



Listening Post

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

July, 2012

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Presidents Column:

Greetings all:

Well, unfortunately we have had some of our brothers pass on and leave us. We have lost Kevin "Snow Berrie" Sheahan and Leslie "Jim" French recently, and I want to give our condolences to their family and friends.

I want to thank all who attended the recent funeral for Jim French, and what a service it was! I want to thank CVSO (County Veterans Service Officer) John Jackson for taking care of the French family and getting the necessary paperwork going, thanks John!

I have been informed that some of Kevin Sheahan's ashes have already been spread by his good friend Seraphine, and a memorial service has been planned around July 1st at Mugu Rock. So watch your emails for more info as to the time and reception for Kevin.

I want to thank all of the VVVC members who recently helped out with the repairs for Army nurse Stephanie Blair at her home recently, David Ha, Skip Thomas, Carl Wade and Dave Tapie and plumber Rick Gaumer of Community Action, and I especially want to thank the Oxnard Noontimers Lions Club and the VVVC for their donations of funds for the repair costs of Ms. Blair's home. By the way, Skip Thomas and I learned how to solder now, so if you need soldering, call Skip first, I already forgot how, hahahaha. I won't forget our CVSO (County Veterans Service Officer) Mike McManus for getting us the info, isn't he great, thanks Mike, we are always here!!

Kudos to 1st Honors Details Color Guard member John Walker who recently donated to the family of Jim French, thanks John, you are the best as we all know!!

We are going to be having lots of guest speakers at the VVVC meetings, so hopefully I can give you names in the newsletter before they make their appearances, next month (July) I am trying to get Julie Sardonia, founder of Reins of Hope, and you can visit her web site at: www.reinsofhope-ojai.org for more info.

Lastly, in case some of you don't know, the off ramps (gates) to the VA West Los Angeles hospital will be closed for 18-months due to construction (METRO project) by Cal-Trans. The off-ramps (gates) are: Eisenhower Ave. and Gorman Ave. So please try and avoid that area as much as possible, because 18-months is a long time.

Welcome new VVVC members Jeff Berry & Das Williams, and thanks to John C. for going out of his way to make this happen.

I want to say get well to Sgt. Larry Seguin, and have a safe road trip to Bobby Holmes, David Ha & Sharon & John Cabrera, have a great time as you explore the wonders of Barbados?

Remember, we can always use more flags (coffin) for the Veterans Ave. of Flags, so if you have any, please contact John Cabrera, and we will make arrangements to pick them up.

The VVVC has new t-shirts now, so if you would like one, just drop us a message, the cost is only \$10.

(Cont. pg. 2)

Presidents Message (cont.)

I want to thank Ivy Lawn for the best Memorial Day service I have ever attended, and I want to thank Terri Taylor-Gonzales and Tim Gallagher for allowing me to speak and honor the late great Garland Middleton, it was an honor, and Garland Middleton is a true American hero to all of us Veterans, thanks again.
Semper Fi!
Dave Betti

Vice President's Message:

I don't know about others, but I find the holidays such as the Fourth of July, Memorial Day and Veteran's Day in particular, hold a special significance for me. As Veterans, we are particularly aware that liberty and freedom carry a great price and responsibility. As of May 23, 2012 an estimated 1,343,812* military personnel have died as a result of combat since the American Revolution. Many of us have buddies who paid the ultimate price for our liberties in Vietnam. Personally, I can only hope that I can live up to the responsibility of their sacrifice. Others of us are still paying the price, struggling with the effects of Agent Orange, PTSD and other emotional wounds, after all, in combat there is no such thing as an unwounded soldier. As a veteran, these holidays hold a special significance for me for they give me the opportunity in my busy life to pause and reflect and give thanks for the special country in which I live and the sacrifice by so many that allows me each day to say, "I am proud to be an American. I am proud to be a Veteran. I am proud of my brothers and sister in arms past and present".

*Wikipedia: United States military casualties of war.



Latest picture of Midshipman Andrea Tinajero (2nd row) at Annapolis. Andrea was our bugler at the POW/MIA ceremony each year. We are all so proud of her.

Greetings all:

The VVVC has been asked to participate in the following with the Ventura County Soccer Team the FUSION!
I have been in discussions with Ajay Dhebar (Marketing & Community Relations), and I want to share with all of you what they are excited about doing with the VVVC! I think this is very exciting for all of us, and especially the children!
Dave Betti

Subject: 1st Annual Veterans day at a Fusion Match
Hi Dave,

Great chatting with you today.

Based on our discussion, we'll start small this season, and go big next year, to make this an annual day in our regular season.

