

Veterans & Community
Housing AKA

“Cruse-Miller Garrison”

November 11th 2006
Minneapolis VA
Medical Center Campus

HONORING living lives of:
“Principles Before Personalities”

George Larry Cruse - Co C 3/21st Infantry 196th LIB Vietnam

Johnny Miller-Co C 3/21st Infantry 196th LIB Vietnam

Roger Starr Co C 3/21st Infantry 196th LIB Vietnam-MACV Board

Geri Wedel WWII-Guadalcanal Army Nurse -VFW-MACV Founder

John & Penny O'Neil JR USMC- WWII -Korea -VFW-MACV Board

Carl & Audrey Sorenson-Korea-VFW-MACV Board

Donald R. Elverd Co C 1/5th 25th Infantry-Hazelden-MACV Board

Jerry McGrath US Army Infantry-Hazelden-MACV Board

Rosemary Hartman-Hazelden-MACV Board Chairman

Bernie Melter Ret. USMC Vietnam-Commissioner MN Veterans Affairs

Heather French Henry-Miss America 2000-Homeless Veterans Platform

US Senator Paul & Sheila Wellstone-Homeless Veterans Champion

Clayton “Chief” & Betty Pyle-Korea-Vietnam -Navy & Ret USAF-MACV Volunteer

Garrity “Buck” & Connie Vogel-Vitilas-173rd Airborne-Vietnam-MACV Volunteer

Chuck & Vi Lindberg WWII USMC Iwo Jima & all VFW 5555 HELP Volunteers

SSG JOHN K. WEBER CHAPTER 15 173rd AIRBORNE BRIGADE COLOR GUARD

Invocation: Brigadier General Paul Forsberg, United States Army Retired
Vietnam Veteran
Past MACVC Board Member

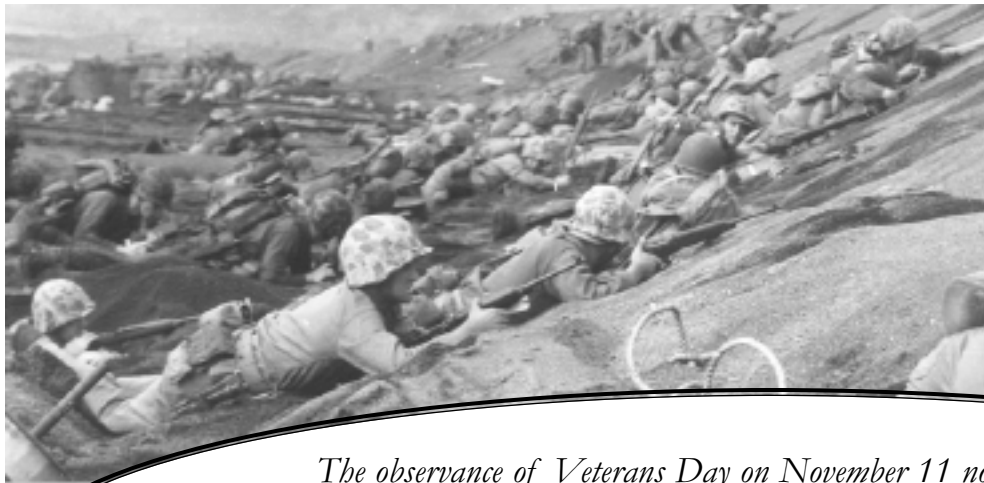
WWII- Richard L. Carroll
US Army Air Corps 1942-46
459th Heavy Bomb Group-15th Air Force
Co-pilot B-24 Italy 15 missions
Shot down July 2nd 44-Stalag Luft 1
Korea- Jerry Nelipenski
7th Infantry Division

Vietnam-Brigadier General Dennis Leach, United States Army Retired
West Point 1963-Airborne-Ranger
Vietnamese Rangers19-----
Co C 3rd Battalion 21st Infantry 196th Light Infantry Brigade

Vietnam-Sharon s
Vietnam 91st Evacuation Hospital-Nurse

1st Gulf War- Master Sergeant Thomas B. Boland, United States Army Retired
United States Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command
Enemy Prisoner of War - Psychological Operations-1985-2002
Formerly Lance Corporeal (Team, Lucky Punch),
3rd Platoon Alpha Company, First Team (3 Alpha 1), 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion,
3rd Marine Division, United States Marine Corps, Republic of Viet Nam, 1969
Past MACV Board Member

Afghanistan/Iraqi
LTC David Rabb
785th Combat Stress Team
Baghdad. Iraqi



The observance of Veterans Day on November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

