



La Salette Vietnam Veteran Ministry

Post Office Box 538 • Attleboro, Massachusetts 02703-5195
Telephone: *Home* 508-222-7313 • *Work* 617-232-9500 X-3768 or X-3773

February 22, 1990

Professor Walter Capps
Professor of Religious Studies
1724 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

Dear Professor Capps,

I am in receipt of your letter of January 31, 1990 accepting the invitation to attend, participate in, and address the **National Conference of Vietnam Veteran Ministers** this **November 6-9** in **Washington, DC.**

I want to thank you for your interest and especially for the word of encouragement on the necessity of such a body of clergy people to get together and interact with one another.

Maybe what would be good if in order to set the tone of the **Conference**, you may want to give a keynote address to kick-off the three days we spend together. I would let you decide what topic you would want to address us on. Bear in mind two things: the topic headings of the sessions we will be discussing ((as illustrated on the sheets I sent you in a previous mailing), i.e. our common past in light of faith; our present situation - both personal development and healing and ministerial thrusts to the Vietnam Veteran Community, and; future direction of our ministries and goals and objectives for the future of the **NCVVM**. Secondly, although I would like this to be a working conference, I would also like to maintain a prayerful, reflective retreat-like atmosphere in as much as possible.

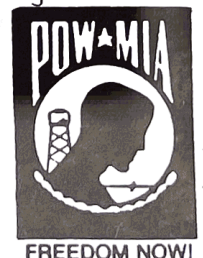
Walter, I will be in touch at a later date on the logistics of our gathering, i.e. room and board and travel. Unfortunately, until we raise funds for this organization this first gathering will have to be funded by each of the participants. The Retreat House for the three days including rooms and meals will cost \$150.00 plus whatever your airfare will cost.

Peace and God bless.


Reverend Philip G. Salois, M.S.

P.S. Walter, could you send me anything you may have written on the subject of Vietnam, spirituality, healing, faith issues, etc.?

National Conference of
Vietnam Veteran Ministers



The National Conference of Vietnam Veteran Ministers, an organization comprised of clergy who served in Vietnam, meeting in Washington D.C. Nov. 6 through 9, issued the following statement with respect to the military buildup in the Middle East:

Out of our experiences at My Lai, the Siege of Khe Sanh, the Phoenix Program, the Tet Offensive and the other battles of Vietnam caring ministries have already emerged. Yet another ministry ~~of~~ remains for us. As our nation stands once again at the very brink of war, we must remind our fellow Americans of that great truth which we recalled in prayer before the Wall: War does cruel violence to humanity. War dehumanizes both ourselves and our enemies. War thrusts upon us the low morality of mere survival. It imposes upon us silence in the face of evil and causes us to forget our quest for peace and mercy.

Our religious traditions remind us that war can only be allowed as a last resort. The true weapons of peace are compassion, forgiveness, justice and love. No decision about war can be taken without recognition of its true consequences. Having ourselves experienced these consequences, we stand ready to go anywhere at any time to promote peace, reconciliation and healing.

Wall
The Statement
Rep



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March 21, 1990

Professor Walter Capps
1724 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

Dear Walter,

I send you warm greetings from Boston, Massachusetts. It won't be long before the buds spring forth new life reminding us all that the joyful Easter season is not far behind.

You had expressed an interest and even made an initial commitment to be an active participant in the newly formed **National Conference of Vietnam Veteran Ministers**. At this time, as the time is flying by for all of us, I am now asking for a deeper commitment on your part. In order for the **Marian Conference Center** in **Washington, DC** to guarantee and hold space for us, I need to make a financial commitment to them by way of a deposit. Therefore, I am asking you to send me a deposit of **\$75.00** [which represents half of the fee] to hold a room for you. I also need you to fill out the enclosed registration form to be sent along with your deposit.

Please remember that there are only 33 individual rooms in the Conference Center and to be fair to everyone - we will accept registrations with deposits on a first-come first-served basis. So please don't delay if you are serious about attending. Travel arrangements must be made on your own.

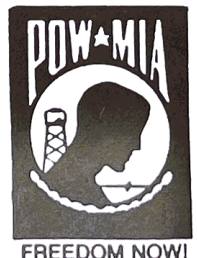
A revised agenda will be forwarded to you at a later time, well before the Conference is scheduled to convene. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to write or call.

May God's peace be with you until we meet in the Fall.

