

*Scanned for*  
**Artists Donating  
To Vietnam Vets**

Chapter One of the Vietnam Veterans of America announced that some Middlebury artists have donated a series of paintings to be displayed and sold at Chaffee Art Center, 16 South Main St., Rutland, 775-0356.

Proceeds from this exhibit will go to Chapter One of the Vietnam Veterans of America, to assist in erecting a monument to all Rutland County Vietnam veterans.

The monument will be erected on the green on South Main Street, just south of Washington Street, and is expected to be dedicated this fall.

The exhibit will run to Aug. 15.





Staff Photos by David Jenne

Officials look over a section of the Dodge Veterans' Center awaiting renovation (left) and center manager Duane Wheeler (right) relaxes on the porch after a dedication ceremony Wednesday.

# Home for the Homeless

## Veterans' Shelter Gets \$60,000 Government Boost

By **FREDERICK BEVER**  
Herald Staff

Twenty-five years after returning from the Cambodian border, where he was a transportation engineer with the U.S. Army First Infantry Division, Tunbridge native Duane Wheeler has found a home.

"We never made the adjustment after coming back from Vietnam or fit back in," Wheeler said. "I felt like an outcast for years."

But on Wednesday, he led the pledge of allegiance for a congregation of dozens of local officials and

veterans in front of a Crescent Street house that is the first homeless shelter for veterans in Vermont.

Wheeler lives there now and is managing the Dodge Veterans' Center while it undergoes a transformation from a three-bed shelter and assistance office to a 19-bed facility.

"The attitude of the American people about the war — I see it changing now," Wheeler said. And so has the federal government's attitude.

The federal government sent a representative —

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# Local Heros Recognized

About 70 people packed the Disabled American Veterans post on Woodstock Avenue last Thursday to help honor some of Rutland's finest "Diamonds" the unsung heroes of community service. The event was cosponsored by the Rutland Mayor's office and Vermonters United to serve America.

Twenty-two Rutland area individuals and organizations were honored with the Diamond Award certificates in recognition of their outstanding service to the community, after which the honorees voted to determine which two of them would receive special *Diamond Crystal Awards*.

The awards were presented by Rutland Mayor Jeffrey Wennberg, who opened the evening's ceremonies with talk evoking the memory

of Operation Desert Storm. "A powerful spirit of unity was generated during that time," the mayor said, "And one of the purposes of this program is to see if we can't generate some of that same unity and spirit to combat our everyday domestic problems like crime, drugs and poverty."

The first group of award recipients were people and organizations who helped organize support the troops efforts in Rutland during Desert Storm. Those so honored were: Paula Smith; Thomas Kantorski; Jackie Metcalf; Michael Caulin; American Legion Post 31 and Sgt. Brian Perry of the Vermont National Guard.

The remainder of the honorees were individuals and organizations who have contributed in a wide variety of

ways to the community. In this group were: John Cassarino, Executive Director of the Open Door Mission; The Salvation Army,

Inc; Disabled American Veterans for their annual Honor Student banquet; Vermont Girl Scout Council; Steven

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## Heros

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Gaike Memorial Foundation; Elks Club for their Youth Day & Sports Banquet; Mark Montgomery for putting out a house fire on Melrose Avenue, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1 and the Chaffee Arts Gallery for bringing "The Wall-the mobile Vietnam Veterans Memorial to Rutland;

DARE program, Corpl. Ed Larson, director, Veterans of Foreign Wars for the Loyalty Day Parade, Rutland Lions Club, 4H Club, Crime Stoppers, John J. Malosky for saving Joe Courcelle's life with CPR and Ken Shaw for running the American Legion baseball program.

Participants at the Rutland ceremony shared many deeply moving moments as a number of the

awards recipients shared some reflections with those present. Karen Larson of the Lions Club simply said, "Seeing all of you here, I have hope for the community my children will grow up in."