Cruse - Miller Garrison

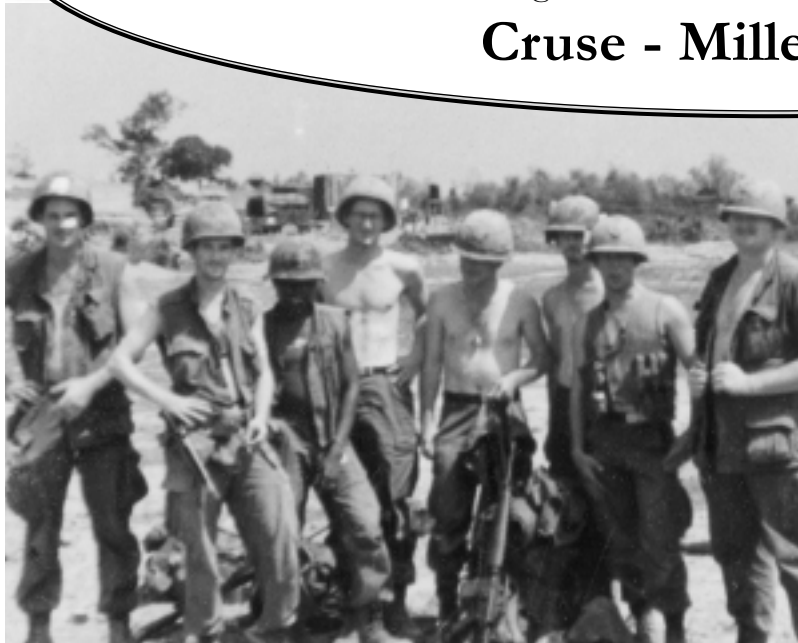
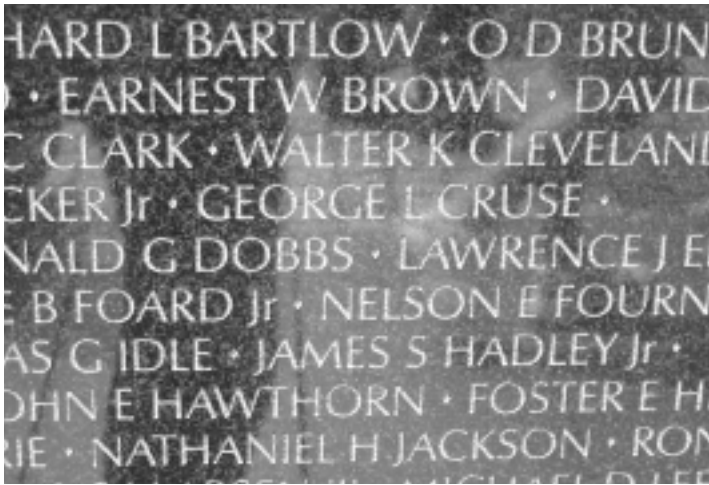


Photo identification here? or Cruse Miller here, with an emblem or two?



“Cruse-Miller Garrison”

*“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our principles, ever reminding us to put principles before personalities”. This is the 12th tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is the guide to live by when residing at **Cruse-Miller Garrison***

Garrison: A permanent stronghold providing protection for it's' troops.

Cruse-Miller: George Cruse was killed in action on the 2nd of May 1968 trying to save the life of Johnny Miller who also was killed that day. Johnny was trying to assist another wounded soldier at the time. They were common men doing their job, as they knew them.

They represent the goodness soldiers have toward others and their willingness to go into harms way so others may live in freedom and peace.

Their honor is in their response to the call to serve America in Vietnam. Me & Roger Starr (a MACV Board Member) the machine gun squad leader was with George and John along with nine other men killed that day. We served in the 3rd platoon of Company C of the 3rd Battalion of the 21st Infantry of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division in the Republic of South Vietnam. I Corps.

It is with the spirit of George & Johnny's devotion to others that will be the heart for Cruse-Miller Garrison and it is the common theme that runs from those honored & named today of living up to Principles before Personalities. Each name reflects these principles in action over a long period of time. Marines from WWII, Korea & Vietnam and their wives, A WWII Army Nurse, A Miss America, A US Senator & his wife along with a Gold Star wife whose husband was killed in Vietnam. Volunteers both civilian and soldiers serving in varied areas from WWII through today in veterans' service organizations and non-profit boards. They each lived practicing the idea of Principles before Personalities.

George and John join our Founding Fathers who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor for America. America is our Garrison; protected by men and women such as these serving in a new war today providing us a permanent stronghold of protection.

(Jimmie L. Coulthard of Tiger Base llc)

"We have shared the incommunicable experience of war. We felt, we still feel, the passion of life to its top. In our youths, our hearts were touched by fire."