(Reverend) Philip G. Salois, M.S.

Enclosures

National Conference of
Vietnam Veteran Ministers





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August 28, 1990

Mr. Walter Capps
1724 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

Dear Walter,

I was so pleased to hear that you will be coming to the National Conference of Vietnam Veteran Ministers. It had occurred to me that your teaching obligations may prevent you from attending, and your phone call to my office the other day put my mind to rest.

The enclosed agenda is an old one that was drawn up before I was certain that you would be able to attend. I am hoping that you will give the keynote address on Tuesday night, November 6th. Could you possibly send to me at your earliest convenience a curriculum, ^{if you} so that I can advertise you coming as the keynote speaker for the Conference?

I am wondering, Walter, if you will be able to stay for the entire Conference, or if your teaching duties will require you to leave before its conclusion? Please let me know what your arrival and departure schedule will be so that I can make any necessary adjustments to the agenda. I would hate to schedule you only to find out that you won't be able to be there!

I was wondering, too, if you would be willing to send me an autographed, complementary copy of your book, "The Unfinished War: Vietnam and the American Conscience". I would love to have a signed 1982 revised edition for the library I am setting up in the office of the Vietnam Veteran Ministry in Attleboro.

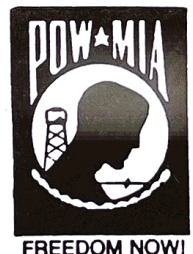
Well, Walter, I will close for now. Please keep in touch, and I look forward to hearing from you soon with your travel plans.

May God's peace be with you always

Reverend Philip G. Salois, M.S.

Enclosures

ps/dlm
National Conference of
Vietnam Veteran Ministers





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October 8, 1990

Mr. Walter Capps
1724 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

Dear Walter,

The Changing leaves of Autumn indicate to me that the first Convocation of the National Conference of Vietnam Veteran Ministers is less than a month away. I want to provide you with some details as you prepare for your trip.

- 1) Dress Code: is informal for the Conference. If you wish to bring something dressier to go out to eat, that's fine.
- 2) If you have not paid your initial deposit of \$75.00, please do so immediately. The balance of the \$150.00 registration fee is due upon registration on November 6th.
- 3) The Conference will be videotaped and recorded on cassette for those NCVM members who cannot attend this year's conference.
- 4) A map and directions to the Conference is enclosed indicating what kind of public transportation is available.
- 5) Also included in this packet is a revised copy of the Goals and Objectives, the Agenda, and our keynote speaker - Walter Capps' - curriculum vitae.

On the following page is a list of the persons responsible to prepare a 15-20 minute prayer during the Conference.

Also, if you have published anything that would be of interest to the membership, please bring it and plan on thirty (30) copies of everything. If you have any other materials that you would like to distribute, feel free, but again, please plan on 30 copies.

See you the evening of November 6th. Please call if you have any questions or concerns.

Fraternally in Christ,

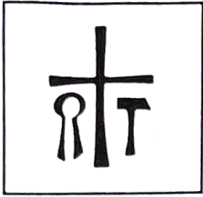
Reverend Philip G. Salois, M.S.

National Conference of
Vietnam Veteran Ministers

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FREEDOM NOW!



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NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF VIETNAM VETERAN MINISTERS

PROPOSAL

The establishment of a not-for-profit organization hereby known as the **National Conference of Vietnam Veteran Ministers [NCVVM]**.

ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

The membership is open to any validly ordained clergy person in their own respective denomination. Verification of orders to be verified by the proper endorsing body.

The members must have served in the Vietnam War either as Chaplains or subsequently receiving ordination after their Vietnam War experience.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1) To offer mutual support to one another as professional ministers and share our Vietnam experience in the light of our faith journey and subsequently sharing our personal pilgrimage to healing and wholeness.
- 2) To learn from each other what our present ministries are to the Vietnam Veteran community, while sharing successes and joys, frustrations and concerns for the spiritual needs and well-being of the Vietnam Veterans and their families.
- 3) To be a theological, educational and pastoral resource for each other and to share these resources with the broader Church on a local and national level [e.g. National Conference of Catholic Bishops; United States Catholic Conference; National Council of Churches, and; other National Church Conferences).
- 4) To develop a pastoral plan on how best to outreach more effectively to the Vietnam Veteran community on a National level.