Here is our upcoming remainder HOME games:

June 16th

June 27th

July 4th

July 13th (Final game of the season, then playoffs)

For this season and next, we will provide a **physical FREE ticket to that match**, and would love to accommodate a special E-Newsletter that can be distributed among the various Veteran organizations across Ventura County and beyond. This way, even if they don't come this year, they will be familiar for next year's initiative.

ITEMS FOR THE MATCH DAY

- We'll provide free tickets to the match, but need to cap it, as the capacity is only 5000, and we already have 1000 season ticket fans that come regularly, plus walk up purchases (just tell me a number, and we'll make that available)
- The Full Color Guard to march out in front of the team, onto the field, prior to start of game
- 22 young kids that are grandchildren or niece/nephews that can walk out with the 2 teams playing (behind color guards)
- National Anthem singer of your choice
- Recognition by the Game Announcer throughout match, on acknowledgments you choose
- Half-time recognition/presentation of fusion jersey, is a special thing that we would be proud to put on for WWII veteran or another distinguished guest(s) you choose
- Signage on the video board, throughout the match
- If you have a banner, we would put it up during our season, along with sponsors
- Blurb in the game-day event program, with an acknowledgment

Let me know how we can coordinate the next steps.

Ajay Dhebar, Marketing & Community Relations
Ventura County Fusion

701 East Santa Clara Street #42

Ventura CA 93001

(323) 285-6986

ajay@vcfusion.com or www.vcfusion.com

Dedicated to Kevin Sheahan and Jim French

A Letter Down From Heaven

I'm living up in Heaven now; this soldier made it home,
The scenery here is beautiful and I am not alone.

For I am now surrounded by the angels of the Lord,
And living in a mansion that the wealthy can't afford.

But just before I made it in, I walked through gates of pearl,
God's messengers had welcomed me into my brand new world.

And as I walked in through the gates, they greeted me by name,
They said, "You are a soldier and the Lord is glad you came".

" He saw you on the battlefield, the bloodshed and the wounds",
"And God said you were coming so we then prepared more room".

You must know I was overwhelmed at what the angels said,
For there I was in Heaven and my earthly body dead.

But mourn for me no more because I'm Happy as can be,
I died to give you freedom; now the Lord has made me free.

And I do not regret the day I bled and died for you,
For I'm a U.S. Soldier; to this country I am true.

Much pain that I endured was long forgotten at the gate
I suffered not in vain for you and the United States.

The ones who went before me and the ones who'll go one day,
Will not remember battle scars when they have seen God's face.

One country's worth the fighting and was surely worth my
death,
For we were called America to stand out from the rest.

Don't take this life for granted for my death has guaranteed,
That you can live as many can't, to live as you believe

Support the ones I left behind; they'll fight at the command,
For next to God, they're your best friend, to lend a helping hand.

But really they're not lending, for in all they do they give,
And take attacks and shed their blood, so you, my friend, may live.

So if you're not a soldier, keep a soldier in your prayers,
A soldier needs to know that you're supporting them out there.

For dusty are the battlefields and hot is blazing sun,
But great is your reward when every soldier's race is run.

So be content and know that I am walking streets of gold,
And listening to the angels sing, and safe within God's fold.

My friend, this place is wonderful, a place I can't describe,
And I'll be waiting here for you the day that you arrive

(cont. next column)

Now don't forget my soldier friends, as they must carry on,
Until the day their work is done and God has called them home.

I'm glad that I am with the Lord, for He makes life worth living,
Just know a soldier sent to you a letter down from Heaven.

(From the heart of a US Soldier who died for our country.
A dedication to US Soldier Nick Zangara
who lost his life in Iraq on July 24, 2004
Submitted by and used with permission of the author,
Norma E. Wright, 2004)

Important Dates:

Wednesday, July 4th – Fourth of July

Ojai 4th of July Parade

Meet at Hwy. 150 & Country Club Dr.
@ 8:00 AM.

Saturday, July 21st – VVVC Meetings

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

Saturday, August 4th – Ventura County Fair Parade

More information coming.

Saturday, August 18th – VVVC Meetings

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

Monday, September 3rd – Labor Day

Tuesday, September 11th – Patriot Day

Saturday, September 15th - VVVC Meetings

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

Friday, September 21st – POW/MIA Recognition Day

More information coming



Vietnam Experience

April 13, 2012, marked the beginning of my 25th year of presenting “Our Vietnam Experience” to local Ventura and Los Angeles County Middle and Senior High School students. I began this program when my late son Tyrone came home from Moorpark High School in 1986 and showed me his history book, which only contained one paragraph on Vietnam, stating that it was an unpopular war.

Knowing that this bothered me, my son spoke to his history teacher Mr. Will Donley, who invited me to come and speak to the class in 1987. This was supposed to have been a onetime presentation.

