



### Freeman Business Center Opens Uptown

Business/Page 4A

## Hearns: Flying With Ease



Sports/1B

## McCrorey YMCA Expansion

Lifestyles/8A

# THE CHARLOTTE POST

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## PAC Hosts Republican Lawmakers

Winston-Salem - The 21st Century PAC of North Carolina will host a reception for the GOP Legislative Delegation of the North Carolina General Assembly on Friday, May 29, at the Quality Inn on the Plaza in Asheville. The event will be in conjunction with the GOP State Party Convention.

PAC Chairman Vernon L. Robinson stated "that this reception is part of an ongoing effort to explore points of agreement and ground for future cooperation between the Black Legislative Caucus, other political leaders and the GOP legislators. We are particularly pleased with Rep. Ray Warren's (R-Mint Hill) eloquent support of the Martin Luther King Holiday Bill and hope to have dialogue with Sen. Cobb (R-Charlotte) and the rest of the Mecklenburg legislative delegation."

The 21st Century PAC of North Carolina is a bi-partisan, independent political action committee which seeks to increase black political clout. Last year, the PAC provided information to GOP legislative hopefuls and incumbents on more effective campaign appeals in the black community at the GOP Leadership Conference in Charlotte. The PAC leadership feels that there is substantial room for cooperation on legislative issues such as education and economic development and works towards that end.

## City Board Seats Are Up For Nominations

The Charlotte City Council is seeking nominations to fill vacancies on four City boards and commissions. Persons interested in applying for the positions should obtain an application form from the Office of the City Clerk, 600 East Trade St., Charlotte, N.C., 28202.

Applications are due on June 1 for the following nominations to be made on June 8:

**Clean City Committee** - Four positions for three year terms. The Committee is responsible for litter control/education in the City of Charlotte.

**Historic District Commission** - One position for a three year term. The Commission safeguards the heritage of the city through preservation of historic areas.

**Planning Commission** - One position for a three year term. The Commission hears petitions for zoning changes and makes recommendations to the City Council.

**Spirit Square Board of Directors** - One position for a three year term. The Board sets policy and controls the administration of the non-profit arts facility.

# Black Vietnam Veterans Reveal Post-War Conflicts

By Loretta Richardson  
Post Staff Writer

Between the years of 1965 and 1975, the years that the United States was engaged in the Vietnam War 3,403,100 enlisted persons were in the Vietnam area. Of that number, 2,594,000 were in country. Somewhere between 1 and 1.6 million of the approximately 2,600,000 saw fairly regular combat. The total number of casualties which also included those missing in action were 58,000 and 303,704 were among the wounded.

When the statistics begin to point to the black Vietnam veteran, figures show that they represented 10.6% or 275,000 of those in Vietnam. Of the black soldier who was killed in combat or considered missing in action there were 5,711 casualties. The non-combat black soldier who died in Vietnam numbered 1,530.

For the most part the Vietnam War was a treacherous one. Oftentimes, fighting the Viet Cong on unfamiliar turf characterized by sweltering heat, monsoon seasons and tall, thick marshland put the American forces at a disadvantage. And many times the enemy the Americans fought, would only have to change his attire in order to pass as the ally. Platoon, the academy award winning movie, which was written by a Vietnam veteran brutally depicted the horrors of war. The internal struggles between the enlisted, however isolated and the racial tension that has been described by the author of *Bloods*, showed clearly that there was more than one enemy.

On the homefront, America, itself was experiencing growth pains. The country was torn apart by the Civil Rights Movement. The Hippie experience was yet to be born and on the minds of many Americans was the question whether or not America should involve itself in the Vietnam conflict.

By 1975, America had its final pull out. "And when Johnny came marching home" in 1975 there were no ticker tape parades. No bands, with drums booming and cymbals loudly clanging played the tune of "GI Joe". As a matter of fact many soldiers came home and not even their immediate families knew about their arrivals, until their knocks on the door made the announcement.

What the Vietnam veteran did arrive home to was a climate of hostility. Like the bullets the Vietnam veteran was accustomed to dodging, insults were being hurled at the Vietnam veteran from all directions. The degrading labels, "drug addicts," "baby killers" and "rapists", were used openly and freely by the American public to single out that soldier who had merely been obedient to his or her country, by being serving in the war.



While memorials and statues are being erected in honor of the Vietnam veteran across the country, the real issues at hand, according to Black Vietnam veterans have not been dealt with.

And while the veteran was being criticized for serving in Vietnam, the draft dodgers were being praised for their avoidance of the war. Most of them were restored as full citizens, having had to suffer little or no consequences for their actions.

Some 10 years later, the climate in America towards the Vietnam veteran seems to be witnessing a metamorphosis. In cities all across the country, memorials, dedicated to the Vietnam veteran are being erected. Attention is now being focused on those soldiers who are purported to still be prisoners of war in Vietnam. The stories of Vietnam veterans are being told through books, documentaries and movies. And for whatever reason, it seems that only now is America ready to listen.

Marvin Russell, at the Vet Center here in Charlotte agreed that there is indeed a change in America's mood toward the Vietnam veteran. "There seems to be a greater effort to divorce the veteran from the war. I personally feel that more positive publicity has a lot to do with the change."

Even at a recent Vietnam Veterans Memorial Dedication Ceremony held in Raleigh, remarks by Governor Jim Martin and John W. Saputo, chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee suggested that America was in the process of healing and that the Vietnam veteran has been vindicated in history.

Many statements relating to the Vietnam veterans' bravery and the respect that he or she deserved, supported the view that America has done some maturing where the Vietnam veteran is concerned.