National Conference of
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NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF VIETNAM VETERAN MINISTERS

MARIAN CONFERENCE CENTER

WASHINGTON, DC

NOVEMBER 6-9-1990

CONFERENCE AGENDA

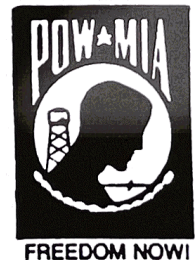
Tuesday, November 6, 1990

- 6:00 P.M. Arrival; registration and settling into rooms.
7:30 P.M. Opening prayer service.
7:45 P.M. Session I- proposal of the Conference agenda.
Introduction of participants.
Keynote address: Dr. Walter Capps, Professor,
University of Santa Barbara, CA.
9:15 P.M. Night Prayer.
9:30 P.M. Social Gathering.

Wednesday, November 7, 1990

- 8:00 A.M. Breakfast.
8:45 A.M. Morning Prayer Service.
9:00 A.M. Session II - Sharing of our personal stories and
our Vietnam experience in the light
of our faith journey.
10:45 A.M. Coffee Break.
11:00 A.M. Guest Speaker: Uwe Siemon-Netto, Lutheran
Theologian and Author of the book,
The Acquittal of God - A Theology
For Vietnam Veterans.
12:00 P.M. Lunch
2:00 P.M. Session III - Reporting on our present minist-
ries; sharing successes, failures;
joys and frustrations. What tools/
methods/programs have worked to en-
hance the spiritual healing of the
Vietnam Veteran?
4:00 P.M. Coffee Break.

National Conference of
Vietnam Veteran Ministers



Page Two

- 4:15 P.M. Session IV - Brainstorming for the future;
Assigning of committees to look into
the various areas the **NCVVM** will in-
volve itself in.
- 5:45 P.M. Evening Prayer Service.
- 6:00 P.M. Dinner.
- 7:00 P.M. Free time (an opportunity for the committees to
meet and begin formulating goals and
plans of action).

Thursday, November 8, 1990

- 8:00 A.M. Breakfast.
- 8:45 A.M. Morning Prayer Service.
- 9:00 A.M. Guest speaker: Rev. William P. Mahedy, Author of
**Out of the Night - The Spiritual
Journey of Vietnam Veterans.**
- 9:45 A.M. Committees meet on their own to come up with
plans of action.
- 12:00 P.M. Lunch.
- 2:00 P.M. Session V - Committee reports and discussion.
- 3:30 P.M. Coffee Break.
- 3:45 P.M. Election of Officers for the Executive Board and
the Board of Directors.
- 4:45 P.M. Guest Speaker: Reverend John Ferguson.
- 5:45 P.M. Evening Prayer.
- 6:00 P.M. Dinner.
- 7:00 P.M. Pilgrimage to **The Wall** for prayer/silent vigil.

Friday, November 9, 1990

- 8:00 A.M. Breakfast.
- 9:00 A.M. Closing session; selection of site for the next
annual gathering.
- 10:30 A.M. Ecumenical Worship Service.
- 12:00 P.M. Lunch.
- 1:00 P.M. Departure.



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Walter H. Capps
1724 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

Professor of Religious Studies
University of California, Santa Barbara

Academic Background

B.S. - Portland State University
B.D. - Augustana Theological Seminary
S.T.M. - Yale University
M.A. - Yale University
Ph.D. - Yale University

Former Positions Held

Director of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions
Chair, California Council for the Humanities
President, Federation of State Humanities Councils

Author

The Unfinished War: Vietnam And The American Conscience

[Boston: Beacon Press, 1982, 1990]

Thomas Merton: Preview Of An Asian Journey [New York: Crossroad, 1989]

The Monastic Impulse [New York: Crossroad, 1983]

Hope Against Hope: From Moltmann To Merton In One Theological Decade

[Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976]

Seeing With A Native Eye [New York: Harper and Row, 1976]

Silent Fire: An Invitation To Western Mysticism [New York:

Harper and Row, 1978]

and six other books...

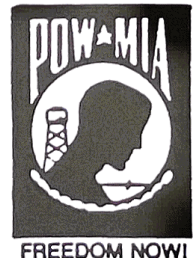
Current Achievements

Teaches the largest class on the Vietnam War (1000 students each time): which was featured on "**60 Minutes**" twice, and in national papers and network television.

Nominated several times for **National Professor of the Year**.

Cited for outstanding teaching by the American Academy of Religion and the Council on Values in Higher Education.

