



# Vietnam Veterans In Canada

## General Meeting (2006-12)

# AGENDA 500

08 June 2006

*British Columbia Regiment (DCO), Vancouver, B.C.*

### 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 25 May 2006

**Pfc. Steven W. Freund, 20, of Pittsburgh, Pa.** Freund died May 23, while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

**Lance Cpl. Robert G. Posivio III, 22, of Sherburn, Minn.** Posivio died May 23, while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

**Pfc. Caleb A. Lufkin, 24, of Knoxville, Ill.,** died on May 25, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C., of injuries sustained on May 4, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his RG-31 Mine Protected Vehicle during combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq. Lufkin was assigned to the 5th Engineer Battalion, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

**Lance Cpl. Kevin A. Lucas, 20, of Greensboro, N.C.,** died May 26, while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

**Capt. Douglas A. Dicenzo, 30, of Plymouth, N.H.** Dicenzo died in Baghdad, Iraq, on May 25, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during combat operations. He was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 6th Infantry, 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Baumholder, Germany.

**Spc. Robert E. Blair, 22, of Ocala, Fla.** Blair died in Baghdad, Iraq, on May 25, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during combat operations. He was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 6th Infantry, 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Baumholder, Germany.

**Spc. J. Adan Garcia, 20, of Irving, Texas,** died on May 27, when his convoy encountered small arms fire received while returning from an explosive ordinance mission. Garcia was assigned to the 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, N.Y.

**Spc. Jeremy M. Loveless, 25, of Estacada, Ore.,** died in Mosul, Iraq on May 29, when his Stryker came under enemy small arms fire during combat operations. Loveless was assigned to the Army's 2nd Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

**Cpl. Richard A. Bennett, 25, of Girard, Kan.** Bennett died May 30, following a non-hostile helicopter accident near Al Taqaddum, Iraq, on May 27. He was assigned to Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron-169, Marine Aircraft Group-39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

**Capt. Nathanael J. Doring, 31, of Apple Valley, Minn.** Doring died May 30, following a non-hostile helicopter accident near Al Taqaddum, Iraq, on May 27. He was assigned to Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron-169, Marine Aircraft Group-39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

**Capt. James A. Funkhouser, 35, of Katy, Texas,** died in Baghdad, Iraq, on May 29, of injuries sustained when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during reconnaissance patrol operations. Funkhouser was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

**Spc. Bobby R. West, 23, of Beebe, Ark.,** died in Baghdad, Iraq, on May 30, of injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated during dismounted patrol operations. West was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

**Cpl. Alexander J. Kolasa, 22, of White Lake, Mich.,** died in Baghdad, Iraq, on May 31, of non-combat related causes. Kolasa was assigned to the 704th Main Support Battalion, 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

**Sp. Brock L. Bucklin, 28, of Grand Rapids, Mich.**, died May 31, in Balad, Iraq, of a non-combat related cause. Bucklin was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colo.

**Sgt. Benjamin E. Mejia, 25, of Salem, Mass.**, died in Marez, Iraq, on May 31, of non-combat related causes. Mejia was assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

**Pfc. Brett L. Tribble, 20, of Lake Jackson, Texas**, died in Ar Ramadi on June 3 of injuries sustained in Ar Ramadi, Iraq on June 2, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during combat operations. Tribble was assigned to the Army's 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, Baumholder, Germany.

**Cpl. Ryan J. Cummings, 22, of Streamwood, Ill.**, died June 3, from wounds received while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

**Staff Sgt. Darren Harmon, 44, of Newark Del.**, died in Haditha, Iraq, on June 3, from a non-combat related cause. Harmon was assigned to the Army Reserves 203rd Military Intelligence Battalion, 205th Military Intelligence Brigade, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. The incident is under investigation.

**Cpl. Derek A. Stanley, 20, of Tulsa, Okla.**, died in Salerno, Afghanistan, on June 5, from a non-combat related cause. Stanley was assigned to the 710th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, N.Y. This incident is under investigation.

**Petty Officer 1st Class Gary T. Rovinski, 44, of Roseville, Ill.**, died June 5, in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, as a result of enemy action when his HMMWV was struck by an improvised explosive device. Rovinski was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 25, Fort McCoy, Wis.

