



# Vietnam Veterans of America



Chapter 835 P.O. Box 6281 - Yuma, AZ 85366 – [vvayuma@roadrunner.com](mailto:vvayuma@roadrunner.com)

Web Page: <http://www.vvayuma835.org>

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## Tours Cut Short



President Bush declared progress in the Iraq war Thursday, saying terrorists "are on the run" and a generally improved security environment should permit further U.S.

troop reductions. Standing on the Colonnade outside the Oval Office of the White House, Bush also announced that effective Thursday, the duration of troop tours in Iraq will be cut from 15 months to 12 months. Bush said this reduction "will relieve the burden on our forces and it will make life easier for our wonderful military families."

## War Hero on Walk of Fame

From World War II hero to dancer and award-winning actor, **Charles Durning** has lived a storied life. Durning's more than 100 movie credits include "Tootsie," "Dog Day Afternoon," "To Be or Not To Be," "The Sting" and "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" A who's who of actors joined him at the ceremony on Hollywood Boulevard, including Ed Begley Jr., Jon Voight, Angie Dickinson and others.



"I never thought this would happen," Durning told the AP. "This is one of the secret awards I wanted. I was hoping this would happen in my lifetime and it did." Born in Highland Falls, N.Y., Durning said he was 17 when he went to war, along with his three brothers. "They dropped down the age (to enlist) to 18. I signed my mother's name and she was not happy about that," he said. During the war, Durning was seriously wounded as a member of the first wave of soldiers to land on Omaha Beach during the D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944. He was taken prisoner during the Battle of the Bulge and was one of a few survivors of the attack on American POWs at Malmedy, Belgium. Durning was honored with three Purple Hearts and a Silver Star.



Shipbuilding executives struggled Thursday to explain plans to abandon a destroyer program that the service's top brass and the Pentagon's chief weapons buyer described as vital just a few months

ago. Changing threats at sea, including increased deployments of diesel-powered submarines by potential U.S. adversaries, drove the service's move to end production of the futuristic DDG 1000 destroyer after just two ships, said Vice Adm. Barry McCullough, a deputy chief of naval operations.

## Extra Charges The Army Should Pay For

After adding all the extra equipment -- boots, foul-weather gear, uniforms and the like -- required to train before deploying to Iraq, Staff Sgt. Ashley Serrano had filled three bags. That was one more than American Airlines was willing to let fly without an extra baggage charge of \$100. Many airlines, faced with the rising price of jet fuel and other costs, have instituted luggage fees. And now military officials are having to re-evaluate policy as soldiers, many of whom are at lower pay grades, face significant charges to haul equipment required by their jobs. Serrano said he was confronted Friday at El Paso International Airport with a demand for \$100 for his third bag. When he mentioned he was headed for Camp Bowie -- where Texas Army National Guard soldiers train before deployment -- he said "they told him, without a smile, that the Army should have given him a voucher". A soldier traveling with Serrano had three extra bags and was charged \$300, he said.

## SS Liberty

Forty-one years after the American surveillance ship USS Liberty was napalmed, torpedoed and strafed by Israeli naval and air forces during the Six-Day War, another "Liberty" will be setting out from a Cyprus port in August to try to break through the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip. The "SS Liberty" is one of two ships -- along with "SS Free Gaza" -- that will be carrying an international group opposed to Israel's blockade of Gaza. Israel imposed the blockade just over a year ago.

## Master Chief Horacio Reyes Passes On

As you have read in the Yuma Sun hard copy recently, Master Chief Horacio Reyes passed away. He was member of the Yuma Chapter 835.

### New Email For Andy

[andrew.noriega@yahoo.com](mailto:andrew.noriega@yahoo.com)

### AZ State Council Meeting

The AZ State Council meeting will be held at American Legion Post 19 on Virginia Dr. on the 6th of Sept. I am in the process of getting the ladies auxiliary to supply lunch. If not, then I suggest the Yuma Landing as we did last time. The hall at Post 56 is already rented for that day, thus the change. If you are intending to attend the meeting, please keep this in mind.

### Golf Tournament

Bring your team registration forms for the Golf Tournament OR sign up as a volunteer. Will take reservations for the Hall of Fame program. Dick Darnell will be posthumously inducted this year Plans are being made to inter Dick's ashes out at the National Cemetery on the 25th of October. This will save his sisters and brother from needing to make two trips to Phoenix. More will follow when I have the information

NAM JAM data below (note: they have a web site this year!) The 2008 **POW/MIA National Recognition Day posters** (produced by The Defense Prisoner of War Missing Personnel Office) are available

Posters are available in **two (2) sizes** - 10" X 15" or 20" X 30". to order: <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/Posterform.htm>

<http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/> :  
<http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/powday/index.htm>

By regular mail send your requests to: DPMO, Attn: Posters, 241 18th Street South, Suite 800 Arlington, VA 22202. By phone call 703-699-1131. For all requests, please specify your name, number of posters, mailing address and telephone number.

[http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/powday/2008POWPosters/lowres\\_POW-MIA\\_2008.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/powday/2008POWPosters/lowres_POW-MIA_2008.pdf)

## VA Finally Moving in the Right Direction By Accepting Online Applications for Benefits

"It's about time!" said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), upon reading today's news release from the Department of Veterans Affairs that on-line applications are now being accepted from veterans, survivors, and other claimants filing initially for disability compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits without the additional requirement to submit a signed paper copy of the application.

### Color Guard Pass In Review The Vietnam Women's Memorial 15th Anniversary Commemoration

Vietnam Veterans of America is proud, once again, to be working in cooperation with the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation in the planning of the commemoration of the dedication of this memorial. VVA developed and organized the historic Color Guard Pass In Review Ceremony for the 10th Anniversary of VWM. It was recognized as a most dramatic, emotional and honorable observance.

On Veterans' Day, November 11, 2008, VVA will be hosting the 15th Anniversary Color Guard Pass In Review. To register and be a part of this moving event please send an e-mail to: [bwhitaker@vva.org](mailto:bwhitaker@vva.org). Include in your e-mail: Chapter #, Post # or group name; your location; contact information; number of individuals in your Color Guard. To review added details of this event along with formation location and time, check on the women's veterans committee.

### 2008 VVA and AVVA membership Directory

Harris Connect has started to contact our members, by phone and email, regarding the Membership Directory. This message is intended to assure our members that the calls from Harris Connect are legitimate. Members do not have to respond if they choose not to. The Directory is scheduled for completion in Fall 2008. To order the new 2008 VVA/AVVA member directory with color photos please contact Harris Connect at (800) 558-7915.

### Next Meeting

Our next meeting is to be August 19<sup>th</sup> 2008 at 7:00pm. We ask that as many of you come as possible. Location is American Legion Post 56 at 1490 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Yuma, AZ. 85364.