Veterans' Entrepreneurship Task Force (VET-Force)

8605 Cameron Street, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910
Tel: 301.585.4000 Fax: 301.585.0519

Association for Service Disabled Veterans
Association of Small Business Development Centers
American G.I. Forum of the United States
AMVETS (American Veterans)
Black Veterans for Social Justice, Inc.
Blinded Veterans Association
Center for Veterans Issues
Enlisted Association of the National Guard
HI Tech Services
Jewish War Veterans of the USA
Korean War Veterans Association
Military Officers Association of America
National Association for Black Veterans
National Association for Uniformed Services
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
National Gulf War Resource Center
Non Commissioned Officers Association of the United States of America
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Quality Support, Inc.
Reserve Officers Association of the United States
Rolling Thunder, Inc.
The Keefe Group
The Retired Enlisted Association
The Veterans Advocacy Foundation
Veterans Benefits Clearinghouse
Veterans Business Network
Veterans Enterprise, Training, & Services Group
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Veterans of Modern Warfare
Vietnam Veterans of America
Vietnam Veterans of California

Testimony of

Richard F. Weidman, Chairman, Veterans Entrepreneurship Task Force (VET-Force)

House Committee on Oversight & Govt Reform Subcommittee on Govt Management, Organization & Procurement

Regarding

Military Base Realignment: Contracting Opportunities for Impacted Communities

February 8, 2008

Rayburn House Office Building
10 am – Rm 2154

Chairman Townes, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of this SubCommittee, thank you for the opportunity for the Veterans Entrepreneurship Task Force (VET-Force) to present our views here today regarding Military Base Realignment (BRAC) – Opportunities for Impacted Communities; i.e. Small, Minority, and Veteran-owned businesses to participate in the process. The VET-Force appreciates the bi-partisan leadership of this Subcommittee, and its willingness to allow me the opportunity to present the views of many Veteran and Service-Disabled Veteran Business Owners and Representatives. The VET-Force also appreciates your tenacity and positive tone in revealing what are the obstacles and barriers to small business contracting within the federal marketplace and especially in the face of the continued passive aggressive behavior toward veteran owned and service disabled veteran owned businesses and self employment of veterans on the part of so many in the Executive branch. We truly admire your efforts, and hope that your findings will not go unresolved.

The impacted communities that I will talk about today are the Veterans and Service-Disabled Veteran Small Business Owners. Wherein laws have been passed giving agencies the authority to assist veterans, their families and their communities, our communities, by including small business owners who are veterans, and especially service-disabled veterans, in the Federal contracting preference programs.

As such, it only stands to reason that the agencies most thought to take the lead on contracting with veteran and service-disabled veteran owned businesses would be the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration. Overt the past 8 years, both have increased the number of contracts awarded to veteran business owners, but only the VA has exceeded the 3% contracting requirement. DOD and its military departments – Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, have been slow to adopt policies throughout all commands. DOD still allows military departments to publicly post goal attainment for service-disabled veteran business owners at 1.5% instead of the mandatory 3%.

It is worth noting that VA is till struggling to change the corporate culture when it comes to procurement, particularly in construction and in acquisition of goods and services by the Veterans Health Administration. As you know, the regulations are still pending that will implement the provisions of Public Law 109-461 giving VA additional tools in order to increase the number and dollar amounts of contracts and sub-contracts that go to Veteran Owned Businesses (VOBs) and Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses (SDVOBs).

While it is our hope that this will help enormously, it is worth noting that the VA, on the orders of Deputy Secretary Mansfield and with the whole hearted support of the previous VA Secretary (Nicholson), the VA has put achievement of the 3% goal in procurement into the performance evaluations of key managers. This has helped a great deal in focusing attention on this issue. VET-Force contends that every department and agency needs to emulate this strong leadership and policy, and do the same thing with their key managers at each Federal agency. We are have had serious discussions with the Department of Defense to consider doing likewise, but so far its been to no avail.