**Maj. Michael D. Stover, 43, of Mansfield, Ohio**, died June 3 from a non-hostile incident in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to Marine Wing Support Squadron-371, Marine Wing Support Group-37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz.

**This brings the total U.S. deaths to 2629 plus those who died prior to 29 May 2003.**

**Perimeter Check (Sergeant At Arms)**

**Call to Order (Sergeant At Arms)**

**Introduction of Scheduled Guests, New Members, and Visitors**

Sid

**Announcements and Acknowledgements**

**LZ North to celebrate 20<sup>th</sup> and final year:**

Lee Hitchins of the Ottawa group and former President of the Canadian National Vietnam Veterans Memorial effort has announced the 20<sup>th</sup> and final occurrence of the annual event.

He says, in part, in a email received earlier this week:

“Can you let the guys know of our final re-union this year. 20 years is enough and most of us are just plain tired. Hope to see you out if you are in the area. This year is the 20th and final L Z North in Smiths Falls at the same place and time as always. All are invited . July 6,7,8 and 9th.

Regards

Lee Hitchins, President CVVO

16 Mary St. N.

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**President’s Remarks**

(W. Carmack, USMC)

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President’s Remarks**

(K. Payne, USN)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President’s Remarks**

(K. Lang, AUS)

**Chief of Staff’s Remarks**

(S. O’Grady, AUS)

**Sergeant At Arms Remarks**

(G. Flowers, USMC)

**Service Officer’s Remarks**

(L. MacKay, USMC)

**General Collection**

## **Minutes of the previous VVIC General Meeting**

Chief of Staff.

Not available.

## **Administrative Items (S-1)**

1. Dues review
2. Bank Signing Authority

## **Veterans Affairs Update**

### **Quartermaster Activities**

(Senior Chief Mac McInnes, USN Ret)

There is inventory of all items.

### **Veteran Outreach**

### **Constitutional Tweaks.**

Adjusting the Constitution to allow for more than one Past President on the Board.

### **Attached Articles:**

1. Purple Heart stamp daily reminder of valour.
2. More Vietnam War papers released.
3. Gunnery Sergeant Michael J. Mella.
4. Memorial Day

Handouts:

1. Federal register, DVA 38 CFR Part 5

## **American Legion**

**New Business:**

**New business from the floor:**

*The next General Meeting is 22 June 2006 at 1930 hours at the British Columbia Regiment.*

## Purple Heart Stamp Daily Reminder of Valor

### *VA Secretary Praises Issuance of New Purple Heart Stamp*

WASHINGTON (May 26, 2006) - In continuing recognition of the sacrifices of combat-wounded veterans, the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, joined with top officials from the U.S. Postal Service today to unveil a new Purple Heart stamp.

Nicholson, a West Point alumnus and retired colonel in the Army reserves, also presented the Purple Heart medal to two soldiers being treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center for combat wounds.

"This stamp will be a daily reminder of the extraordinary valor of our service members," said Nicholson during remarks at a ceremony for the first day of issue for the stamp held at Arlington National Cemetery.

"It is fitting that we have every-day testimonials to the wounds of war that, for some veterans, have occurred through their brave and selfless service to our grateful nation," Nicholson added.

Receiving the Purple Heart were Army Specialist Michael Hilliard and Army Specialist Ian Wagner.

The new 39-cent postal stamp has the image of the military's Purple Heart medal. Created by George Washington in 1782 for soldiers in the Continental Army, the Purple Heart now goes to military men and women wounded in combat. Next of kin of veterans who die in combat also receive the medal.

In 2003, the U.S. Postal Service first issued a 37-cent stamp with the medal's distinctive image - a profile of George Washington on a purple background within a heart-shaped medallion. The new stamp has the same image, although it comes in the new 39-cent value set for first-class postage.

## More Vietnam War Papers Released

### Kissinger Told China U.S. Could Accept Communist Takeover

By Calvin Woodward  
Associated Press  
Saturday, May 27, 2006; A22

Henry A. Kissinger quietly acknowledged to China in 1972 that Washington could accept a communist takeover of South Vietnam if that evolved after a withdrawal of U.S. troops -- even as the war to drive back the communists dragged on with mounting deaths.

President Richard M. Nixon's envoy told Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai: "If we can live with a communist government in China, we ought to be able to accept it in Indochina."

