

◆ LEGACIES ◆

The quarterly newsletter for members of *Sons and Daughters In Touch* — the sons and daughters, family members and friends of U.S. Servicemen who were lost, or remain missing, as a result of the war in Southeast Asia.

Spring 2006

SDIT 2006 Annual Membership Drive

(See page 5 for details)

*Photos from The Wall on Father's Day 2005:
— Jim Sampers holds Dawson Oppen (right)
— SDIT members gather after washing The Wall early on Saturday morning.*

SONS AND DAUGHTERS
IN TOUCH

"They Were Our Fathers..."

Father's Day 2005

In mid-June of last year, hundreds of SDIT members from across the country packed their families into cars for a multi-state road trip, some boarded airplanes for cross country flight, still others hopped on Amtrak for a ride to Washington, DC to celebrate Father's Day at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

These 'sons and daughters' and their families came from Texas, Florida, Oregon, New York, Ohio, California, Colorado and nearly every other state to pay tribute to the fathers they lost in the Vietnam War.



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For the fifth time in its history, SDIT hosted a national reunion of its members—this time to celebrate its 15th Anniversary—during the 2005 Father's Day weekend. The members of the SDIT board along with other volunteers planned each program and event during the three-day reunion.

At the first Father's Day reunion in 1992, most attendees had not visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial nor had they met others who share their loss. In 2005, many now headed to Washington to renew friendships forged through SDIT.

On the first night of the reunion—to spotlight the creative work of its members—an Artists' Forum provided insight into the acclaimed documentary work of SDIT members John Hulme, producer of *Unknown Soldier*, and Tracy Tragos, producer of *Be Good, Smile Pretty*. Diane Moore also highlighted her involvement in the production of *In the Shadow of the Blade*. Filmmaker Randy Wallace provided a taped interview about his 2002 hit, *We Were Soldiers*, the Vietnam-era film that tells the family story of several SDIT members.

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President's Message

Much Has Happened...

By Tony Cordero [USAF:65]

It's been a very long time...

Yes, this edition of Legacies is the first since last year's Father's Day reunion.

In that time, much has happened. Here's a recap: Father's Day '05 was a smashing success, SDIT has joined with other like-minded non-profit organizations to publicly protect the image and reputation of the Gold Star symbol (the statement is provided on page four) and a new SDIT Board of Directors has been elected and is busy working for you.

The honest truth is that SDIT has been resource-challenged in recent months. The hope here is that with the 2006 membership drive and a few revenue-generating efforts, we'll put the challenge behind us.

This edition of Legacies, also announces the 2006 membership renewal drive. Your \$30.00 annual membership will help fund the SDIT programs that have become so valuable to so many. Be sure to either submit your membership renewal on-line or by mailing the enclosed form.

In this edition, you'll also find information about the new members of the SDIT board, information about the new VVA President, and the passing of George Duggins, a very loyal supporter of SDIT.

Results of the 2006 SDIT on-line survey are provided for your review and interpretation. Nearly 200 SDIT members responded to these questions and the information that has been gathered will be used to guide your organization into the future.

As always, SDIT faces the constant questions, "When is the next national Father's Day reunion?" ... and "will there be another SDIT trip to Vietnam?"

Here are some points to consider. With Veterans Day 2007 marking the 25th Anniversary of 'The Wall' should SDIT hold a reunion at that time? ... Or should the reunions always coincide with Father's Day (meaning the next reunion would be at least two years away)?

On Vietnam: Disney is ramping up its marketing there, Bill Gates just completed a smashingly successful trip there...how about the next SDIT trip?

Global Spectrum—the '03 trip planner—has proposed holding smaller trips (15-20 persons) with a concentrated focus on a particular section of the country or branch of the military. All interested SDIT members need to let their voices be heard.

Finally, the most important question continues to be, "how can we help this new generation of 'sons and daughters' deal with the challenge they've been handed?"

Scores of SDIT members continue to propose wonderful ideas like: mentoring programs, visiting with these young 'sons and daughters' to share our 'unique life experience' with them and more. A small group of SDIT members is to be commended for simply sending letters of condolence to these grieving families.

As always, if you have an idea or recommendation to share here, please do so.