One troubling development that seems to be cropping up at VA however is that some contract managers appear to be rushing contracts, particularly multi-year contracts, toward consummation prior to the new regulations taking effect next month, in order to circumvent the new regulations and to avoid having to contract with qualified SDVOSB and VOB. We are frankly not sure how widespread this phenomena is (and we hope it is only the few incidents we have documented), but have asked VA to investigate. If this is in fact happening, it is our view that those involved should be appropriately sanctioned, in addition to VA stopping these improper actions.

We have also been troubled by the actions taken by DOD and the Army following commitments made to the VET-Force by DOD acquisitions officials, that the care and maintenance of the Nations' Arlington Cemetery, would be reserved for SDVOBs. And further, DOD was to include in their 2007-08 strategic plans, how they would reserve contracts at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and other military medical facilities, for SDVOBs. However, we have now discovered that many of the pending contracts were expeditiously awarded to other ANC small businesses.

While the Army and DOD undertakes its BRAC mission, if SDVOBs are to benefit from the enormous amount of contracting opportunities, a real effort has to be made to include them. Just the other day, one of our members, attended a BRAC procurement forum at Ft. Belvoir, hoping to get first-hand information about plans to include SDVOBs in BRAC projects, only to find that he had paid a $175 fee just to get general information about how a company can do business with the Federal Government.

PL 106-50 Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999

Over the years, there have been a number of good laws passed in recognition and support of those that 'have borne the battle." But it wasn't until 1999, that Congress found that (quoted from PL 106-50, Findings Section): (1) "The United States [had] done too little to assist veterans, particularly service-disabled veterans, in playing a greater role in the economy ... by forming and expanding small business enterprises; and (2) "The United States **must** provide additional assistance and support to veterans to better equip them to form and expand small business enterprises."

These and other findings, promoted and supported by the VET-Force, Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) and members of the veterans community, set in motion the enormous possibility of how a greatful Nation could empower its military veterans to realize the American Dream that they fought so hard to protect.

PL 106-50, directed the SBA, Small Business Development Centers, the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, to do more to assist veterans with starting or expanding their own small businesses. It also called for the creation of new programs and institutions, i.e., the VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise, the SBA's Office of Veterans Business Development, and the National Veterans Business Development Corporation (TVC), which was to become a fully, self-sufficient, non-profit entity within the veterans community.

It has been over eight (8) years since the passage of PL 106-50, which set a minimum 3% goal for ALL business done by ALL Federal agencies to go to Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses (SDVOBs). But the overall view of efforts to assist veterans, particularly disabled veterans, to start and successfully operate their own small business is a decidedly mixed picture. Certainly those of us who have been at this for decades thought that we would have much more in the way of substantive services in place for the young men and women returning home from military service today than currently exists.

When men and women separate from the Armed Forces, and thus become veterans, not all will need additional medical services nor educational benefits nor other important services, at least not immediately. They will each need a job, or a way to be gainfully employed. For some that will mean that they will work for a private company or a government agency. For some, particularly disabled veterans, self-employment may well be the best option unless they can secure "niche" employment.

Public Law 108-183 (Section 308) of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003

While PL 106-50 established the foundation for a veterans entrepreneurship initiative that would get veterans across the nation into the mainstream of owning a business, entrepreneurship, and thereby building capacity to employ other veterans and disabled veterans, it was under Section 308 of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (PL 108-183) that called for the creation of a Veterans Federal Procurement Program.

Under PL 108-183, its now "mandatory" that BOTH the Federal Government and its large Primes, procure a **minimum** of 3% of **all** of their goods and services from Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses. The law even allows contracting officers a means by which to achieve the minimum 3%. A contracting officer **MAY** restrict competition to only SDVOBs, or they **MAY** implement a sole source award to a capable and qualified SDVOB. Yet here we are today, more than 4 years after the passage of PL 108-183 and 8 years after PL 106-50, and most Federal agencies and their large Primes still have not figured out how to meet the minimum 3% legal requirement.