Kissinger's blunt remarks surfaced from a collection of papers released yesterday by George Washington University's National Security Archive. The collection, from his years of diplomacy, was made up of documents available at the National Archives and obtained through the research group's declassification requests.

Kissinger's comments appear to lend credence to the "decent interval" theory posed by some historians who say the United States was prepared to see communists take over Saigon as long as, to save face, that happened long enough after a U.S. troop departure.

But Kissinger cautioned in an interview yesterday against reaching easy conclusions from his words of more than three decades ago. "One of my objectives had to be to get Chinese acquiescence in our policy," he said.

"We succeeded in it, and then when we had achieved our goal, our domestic situation made it impossible to sustain it," he said, explaining that he meant Watergate and its consequences.

The papers consist of about 2,100 memorandums of Kissinger's secret conversations with senior officials abroad and at home from 1969 to 1977 while he served under Nixon and President Gerald R. Ford as national security adviser, secretary of state and both. The collection contains more than 28,000 pages.

The meeting with Zhou took place in Beijing on June 22, 1972, during stepped-up U.S. bombing and the mining of harbors meant to stall a North Vietnamese offensive that began in the spring. China, North Vietnam's ally, objected to the U.S. course but was engaged in a historic thaw of relations with Washington.

Kissinger told Zhou that the United States respected its Hanoi enemy as a "permanent factor" and probably the "strongest entity" in the region. "And we have had no interest in destroying it or even defeating it," he insisted.

He complained that Hanoi, in negotiations, had made one demand that he could never accept -- that the United States force out the Saigon government.

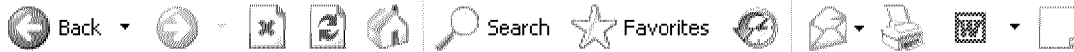
"This isn't because of any particular personal liking for any of the individuals concerned," he said. "It is because a country cannot be asked to engage in major acts of betrayal as a basis of its foreign policy."

In January 1973, the Paris Peace Accords officially halted U.S. action, left North Vietnamese troops in the South and preserved the Saigon government until it fell in April 1975.

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## 2005 Honorable Mentions

**Gunnery Sgt. Michael J. Mella**

FORMERLY KILO COMPANY, 3rd BATTALION, 1st MARINE REGIMENT, CAMP PENDLETON, CA.

Three weeks before a deployment to Iraq, Gunnery Sgt. Michael J. Mella became the commander of Weapons Platoon, Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., a job normally filled by an officer.

Soon after arriving in Iraq, Mella was wounded by a roadside bomb that severely damaged both his hands, and he was medically evacuated to the United States, where he endured 12 surgeries.

But even as he healed back home, he continued to provide leadership to his unit, dictating letters to his Marines still in harm's way. He also visited other injured Marines while hospitalized and gave speeches to raise money for the Injured Marines Semper Fi Fund.

## Memorial Day

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service.

There are many stories as to its actual beginnings, with over two dozen cities and towns laying claim to being the birthplace of Memorial Day. There is also evidence that organized women's groups in the South were decorating graves before the end of the Civil War: a hymn published in 1867, "Kneel Where Our Loves are Sleeping" by Nella L. Sweet carried the dedication "To The Ladies of the South who are Decorating the Graves of the Confederate Dead" (Source: Duke University's Historic American Sheet Music, 1850-1920).

While Waterloo N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966, it's difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day. It is more likely that it had many separate beginnings; each of those towns and every planned or spontaneous gathering of people to honor the war dead in the 1860's tapped into the general human need to honor our dead, each contributed honorably to the growing movement that culminated in Gen Logan giving his official proclamation in 1868. It is not important who was the very first, what is important is that Memorial Day was established. Memorial Day is not about division. It is about reconciliation; it is about coming together to honor those who gave their all.

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11, and was first observed on 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873. By 1890 it was recognized by all of the northern states. The South refused to acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I (when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war).

It is now celebrated in almost every State on the last Monday in May (passed by Congress with the National Holiday Act of 1971 to ensure a three day weekend for Federal holidays), though several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19 in Texas, April 26 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; May 10 in South Carolina; and June 3 (Jefferson Davis' birthday) in Louisiana and Tennessee.

In 1915, inspired by the poem "In Flanders Fields," Moina Michael replied with her own poem:

We cherish too, the Poppy red  
That grows on fields where valor led,  
It seems to signal to the skies  
That blood of heroes never dies.