Much peace, Tony



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In Touch**

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SDIT 2006

Annual Membership Drive

*Please use the form on the back page of Legacies to
RENEW your membership. Or, renew ONLINE at*

www.sdit.org/registration.aspx

SDIT Board of Directors Election: 2006 – 2007 Term

Sons and Daughters In Touch is pleased to announce the election of its 11 member Board of Directors for the 2006-2007 term. The all-volunteer board will fulfill both the internal and external objectives of SDIT. Internally, the board will be responsible for the daily management of the non-profit corporation including filing all IRS documents, processing membership applications and renewals, producing the SDIT newsletter and raising funds to keep SDIT in operation. Externally, each SDIT board member will fill several roles including service as the SDIT liaison to various Veterans Service Organizations. The entire board can be contacted via email—(board@sdit.org)—or individually, by using their first name followed by the SDIT.org domain (example: dennis@sdit.org).

Dennis Shine was re-elected to the board and has served consistently since 1995. He is the son of Dennis F. Shine, Jr. (US Army 08/69) and also was re-elected Treasurer of the Board. Dennis also serves as the SDIT representative in Washington, DC.

Elaine Roach of Southern California was elected to her first term on the board. She is the daughter of Harold Roach (US Navy 10/64) and is also the mother of Joel Brattain US Army (KIA in Iraq, 03/13/04). Elaine will serve as the SDIT liaison to the Gold Star Mothers and to the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Jim Sampers of Denver was re-elected to the board and has served consistently since 1997. He is the son of IC1 James W. Sampers (US Navy 09/69). Jim also serves as the liaison to VietNow and as the manager of the membership SDIT database.

Kelly Rihn of Pennsylvania was re-elected to the board and has served consistently since 2000. She is the daughter of Joel Coleman (US Army 05/66). She also serves as the liaison to Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and Gold Star Mothers.

Laurette Kanavos of New York was elected to her first term on the board. She is the daughter of SSG Michael Rand (US Army 10/66) and will serve as an SDIT liaison to Vietnam Veterans of America.

Melanie J. Danna of New Jersey was elected to her first term on the board. She is the daughter of CWO Joseph J. Danna (US Army 12/70). She will serve as the liaison to Gold Star Wives and Disabled American Veterans.

Mike Taylor of Northern California was elected to his first term on the board. He is the son of 1st Lt. Clyde D. Taylor (US Army 1/66) and will serve as a liaison to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Noreen Doloughy of Pittsburgh was elected to her first term on the board. She is the daughter of SSG James Doloughy (US Army 07/69) and will work on publishing "*Legacies*"—the SDIT newsletter and represent SDIT on the east coast.

Patty Lee of San Diego rejoins the board after a two-year absence. Patty served on the board from 1995 to 2003. She is the daughter of SFC Delbert C. Totty (US Army 03/67) and was elected Secretary of the Board. Patty also serves as an SDIT Historian.

Susan Mitchell-Mattera of Southern California was elected to her first term on the board. She is the daughter of James C. Mitchell, Jr. (US Navy 01/70) and will serve as the liaison to Vietnam Veterans of America and Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America.

Tony Cordero of Southern California was re-elected to the board and has served consistently since 1990. He is the son of Bill Cordero (USAF 06/65) and was elected President of the board. He will also serve as liaison to The American Legion. ◆

The Gold Star Symbol



Upcoming Events

May 29: Memorial Day Observance at The Wall

One of the biggest ceremonies at The Wall during the year, the Memorial Day observance draws thousands of visitors as those who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam and other military conflicts are honored.

Also, names added to The Wall are commemorated on Memorial Day.

As always, SDIT will have a limited number of reserved seats for its members at the ceremony.

Please contact us at board@sdit.org to request a seat reservation. ♦



In August 2005, SDIT joined three other organizations in issuing the following statement regarding the Gold Star and its proper use:

"The American Gold Star Mothers, Gold Star Wives of America, Sons and Daughters In Touch and American WWII Orphans Network object to "American Gold Star Families for Peace" misusing the term 'Gold Star' in its political demonstrations.

"These four organizations—representing the mothers, wives and children of US service personnel killed in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and other U.S. military conflicts—are non-political organizations that do not take a position on the merits of the political demonstration being carried out by 'American Gold Star Families for Peace.'

Father's Day 2005

(continued from page 1)

SDIT member and author Karen Zacharias discussed her recent release (*Hero Mama*) and noted authors Bernard Edelman (*Dear America, Letters Home from Vietnam*), Laura Palmer (*Shrapnel in the Heart*), and Marlene Lee (*The Hero in My Pocket*) also made appearances at the Forum.

At daybreak on Saturday, scores of SDIT members helped wash 'The Wall' in a symbolic personal preparation for Father's Day. Later that morning, the grandchildren of the men whose names are inscribed on 'The Wall' were presented with special gifts during a 'child's eye' visit to the Memorial.