Oliver Wendell Holmes



George Larry Cruse



Johnny Lee Miller





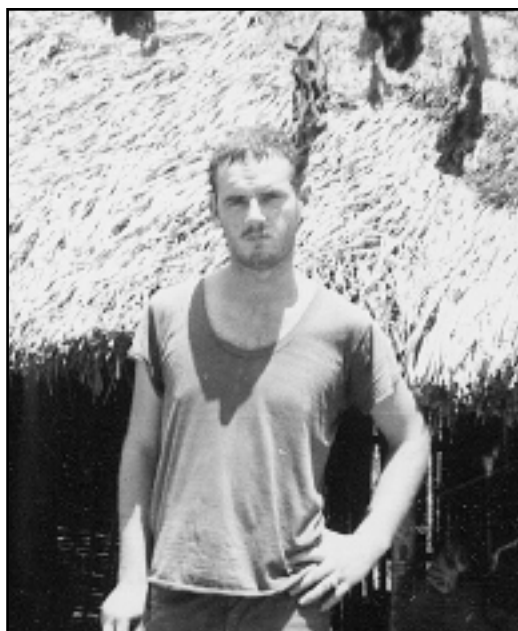
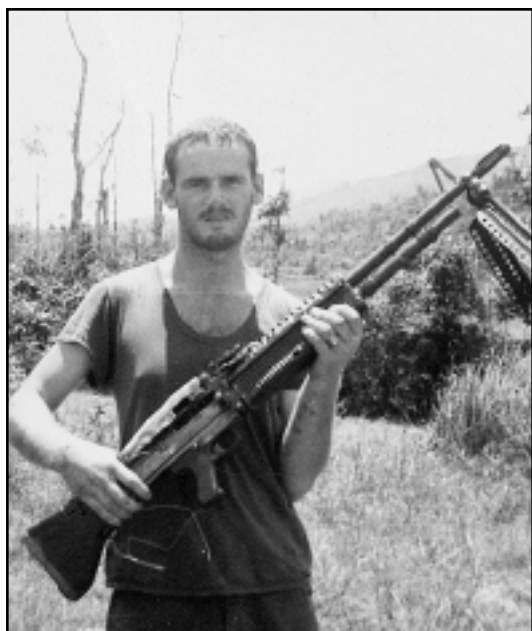
Code of Conduct

1. I am an American fighting man. I serve in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense.
2. I will never surrender of my own free will. If in command I will never surrender my men while they still have the means to resist.
3. If captured I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make ever effort to escape and aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy.
4. If I become a prisoner of war, I will keep faith with my fellow prisoners. I will give no information or take part in any action which might be harmful to my comrades. If I am senior, I will take command. If not I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me and will back them up in every way.
5. When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am bound to give only name, rank, service number and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and to its allies or harmful to their cause.
6. I will never forget that I am an American fighting man, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and the United States of America .



Roger Starr on May 2nd 1968 held the position of the third platoon of Company C, 3/21st Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade. He was the machine gun squad leader that day. After the initial opening of the battle he picked one of the M-60 machine guns and moved forward returning the enemies fire and kept them pinned down for the afternoon. Eleven men were killed that day along with twenty two others who were wounded. George Cruse and Johnny Miller were two of these killed that day. Without Rogers's actions our positions could have been overrun creating more casualties. Roger was awarded the Silver Star for this action. He also has an award for the Combat Infantry Badge and the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster. He was wounded and returned from the aid station after this action. He was wounded again a few days later. From this wounding he lost an eye. He was an excellent squad leader and is a very humble man. He says that even though it was over 38 years ago; in his mind it seems it was only yesterday. And that he will always be extremely proud of what we all did those few days. He serves today as a board member for MACV.







Gerl Wedel

**1st Lieutenant, Army Nurse Corps
1944 to 1946
Luzon Philippines
Asian Pacific Theater Ribbon with 1 battle star
Philippines Ribbon with 1 battle star
One Overseas Medal
WWII Lapel Button
Letter of Accommodation by Medical Corps Colonel
C.R. Steward, 248th General Hospital, APO 75**

An angel of mercy has died. She served in the U.S. Army as a nurse during WWII. She was in combat in the Philippines. She was one of 300 nurses who joined the Army together here in Minnesota and served together. Those nurses are the ones who spearheaded specialty-nursing care. Her care & concern for veterans did not stop at the end of the war. The name of this Angel is Geri Wedel.