John Cassarino of the Open Door Mission was moved to recount the story of the Good Samaritan, saying, "I used to wonder: was he good because he stopped or did he stop because he was good, because he knew what it was like to be beaten and left by the side of the road. People asked us why we do what we do - it's because we know what its like to suffer and our heart goes out to others in such a situation. United to Serve America will succeed because this is the

right approach - to recognize these Diamond of community service."

Jake Jacobsen of the Vietnam Veterans of America touched many when he said, "People would ask me, 'How can you be happy seeing how well the Desert Storm veterans are treated, when you were treated so poorly?' I tell them, what happened in the Gulf, and how well America acted there, was the harvest of the message that came out of Vietnam: don't confuse the war and the warrior. I saw so much heroism in Vietnam - men going to pick up the wounded and being wounded themselves. I was saved to serve, and I'm so happy after 20 years to finally see the harvest."



## 'Honor the Veterans'

Staff Photo by Dale Schaft

Stephen Faye of the Vietnam Veterans of America (left) and Elizabeth Gibbs-Weston, of Rep. Bernard Sander's office, participate in a ceremony Friday to launch an "Honor the Veterans" program. In Rutland, some businesses will provide veteran discounts, and signs will be placed at the entrances to the city. Faye said the program would spread statewide next week, and perhaps across New England after the regional veterans' conference Oct. 23 in Rutland. Also joining in the ceremony were Mayor Jeffrey Wennberg and a representative of Sen. Patrick Leahy.



# Vietnam Veterans Plan Memorial in City Park

By LIZ ANDERSON  
Herald Staff

Rutland City officials and area Vietnam veterans will meet this week to discuss the veterans' proposal to install a memorial in Main Street Park.

The veterans envision a roughly 500-square-foot, partially enclosed garden and terrace that will function as a tribute to area residents who served in the Vietnam War and be a place for reflection for all who visit.

They expect to detail their ideas in a meeting Thursday with city Recreation and Parks Superintendent Leif Dahlin. Board of Aldermen President David Sagi is also expected to attend, according to John Bergeron, president of the local chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America.

"Certainly I'm supportive of the

idea," said Dahlin, who said he planned to listen to the proposal and then "begin the research of how to go about doing it so we can put something in place that will be appropriate and visible."

"What I'll be doing is taking it from there and reporting to the Recreation Committee, which then will get it to the Board of Aldermen and the mayor and, of course, I'll just check on any restrictions, conditions, as to how we would proceed with this," Dahlin said.

Bergeron said several members of his group have met regularly throughout the summer to discuss ideas for the memorial, which is expected to include a three-ton marble carving begun a decade and a half ago by an area veteran who died before it was finished.

Early on, Bergeron said, the  
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group's focus was on the piece of marble and what to do with it, a question that had them stumped.

"Then somebody said we should have a place to go, to meditate, to reflect, and right away this mental block we had just evaporated," he said.

Bergeron said he and group member Andrew Moschetto quickly came back with similar designs.

Since then, he said, members have been soliciting estimates from area vendors and artisans to determine how much such an idea would cost. Bergeron said the estimates run anywhere from \$15,000 to \$20,000.

The current plan is to create an oblong brick terrace flanked on four corners with plantings and bench-

es. Two sides would bear plaques listing the names of veterans killed in Vietnam or possibly all veterans who served in the conflict, and might possibly give facts about the war and the country of Vietnam.

On a third side would rest the marble carving, which Bergeron said a local sculptor has volunteered to complete with the full figure of a soldier.

In the center of the park, the veterans hope to have a bronze fountain in the shape of a "field cross" — a configuration of a bayonet, boots and helmet used to commemorate a fallen soldier.

Bergeron said the veterans' group plans to begin fund raising for the project once they have the final plans fleshed out and OK'd by the

city.

Staff for Sens. Patrick Leahy and James Jeffords and Rep. Bernard Sanders are currently researching whether any grant money is available to help fund the memorial, Bergeron said. Several area artisans and merchants have also offered to donate their services or materials either for free or at cost, he said.

The group hopes to dedicate the memorial either Aug. 9, 1997 — the date a statewide Vietnam-era recognition day will be celebrated in Rutland — or on Veterans Day in November 1997, he said.

