



Listening Post

Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County, Inc.
P.O. Box 3218
Ventura, CA 93006-3218

August 2010

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In Memory of SW2 Oscar Avila-Mendoza, USN 16 May, 1987 – 16 July, 2010

On July 16, 2010, SW2 Oscar Avila-Mendoza was killed in a tragic automobile accident on Pacific Coast Highway. David Ha, Richard and I had the honor of attending his memorial service at the Seabee Chapel at NBVC, Port Hueneme. This was an amazing young man who will be missed by his family, many friends and the entire Seabee community.

Jan Camacho,
LP Editor



Oscar Alfredo Avila-Mendoza was born in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Family was always his top priority, and as the oldest of four children he provided a good example for his siblings. At the age of nine, his family migrated to El Paso, TX to secure more opportunities for their children. Oscar did not take the sacrifice of his parents for granted: he studied hard and excelled in his coursework. He graduated from Chapin High School in 2005.

Even as a child Oscar was intent on serving in the military. Shortly after graduating from high school, Oscar joined the Navy on December 5, 2005. After graduating from basic training in Great Lakes, IL, he reported to Steelworker "A" School in Gulfport, MS where he graduated on March 31, 2006. Petty Officer Avila-Mendoza reported to NMCB 40 on April 28, 2006. He experienced his first deployment in Iraq. In August of 2007 he deployed to camp Arfjan, Kuwait where he advanced to Steelworker 3rd Class. For his third deployment he was chosen for a detachment to Chinhae, Korea. While there he was the MLO/CTR representative, and was a member of the disaster recovery team during the monsoon season. During that deployment he also became Seabee Combat Warfare Qualified. In this last homeport, Petty Officer Avila-Mendoza advanced to Steelworker Second Class, was a member of the security REACT team for the battalion field exercise, and was a strong mentor impacting the lives of the junior enlisted personnel.

In March of 2007, Oscar met his wife Ana and in 2008 he proposed to her. They married August 29, 2009 and are expecting a son due in a few weeks time. Oscar leaves behind his wife Ana, mother Olivia, father Juan, and three siblings, Lily, Javier and Jennifer.

Presidents Message:

Greetings all:

Well, if 2010 hasn't been great year, I can't think of a better year than this one!

To be leading the recent parade in Ojai, Calif. this past 4th of July was an honor to say the least, thanks to all who participated, and our Parades chairman John Cabrera for making it happen!

The Moving WALL meetings have been going great, you all of stepped up to the plate and make so many things happen, and the donations have been out of this world. Thanks to all who have contributed. There is still much to do, and the time is down to the bare wire!

The Ventura Fair parade is coming up, and I will let John Cabrera touch on that.

I am very happy to report that VVVC member John Smiley is doing better, as is Jane Smiley! I have been getting an update from their son Kevin from Ohio, thanks Kevin.

We have now been contacted and we need to support the new manager for the Oxnard family Circle who attended our July meeting to give us an inside idea as to what is going on, and what they are doing to assist veterans. Welcome Shannon, who also recently assisted us in the 4th of July Parade, thanks Shannon.

I have been receiving phone calls from Ms. Jean Ray and she has been giving an update on Charlie Ray. He is doing well, and he wishes all of you the best of health, and Ms. Ray says hello to all.

I expect any day now to hear or come by my house Mr. Robert "Fox" Kueser, (past President of the VVVC). I received a phone call from him a few months back telling me he is going to his 35 year high school reunion at Nordhoff High School in Ojai, Calif. this August. I was going to have him stay at my residence, but unfortunately I got sick so he booked himself a room at the Oak View Inn across the street from me, sorry about that "Fox" it wasn't planned, hahaha. He is a great guy if you have never met him!

Last but not least, it is my honor to invite all of you to the Board of Supervisors proclamation ceremony that will be held on August 10, 2010, at 9 AM, at the County of Ventura Board of Supervisors meeting room at the Ventura County Government Center. The ceremony actually starts at 10 AM, but you may want to arrive early for a seat.

The County Board of Supervisors chair, Ms. Kathy Long will present the Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County, Inc. with a proclamation recognizing that the Vietnam Veterans Moving WALL will be coming to Ventura County this August.

Richard Camacho and I will be accepting this award, on behalf of all of the Vietnam veterans and veterans in the community!

(cont. next column)

We have had a lot of folks volunteer to help out at the WALL, and I will let Richard Camacho fill you in at the meetings, and in the newsletter.

One last thing before I get cut off, I wanted to thank all of you who helped out at the Camacho family reunion. I can honestly say they have a big family, and they are the nicest folks I have ever met; good job all of you and the chefs, Ed Evans, John and Doug! I got to cut the meat with Dickey, and it was good!!