To honor their commitments and contributions, SDIT Life Memberships were presented to Patty Lee, for local and national program development; to Jeanette Chervony for her design of the SDIT web site and program development; and to Dennis Shine and Cindy Smith for completing ten years of service on the SDIT board.

Another planned presentation—to Gen. George Casey Jr., the current commander of multinational forces in Iraq, had to be postponed. His father, Maj. Gen. George Casey (US Army), was killed in Vietnam on July 7, 1970.

"Our loved ones gave their lives to protect the freedom to protest, and we know all too well the pain that these families are now suffering. However, the Gold Star symbol—authorized by Congress to honor a family's loss in service to our nation—must not be tarnished by partisan political demonstrations."

The Department of Defense awards gold star pins to family members who have lost a loved one in military service to their country.

Note: At its Father's Day 2005 ceremony, SDIT presented more than 300 official Gold Star Pins to the 'sons and daughters' of US servicemen lost in the Vietnam War. See sdit.org for Gold Star information.

The organizations' websites are listed on page 7. ♦

Two members of today's new generation of 'sons and daughters' opened Sunday's Father's Day ceremony by leading the Pledge of Allegiance. Beau Dolan, who lost his father (Capt. Robert Dolan, US Navy) in the 9/11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon; and Brooke Nyren who lost her father (Army SSgt. Nathaniel Nyren) in Iraq in December 2004, helped remind the audience of the need to support this new generation of 'sons and daughters.'

Maj. Gen. Richard Newton (USAF) was dispatched by the Pentagon to deliver the ceremony's keynote address. In addition to serving in the Pentagon, Gen. Newton is also a family friend of SDIT members Vicki Hall, Gail Worley Permenter and Air Force Brig. Gen. Robert Worley II. Their father, Air Force Maj. Gen. Robert Worley, was killed in Vietnam July 23, 1968.

To conclude the Father's Day Rose Ceremony, each daughter and son was presented with an official Gold Star pin; an historic and unifying symbol of their loss and the bond they share with past and future generations of Americans who have lost loved ones in military service to the United States.

As dusk fell on Father's Day, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was blanketed with a sea of red and yellow roses, symbolizing the honor and hope that is the spirit of Sons and Daughters In Touch. ♦

SDIT 2006 Membership Drive

As Father's Day approaches each year, SDIT utilizes the occasion to ask its members to renew their commitment to the organization.

SDIT is an all-volunteer non-profit organization and its primary source of income is the revenue generated from new and renewed memberships. Every dollar donated to SDIT is used for program support and operating expenses.

Annual Membership in *Sons and Daughters In Touch* is \$30.00.

Your generous support continues to provide SDIT with the resources needed to publish its newsletter, provide information on its website, field and direct phone calls and distribute information to 'sons and daughters' around the country.

Since its founding in 1990, SDIT has provided its newsletter *Legacies* to any daughter, son, spouse, other family members or supportive veterans free of charge. This long-standing commitment is intended to fulfill the SDIT mission to 'locate, support and unite the children of US servicemen lost during the Vietnam War.'

Any person with a concern or interest in the issues related to the war's effects on families is invited to join SDIT. Membership for the

now-grown children of US Servicemen lost during the Vietnam War includes eligibility to serve on the SDIT Board of Directors.

To facilitate the payment of membership payments, SDIT has established an on-line payment processing service. To make payments on-line (for either new or renewing memberships) visit the site at: www.sdit.org/registration.aspx

SDIT can also accept membership payments via the US Mail. The back page of this edition of *Legacies* can be returned with a check or money order payable to SDIT. If necessary, the form on the final page can be photocopied for distribution.

In the event that any 'son' or 'daughter' is unable to afford the \$30.00 annual dues, SDIT will endeavor to provide *Legacies* to them at no cost.

For more information on SDIT membership, please contact membership@sdit.org or call **800-984-9994**.

Thank you for the tremendous support you provide to *Sons and Daughters In Touch*.

Contributions to SDIT may provide donors with tax benefits. ◆

Upcoming Events

June 18: Father's Day Rose Remembrance

The families and comrades of fallen soldiers gather on Father's Day at the Wall to pay tribute, placing red, yellow and white roses with messages attached.

The red roses are for service members killed in Vietnam, yellow roses are for those missing in action, and white are for those who died in Iraq and Afghanistan.