"I think the time is now, because the longer we prolong it, it may never get done," he said.



# Rutland County Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Planned For Old Parade Grounds On Main Street



*The local chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America volunteered to help establish the monument. A carved marble slab includes the names of the 18 local people killed in the conflict.*

BY KIP FRY

Local soldiers killed in the Vietnam War will soon be remembered with a new monument on Main Street in Rutland. Members of the local chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America, especially President John Bergeron, have volunteered their time to get the monument placed in the old parade grounds just south of Main Street Park.

The monument, called the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, will consist of a large slab of marble that has been carved into the likeness of a uniformed soldier lying in rest. The names of the 18 Rutland County soldiers killed in the conflict will be inscribed along the side.

A new walkway and a semi-circle of benches and display cases, intended to showcase the names of other Vietnam vets from the area, as well as other exhibits that can be changed occasionally, will surround the sculpture. The Rutland Garden Club will maintain the shrubbery outside the benches. A marker explaining the significance of the monument will be installed on the Main Street side, along with a new flag pole.

"We're trying to keep it as simple and low maintenance as possible," Bergeron says of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial.

The project has taken several years to come to fruition for Bergeron, who also operates Downtown Has Sole Shoe Repair in Rutland. But the story actually goes all the way back to

1980 when a man named John Reno, who worked at Carris Marble, started carving the three-ton piece.

Unfortunately, Reno was killed in a boating accident and the project sat unfinished for a number of years in a Castleton marble quarry. Bergeron had read several old newspaper articles about it and assumed that the piece had been destroyed in the years since. But after doing some research and banging on doors, he was able to locate the piece and have it moved to the Carving Studio in West Rutland, where carver Don Reamy took up where Reno had left off years earlier.

The entire area measures 640 square feet, with 488 of that paved. Work has already started on the excavations, which was done by Fabian Earth Moving of West Rutland. Ernie Smalley of Smalley Construction, also a member of the veterans' organization, has volunteered his time to help oversee the project from a construction point of view. Michael Handley designed the piece. He is a student at the Engineering Technology Academy at the Stafford Vocational Technical Center in Rutland whose idea won a contest over 18 other classmates. The group has also spent a great deal of time raising funds for the project, something they are still undertaking. Anyone interested in donating money for the veterans' project can contact Bergeron at (802) 773-2815.

The memorial will be dedicated on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29. □



# Honor our Veterans



Photo by Albert J. Marro

Ron Fairbanks and members of the American Legion Post 31 Color Guard fire a volley during a Veterans Day ceremony Saturday.



Photos by Albert J. Marro

Vietnam veterans, above, gathered Saturday at Rutland Main Street Park to unveil a new list of veterans who fought in the conflict. From left, Leo Batholon, Louie Wierzbicki and Jack Crowther. Crowther is secretary of Vietnam Veterans Chapter 1 in Rutland. Right, Roland Chabot bows his head during a minute of silence for fallen comrades during Saturday's Veterans Day ceremony at Rutland's American Legion Post 31.





Date?

# Medals to Honor Vietnam War Dead

*Rut Herald*

Vermont Press Bureau

COLCHESTER — The next of kin of more than 100 Vermonters who were killed in the Vietnam War will be honored in a special ceremony at Camp Johnson in Colchester next month.

Major Gen. Donald Edwards, adjutant general of Vermont, said the surviving next of kin would be awarded the Vermont Patriot's Medal at this year's observance of POW/MIA Recognition Day on Sept. 21 at 1 p.m.

The medal was authorized by the Vermont General Assembly during a special session in 1966, but through an oversight, the medal and scroll recognizing the sacrifice, was never funded.

That oversight was brought to the attention of the Legislature last year by the Vermont State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America, and funding for the medal was authorized.

Edwards said the medal was the first decoration in the nation for next of kin of those killed in battle.

He said more than 100 Vermont families were eligible to receive the decoration, and urged those relatives of Vermonters killed during the Vietnam War to contact the Vermont National Guard toll-free at 1-800-637-3000, extension 120.