



In Service to America

Vietnam Veterans of America



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Glendale War Hero Dies At 91 years old

Silvestre Herrera, 91, a Mexico-born recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, died Monday at his Glendale, Arizona. Herrera,

who rose in courage and earned a place in history, also wore Mexico's highest honor for valor on the field of battle, making him the only person to earn both.

In 1945, Herrera, an Army private from Arizona, was awarded the Medal of Honor for saving his platoon from machine-gun fire near Mertzwiller, France, not far from the German border. The private first class with the 36th Infantry Division took out one emplacement, then charged through a minefield toward a second, losing both feet to explosions. The entire eight man German crew threw down its weapons and surrendered.

Two years ago, Herrera recalled receiving the Medal of Honor from President Harry S Truman during a ceremony on the White House lawn.

Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2007

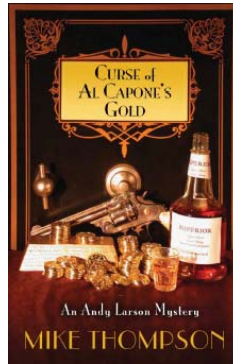
A bill to amend title 46, United States Code, to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II, and for other purposes.

Cold War Medal Act of 2007

A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the award of a military service medal to members of the Armed Forces who served honorably during the Cold War era.

Local VVA 835 Goings On

The Stand Down for 2008 location is not yet known but will be announced soon. Last year you may recall it was in March. Locations discussed were Desert Sun Stadium here in Yuma. There is no real discussion of the Rodeo parade, but be assured VVA 835 will participate; we'll let you in February newsletter.

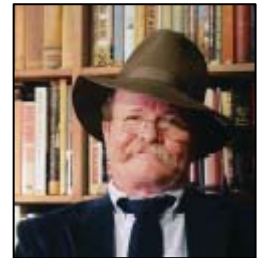


Curse of Al Capone's Gold

It was a simple plan. Andy Larson, a veteran of The Great War, who is now a North Dakota cop, along with four close friends, will hijack a truckload of bootleg booze coming in from Canada. During prohibition, these trucks ran with the regularity of busses, overwhelming all government attempts to stop them.

And to Larson, stealing from crooks wasn't really a crime. Everything goes wrong, when after months of meticulous planning; the men actually take down a whisky truck. An unexpected guard with a Tommy gun kills one of Larson's friends. After the ensuing bloody shootout, all four whiskey runners lay dead. When a shaken Larson and his remaining companions unload the whiskey, they find the reason for the increased security. Hidden in the whiskey on the truck is sixty-thousand dollars in gold coins belonging to Al "Scarface" Capone. The notorious gangster is not only infuriated, his reputation can only be maintained by making examples of anyone who dares challenge his rule. Very dead and very public examples. Capone's combination of rewards and threats ignites a furious hunt for his stolen gold along with the perpetrators of the daring deed. The hardest task Andy Larson will ever face is saving his remaining friends while trying to stay alive himself.

You may be asking yourself what this has to do with VVA. The author of this book is our own **Mike Thompson** currently living in San Angelo, TX and has been a writer, actor (HBO) and a fan of things of the 'ol days. If you're interested in his mystery book, try www.amazon.com or Barnes



and Noble Booksellers will carry this very interesting book. Consider checking it out. If he comes to town, he may even sign it for you. Thanks Mike for making a good story even better. Hope to see and Ruthie soon. We trust 2008 will be a rewarding year for you. Our very best to you both.

Agent Orange Equitable Compensation Act

A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, chapter 11, to clarify that an award of benefits based on a regulatory presumption established pursuant to 28 U.S.C. section 1116 after September 30, 2002, cannot be made effective earlier than the date the regulatory presumption was established; and to clarify that the presumption of herbicide exposure provided by 38 U.S.C. section 1116(f) applies only to veterans who served in Vietnam on land or on Vietnam's inland waterways and not to those who served only in waters offshore or in airspace above.

Mental Health Improvements Act of 2007

A bill to improve the treatment and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Sen. Daniel Akaka, (HI) introduced on 15 Oct 07. Two cosponsors and the status is that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings are to be held.

Battle of the Bulge



In late 1944, in the wake of the allied forces' a very successful D-Day (Decision Day) invasion of Normandy, France, it seemed as if the Second World War was all but

over. But on December 16, with the onset of winter, the German army launched a counteroffensive that was intended to cut through the Allied forces in a manner that would turn the tide of the war in Hitler's favor. The battle that ensued is known historically as The Battle of the Bulge. The courage and fortitude of the American Soldier was tested against great adversity. Nevertheless, the quality of his response ultimately meant the victory of freedom over tyranny.

A Christmas Gift From VVA 835 - Update

VVA 835 donated \$400 to a Army Community Services at YPG for the less fortunate soldiers there. The money was used for groceries and needed items for the people living there. We thank them for allowing us to help them out. On the same note, we all appreciate Brenda and Andy Noriega for their helping Valerie distribute goodies to the folks at YPG and MCAS.

Arizona State Council Meeting

This next quarter's meeting with the Arizona State Council will be held on January 18th 2008 in Tucson, AZ. They have reserved a block of rooms and the meeting room at the Holiday Inn Express in Marana. The room rates are \$89.00 per night and are reserved with a VVA

Arizona credit card. A total of ten rooms so you all need to get started making your reservations since they will have to call and cancel those that are not reserved by 11 January 2008. The confirmation number for these rooms is **66791684**. The meeting date is 18 January 2008 (a Saturday) and the President of VVA Arizona, Bill Messer will be sending out an agenda in the near future. The address of the motel is 8373 Cracker Barrel Road in Marana and the phone number is **520-572-4777**. Directions from Yuma are I-8, East towards Tucson and exit at 246 and then turn southwest on Cortaro Road, then west near the Cracker Barrel Restaurant. It's about 150 miles from here.

If you have never been to one of these meetings, they are extremely informative and you will gain some real insight as what goes on throughout all of the chapters in Arizona.

Flyin' Low

This picture is compliments of Mike Thompson. Can you imagine the pilots doing this kind of trick on the water??



Why Do Soldiers Reenlist?



For those of you reading this article, have you ever reenlisted? If so, why? For me it was the idea that I could (if I chose to) serve my country one or two more times. Yes, it was hard, but you have to give the service men and women a lot of credit for WANTING to do it especially in this war. Vietnam was hard enough but the enemy is ever harder to see here. Nevertheless, they have my vote

for being pretty brave and forthcoming for showing their stuff during this time in all of our lives, the life of terror.

Next Meeting

We'll be having our next meeting on Tuesday, January 15th 2008 at 7:00 pm at the American Legion located at Location is American Legion Post 56 at 1490 W. 3rd Street, Yuma, AZ 85364. We hope to see you there.

We hope you all had an enjoyable holiday season and look forward to a wonderful new year in 2008.