To request that a rose be placed in your name on Father's Day, please contact the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund at 202-393-0090. ◆



VVA Election

John Rowan was elected National President of Vietnam Veterans of America in August 2005 at the organization's Twelfth National Convention in Reno, Nevada. Rowan, who has served as the chairman of VVA's Conference of State Council Presidents and three terms on the organization's Board of Directors, served as a linguist in the U.S. Air Force's Security Service during the Vietnam War.

Rowan was a founding member and the first president of VVA Chapter 32 in Queens, New York. He recently retired as an investigator in the City of New York's Comptroller's Office. He is a veterans' service representative for Vietnam Veterans of America in New York City. He lives in Middle Village, New York, with his wife, Mariann. ◆

In Memory...

On August 1, 2005, former VVA President **George Duggins** lost a lengthy battle with cancer. Beginning in the mid-90's, George played a critical role in building what has become a powerful relationship between VVA and SDIT.

Mr. Duggins served two tours of duty in Vietnam with the U.S. Army Security Agency. He was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma, a disease caused by exposure to the toxic herbicide Agent Orange while in Vietnam.

In his honor, SDIT made a contribution to the American Cancer Society. ◆

Election & Survey Results Summary

In early 2006, *Sons and Daughters In Touch* conducted an on-line election for its board of directors and to ask questions about the desired directions of the organization. The following information presents a summary of the election results and survey responses. For brevity, information from similar questions has been combined. In some cases, it was possible to select several responses to a single question.

1) The election: 81.5% of all respondents cast ballots for the entire slate of candidates for the SDIT Board of Directors. No 'write in' candidate received more than 3 nominations

2) Would you support expanding SDIT membership to include other 'sons and daughters': 32.1% said Yes; 40.9% said Yes, but SDIT should maintain its Vietnam focus; 15.3% said No; and 11.7% were Uncertain.

3) Would you support a move to seek a congressional charter for SDIT, similar to that of the Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Wives? 64.7% said Yes; 12.5% said No; 22.8% were Uncertain.

4) Would you support enhancing the SDIT name to include the Gold Star designation (several variations of a new name were proposed). 55.1% said Yes; 25% said No; 19.9% were Uncertain.

5) In a typical week, here's what SDIT members do: 66.7% read or post messages on SDITalk; 60.3% read 'Remembering Our Fathers;' 43.7% visit SDIT.ORG; and 40% read 'This Day in Vietnam War History.'

6) Percent of respondents who would like to receive *Legacies*—the newsletter—via email or read it on-line: 87.4%

7) Visiting Vietnam: 74% of all respondents have not visited Vietnam and 68% of all respondents want to visit Vietnam right away or in the next few years. 30% of the participants in SDIT's 2003 trip to Vietnam responded to this survey.

8) The Education Center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial: 53.3% were familiar with the planned Education Center at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; while 46.7% were not familiar with the plans. More than 70% would like to see the story of SDIT represented in the Center with photographs and news articles.

9) The next national Father's Day celebration: 44% would like to see the Father's Day reunion held in 2008 or 2009; 29% felt it should be held in 2010 (SDIT's 20th Anniversary); and 33% indicated that they would attend regardless of when the event is held.

10) Father's Day 2005 – According to survey respondents:

- **Who attended Father's Day 2005?** 50% were 'daughters;' 31% were 'sons.' The remaining responses came from mothers or supportive Veterans.

- **In which branch did their fathers serve:** 61.9% of respondents were 'sons and daughters' of men who served in the US Army; 15.2% represented 'sons and daughters' from the US Marine Corps; 12.4% represented 'sons and daughters' from the US Air Force; 10.5% represented 'sons and daughters' from the US Navy.

- **Who attended Father's Day with the 'sons and daughters':** 55% were joined by their spouses; 46% were joined by their children; 33% were joined by their mothers.

Most of the attendees were in the Washington, DC area for between two and four days.

- **Did you attend other Father's Day celebrations?**

53% attended Father's Day 2000; 41% attended Father's Day 1997; 31% attended Father's Day 1993; 34% attended the first SDIT Father's Day event in 1992. For 17% of the respondents, 2005 was their initial Father's Day celebration at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

These results are provided for informational purposes only. The newly elected SDIT board will use the information as a guide in leading the organization into the future. If you are interested in participating in the on-line survey, please notify SDIT at board@sdit.org.



