

" <http://betweenthebars.org/blogs/474/>
Thoughts From THE HEART"

FOR THOSE THAT HAVE FOUGHT FOR IT
"FREEDOM" HAS A FLAVOR THE PROTECTED
WILL NEVER KNOW.....

THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
CHAPTER 822 IS ONE OF FEW CHAPTERS
BEHIND PRISON WALLS. IN 1999 25
PRISONERS-[VIETNAM ERA VETERANS] PETITION
THE NATIONAL OFFICE FOR A CHARTER. WE
WERE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, BLACK-
JEWISH-WHITE-HISPANIC. WE DIDN'T
ASK WHY THE PERSON WAS IN PRISON.
[IT'S A QUESTION NEVER ASKED OF ANOTHER
PRISONER] ALL REQUIRED- YOU HAD TO PRODUCE
A VALID DD-214-[PROOF OF MILITARY SERVICE]
OR OTHER SUITABLE MILITARY PAPERS. TO
KEEP DOWN THE FRAUD- THE PAPERS HAD
TO COME FROM THE NATIONAL MILITARY
RECORD CENTER AND MAILED TO ONE
OF OUR STAFF ADVISOR'S. WHO SUPERVISED
THE GROUP. THEN THE PERSON WAS PERMITTED
ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHAPTER.

EZEKIEL 37:1-4 SPEAKS ABOUT THE VISION OF DRY BONES. WE AS VETERANS INCARCERATED ARE VIEWED AS SUCH - HOPELESS - LIFELESS - AND WITHOUT A FUTURE. GOD TELLS EZEKIEL; THAT NO ONE IS BEYOND HOPE AND REDEMPTION. SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE CHAPTER IN 1999. \$70,000 DOLLARS - PLUS HAS BEEN GIVEN OUT IN COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANTS AND DONATIONS TO ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT CENTRAL OHIO - AND TO TWO LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS THAT WE HAVE ADOPTED. CHAPTER 822 WILL CEASE OPERATIONS AT THE NORTH CENTRAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION ON SEPTEMBER - 11 - 2011. THE STATE OF OHIO IS SELLING THIS PRISON AND FOUR OTHERS IN ORDER TO CLOSE A 8 BILLION DOLLAR BUDGET GAP... SO THEY CAN BALANCE THEIR BUDGET BY JULY - 01 - 2011. THESE PRISONS ARE GOING TO BE SOLD TO PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS SEEKING TO MAKE A PROFIT OFF THE BACKS OF HELPLESS PRISONERS WHO WILL NOT FAREWELL IN THE HANDS OF THOSE SEEKING A PROFIT. PLUS WITH A DECLINING MEMBERSHIP

DUE IN PART- IN THE DEATH OF MEMBERS- AND WITH MEMBERS GOING HOME; THE REQUIRED MEMBERS NEEDED TO KEEP THE CHARTER CANNOT BE MET. AS WELL WITH THE TRANSFERS THAT WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE CHAPTER MISSION HERE WILL CEASE AT NORTH CENTRAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION. IT HAS BEEN A HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO BE PART OF THE MISSION AND BE AMONG THE MEN AND WOMEN-[FEMALE STAFF ADVISORS] HERE AT THE CHAPTER. THE CHAPTER HAS PROVEN TO BE VERY VIABLE AND EFFECTIVE HERE AT NORTH CENTRAL. THE CHAPTER IN FACE OF INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS WAS STILL ABLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THE CHAPTER ORGANIZED LARGE FUND RAISERS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE CHARITIES AND TWO SCHOOLS [WE] SUPPORT. THE VETERANS REENTRY PROGRAM ASSISTED VETERANS BEING RELEASED WITH SERVICES THAT WOULD HELP THEM WITH A NEW START IN SOCIETY. ASSISTANCE WITH CLOTHING- HOUSING- JOB REFERRALS- MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES THROUGH THE U. A. AS WELL WITH ALCOHOL AND DRUG TREATMENT SERVICES. GEARED TOWARDS VETERANS. THESE SERVICES ARE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE

PRIVATE SECTOR. ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE STEP-UP TO HELP VETERANS BEING RELEASED BACK INTO SOCIETY. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AS WELL AS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO THE TWO LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS "HAS" PROVEN TO NOT ONLY TO BE THE SMART THING TO DO - BUT THE RIGHT THING TO DO... TO ASSIST WITH THE EDUCATION OF AMERICA CHILDREN. EDUCATION IS NOT A "PANACEA," BUT RATHER IT IS ANOTHER TOOL THAT TAKES AMERICA CHILDREN, ONE STEP FURTHER FROM GUNS - ONE STEP FURTHER FROM DRUGS; THE USE OR SELL OF THEM; ONE MORE STEP AWAY FROM VIOLENCE; A TOOL THAT ENHANCES THE POSSIBILITY OF AMERICA CHILDREN TO LIVE LIVES OF HOPE AND FULFILLMENT, LIVES OF CREATIVITY AND PRODUCTION. NOT LIVES OF DESTRUCTION AND VIOLENCE. THIS IS OUR HOPE AND OUR PRAYER. TO SAY IT WILL BE EASY TO CEASE OPERATIONS ON 9-11-11, IS TO SAY - "ALL WE ^{HAVE} DONE - WAS IN VAIN". "IT WAS NOT"

SEMP FI

JOSEPH SMITH, CHAPTER PRESIDENT
VVA CHAPTER 822
NORTH CENTRAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
MARION, OHIO