While this presents a rather dismal picture on the part of Federal agencies and their large Prime contractors, some progress has been made. At least 2 Federal agencies exceeded the 3% for FY 2007, and a few other agencies got close, they reached just over 2%. But very few, if any, of the large Primes exceeded their 3% requirement.

Executive Order 13-360

So Why Can't Federal Agencies and their large Primes meet a minimum 3% SDVOB procurement requirement. One of the reasons may very well be due to a lack of planning.

In the winter of 2004, President Bush issued an Executive Order, 13-360, directing Federal agencies to designate a senior-level official to direct their agency's SDVOB initiatives that would develop and implement a Strategic Plan to increase contracting

opportunities for service-disabled veteran owned businesses so that veterans could begin to receive the intended benefits of PL 108-183 and PL 106-50. After several months of delay, many agencies began to develop and make public their strategic plans.

Later, the VET-Force conducted an independent analysis of each agency plan and rated them. Over half receive a Below Average rating, others were Good, and only 2 were rated as Excellent. Since that report was released in early 2006, only a few agencies have continued to make an effort to improve their plans, and to publicly post them on their websites. Others have expressed reluctance to develop and post their plans due to the failure on the part of SBA to provide guidance, oversight, and technical assistance as required by the Order.

It should be noted that the 2 agencies that received an Excellent rating on their Strategic Plans, also achieved the 3% minimum procurement requirement. (State Dept and VA – FY 2006). And some of those agencies that are moving closed to the 3% have developed Strategic Plans.

So what else is preventing veteran business owners from realizing the dream of owning their own small businesses? What more can the federal government do to assist them? What can DOD – Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and other military departments do? What can this Congress do to improve what has been done already? Here are some recommendations that, IF IMPLEMENTED, would probably make a difference:

Recommendations to Achieve the Goals

1. Create a level playing field for veteran business owners. The use of "May" for SDVOBs should be changed to "Shall;" whereby contracting officers will clearly have the authority to restrict competition to SDVOBs or make single sole source awards to SDVOBs for their self-marketing activities under FAR Part 19, equally as much as permitted for other preference programs.

Meeting with and talking with Federal Government contracting officers, we have found that they are often under pressure to get certain requirements awarded quickly, and although there is a SDVOB that can do the job, they routinely utilize other contracting vehicles that will allow them to directly award the contract. In these cases, the Government does not have time to even consider restricted competition among SDVOBs because of time factors. Thus, the SDVOB suffers and the government agency looses an opportunity to get closer to its 3%.

2. Large Primes should be held accountable for meeting the required SDVOB 3% minimum. This is very relevant to BRAC projects now and in the future. Large Primes should make a better effort to include small businesses in these and other projects. They should also be held accountable for failing to honor the small business subcontracting plans that they are required to submit. Agencies should consider incentives to encourage contracting officers to be more diligent about monitoring the subcontracting plans and

imposing penalties, by the use of liquidated damages, the elimination of future contracts, or other appropriate remedies on violators of the law.

3. The VETS GWAC. It took several years and a lot of protests, to finally get GSA to approve and implement a Government Wide Acquisition Contracting program for Service-Disabled Veterans Business Owners. Now GSA and agencies should do more to educate and encourage contracting officers on how to use it.

4. Strengthen and expand the pool of capable and qualified SDVOBs by increasing contract awards, resources, and support. It's difficult for any business to grow and expand if they are not getting any business. Offer contracting opportunities that can be fairly competed among firms of differing capacities by reducing the number of procurement requirements bundled under one large contract that make it nearly impossible for a small business to compete. As a result – more employment opportunities will be created for veterans, their families and their communities.

5. Discontinue the practice of allowing contracting officers to withdraw procurements set-aside for certain preference groups without just cause. This practice is not only costly, but also overly burdensome to a small business. An agency should be required to be audited by an independent body to prevent this practice from continuing.

