



**CHAPTER 391**  
*Tuolumne County, California*

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
**GUERRILLAS IN THE MIST**

**Vietnam Veterans - Chapter 391**

**Volume 1, No. 6, Email Edition**

**NOVEMBER 2009**

*Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day*

## CA Governor signs AB-717 at Twenty-nine Palms

By **DOUG BEGLEY**

The Press-Enterprise

Waiting 45 minutes for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to arrive couldn't dampen the spirits of the aging Vietnam War veterans assembled in the hot sun to watch the governor sign a bill honoring them.

Neither could the tumult of the bill almost being a casualty of the state's budget woes.

"It's just important it gets signed," said Robert Sigala, commander of the American Legion district in Riverside County and an Army veteran of the Vietnam War. "A lot of veterans are still suffering."

The bill, making March 30 "Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home

Day" annually in California, was signed Friday by Schwarzenegger, surrounded by current and former troops. Schwarzenegger was late to the 10:30 ceremony.

"We are here to say what we should have said a long time ago," the governor said. "Welcome home."

It was his first visit to the Marine Corps Air and Ground Combat Center outside Twentynine Palms.

Absent from the ceremony was the political dustup that preceded it. The bill, sponsored by Assemblyman Paul Cook, R-Yucca Valley, was caught in a pledge by Schwarzenegger to veto bills until legislators handed him solutions to

the state's budget struggles.

Cook, a Vietnam veteran with two Purple Heart medals for being wounded in battle, fought back when the governor vetoed his bill earlier this month. Schwarzenegger vowed to veto all bills not dealing with water, corrections and his other priority issues during the final hours of the legislative session.

Cook didn't budge on his bill, which he called a personal priority, so it was vetoed.

But Schwarzenegger told Cook to re-submit the bill and he would sign it. The measure was added to another bill.

"The Governor knew that this was an important issue," Cook said.

For the Vietnam War veterans, it is recognition of their service to the nation after decades spent on the fringes of the armed forces, they said. Some recalled being spit on by protesters when they returned, and shunned by older veterans because of the uncertainty of the outcome of the war.

Jose Ramos, founder of the group that's pushed for 10 years for a Vietnam veteran's remembrance day, said marking the sacrifice of veterans in Vietnam is important for most citizens because of the divide the Vietnam War caused.

"It turns out America also needed a place to heal," Ramos, a former Army medic in Vietnam, said.

Actor Jon Voight, who opposed the war as a young man, said supporting the soldiers from Vietnam is crucial to bridging the divide the war



Photo by George L. Eldridge

On October 9, the new VA Sonora Medical Clinic dedication was held at the clinic. VVA-391 President and several members were in attendance along with Frank Smart who was a presenter. The VVA-391 Color Guard presented colors along with the Veterans of Foreign Wars. **See story & photos, page 5**

See **Gov. signs WHVVD**, page 4