Geri was a long time member of the veterans' community in Minnesota. One of her last great achievements was the formation of a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization with the mission of reintegrating veterans who were experiencing homelessness back into the society they once protected. She formed "Transitional Housing for Homeless Veterans of Ramsey County", a one house operation located at 55 Front Street in St. Paul. She did this with the help of a few dedicated veterans, such as John O'Neill Jr. & some money from World War II VFW Post 6845 and the encouragement of Mark Mulvihill from the St Paul Vets Center. This nonprofit started operation January 15th 1992 and she was the Founding Board President.

Her organization now is named Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) and has served over 2,400 veterans experiencing homelessness to date. It is a statewide, serving organization with locations in the Twin Cities/Metro, Duluth, Mankato and St. Cloud. It is a nationally recognized model for this issue. MACV received the "2002 Bruce Vento Distinguished Service Award" from the Minnesota Coalition for the homeless and the National Coalition for the Homeless. In 2003, MACV was presented from the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans the "Outstanding Member Award".

It is with great pride, admiration and affection for the work Geri has done in her life that this little piece is written. If she had not provided the leadership, which required constant energy and a belief in assisting these veterans as the right thing to do, MACV well might not exist and those who have been the recipients would not have made it as far as they have. She will be welcomed into Heaven by her fellow soldiers and veterans experiencing homelessness will escort her here on earth to her final resting place. Well-done Geri.

*Jimmie L. Coulthard
President/ CEO
Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans*

Those who Volunteer over and over

There is nothing more familiar or common than a picnic on a sunny day. But a picnic among strangers adds a new dimension especially if an older group serving a younger one. One might be tempted to report on the appetizing food or the “good time.” But the words generous, caring unpretentious and open must describe a particular gathering and those who brought their distinct brand of sunshine to this day.

In the shadow of the VA Hospital in Minneapolis, Building 47 is a small 13 bed facility for veterans experiencing homelessness. Veterans from Building 47 and other houses in a program with Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, were treated to a picnic laced with goodness and warmth. The dotting provided by the men and women of the Babcock VFW Post 5555 in Richfield, Minnesota, September 9, 2000.

Tom Brokaw wrote about men and women like this Richfield group in *The Greatest Generation*. Men like Don who served in World War II and Korea who speaks softly of the 39 years of marriage and the loss of his wife with “I couldn't have had it better, it was hard losing her.” Women like Vi and husband Charles proud that their three sons served their country, and quietly mention that Charles is the last survivor of the first flag raised on Iwo Jima.

Or Millie pleased that her Father and all of her brothers served in the U.S. Army. Yet, there is a poignant moment as we go back when she was in 7th grade. It was the day that a telegram was delivered announcing the loss of her brother Herman in the Battle of the Bulge. A tender moment frozen in time as Millie relates that her Mother was writing a letter to Herman at the very moment the telegram was delivered. George (USMC), Gordy and Wally, both Navy men, Horace and Betty add to the conversation and goodness of the day.

Why did these people take time out to bring their distinct brand of sunshine to this event? Don't they have a trip to plan or grandchildren to visit? Then I realize they are of the same breed who tramp the halls of the VA hospital bringing cheer and goodies to veterans. They are the same breed who just give and as part of lifelong giving. I feel overwhelmed by their generosity and acceptance of fellow veterans who served.

Submitted by Jim Coulthard, past President/CEO of Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, written by his wife Cathy after attending one of the picnics.