6. Provide better oversight and frequent monitoring of agency strategic plans. Require that each agency implement Executive Order 13-360 and continue to do so indefinitely; the requirement in the Order that directs each agency to submit an end-of-year progress report and a revised plan for the next year.

7. Demand that the Dept. of Veterans Affairs implement the provisions of the law that was passed in December 2006. Its now been more than a year since PL 109-461 directed the VA to change its procurement regulations to prioritize the use of SDVOBs and VOBs for contracting requirements within the VA.

8. In addition, make it mandatory that all VOBs and SDVOBs register in the VA' s Veterans Business Database. And it should also be required that all agencies in search of VOBs and SDVOBs for agency procurements select them from the same Veterans Business Database. This will ensure that each veteran business owner has been verified as a veteran and/or a service-disabled veteran. It will also help to increase the numbers of veterans registered for easy access by all agencies.

9. Provide a Price Evaluation Preference of 10% for SDVOBs in acquisitions conducted using full and open competition.

10. See attachment 1 for SBA Recommendations.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today to share our views regarding the impact of BRAC on veteran business owners. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or your distinguished colleagues may have.

Recommendations for SBA

The Veterans Business Development Office of the Small Business Administration (SBA) is more problematic. While the Administrator, Steve Preston and his former Chief of Staff, Joel Szabat had been engaged and committed to making SBA much more veteran friendly, it would appear that once again there is an uphill struggle.

The SBA Office of Veterans Business Development which was created under the legislation along with the position of an Associate Administrator has increased its headquarters staff size but has been given limited resources to operate four veteran business outreach centers and to provide assistance to veteran business owners with federal contracting, though efforts have been made to educate the veterans of the Guard and Reserves.

The addition of a person in the Veterans Business Development office who does contracts full time is a significant addition, and it has been an aid to some businesses. It is still, however, far short of the efforts extended by SBA for other categories of small businesses such as 8(a) and women owned businesses.

As to what steps can be considered useful steps and concrete actions that can be taken by the SBA, those include the following steps:

Create a dedicated section in the contracts office with at least the same number of contract specialists devoted to 8 (a) contracting. (It is worthy noting that there are 12,700 service disabled veteran owned businesses listed on the VIP at VA, while there are less than 7,400 certified 8(a) businesses. Since there are many more SDVOBs than 8(a)s, having the same number of contract specialists does not seem to be too much to ask.)

The Administrator should take steps to create a capital formation program specifically for VOB, with an emphasis on SDVOBs. This should not be just for "start up capital" but also for so-called "mezzanine funding" to help businesses expand to a sustainable phase beyond the first few years of the small start phase.

The legislation that is presently before the President for signature, to increase the budget of the Veterans Business Development Office for use primarily as grants to create new Veteran Business Outreach Centers, should first be used to continue the operations of Veteran Business Resource Centers that have already been providing services to veterans like the one in St. Louis operated by Pat Heavey, the center in Boston, and the one in Flint Michigan. The increased funding should also be used to increase the number of FTEs within the office that provide federal contracting assistance for veteran business owners and for special projects reaching out to wounded service members or to veterans for purposes of helping them become self-employed or to start micro businesses.

The Administrator should issue a long overdue Administrator's Order implementing all of the statues that have been enacted in the past eight years, plus putting more teeth into Executive Order 13-360 in regard to services delivered by SBA or funded through SBA.

The Administrator should undertake a review of all SBA programs to ensure that veterans, particularly disabled veterans, are receiving full and proper access and maximum services from each of the SBA services and programs for which those individuals would otherwise be eligible. In other words, for example, this internal review, and appropriate corrective action as needed, would determine if women veterans were being properly reached in numbers commensurate with their incidence in the population and given the full range of services available to the maximum extent legally permitted.

