

DOC archery at the Huron Event Center...



Archers of all ages participated in the Dakota Oyate Challenge Archery Tournament on Saturday.

PHOTOS BY ANGELINA DELLA ROCCO OF THE PLAINSMAN

State’s unpaid child support grew \$50M in five years

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — Federal data show that South Dakota’s unpaid child support grew by about \$50 million over five years, to more than \$190 million.

The state’s unpaid child support rose by nearly 32 percent between 2012 and 2016, the largest increase in the nation during that period, the *Argus Leader* reported. The amount of money owed in back child support, also known as

arrearages, only increased by less than 2 percent nationally.

Larissa Bell took a second job working at a hotel in order to make ends meet. Bell wouldn’t need the second job if the father of her child had paid child support. Bell said she should have received more than \$15,000 in back child support.

“When I filed for child support, I was told South Dakota was the number one state for getting child support,” Bell

said. “If we were the number one state, why didn’t I get it in the first place?”

South Dakota’s child enforcement unit within the Department of Social Services has been recognized as one of the most efficient nationally for over a decade. But federal performance measurements don’t take into account the total of back child support that has accumulated for each state.

Gail Stoltenburg is director of the state’s child support program. Stoltenburg said case-loads have increased, which ultimately results in more cases. Stoltenburg also said a 2011 U.S. Supreme Court decision complicated child support collections by requiring proof of the ability to pay before an individual can be jailed.

Chris McClure served as a staff attorney at the state’s social services department for five years. McClure said the arrearages have risen dramatically due in part to South Dakota’s decision not to reduce minimum child support payments from parents who were unemployed or in jail until recently.

“All the other states moved quicker to change their laws,” he said. The number of arrearages piled up for South Dakota parents who might not have owed as much in other states.

Voters also approved a minimum wage boost in 2014, which drove minimum child support payments for non-custodial parents up from \$216 per month to \$300 per month.

SUNDAY TV NEWS LINEUP

WASHINGTON (AP) — Guest lineups for the Sunday TV news shows:

ABC’s “**This Week**” — Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.

NBC’s “**Meet the Press**” — Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.; Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va.

CBS’ “**Face the Nation**” — White House legislative affairs director Marc Short; Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill.

CNN’s “**State of the Union**” — Collins, Manchin.

“**Fox News Sunday**” — Short; Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C.

FREEZE:

for property taxes to be frozen: Applicants need to be 65 on or before Jan. 1, 2018 or disabled during 2017 and proof of disability is required.

They also need to have been a South Dakota resident for at least one year and have lived in their single-family dwelling for at least 200 days of the previous calendar year.

Applicants need to bring in

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their 2017 proof of income - all income - in order to fill out application.

Income guidelines are:

- for single income is \$27,697.78 and under.
- for a household with more than one income the amount is \$34,622.21 and under.

Deadline for the application is Friday April 1.

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TSCHETTER:

of a war that wouldn’t end for years – led to a nightmare experience that he continues to struggle with today.

“I had no clue what I was doing and later said it was the dumbest decision I ever made,” Tschetter said in an interview.

Five years after he began writing about what he saw, did and ultimately survived in Vietnam, Tschetter has published “Fifteen Minutes Ago, A Vietnam War Memoir.”

Has he found peace, something he thought possible when he finished writing the book?

The short answer is no.

But he has been told that it has given many veterans and their families a clearer understanding of the anguish suffered by those who served in Vietnam.

It was nine years after his 1971 discharge that Tschetter first began having problems with what would be diagnosed as post traumatic stress disorder.

At no time during his training did anyone mention or warn the young soldiers about the devastating psychological effects combat would play in their lives, he said.

PTSD, he said, hit him with a vengeance.

“I fell into a deep, dark hole

of depression, panic and fear,” Tschetter said. “I could see no way out. I suffered from nightmares, severe panic attacks, anxiety and continual thoughts of suicide.

“I couldn’t function as a father, husband or professional,” he said. “It was in total control of my life and it scared me to the point of knowing if I didn’t get help, I would stop it on my own.”

All through the 1980s and 1990s the attacks continued, even though he sought treatment from his doctor and private psychiatrists.

It wasn’t until he received the Veteran Administration Hospital’s advanced PTSD counseling did he feel free of ever having another attack.

Tschetter was assigned duty as a combat radio operator in Vietnam.

In his book, he writes about his experiences in the bush, describing in detail the fire-fights, the loss of buddies and even his witnessing his squad

ENCOUNTER: From Page 1

were incredulous.

“Vietnam was going on at the time and I remember my uncle said, ‘Roger, what were you thinking? You know where you’re going to go.’

“And I said, ‘I know exactly where I’m going to go.’ I had a full expectation that that’s where I was going to be. But I did it anyway, and I never looked back and regretted it.”

Both reported to the induction center in Omaha for processing, and then were on a train for two days to the Marine Corps boot camp in San Diego.

After boot camp, it was on to Camp Pendleton to the infantry training regiment and then they flew home for a 20-day leave.

“That was the last time I saw Craig until sometime during our tours in Vietnam,” Decker said.