National Conference of
Vietnam Veteran Ministers



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93106

November 14, 1990

Dr. Laurence O'Connell
Park Ridge Center
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Larry:

I spent three days last week with a new group called the National Conference of Vietnam Veteran Ministers that is being organized under the leadership of Father Philip G. Salois (a member of the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette, in Attleboro, Massachusetts). This was the first national meeting on the subject of the religious and spiritual dimensions of the Vietnam War experience. I was keynote speaker. The Rev. William Mahedy, author of Out of the Night: The Spiritual Journey of Vietnam Veterans, gave a presentation as did Uwe Siemon-Netto, a Lutheran theologian, who is author of the book The Acquittal of God: A Theology for Vietnam Veterans.

The group was organized, in part, through the recognition that psychological and psychiatric knowledge of war trauma reaches to significant depth, but needs to be augmented by spiritual healing, because of the nature of the offense and by virtue of the "place" within the psyche or the soul where the experience is most fundamentally situated. In this regard, we examined veterans' testimony, such as "having been scarred in the deepest human place," as warrants for our interest. I presented evidence that the war trauma calls out for the kind of healing that is rooted in atonement. Mahedy likened the veterans' experiences to the abjectness described in mystical literature as "the dark night of the soul." Siemon-Netto related the Vietnam experience to that which was described by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the midst of World War II. And many of the persons present spoke of needing to be spiritually cleansed in order to deal effectively with the acts they had been called upon to perform in the heat of battle.

In speaking about next steps, I told them of the work of the Park Ridge Center and of your unique and superlative record in approaching subjects that combine interest and involvement in health, ethics and faith. Since we were discussing all three of these, I promised (of course, without pre-commitment) to discuss this matter with you to explore the possibility of some future cooperation. In embryonic form, my suggestion was that we try to organize a national conference (on a restricted, limited basis) that would focus on the specific healing rituals and practices that are available to persons within our culture by virtue of the presence of distinctive spiritual traditions. The three of us who are working within this field already (Mahedy, Siemon-Netto and I) have been looking to the classical Christian tradition for such assistance and insight. We are aware, however,



DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93106

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November 14, 1990

that the Buddhist tradition -- significantly, under the leadership of monks from Vietnam -- has much to say and offer on this subject. In addition, numerous American veterans have found comfort and solace in the spiritual rituals and practices of native American traditions. And bringing this matter to greater social and cultural awareness, the current work of Robert Bly (cf. his recent book, Iron John), on male initiation and the role of the mentor, also speaks directly to the subject.

My hope is that the group might assist in organizing a one or two day conference on the subject, requesting papers from persons who can speak to the subject within an inter-religious and cross-cultural framework (which papers might subsequently be published) as the basis for a rather comprehensive initial exploration. I am confident that this is a topic that carries considerable religious and cultural significance; indeed, it requires that issues of health, religion and culture be treated as interdependent dimensions of one and the same subject.

At this writing, I don't have all of the details worked out. But if there were an opportunity for such a conference, the group would choose to have its next meeting (which includes both formal deliberation and guided retreat) in the Chicago area. My thought is that a portion of their work would be participation in the conference, but the specifics of such linkages will need to be worked out.

As you know, I have been impressed with the work of the Park Ridge Center from the very first precisely because of the ways in which the three foci -- faith, health and ethics -- are brought together. I am confident that the project I have sketched in this letter exhibits the same dimensions and can only be approached resourcefully in the same spirit.

Warmest personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

Walter H. Capps



THE PARK RIDGE CENTER
FOR THE STUDY OF HEALTH, FAITH, AND ETHICS

Laurence J. O'Connell, Ph.D., S.T.D.
President & CEO

April 24, 1991

Rev. Philip G. Salois, M.S.
President
National Conference of Viet Nam
Veteran Ministers
P.O. Box 538
Attleboro, MA 02703

Dear Rev. Salois:

I am pleased to confirm my invitation to you and the members of the NCVNVM to visit the Park Ridge Center on Saturday, November 16, 1991. I shall arrange to have a staff member present to welcome you, give a tour of our office suite, and answer any questions you might have.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Park Ridge Center for the Study of Health, Faith, and Ethics. I am confident that at some time in the future we shall find a productive avenue of cooperation. Every best wish.

Sincerely,

Laurence J. O'Connell

/mkm

cc. Walter Capps