Acceptance, though it has been a long time coming, is not enough. There are real issues concerning the Vietnam veteran, especially the black veteran that need to be addressed and no longer swept under the rug.

Four black Vietnam veterans, Jim Black, Abram Way, Eugene Marsh and Freddie Smith talked about what they felt those issues are.

"Without a doubt, while we (black vets) were in Vietnam and when we returned home, our biggest problem was and remains to be, drugs," began Jim Black. Black, who served as a sergeant in Vietnam during a two-year tour of duty was with the 128th Combat Assault Helicopter. He was a machine gunner.

Black recalled having to send far more enlisted men home because of drugs, than because of casualties or physical wounds. "So many of the guys felt that if they were stoned out of their minds, then they could handle the combat situation a lot better."

"The general population is still ignorant of the fact who the real enemy in Vietnam was. The smartest thing North Vietnam did was to introduce heroin in South Vietnam."

According to Black the guys he saw become drug addicts developed habits that cost \$500 a day. But because drugs were so prevalent, what would have cost \$500 here in the States, only cost \$5 in Vietnam.

"And the greatest travesty was that when those guys had served their tours of duty and returned back to the States, they received no treatment. This is where the government has shirked its responsibility," exclaimed Black.

"Here were these guys who had \$500 a day habits, they had been paying \$5 for and the drugs they were getting, if it was heroin, it was at least 97% pure. They're back in the States and they still had those expensive habits, but not the money to support them. What that meant was that the veteran who was an addict had to commit some kind of crime in order to get the drugs he needs."

Stating that many of the prisoners incarcerated today are Vietnam veterans Black pointed that this travesty was the result of a snowball effect. "Without proper drug treatment, the Vietnam veteran addict was destined to be lost when he returned home."

If it's not too late, which Black alluded that it was, his suggestion was for the government to pull those vets with drug problems out of jail or off the streets and work with them under a controlled situation.

See Black Vets On Page 6A

## McMillan Proposes Critical Project For Public Housing



Alex McMillan

WASHINGTON-The Banking Committee today unanimously accepted an amendment offered by Congressman Alex McMillan to allow a critical demonstration project for Charlotte public housing.

The McMillan amendment will provide up to 100 units of public housing for transitional housing for seven years to those who are temporarily displaced or without means to find safe and affordable housing. In exchange for this temporary housing, the participant will:

1. Agree to complete high school

if needed; 2. Receive job training and preparation; 3. Take part in substance abuse treatment and counseling, if needed; 4. Be trained in homemaking skills and parenting; 5. Be trained to manage money.

Additionally, rent charged for the public housing will increase as the participants income increases. The excess will be placed in an escrow account for the family to be used for a down-payment on a house or a lease on permanent housing when the family leaves the transitional housing after seven years.

"This is the first step for true welfare reform of public housing," said Congressman McMillan. "For decades, government has promoted a downward spiral of dependency. This amendment provides incentives and assistance to those who want to get out of the web of dependency and make it on their own."

The Housing Bill, H.R. 4, must be approved by the full House and then must be accepted by the Senate.

The Public Housing Comprehensive Transition Demonstration Project is a local initiative.

## Legislative Black Caucus Conference

State Representative Dan T. Blue announced the final plans for the Third Annual North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus Weekend Conference. The Caucus, consisting of 16 Senators from



Dan Blue

across the state, announces that it will be bannered under the theme-- BRIDGING GAPS TO THE FUTURE: Focus on Education, Economic Development, Health/Human Services.

The Conference will feature:

Friday, June 19: A Town Meeting with Caucus members, Minority Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses; A Reception; A Banquet featuring a national speaker and Focusing on Bridging Gaps in the Business World.

Saturday, June 20: Workshops on three major issues - Education, Economic Development, Health/Human Services; A Luncheon, featuring a national speaker.

The goals for the weekend, as stated by Representative Blue, chairman of the Caucus, are to involve more North Carolinians in giving input on legislative issues for the current as well as future sessions.

## NAACP Honors Phillip Morris On Civil Rights Effort

NEW YORK -- Hazel N. Dukes, President, New York State Conference of Branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, presented recently the Association's Corporate Recognition Award to Hamish Maxwell, Chairman of the Board, Philip Morris Companies Inc.

"We believe it is important to recognize corporate America and especially those companies who have been out in the forefront in the fight for civil rights," Ms. Dukes told guests at the Metropolitan Council of NAACP Branches' 9th Annual Corporate Recognition Luncheon at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

Dukes said: "It is indeed a pleasure to thank Philip Morris and Hamish Maxwell for their leadership, commitment and concern for equal opportunity for all New Yorkers."

Another award was presented during the luncheon to Alice M. Chapman, Corporate Director, E.E.O., RKO General Inc.

Hamish Maxwell, the Philip Morris chairman, told the group: "It is good to have our efforts recognized. Logically, we should be giving you an award at the same time because the partnership between the NAACP and Philip Morris is not one way. It is mutual."

He said, "both our organizations stood for civil rights long before it became the law of the land."

Maxwell noted that Philip Morris was the first national advertiser in the black press and the first cigarette manufacturer to hire black salesmen in the 1940s. General Foods, one of the Philip Morris family of companies, adopted a written policy prohibiting discrimination in hiring and advancement in 1937, Maxwell said.

The Philip Morris board chairman told how, during the 1960s, the company's support for civil

See Civil Rights on Page 4A

### INSIDE THIS WEEK

PAGE #

EDITORIALS	2A
LIFESTYLES	8A
CHURCH NEWS	12A
ENTERTAINMENT	1B
SPORTS	9B
CLASSIFIEDS	14B