



Listening Post

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

January, 2012

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Presidents Column:

Greetings and Happy Holidays to all:

Well, here it is, another year over, and a new about to begin! I want to thank all of you for making this year as far as I am concerned the best ever! The support from all of you for all of the VVVC parades, the Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies, the work parties at Ivy Lawn, attending funerals as I know some have, the support of every event the VVVC has participated in, and of course the VNVMC "F" Troop BBQ Vung Tau, which again is next April 2012 at Camarillo Springs Grove Park.

I have to mention not only get well wishes to Marie Pounds, but also for her fine work she does for the DAV and for all of her detailed work she does for the VVVC membership! She has been a member of the VVVC for a very long time, and duly should be recognized like a lot of you for her contributions to all veterans, all of us, and to all she touches in her life each and every day! Thanks Marie, and thanks for making the VVVC membership what it is today, and thanks to Richard Camacho for making all of those trips to Sepulveda, Calif. and bringing us all up to date.

By the time most of you get this newsletter we will have had the VVVC Christmas party at the Veterans home already! I can tell by all of the excitement over this year's party how much I missed last year, and I can say that there is a lot of planning involved in this year's party as was last years, and special thanks to Lynda Griffin and Brenda Manke for allowing the VVVC to continue to have these special events and for allowing the VVVC to continue to have our meetings at the Veterans Home, thanks so much ladies!!

I salute all of you for attending December 7th Pearl Harbor Day at the Veterans memorial site here in Ventura recently. I know you have made all of the survivors very proud, and this is a tradition we all should carry on up until our end, and hopefully it will continue to be carried on long after us!

I was not able to attend the event due to being out of town, but that's another article in the newsletter that I will share!

The next VVVC meeting will be on January 21, 2012. This meeting will also be our first of nominations for VVVC officers for 2012-2013. We will continue to have nominations at our February 18, 2012 meeting and then final nominations and elections of officers on our third meeting of March 17, 2012 (St. Patrick's Day), we hope that you will attend and possibly assume some of the positions that will become available.

You all are what makes this great club run so smoothly, without you, it would be nothing but a just another club without much meaning, and the VVVC does mean a lot to the community and to all of us, and to the many veterans out there we are in touch with on a daily basis, so c'mon down!

Okay all I hope that you had a Merry Christmas and Happy Merry New year, again, thank you all for your support and making this the most respectful club I have ever been involved with!

Semper Fidelis:
Dave Betti

PS-Due to unforeseen problems with AT&T, I now have new email addresses.
NEW EMAIL: DAVISBETTI@AOL.COM or DAVEBETTI@YMAIL.COM

Vice President's Message:

By now I'm sure that all of you have heard that all of our troops are out of Iraq. Many of them made it home for the holidays. While everyone is happy about this, I have to sit back and look at the bigger picture.

Now that we are bringing our troops home, what will happen to them? How many of them will be released from the military as the U.S. draws down? What will they face as they become citizens once again? There are no jobs for them, and once they separate from the military will the general public still consider them heroes?

What about those who are suffering from PTSD and TBIs? If the VA isn't capable of keeping up with the current demand for assistance, how are they going to service all of these new veterans? Who is going to support these new veterans as they wait for a year or more for the VA to review their claims?

I've read story after story from returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, who have said they feel more alienated here in the United States than they did in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many are opting for redeployments, because they don't feel welcomed here at home, (they don't fit in). Reminds me of my time in Vietnam, one of our guys was on his fourth consecutive tour and wouldn't return home or take leave. His response, "I have nothing back there to return to"!

One vet stated that he couldn't talk to his friends or family, as they were not in the service and couldn't comprehend what he had faced during his deployment. Does this sound familiar? Does the phrase "You wouldn't Understand" come to mind?

What happens to the new returning fathers, when their newborns start to cry at night? Will that flash them back to situations in the field?

I remember when Jan's son Steven returned from Iraq, he would call her all upset and going off like a mad man. Jan would just hand me the phone and say "Talk to him". It would take me a few minutes, but I was able to calm him down. That is what we need to do for these returning troops.

What I'm trying to say, it is our responsibility to support these new veterans returning home, as we have already gone through this, and it was without the assistance of the WWII and Korea veterans. It's time for the Vietnam Veterans to become "Big brothers" and Big Sisters" to these returning heroes.

It's up to us (the Vietnam Veterans) to assist these new veterans as they face the VA, and the non-military leadership that we have. The VVVC membership has always supported our warriors, and I ask that you continue to do so.

Thanks for allowing me to sound off.
Until next month,
Semper Fi
Richard Camacho

Treasurer's Report:

I would like to thank all of you that donated for the Christmas gift cards that were given to the residents of the VA home. It was a very nice gesture by the members of VVVC and others that made it all possible and I'm sure it made the day a little brighter for those living at the home.

Doug Temple

VVVC Treasure

Parade Chair/Work Party

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas. I would like to wish everyone, from myself and Sharon, a very prosperous new year. I'd like to thank Terri & Jean for putting all the gift bags together and getting all the goodies to help make this a special event and to thank all of those who gave from the bottom of their hearts.