Clockwise from top left:
photo credit explaining these people,

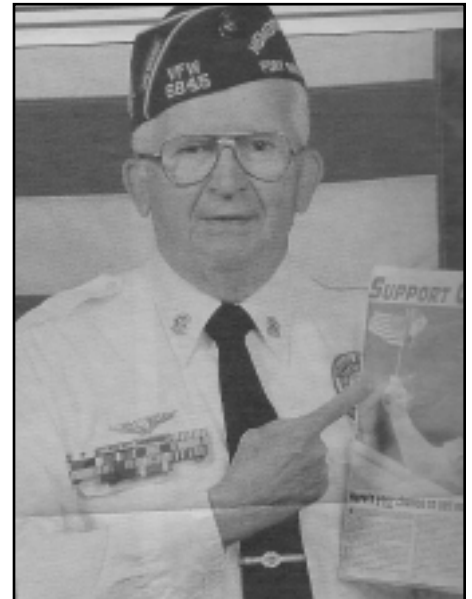
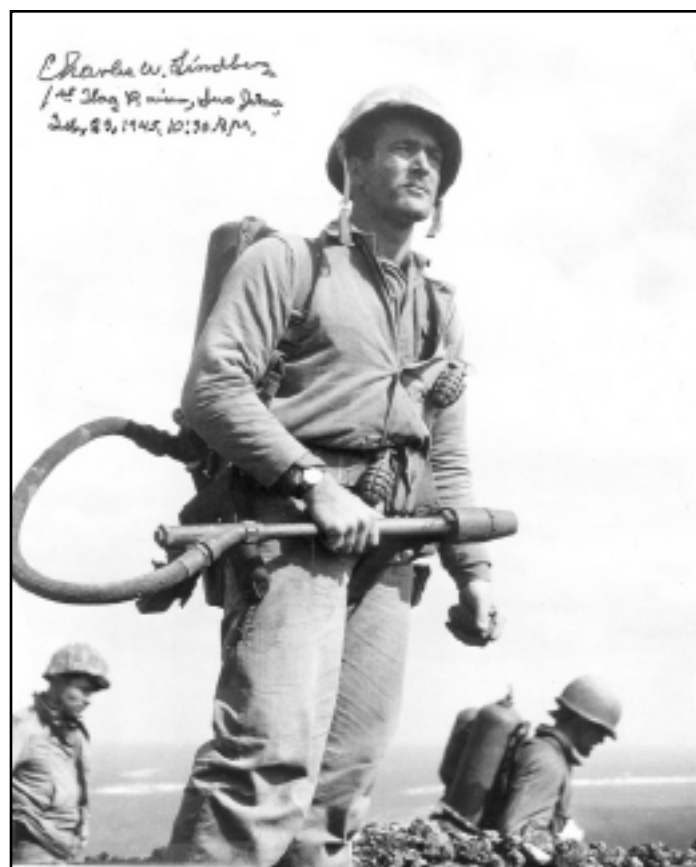


Photo credit explaining check here







Jimmie Coulthard's dream for this project came out of his belief that our community needs to honor and respect veterans, not only in glory but also in pain and struggle. He conceived of this project as one that would demonstrate an attitude of respect and dignity to all who are willing to make the effort to battle the demons of poverty, mental illness, addiction and despair. His belief in the 12 Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous that suggests "principles over personality" led him to honor two men, Johnny Miller and George Cruise, who died too young to reach their potential but continue to be remembered by their families and those who fought with them. This building is a demonstration of the power of determination and collaboration and symbolizes Hope

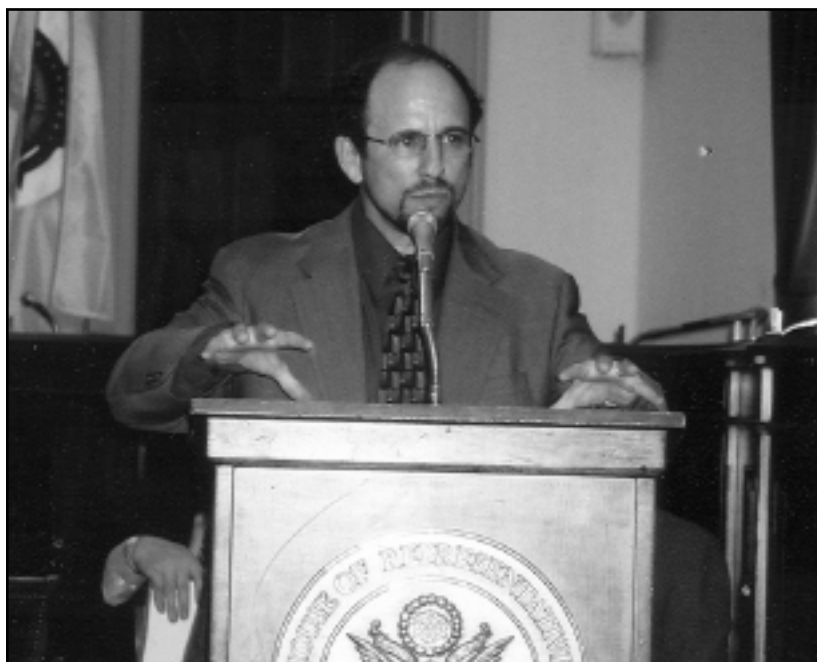
Past MACV Board Chairman Rosemary Hartman.





Sergeant Donald Ray Elverd

Served with Company C, 1st Battalion 5th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division as a combat infantryman in the Republic of South Vietnam 1967-1968. He is the recipient of the Bronze Star with V device signifying Valor along with the Combat Infantry Badge and the Purple Heart with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, being seriously wounded August 21st ,1968 in the Ben Cui Rubber Plantation. In this battle his unit was hit by an extremely larger force which killed & wounded many of his fellow friends. One of these friends was awarded posthumously the Medal of Honor. From those days and with the work he has done since returning to civilian life where he works with many veterans assisting them into recovery of many types he truly feels he has and is blessed by his creator to serve his comrades in war and peace that they might walk the earth with dignity and honor..