Thanks again everyone, see you at the meetings.
Dave Betti

Vice Presidents Message:

Just a quick update on the Moving Wall, Home Depot has contacted me, they are waiting for a package of vouchers from their headquarters that will provide us with the materials that we need for the Wall base at no cost to the VVVC. We just have a few more items to iron out prior to the Wall's arrival in August.

I want to thank all who have assisted us in the planning of this event. I will meet with Terri Taylor Gonzalez, Dave Betti, John Cabrera and Carl Wade on August 5th, to plan the programs for Thursday night's candle light vigil and Saturday's honoring ceremony. Both programs will be short; I don't want to take away from the Wall while it's here.

As I stated at our July meeting, be aware, the closer we get to the arrival of the Wall, more and more solicitors posing as veterans will start popping up at store fronts, trying to collect donation on behalf of our county Veterans and some will go so far to say they are supporting the Veterans home and the Moving Wall. During our next KHAY radio interview, I plan on saying something about this. Both Dave Betti and I will also be addressing the Ventura Lyons Club in August; we'll mention it there as well.

One more word of advice to those who are working the Wall for the first time, when this all comes to an end on August 30th, be prepared, you will emotionally down on Tuesday August 31st. If you need to contact someone and talk, give us a call. This will be my eight time of working a Wall, and it doesn't get any easier.

Thank you to all who have stepped up to the plate, it means a lot to the Board and Officers, and I'm sure the citizens of Ventura County are thankful also.

Until next month,
Semper Fi
Richard Camacho

Chaplain/Scholarship:

Last week I had the great pleasure to attend a "Meet and Greet" event sponsored by the Patriot Guard Riders. If you don't know who they are, the group of patriots, many of them veterans who stand on the gap so to speak to be a barrier against protesters who interfere with veterans' funerals.

This event is held every month on the 2nd Saturday and the 4th Sunday at the "EAT'N PARK" 2517 WEST VICTORY BLVD, BURBANK at 10:30 am. If there is a mission/escort then this event is called off. I got an opportunity to pray for one of its members. They are a great bunch of folks and breakfast was excellent both in quality and quantity.

Dave Betti you probably like this place, Ha, Ha. I passed out the flyers about the Moving Wall event and some of them want to volunteer and help. I directed them to the website for all contact information.

SSgt James M Ray 2010 Scholarship Update:

1 August - forms due back
30 August - announce winners
18 September - make presentation to the winners

Note: I have not received any applications as of today.

Until next time...God Bless you all
David Ha
Chaplain

Wall Donations for July:

Donations have been slow in coming in for the past month, however in the middle of July we received a donation from the American legion Post #502 and friends. We have also had some rather large pledges that will be coming our way soon.

If you know of any group, company or individual that might want to donate to the Moving Wall, have them contact Dave Betti, Richard Camacho or go to lzventura.com.

Doug Temple
Treasurer

From the Editor:

Due to the timing of the Moving Wall, the September issue of the Listening Post will be sent out later than usual.

Jan Camacho,
LP Editor

Ojai 4th of July Parade:

The VVVC had the honor of leading the Ojai 4th of July Parade this year. Everyone had a good time. Thank you to all who participated.

Don't forget the Ventura County Fair Parade is Saturday, Aug. 7th. We will meet at Ventura H.S. at 8:00 a.m.

John Cabrera
Parade chair



Getting ready for the parade.



Almost time to start the parade.



Aren't we cute?

Congressman Gallegly stopped to wish us well.



Couldn't pass up a chance to promote the Wall with our new banners.

Who Was I?



This month's picture is from Bobby Gonzales. It was taken in December of 1962 in Berlin, East Germany. Part of the unit's duties were to guard the wall, which had mines 30 yards on the other side of the wall. His unit was the only armored unit behind the Iron Curtain. Thanks Bobby for the picture.

Oxnard Family Circle:

To access your VA benefits for Medical Rehabilitation and Psychological Day Program, please refer to **Oxnard Family Circle Adult Day Health Care** a **VA contracted facility**.

Our program provides Nursing Care, Medication Administration, Diabetes Management, Personal Care, Dementia Care, Breakfast and Lunch, Social Activities, A large Exercise Gym, Caregiver Respite, Physical, Occupational, Speech Therapy, Massage services, Podiatry, Dietitian and Social Workers to assist with your care needs. We have transportation available to pick you up and take you home with our hours of operation from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., you are also welcome to drive as we have plenty of parking available.

Call and speak with a social worker to see if you qualify!
(805) 385-4180.