Back in California, Tschetter was shipped out to Vietnam while Decker remained stateside for a time because he had scored as the second highest shooter at the rifle range and was assigned to go to scout sniper school.

When Decker realized who that dirty, tattered marine standing in front of him was on that day in the regiment’s quarters, they talked for awhile and then Tschetter was given the opportunity to shower.

“If the sun shone that day, the black water bladder on top heated the water and you could take a warm shower,” Decker said.

Tschetter was given clean gear, and the unit’s soldiers opened their foot lockers to offer him whatever else he needed. But Tschetter declined, saying while he appreciated it he couldn’t accept it because none of the other guys in his outfit would have it.

Tschetter had known Decker was with that outfit as a scout sniper, but it was still amazing that the two were reunited.

“Just by luck of the draw,” Decker said. “His regiment showed up on our regiment CP (command post) and he wanted to look me up and found me.”

Decker said it was understandable why his friend from

Huron looked the way he did that day.

And why he suffered for so long later with post traumatic stress disorder.

“Their regiment, it seemed like any time there was bad stuff happening their regiment would be right in the middle of it,” Decker said. “They got in a lot of stuff, and he looked like it.”

But, he too, had some problems for a short time after he came home.

“When you see enough of certain kinds of things and experience some things it stays with you, even today,” he said.

“I have very vivid memories of certain incidents, but I know that by virtue of what their regiment was involved in, all the operations and all of that, it would have been far worse,” Decker said.

“I can say that my experiences were not to the level of severity that Craig’s were, and other people,” he said.

Decker said he has been asked if he and other snipers were shot at.

“Well, no,” he said. “If we’re doing our job correctly, no one knew we were there until it was too late for them, and then we disappeared.”

Decker said it was more difficult for him to accept the reception he got when he was coming back home.

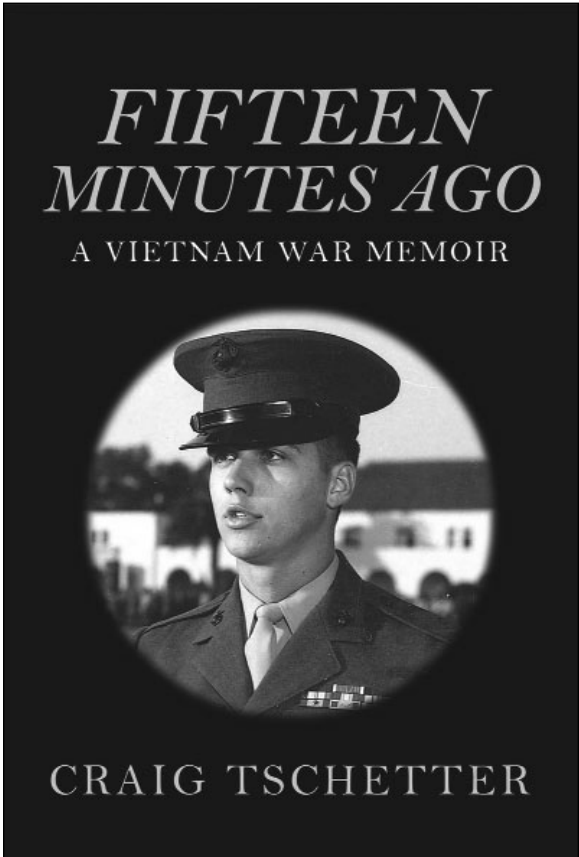
On Christmas Day in 1968, he was at Los Angeles International Airport, in his winter uniform with Vietnam ribbons, when he looked for a place to sit to await his flight and no one would get closer than 10 or 15 feet of him.

“It was like Moses parting the Red Sea,” Decker said. “People just moved aside.”

He remembers a little boy who excitedly told his mother of the soldier he saw.

“He started coming my way and his mother grabbed him by the arm and jerked him and went the other way,” Decker said.

“I was 19 years old,” he said.



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“I listened to students speak negatively about Vietnam in class, but at no time did I acknowledge I had served, was wounded, decorated or trained recruits to go to war,” Tschetter said.

“It was very clear to me it was best to keep my distance, avoid confrontation and go on with gaining my education,” he said. “Did I like what they were saying? Absolutely not, but it wasn’t worth trying to change their opinion because to them, they were right and I was wrong.”

After his discharge and college education, Tschetter’s career in funeral service spanned more than 30 years.

He retired in 2005 and he and his wife, Della, live in Brookings. He spends his time writing and speaking to high school classes.

When people ask him when he served in Vietnam, he answers that it was from Nov. 23, 1967 to July 27, 1969.

“However, what I really want to tell them is fifteen minutes ago,” he said.

He was a naïve 18-year-old that day he stood in the recruiter’s office and asked that question so long ago now.

“Now I would tell you the United States Marine Corps made me who I am today; it clearly identifies me,” Tschetter said.

“What they did for my life in four years is more than any college or university could ever hope to offer.

“Granted, it was a different type of education, but when I did go to college and acquired my degree I was far more mature, disciplined and dedicated to the cause than most,” Tschetter said.

His website is fifteenminutesago.com.

Email him at craigt@swiftel.net to purchase an autographed copy of the book.

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