Special to the Star Tribune by Jeff Hutchens

Sen. Paul Wellstone greeted Jimmie Coulthard, president of the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans.

Advocate pushes for bill to assist homeless veterans

Congress is asked to fund plan for housing, job training, work

By Jessica Thompson
Star Tribune Washington
Bureau Correspondent

WASHINGTON, D.C. — When Jimmie Coulthard returned from the Vietnam War, he was crushed. He expected to come back a hero, but instead he was called a "baby killer." Feeling betrayed by the country that he had fought to protect, Coulthard dealt with his anger and loneliness by drinking.

He ended up homeless.

"It was really hard coming home," said Coulthard, president of the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. "I was pretty disgusted with America, and I despised most of the civilian population. I didn't fit in anywhere."

On Thursday, Coulthard came to Washington, D.C., to ask Congress to help him get other veterans clean and off the street.

Joining Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn., Coulthard testified before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, which is considering a bill aimed at ending homelessness among veterans within the next decade.

Act," named after Miss America 2000 for her efforts in combating homelessness among veterans. It would expand programs to help veterans, increase mental health facilities, build more transitional housing and address ways to prevent homelessness. Wellstone's office said the bill would cost \$910 million over a four-year period, beginning in 2002.

More than 90 percent of homeless veterans have had alcohol, drug or mental health problems, a 1999 Interagency Council on the Homeless study showed. Other common problems include a lack of education and job training, and limited family support systems.

Linda Boone, president of the National Association for Homeless Veterans, told the Senate Committee that "in a great many cases these problems and difficulties are directly traceable to that individual's experience in military service."

"We find that many of the veterans avoid asking for help, so they get sicker and they stay homeless longer. They tend to try to be survivors," Boone said.

Coulthard said that when he left for Vietnam, he was self-sufficient and "didn't believe in alcoholism or post-traumatic stress disorder." Ten years later, he went through treatment and learned he had both.

After Coulthard got clean, he decided to help others cope with their readjustment. Because resources for struggling veterans are limited, Coulthard said, he helped develop the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, which provides housing, job training, living skills classes and employment for homeless veterans.

Of the roughly 430,000 veterans in Minnesota, more than 4,000 are homeless, Coulthard said.

At the Senate hearing, Wellstone called the number of homeless veterans "a national scandal during a time of prosperity."

"The vast majority of homeless veterans fully honored their oath to defend and protect the United States," said Wellstone, who called Coulthard "my teacher" on homeless veterans' issues. "Unfortunately, we haven't fully honored our obligation to rescue them from the degradation and privations of life on the street."

Wellstone is the author of the "Heather French Henry Homeless Veterans Assistance

but a Bush administration official said the bill could reduce services for veterans if more homeless veterans became eligible for expensive care at VA hospitals. Thomas Garthwaite, undersecretary for health for the Department of Veterans Affairs, said the department could be forced to cut funding.

The bill has received lukewarm support in the Senate, gathering only 13 co-sponsors, including Sen. Mark Dayton, D-Minn. In the House, Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., is one of 138 co-sponsors, and she blamed the lack of support on conflicting priorities within Congress.

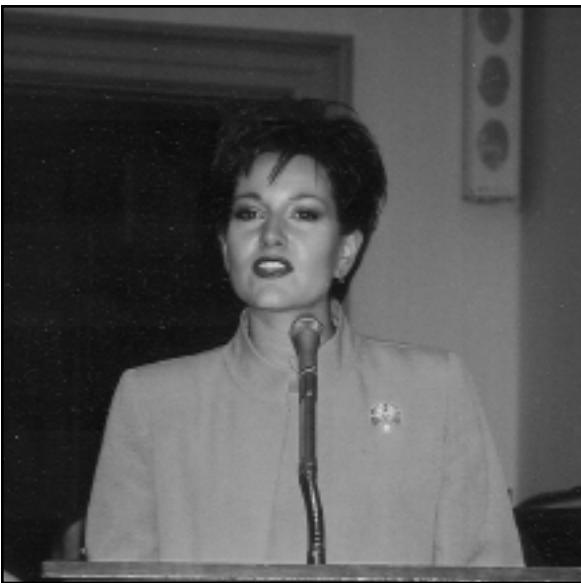
"With the huge tax bill that has been passed, we're seeing the economy in a downturn," she said. "We have put off infrastructure needs and social human needs of people in our community for a long time. . . It's time to stop telling our veterans to wait."

McCollum and Dayton said the bill faces an uphill battle because it will be competing for funding for education, prescription drugs, and possibly Social Security and Medicaid.

"The reality is we have . . . extremely limited funds for any additional social spending," Dayton said.

— Jessica Thompson is at intern@mcclatchydc.com.