The Administrator should specifically review all that is being done for those citizens serving in the National Guard or Reserves who activated, and determine what more can be done under existing law to better assist these individuals, and work with the Congress and The White House to determine what else can and should be done by changing the law or by Executive Order.

Closely related to the above point, but slightly different, is that we as a nation have to figure out how we can better support those businesses who have National Guard and Reserves members as employees who are now subject to frequent deployments for longer periods of time. This is a matter of national defense, but it is also a veterans re-employment and employment issue because the negative side of hiring and employing those who serve in the National Guard and Reserves is being disproportionately borne by a relatively small segment of the employer community. It is also having a negative impact on veterans' employment and on the advancement of those who are employed within their company. This is the real world, where the bottom line must be addressed, and not the ideal world of what is fair, so we must find practical ways to solve this problem.

The Associate Administrator for Veterans Business Development and all other officials of the SBA (and other agencies for that matter) should by this point know better than to keep saying in public and in private that "there are not enough service disabled veterans to do the 3% contracting, they are not sophisticated enough to do the work, and we have to teach these poor old veterans how to compete" before we can move forward on contracting and sub-contracting goals, or with other programs that would better enable veterans to have access to capital or international markets. Frankly, none of this is true, and these negative stereotype "straw men" set up by those who continue to say these things are a manifestation of "VETism" or an ugly set of prejudices and stereotypes that is every bit as ugly and inappropriate as sexism or racism.

Increase the number of PMRs – CMRs within the SBA Prime Contracts Program and the SBA Subcontracting Assistance Program

While there are many more specifics that I could list here, suffice it to say that there is much that can and should be done by and at the SBA, but I have confidence in the top leadership of SBA in regard to doing right by America's veterans for the first time in a very long period of time. I personally have more confidence in Administrator Steve Preston than any Administrator since James Sanders departed, and that was in 1985. I pledge that on behalf of the VET-Force to work cooperatively with him and his management team to accomplish much in this year. However, time will tell.

STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW RATING SHEET

submitted by the Strategic Planning Subcommittee

TASK FORCE FOR VETERANS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

December, 2005

The following agencies submitted Strategic Plans for 2005 in compliance with the Presidents Executive Order 13360. Each plan has now been reviewed and rated by the TFVE Strategic Planning Subcommittee. A summary of the ratings per agency is listed below. The Strategic Plans Review Summary Sheets for each agency have been forwarded via e-mail.

RATING SUMMARY: Each plan has been rated based on a scale of 0 – 4, with 0 = Unacceptable, 1 = Below Average, 2 = Average, 3 = Above Average, and 4 = Excellent. Of the total 34 agencies listed below, 32 submitted Strategic Plans. 10 were rated Unacceptable; 10 were rated Below Average; 10 were rated Average; and 2 were rated Above Average. In determining the ratings consideration was given to: the number of completed responses out of a total of 12; the soundness of the approach; the level of detail in the responses; and the likelihood that the proposed activity would achieve the anticipated results.

Other factors considered were: the use of: Forecast Lists; CCR; VETBIZ; Outreach Events; Websites; DAU; Accountability (Top – Down); Prime Contractor Preference Incentives and SDVOB Past Performance as Evaluation Factors.

Copies of the agencies' plans are posted on the websites of the Dept. of Veterans Affairs and the Small Business Administration. To review, go to: www.vetbiz.gov or www.sba.gov.