I know this isn't the time to mention the avenue of flags, but we still have a lot of work to do. We lost a lot of flags due to the wind and rain. We need to go through all the nylon flags; there are 120 flags that have already been repaired so far and 60 more to do. Then ten boxes of cotton flags to do before Memorial Day. To all that helped on Wednesdays I can't thank you enough and Larry, Dave, Ron for the raffle donations

John C

Important Dates:

Sunday, 1/1 – New Years Day

Monday, 1/16 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Saturday, 1/21 - VVVC Meetings

10900 Telephone Rd., Ventura, CA

Board Mtg. – 5:30 PM

General Mtg. – 6:00 PM

Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

Thursday, 2/2 – Groundhog Day

Tuesday, 2/14 – Valentine's Day

Saturday, 2/18 – VVVC Meetings

10900 Telephone Rd., Ventura, CA

Board Mtg. – 5:30 PM

General Mtg. – 6:00 PM

Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

Monday, 2/20 – Presidents Day

Wednesday, 2/22 – Ash Wednesday

Sunday 3/11 – Daylight Savings Time Begins

Set your clocks forward one hour.

Greetings everyone:

I want to share something with you that doesn't come around that often. Some of you may know, and then some of you may not, but recently (Dec. 4-6, 2011) my wife and I and a Young Marine Bugler by the name of Jennifer Vasquez were invited by private invitation only to a Christmas Concert for the Troops in Washington DC presented by Robert and Suzy Pence.

The reason my wife and I were asked to go is because Jennifer Vasquez is only 13 years old, her mother and sister Maserrat could not attend, and her Color Guard Cmdr. Carl Wade was going to out of town so we were asked to chaperon Jennifer to this event.

The Pence' had read an article on this Young Marine named Jennifer Vasquez upon a flight back from Las Vegas, Nevada to Washington DC. The Pence family for the last 4-5 years has been flying veterans and their families to Germany for Concerts for the Troops during the holidays, well after 5 years Mr. Pence had decided to have his next concert in Washington DC, at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts where Mr. Pence is a Board member.

We all boarded our flight at LAX on Dec. 4th and landed at Washington Dulles Airport and were immediately picked up and taken to our hotel in Georgetown. On Monday, Dec. 5th we all were picked up for a tour of Washington, DC, which included the White House, the Pentagon, the Library of Congress, Washington Monument, Lincoln Monument, Smithsonian Institute, the World War II Veterans memorial, Arlington Cemetery and the Vietnam Veterans WALL!

On Monday evening, we were all picked up by Robert Pence and taken to his residence where we were treated to a house full of guests that consisted of World War II Navajo Code talkers, Miss America Teresa Scanlan, John Cowsills, Beach Boys drummer (and original member of the 60's band the Cowsills), his wife, guitarist Vicki Pederson (of the rock band the Bangles) many cheerleaders from the Buffalo Bills, San Diego Chargers, Washington Redskins, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and Minnesota Vikings.

On Tuesday, December the 6th we all headed to the JFK Center for Performing Arts where we all enjoyed a concert by the Beach Boys, John Stamos, John Lloyd Young, Lorrie Morgan, Marlee Matlin and so much more.

I could go on, but there were so many Iraq and Afghanistan veterans at this event it would be impossible to list them all.

I will say this, I have never in my life seen so many double amputee veterans ever, from Ramon Guitard, U.S. Army, to S/Sgt. Jesse Cottle, USMC, and many more, it was very depressing, but on the same hand, these veterans were the most gracious of anyone I have ever met in my life, and we all exchanged addresses and stories, it was unbelievable.

I must say that meeting (3) Medal of Honor recipients, and James G. Zumwalt and his son James Jr. was a huge honor in itself! I was able to have a brief discussion with Medal of Honor recipient Drew Dix, U. S. Army, and what a fascinating man he is.

(continued next column)

Once the concert had ended, my wife and I had stayed inside the Kennedy Center to talk with some Navajo Code talkers who were still around, but I noticed that Jennifer was nowhere to be seen? My wife and I were looking around when all of a sudden the drummer for the Beach Boys, John Cowsills was up on stage, so we proceeded to talk to him, he kindly took us back stage and what do you think we saw? There was Jennifer hanging around with the Beach Boys and Robert Pence! Geez, she was already there, and the CD she had from the beach Boys was already signed by all of them, hahaha, so we all finally left, got in our ride back to the hotel, and the next day, Wednesday, Dec. 7th we were on our way home.

This trip was unbelievable, and we were very humbled to be asked to go, we all will have plenty of stories to tell for a long time, but you can rest assured that this memory we have shared together will never go away, ever.

Dave Betti

VVVC Christmas Party Pics:



Cooking the hamburgers & hot dogs.

Santa (AKA Bobby Holmes) with Marie, one of the residents.



Marlene B. sang carols for everyone with her wonderful voice

Scholarship winner Breanne Dyeling with one of the residents.



VVVC members being thanked by the residents for their hard work.

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