The first few years I made the presentations solo, and then I began to bring in other Vietnam Veterans from other branches of service to give the students a well rounded idea of what when on in the field as well as in the rear (support). Prior to each presentation, I make it clear that we don’t discuss the number of people killed or favorite weapons, as we are not there to glorify war, but to share what we experienced after joining the military and how we were treated (received) when we returned from Vietnam.

However, each year Mr. Donley would call and ask if I would come back and address his students once more. Over time, more teachers would bring their classes in to take part of this presentation, until it became so crowded, (the whole junior class), that we had to move it to the multipurpose room, which would hold four classes at a time.

This year presentations include the following Middle and Senior High schools; Moorpark High (25th year), Chaminade Prep (4th year), Flintridge Sacred Heart High (1st year), Pacific High (2nd year), Newbury Park Academy (5th year), Buena High (2nd year), Thousand Oaks High (2nd year), Anacapa Middle School (9th year), and Redwood Middle School (2nd year).

This program not only gives the students an idea of what their parents or grandparents experienced, but it also provides therapy to the veterans speaking.

Richard Camacho



Moorpark High School



Pacific High School



Flintridge Sacred Heart



Chaminade Prep



Anacapa Middle School



Redwood Middle School



Thousand Oaks High School

Teacher Feedback on Vietnam Experience:

Dear Mr. Camacho, Dave Betti, David Wilson, Ed Evans and Tim Tobin

The presentation was so amazing. I wish I could convey to you how incredible it is for me to witness how intently my students listen to each of you speak. I am so thankful they do get to listen and see a presentation that not is in the text books. Several students make comments for days following your visits. As we reconvene next school year I do expect to have the question, "Ms Weatherford, will "those guys" come and talk to this class?" The word about you speaking to PHS students has spread like wild fire. Thank you so very much for serving our country first with your lives and now again with your continued time to our young people so that they may understand in a deeper manner.

To answer your question I believe I could not add anything to improve the presentation. I wish school were still in session and I could ask this question to the students. I do wonder if students had any questions left unanswered. It seems to me we went right up to the bell during the presentation.

However, I do not want to lose any of the presentation time. If I combine Classes it is too many minutes? If so I'll go back to leave the presentation just as it is...

Forever grateful,
Angie Weatherford, PHS Teacher
(805) 289-7950 x 2119
angie.weatherford@venturausd.org

Just keep coming back! Please reserve a spot for me in your spring agenda. You are one of the best things I can do for my kids in the course of the school year.

Respectfully,
Cheryl Wheeler
Buena High School
(805) 289-1826 X 2143
Please note my new e-mail address
cheryl.wheeler@venturausd.org

Hi Richard,

Again our sincere appreciation and gratitude for a wonderful presentation. It was great to have all four of you present. I think it gave the kids and understanding of cooperation and to see the different aspects of the war from varied viewpoints. You each have unique things to share.

It is a highlight of our year to have you at Redwood, looking forward to seeing you again.

Laura Detweiler

Redwood Middle School

90-Day Closure of Two I-405 Freeway Ramps at Wilshire Boulevard Planned Beginning June 22, 2012

Los Angeles, Calif. – Plan Ahead, Adjust Travel Times, or Share the Ride. That's the new message public officials are advising motorists in the greater West Los Angeles region to help reduce severe congestion resulting from the first extended, 90-day closures of key Wilshire on- and off-ramps to the I-405 now scheduled to officially begin Friday, June 22, 2012.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), Caltrans and Los Angeles Department of Transportation are giving the public advance notice that the I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements Project contractor must begin demolishing and reconstructing eight heavily traveled freeway ramps at Wilshire Boulevard in order to complete the construction project schedule. This single interchange is where one of the nation's busiest boulevards meets the nation's busiest freeway, where tens of thousands of freeway-bound motorists travel on a daily basis.

Demolition and reconstruction of the Wilshire ramps is required to build a 10-mile carpool lane on the northbound I-405 between the I-10 and U.S. 101.

Ninety-day closures for the first two Wilshire Boulevard ramps are as follows:

- Westbound Wilshire on-ramp to the Northbound I-405. Detour: Motorists should travel northbound on Sepulveda Boulevard to access the Moraga on-ramp or travel southbound on Sepulveda to access the Santa Monica Boulevard on-ramp.
- Northbound I-405 off-ramp to Westbound Wilshire. Detour: Motorists should exit freeway using Santa Monica off-ramp, then proceed northbound on Sepulveda to Wilshire Boulevard. Other alternatives include the off-ramp at Sunset Boulevard

Expiring Memberships

The following memberships will expire in July:

Larry Cole July 13,

Joe Reyes July 9

Fabio Allodoli July 7

The following expired in June:

Roy Villa June 28

David Ogden June 4

Please renew your membership if you want to continue to receive the LP Newsletter

Thank you on behalf of Marie Pounds, Membership Chair

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