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Bernard R. (Bernie) Melter:

His life experiences listed here is being used as an example of all those members being honored here today at the Cruse-Miller Garrison. Men and women as those from VFW 5555 help group. Betty Wellnitz, Deloris Stine, Marion Stinchfield, Dorothy Gisvold, Gordy Beusgens, George Udseth Chuck & Vi Lindbergh and Millie Johnson. Ray Bonnabeau, Dennis Forsberg, Joanne McCullough, Clayton "Chief" Pyle and his wife Betty. Tom Mullon, Mark Mulvihill, Gene House, Bill Johnson, Vince Pletcher, Vi Wagner, Kathy Hessberg, Carol Horn, James F. Carlson, Ray Early, Connie Vitalis, The 173rd Honor Guard are excellent examples of volunteer work after serving our country in one form or another. This work is preformed with much dignity for veterans and their families in varied situations. The help and direction provided by John and Penny O'Neill though out my time with MACV was greatly needed and much appreciated. John was one of the busiest men I knew. He was always on the march helping others.





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During this time friends of veterans passed away. First was Jerry Mc Garth, an Infantry Lieutenant, who was a MACV board member who assisted in educating the board about recovery from alcoholism and the importance of us having a 12 step recovery model for our program assisting veterans experiencing homelessness due to alcoholism. Jerry, Donald Ray Elverd and Rosemary Hartman , all from the Hazelden Treatment Center provided this much needed service

Under Rosemary's leadership as the MACV board chair the organization was able to purchase the nine transitional houses, secure the funding for the project we celebrate here today , the 140 unit "Cruse-Miller Garrison" which includes the sixty unit Al Loehr Veterans & Community Studio Apartments on the VA Campus in St. Cloud and the eleven Paul & Dorothy Radical Veterans Apartments located in Mankato.

Carl and then Audrey Sorenson passed away and they were people who raised money for the programs. They spent many hours helping others with their local VFW and Veterans Helping Veterans organization.

Then Clayton "Chief" Pyle died. He was the very 1st program volunteer to help us and he continued on in various endeavors that benefited veterans or their families. He was elected to the Minnesota Aviation Hall of Fame right before his death. A Marine, John O'Neill Jr., was the next veteran to go. He was laid to rest by his friends and comrades from the Friday Memorial Rifle Squad at Fort Snelling National Cemetery; a group he helped to organize, one of many projects he and Penny were involved in.

A Soldier of the Great War by Mark Helprin

He knew that this was because the war was still in him, and that it would be in him for a long time to come, for soldiers who have been blooded are soldiers forever. They never fit in-even when they finally settle down. The settling is tenuous for when they close their eyes they see their comrades who have fallen, that they cannot forget, that they do not forget. That they never allow themselves to heal completely is their way of expressing their love for friends who have perished. And they will not change because they have become what they have become to keep the fallen alive.

Civilians seldom understand that soldiers, once impressed into war, will forever take it for the ordinary state of the world, with all else illusion. The former soldier assumes that when time weakens the dream of civilian life and its supports pull away, he will revert to the one state that will always hold his heart. He dreams of war and remembers it in quiet times when he might otherwise devote himself to different things, and he is ruined for the peace. What he has seen is as powerful and mysterious as death itself, and yet he has not died, and he wonders why.

Bernie Melter enlisted in the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve and the regular Marine Corps from February 1955 to April 1976. He served as an Aviation Ordnance man (MOS-6511), Field Artilleryman (0811) and Unit Administrative Chief (0193) for most of his career. He retired at the Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity at Camp Pendleton, CA. He served three tours in the Western Pacific to include a full tour in Vietnam with Mike Battery, 4thBn, 11th Marines, FMFPac as part of the 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions in May65 to Jun66. He served a tour in the late fifties with VMO-2 of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and his last tour was with VMFA 115, an F4B Squadron with the 1st MAW in Iwakuni Japan, Cubi Point RPI, Naha Okinawa and DaNang RVN.

While on a 4 year tour in Milwaukee (58-62) he married Mary Anne (Midge) Czerwinski and they had 5 children, four of whom served in the Armed Forces, 3 in the Army and 1 with the SeaBees of the Navy. They have 15 grandchildren and 2 great granddaughters.

Upon retirement the family returned to Minnesota. Bernie became active in the VFW and attended college. He graduated with an AA degree from Inver Hills Comm. College and obtained a Bachelor of Science degree (Magna Cum Laude) from Mankato State University. He started his second career in Veterans Service working from Jan77 to Apr80 for the Dakota County Veterans Service Office as an Assistant VSO. In Apr80 he became the Goodhue County VSO and stayed in Goodhue County until Jan91 when he was appointed Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs by Governor Arne Carlson. He was reappointed for the Governor's second term and served two years into Governor Jesse Ventura's first term, retiring on 6Jan01.