	AGENCY NAME	STRATEGIC PLAN RATING
1.	Department of Agriculture	2
2.	Department of Commerce	1
3.	Department of Defense	2
4.	Department of Energy	1
5.	Department of Education	2+ (Almost Above Avg)
6.	Department of Health and Human Services	1
7.	Department of Homeland Security	2
8.	Department of Housing and Urban Development	1
9.	Department of Interior	2
10.	Department of Justice	2
11.	Department of Labor	1
12.	Department of State	3+ (Almost Excellent)
13.	Department of Transportation	0
14.	Department of Treasury	2
15.	Department of Veterans Affairs	3
16.	Agency for International Development	2
17.	Defense Contract Agency	- (No Plan Submitted)
18.	Environmental Protection Agency	2
19.	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	1
20.	Federal Election Commission	0

21.	International Broadcasting Bureau	1
22.	General Services Administration	2
23.	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	1
24.	National Credit Union Administration	0
25.	National Labor Relations Board	1
26.	National Science Foundation	0
27.	Nuclear Regulatory Commission	0
28.	Peace Corps	0
29.	Railroad Retirement Board	0
30.	Security and Exchange Commission	0
31.	Selective Service System	0 (set 1% goal for SDVOBs)
32.	Small Business Administration	0
33.	Smithsonian Institute	- (No plan submitted)
34.	Social Security Administration	1 (good response to #11)

Agency # (SAMPLE STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW FORM)

RATING FACTORS

0 = Unacceptable 1 = Below Average 2 = Average 3 = Above Average 4 = Excellent

No.	CRITERIA	RATING
1	**SENIOR LEVEL OFFICIAL NAMED AND CONTACT INFO –**	
2	**PLAN AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC** - www.vetbiz.gov; www.sba.gov	
3	**PROGRESS REPORTS TO SBA** – Annually to the Office of Government Contracting.	
4	**HOW CONTRACTS WILL BE RESERVED FOR SDVOBs -.**	
5	**HOW INFO WILL GET TO SDVOBs TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION –**	
6	**HOW PRIMES WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO SUBCONTRACT WITH SDVOBs –**	
7	**HOW AGENCY PERSONNEL WILL BE TRAINED –**	
8	**DISSEMINATE INFO TO SDVOBs TO ASSIST THEM IN GETTING AWARDS –**	
9	**DOES STRATEGIC PLAN COMPLY WITH EXEC ORDER -**	
10	**HOW WILL SENIOR LEVEL OFFICIAL, CAO, AND OSDBU DIRECTOR'S. PERFORMANCE PLANS BE IMPLEMENTED –**	
11	**HOW WILL SDVOB OPPORTUNITIES BE INCREASED –**	
12	**HOW WILL SUBCONTRACTING PLANS WITH PRIMES BE MONITORED AND EVALUATED –**	
	TFVE CONCERNS	
1	Plan only mimics Executive Memo	
2	Plan execution	
3	Plan specific or general small business	

Members of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee are as follows:
Charles Jones (Subcommittee Chair), Joe Wynn, Bob Hesser, Jim Hudson, Scott Golden, Dick Richards, and Mike Bradican. (Assistants: Michelle Reinecke and Dianna Osborne of Commercial Marking Corp.) For additional information or to contact the subcommittee members contact Charles Jones (803) 699-4940 Charlesjon@aol.com or Joe Wynn (301) 585-4000 ext 147 Jwynn@VVA.org.

VET-FORCE VISION STATEMENT

VetForce will advocate for support of America's service disabled and other Veteran owned entrepreneurial enterprises, as one way for Veterans to provide economic security and prosperity for their families and their communities.

VET-Force Mission Statement

The Mission of VetForce is to accomplish the following for America's service disabled and other Veteran entrepreneurs:

Advocate for America's serviced disabled and other Veteran owned enterprises, for increased access to: entrepreneurial and business education, technical assistance, startup and growth capital, open/ transparent markets and contracting opportunities in the public and private sector marketplace.

Ensure that the Federal Government and their prime contractors obey PL 106-50, which entitles service disabled veterans to contracting dollar values of a minimum of 3%.

Ensure that Executive Order #13360 is fully implemented.

Advocate for the full and immediate implementation of the program created by PL 108-183.

Advocate that State and Local governments adopt minimum contracting dollar values for Veterans and Service-Disabled Veterans in their jurisdictions.

