

**RONALD H MORGAN, DIRECTOR
VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND**

Chair Boquist, Vice Chair Monnes-Anderson, and Committee Members:

It is my privilege and honor to come before you today, as not only a National Director of VVA, but as President of the Oregon State Council of the VVA.

Vietnam Veterans of America was Congressionally chartered in 1978 with the basic principle that, “Never again will one generation of veterans be abandoned by another”.

We have never failed to abide by this principle, we’ve worked hard for benefits and rights of all veterans—be they of WW II, Korea, Vietnam, or any of the wars since.

Today, I will share the testimony of Stephen L Bates, Chair of the Committee on Memorials and Remembrance.

Of thirty-nine American families who experienced the loss of a son, not once—but twice, four of them are Oregonians. Oregon has more than its fair share of “Double Goldstar” families and we should have paid those families proper recognition for their sacrifice long ago!

One of these families no longer exists, but in the hearts of friends and neighbors who knew them.

With your permission, I will share Mr. Bates testimony.

Committee on Memorials and Remembrance

"To Memorialize casualties of war and Remember the service of Military Veterans"

Stephen L. Bates, Chair
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Boring, Oregon 97009
(503) 663-6271

Jaycee Newman, Secretary

Testimony on House Concurrent Resolution (HCR 30) – Hearing Scheduled for May 23, 2017

Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Chair Boquist, Vice-Chair Monnes-Anderson and committee members:

The Committee on Memorials and Remembrance identified four families in Oregon that lost two sons to the Vietnam War. It is terrible to lose a child, but to lose two is exceptional. 39 families in the United States share this experience. Our committee made a commitment to honor the four Oregon families that sacrificed so much: The Wright family of Boring, The Rowden Family of Jackson County, The Evans Family of Klamath County and today, we wish to honor the Johnson family.

Our research has demonstrated that each of these families have compelling stories. The Johnson family story is the most heart wrenching. We have found surviving family members of each of the two gold star families with the exception of the Johnson family. It is most imperative that we as Oregon citizens stand up to honor and remember the sacrifice and loss of this family. Please accept the following points of our research:

Louis Johnson married Helen Gordon. They had four children; Charles, Kalista, Clifford and Gordon. Research on this family has been difficult.

We have identified that Charles attended Toledo High School. Charles Eugene Johnson enlisted in the Navy in December of 1961 at the age of 17. He was honorably discharged in 1966, only to re-enlist in 1967. Less than three months after his re-enlistment, he was in Vietnam. He was a Medic assigned to the 7th Marines and was killed outright in a hostile engagement on February 8, 1968 at the age of 23.

At the time of Charles' death, we have been able to identify that his parents lived in Portland. We have not been able to locate any information on the father, Louis A. Johnson.

Clifford Thomas Johnson was drafted into the Army. He was an Infantryman, but achieved the rank of Sergeant. He was involved in a hostile engagement and sustained wounds on December 7, 1970. Sergeant Thomas died from those wounds almost three weeks later on December 26, 1970 at the age of 21.

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Val Shaul
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Past Commander,
VFW Post 180

Bert Key
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VFW Post 4273

Additional members: Tom Bennett, Gary Handy

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Both of the Johnson Brothers were single at the time of death. They had no dependents. Their sister, Kalista, married Stephen Elia and they had a daughter. Stephen, Kalista and their daughter, Shannon are deceased. Their brother, Gordon is also deceased. Their mother, Helen died in 2005. This branch of the Johnson family tree is dead. There are no surviving relatives that we can find.

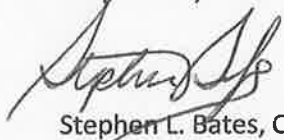
Tony Molina of Lincoln County, Oregon advised that Helen Johnson contacted him in 1992, asking that the names of her two sons be placed on the Newport Vietnam Memorial as they lived in Toledo when the boys were young. This is the only contact with the Johnson family that we have on record.

As there are no surviving family members to remember and honor the Johnson Brothers, it is important that we honor and remember the sacrifice of this family.

We ask that this Resolution be passed to the Senate Floor with a Do Adopt recommendation so that we can honor the Johnson family. This Resolution, when passed, will enable the process for signage and the dedication of a portion of State Highway 20 in Lincoln County as a Fallen Hero Memorial Highway in memory of: Navy Hospitalman Charles Eugene Johnson and Army Sergeant Clifford Thomas Johnson.

Two heroes that were brothers: Brothers that died in Vietnam:
They sacrificed their American Dream so that we could live ours.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen L. Bates, Chair

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