He was selected by Governor Al Quie as one of the "Ten Outstanding Vietnam Veterans". The American Legion granted him their "Good Neighbor Award for work with Veterans." He has been Commander of his VFW Post 4452 and American Legion Post 142 of Cannon Falls, was Chapter Commander of Red Wing Chapter 5, Disabled American Veterans, a charter member of Marine Corps League Detachment 510, both of Red Wing, MN and charter member of AMVETS Post #1 of Mendota Heights, MN.

He was an All State Post Commander of the VFW and served through the chairs as District Commander. He was the Chief of Staff on the Department Level and Chair of the Veterans Service Committee on the VFW. He served as a member of the 3rd District American Legion as School Patrol/Legionville and as the District Service Officer. He also served as a Department Commander of the DAV, Department of Minnesota. He is currently the First District Chaplain, VFW and Department Judge Advocate of the DAV. He is an immediate Past Commander of the Ft. Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad, volunteer in his community as the Chairman, Goodhue County American Red Cross and have been involved with the Red Cross since 1980 at both the State and local level. He currently serves as Chair, Ft. Snelling Memorial Day Committee. He serves on the Tuesday Squad of the Ft. Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad and is on the Board of Directors of the Armed Forces Service Center at MSP Airport as well as volunteer with his wife Midge on the 0400-0800 watch on Thursday mornings. He continues to be active in Scouting as an Eagle Scout and is a holder of the Silver Beaver Award. He is the COR for the VFW sponsored Troop 39, Gamehaven Council. He serves his church as a Lector and Eucharistic Minister and in our Parish Jail Ministry two Sundays every other month. During his Post Marine Corps career he was deeply involved in homeless issues and in insuring that Women Veterans were honored and obtained the recognition and entitlements of their male counterparts.



Connie Vogel Vitalis: Gold Star wife of Garrity "Buck" Vogel from Troop E, 17th Cavalry, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Separate. These men were known as "Sky Soldiers" and he was very proud to be one of them. He was on his 4th day of an extended tour of duty when he was killed in action on March 6th, 1968..

An excerpt from *'The Faces Behind the Names'* (1999) in which Connie Vogel Vitalis wrote the following:

I began this article over a year ago, and I found 1998, becoming 1968, as I read Buck's letters and looked over the things from that period of time. It was then that I realized I had never dealt with his death, but had stuffed my feelings. As a nurse, I had good training for that kind of thing. So, unlike then, I decided to reach out and try to find some answers. I haven't found many, but I have started to

heal some of the pain that had been pushed way down in my gut. It's been a year of spiritual growth as well. I will be forever grateful to the members of the John Weber Chapter 15, of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, in St. Paul, Minnesota. They have been there for me, offering support and understanding whenever I've asked...and even when I haven't asked. My affiliation with them led me to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, a private, non-profit organization that assists homeless vets in obtaining housing, jobs, etc. I thoroughly enjoy my volunteer time with them and feel that I'm helping in some small way to assist those vets who are still having trouble 'coming home.' The one thing that I still feel is missing, is information from those that served with Buck. He would never discuss his time in Vietnam, and would answer any questions as briefly as possible. Since I have been around more of the vets from time to time, I can now better understand where he was coming from, but I don't even know what platoon he was in. I know he was trying to protect me, but any information about him would be so very important to all of us at this time. So, if any of you "grunts" out there that might read this and remember Buck, please, please get in touch with me. I'd like to close with a piece that I found this year, that has "talked to me" and helped me make it through the tough times.

It's entitled, "What is Death," written by Harry Scott Holland.

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I, and you are you. Whatever we were to each other that we are still. Call me by my old familiar name. Speak to me in the easy way which you always used to. Put no difference in your tone. Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together. Play, smile, think of me, pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. Let it be spoken without effect, without the trace of a shadow on it. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same that it ever was. There is absolutely unbroken continuity. Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?

I am waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner. All is well. Thanks for our "Magic Moment," Buckets. God keep you in his care.

Michael Norman

THESE GOOD MEN

I know now why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep on one another's knee. Comrades gather because they long to be with men who once acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity.

I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the U.S. Marine Corp. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never since given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another.

I cannot say where we are headed. Ours are not perfect friendships; those are the province of legend and myth. A few of my comrades drift far from me now, sending back only occasional word. I know that one day even those could fall to silence. Some of the men will stay close, a couple, perhaps, always at hand.

As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thoughts will be of my family - my comrades, such good men.