VetForce will continue to provide vigilant oversight of American law regarding Veteran contracting. It will continue to develop and promote ideas, in the areas of acquisition, planning, marketing and outreach to ensure that Veterans and service disabled Veterans receive the full benefits of the programs promised them by the Congress and the President.

Promote the substantial and valuable capabilities of Veteran owned enterprises.

Support and promote Vet GWAC concepts

Provide and promote business models for Vet partnering that builds contracting capacity for small and medium enterprise

VET-Force Values

VET-Force supports the following enduring values and ideas:

American Entrepreneurship is a creative and dynamic economic system that requires the individual freedoms that Veterans' have fought to protect for over two centuries

Management of Veteran owned businesses with honesty and integrity

Whenever possible hire Veterans as contractors or employees

Support and promote the efforts of younger Veterans to start and grow SMEs

Whenever possible, mentor younger Veterans in their efforts to compete for public and private sector contracting as provided for by PL 106-50

SMEs development is our free market system for a more equitable division of our country's GDP

VET-Force Website Guiding Principles

1. The site should be information based and not procurement based.

2. The site should track the historic evolution of the Veterans Federal Procurement Program (from Aug 1999 with PL 106-50 to present).

3. The site should seek to develop content that will educate veterans about all aspects of starting, developing, managing, and growing a successful small business (workshops, seminars, etc).

4. The site should serve as a portal to an abundance of small business resources and other supportive services for veteran business owners.

5. The site should provide guidance toward building better business relationships: Teaming, Partnering and Joint Ventures

6. The site should serve as a bulletin board to post notices of activities that would heighten the awareness of opportunities for veteran business owners (conferences, symposiums, etc).

7. The site should serve as a resource for locating contracting statistics, surveys, and other federal procurement data relevant to veteran business owners.

8. The site should document the history of the organization, its leadership, and its members.

9. The site should provide, those who care to do so, an easy to use, electronic interface for contributing to the overall mission of the organization.

10. The site should be kept current and accurate with regard to its contents.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Funding Statement
February 8, 2008

The national organization Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is a non-profit veterans membership organization registered as a 501(c)(19) with the Internal Revenue Service. VVA is also appropriately registered with the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives in compliance with the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995.

VVA is not currently in receipt of any federal grant or contract, other than the routine allocation of office space and associated resources in VA Regional Offices for outreach and direct services through its Veterans Benefits Program (Service Representatives). This is also true of the previous two fiscal years.

For Further Information, Contact:

Executive Director for Policy & Government Affairs
Vietnam Veterans of America
(301) 585-4000, extension 127

Richard F. Weidman

Richard F. "Rick" Weidman is Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs on the National Staff of Vietnam Veterans of America. As such, he is the primary spokesperson for VVA in Washington. He served as a 1-A-O Army Medical Corpsman during the Vietnam War, including service with Company C, 23rd Med, AMERICAL Division, located in I Corps of Vietnam in 1969.

Mr. Weidman was part of the staff of VVA from 1979 to 1987, serving variously as Membership Service Director, Agency Liaison, and Director of Government Relations. He left VVA to serve in the Administration of Governor Mario M. Cuomo as statewide director of veterans' employment & training (State Veterans Programs Administrator) for the New York State Department of Labor.

He has served as Consultant on Legislative Affairs to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV), and served at various times on the VA Readjustment Advisory Committee, the Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment & Training, the President's Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities - Subcommittee on Disabled Veterans, Advisory Committee on Veterans' Entrepreneurship at the Small Business Administration, and numerous other advocacy posts. He currently serves as Chairman of the Task Force for Veterans' Entrepreneurship, which has become the principal collective voice for veteran and disabled veteran small-business owners.

Mr. Weidman was an instructor and administrator at Johnson State College (Vermont) in the 1970s, where he was also active in community and veterans affairs. He attended Colgate University (B.A., 1967), and did graduate study at the University of Vermont.

He is married and has four children.