vets, about 18,000, might feel their own stress levels rise as VA presses them to better document their claims.

To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA, 20120-1111, e-mail milupdate@aol.com or visit www.militaryupdate.com