Please feel free to tour us any time as we can arrange transportation and Lunch is on Us!

We are hosting the DAV Veterans Information Seminar on 9/18 Sat. 12 and at 2pm (two sessions) You need not be a DAV member to take advantage of DAV Services. If you missed the one on 6/28 at the Veterans Home you have a second chance to hear about all the changes and get the details about benefits and services Veterans have available.

Shannon Bank,
Social Worker & Veteran
Oxnard Family Circle

Upcoming Dates:

Saturday, Aug. 7th – Ventura County Fair Parade

Meet @ Ventura High School at
8:00 a.m.

Saturday, Aug. 21st – VVVC Meetings

Veterans Home
10900 Telephone Rd.
Ventura, CA
Board Mtg – 5:30 p.m.
General Mtg. – 6:00 p.m.
Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

Aug. 26th through Aug. 30th – The Moving Wall

Ivy Lawn Memorial Park
Ventura, CA

Thursday, Aug. 26th – Candlelight Vigil at the Wall

7:00 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 28th – Welcome Home Ceremony at the Wall 11:00 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 6th – Labor Day

Saturday, Sept. 11th Patriot Day

Friday, Sept. 18th – POW/MIA Recognition Day

Veterans Memorial @ the Govt. Ctr.
Candlelight Vigil and reading of
California's POW/MIA's at dusk.

Saturday, Sept. 19th – VVVC Meetings

Veterans Home
10900 Telephone Rd.
Ventura, CA
Board Mtg. – 5:30 p.m.
General Mtg. – 6:00 p.m.
Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

From the Editor:

Okay everyone; I **really** need your help. I still need pictures for the Who Was I column. The picture in this month's LP is the last one I have.

Please send your pictures and a description of the picture (when and where, what you were doing, or any other information about the picture) to me at camacho4@roadrunner.com. Please send pictures as attachments.

Jan Camacho
LP Editor

New Member:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest member, Mark Fulton, to the VVVC. Glad you were able to attend the July meeting. We are honored to have you as a member.

Dave Betti

VA Simplifies Access to Health Care and Benefits for Veterans with PTSD

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced a critical step forward in providing an easier process for Veterans seeking health care and disability compensation for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), with the publication of a final regulation in the *Federal Register*.

“This nation has a solemn obligation to the men and women who have honorably served this country and suffer from the often devastating emotional wounds of war,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This final regulation goes a long way to ensure that Veterans receive the benefits and services they need.”

By publishing a final regulation in the *Federal Register* to simplify the process for a Veteran to claim service connection for PTSD, VA reduces the evidence needed if the trauma claimed by a Veteran is related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity and is consistent with the places, types, and circumstances of the Veteran’s service.

This science-based regulation relies on evidence that concluded that a Veteran’s deployment to a war zone is linked to an increased risk of PTSD.

Under the new rule, VA would not require corroboration of a stressor related to fear of hostile military or terrorist activity if a VA doctor confirms that the stressful experience recalled by a Veteran adequately supports a diagnosis of PTSD and the Veteran’s symptoms are related to the claimed stressor.

Previously, claims adjudicators were required to corroborate that a non-combat Veteran actually experienced a stressor related to hostile military activity. This final rule simplifies the development that is required for these cases.

VA expects this rulemaking to decrease the time it takes VA to decide access to care and claims falling under the revised criteria. More than 400,000 Veterans currently receiving compensation benefits are service connected for PTSD. Combined with VA’s shorter claims form, VA’s new streamlined, science-based regulation allows for faster

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VA Simplifies Access to Healthcare & Benefits for Veterans with PTSD (cont.)

and more accurate decisions that also expedite access to medical care and other benefits for Veterans.

PTSD is a medically recognized anxiety disorder that can develop from seeing or experiencing an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury to which a person responds with intense fear, helplessness or horror, and is not uncommon among war Veterans.

Disability compensation is a tax-free benefit paid to a Veteran for disabilities that are a result of -- or made worse by -- injuries or diseases associated with active service.

For additional information, go to www.va.gov or call VA’s toll free benefits number at 1-800-827-1000.

Editor’s Note - (Article taken from Veterans Administration website).

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1922>



August 26th through August 30th

Ivy Lawn Memorial Park

Ventura Ca

Thursday, August 26th – 7:00 p.m.

**Candlelight Vigil & Name Reading of
California’s 170 POW/MIA’s**

Saturday, August 28th, 11:00 a.m.

Welcome Home Ceremony

Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County
P.O. Box 3218
Ventura, Ca 93006-3218



Aug. 26th through Aug. 30th
Ivy Lawn Memorial Park
Ventura, CA