Important Web Links

- ◆ **American Gold Star Mothers:** The national organization for women who have lost sons or daughters in service to the United States.
www.goldstarmoms.com
- ◆ **The American Legion:** The nation's oldest Veterans Service Organization with more than 3 million members worldwide.
www.legion.org
- ◆ **American WWII Orphans Network:** Established to serve the needs of American 'sons and daughters' whose fathers were lost in WWII.
www.awon.org
- ◆ **Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall:** Traveling replica of the Memorial that has been presented by Dignity Memorial Network Providers since 1990.
www.vietnamwallexperience.com
- ◆ **Disabled American Veterans:** Committed to advocating for the needs of America's disabled veterans.
www.dav.org
- ◆ **Global Spectrum:** The travel company that coordinated SDIT's March '03 trip to Vietnam, and specializes in customized travel throughout SE Asia.
www.asianpassages.com
- ◆ **Gold Star Wives of America:** The federally chartered organization serving the needs of war widows and widowers from WWII to the present.
www.goldstarwives.org
- ◆ **The Military Order of the Purple Heart:** Congressionally chartered organization for combat-wounded soldiers.
www.purpleheart.org
- ◆ **Military Records Request - Form 180:** The official form to be used in requesting your father's military records. Remember to request ALL records/information.
www.archives.gov/records_center_program/index.html
- ◆ **The Moving Wall:** Half-sized replica of the Memorial that has been traveling the country for more than 20 years; information and future schedules.
www.themovingwall.org
- ◆ **National League of POW/MIA Families:** The organization of family members who are committed to the fullest possible accounting for all US Servicemen yet to return from Vietnam.
www.pow-miafamilies.org
- ◆ **Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors:** Established to support all military family members who have lost a loved one during war, to acts of terrorism or other circumstances.
www.taps.org
- ◆ **Veterans of Foreign Wars:** Veterans Service Organization providing all veterans with programs and services. One of the nation's leading voices calling for improved veteran's benefits.
www.vfw.org
- ◆ **Vietnam Casualty Database:** Provides search options for casualties from the war.
www.no-quarter.org
- ◆ **Vietnam Veterans of America:** Long time supporters of SDIT, Congressionally chartered Veterans Service Organization for Vietnam Veterans.
www.vva.org
 - **The Veteran:** Subscribe to VVA's newsmagazine published every two months.
theveteran@vva.org
 - **Associates of VVA:** Membership organization open to sons and daughters, and other non-veterans.
www.avva.org
- ◆ **Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund:**
www.vvmf.org The organization responsible for maintaining the Wall and educating the public about its legacy. SDIT partners with VVMF to hold Father's Day ceremonies every year. The site includes VVMF content along with information about:
 - **The Wall that Heals:** A traveling half-scale replica of the Memorial;
 - **The Virtual Wall:** A digital and interactive legacy of the Memorial;
 - **In Memory:** A program designed to honor those Vietnam Veterans who died as a result of the war but are not listed on the Memorial;
 - **Teach Vietnam:** A program to assist educators in teaching the history and legacy of the Vietnam War;
 - **Project Renew:** A program committed to the eradication of unexploded landmines in Vietnam.
- ◆ **Vietnam Women's Memorial:** The organization that constructed the Women's Memorial adjacent to "The Wall" and is committed to maintaining the legacy of those women who served in Vietnam.
www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org
- ◆ **VietNow:** Membership organization formed twenty years ago to support veterans' causes, including major support for SDIT.
www.vietnow.com
- ◆ **The Virtual Wall:** A virtual tribute to those whose names appear on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.
www.virtualwall.org



**SONS AND DAUGHTERS
IN TOUCH**

"They Were Our Fathers..."

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Yes, I would like to become a member of Sons and Daughters In Touch.

Please check membership type: New Renewal

Chapter Affiliation, if applicable: _____

- \$30 Individual
 \$50 Contributing
 \$100 Patron
 \$1000 Benefactor
 \$ _____ Other

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ONLINE:
[www.sdit.org/
registration.aspx](http://www.sdit.org/registration.aspx)**

Please make check payable to Sons and Daughters In Touch and return to:

**Sons and Daughters In Touch
P.O. Box 1596
Arlington, VA 22210**

For additional information call: 1-800-984-9994

Membership Form

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Name of loved one being remembered: _____

Date of casualty: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Relationship (please circle one): I am a

Son Daughter Brother Sister Widow

Friend Veteran Grandson Granddaughter

Spouse of: Son Daughter

Sons and Daughters In Touch (SDIT) is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational and support programs for the family and friends of those lost, and those who remain missing, in Southeast Asia.