Listening Post

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

June, 2012

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Chaplain – David Ha
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Presidents Column:

Here it is June already! The year is almost half over. So, what is ahead? What do we want to do for Thanksgiving and Christmas; not only for ourselves but for the other vets at the Saticoy Home?

How about our James M. Ray Scholarship fund? Richard Camacho came up with a great idea about those who could afford it contributing $25.00 a month to the fund. I know, with the 50/50, the flag money and special "emergencies" that come up that some can't do $25.00, but how about $10.00 or $5.00 or anything? This Scholarship helps keep alive our connection with the Vietnam experience with our young people today and is a great investment in our future. Just look at how proud we are of some of our past recipients.

Then there are those things which don't cost money but some of our precious time: Ivy Lawn, the Breakfast Club, the Parades, Vung Tau, Pearl Harbor Remembrance ceremony, POW/MIA ceremony at the government center, etc.

I went to the movies last month to watch the new Star Trek movie. I actually sat through the credits at the end of the show. Right near the end was a dedication of the movie to all the "post 9/11 veterans". I thought that very cool, and then I thought how our nation's consciousness has moved on from our WWII, Korean, Vietnam and other veterans.

Well we are still here. We are still making a difference. We will not be forgotten, especially our POW/MIAs. There is a lot to do, so, "Suit Up"!

Dave Wilson,
VVVC President

Vice President's Message:

May was a very busy month, Tim Tobin and Ed Evans joined me to speak at Sacred Heart High School in La Canada-Flintridge for two days, Dave Wilson and Dave Betti joined me for a presentation at Buena High for five periods. Then Tim and Ed joined me once more for a full day at Thousand Oaks High. We also presented at Anacapa Middle School, Pacific High and Redwood Middle School. In total, we made fourteen presentations this year.

CSUCI students presented their Oral History project on May 8th; the six students provided reports on Dave Betti, Rafael Peres, Roy Villa, Stan Leighton, John Smiley and I. What an experience that was. The class will be carried again next year and Rafael has the list I provided him, so if you weren't called this time, you may be for the next class.

In between time, I attended the Ventura County Board of Supervisors meeting on May 14th to support the proclamation Honoring May as Military Month. That same day I met with Carina Armenta, District Director for Congresswoman Julia Brownley's office in Oxnard. Carina wanted to learn more about the VVVC and what we do and offered any assistance that her office can give us on federal items. She had heard many great things about us from Elton's staff.

This month marks twenty-eight years that the VVVC has been in existence, you all should be proud of what this organization has accomplished over the last 28 years, and the fact that we are still going strong while other veteran organization have closed their doors.

I wanted to add that I've gone back to the Ventura Vet Center for one-on-one counseling, and I've been informed that a new Vietnam Vet group will be starting up this month. I would recommend this to anyone that is having any trouble, it really helps. I've gone through two other groups in the past with Robert Reed, it requires a one year commitment to attend one night a week, and it really helps to bring closure to lingering effects from our time in Vietnam.

In closing, I wanted to let you know that Jan is making a great comeback from her minor stroke; she is in outpatient physical therapy.

Hope to see you all at our next meeting.
Richard Camacho

POW/MIA Chairman's Message:

Harvey Charles Addison
Warrant Officer
240TH AHC, 214TH AVN BN, 12TH AVN GROUP, 1 AVN BDE
Army of the United States
29 October 1947 - 25 June 1968
Ojai, California
Panel 55W Line 032

On 25 June 1968 the 240th Assault Helicopter Company was tasked with conducting a troop lift for a Royal Thai Army unit moving into an area about 11 kilometers southeast of Bien Hoa. Eleven UH-1H Hueys were involved - a command and control aircraft and ten lift ships. Since the weather was marginal the C&C ship departed first to recon the assault area and found that the weather in the operating area was acceptable. He directed the ten lift ships to depart BEARCAT base for the assault point. The subsequent accident investigation says
"During takeoff, climb out and enroute to the area of operation the flight encountered fog, clouds and haze that restricted visibility. The flight of ten lift helicopters proceeded northwest from Bearcat at an altitude of 1000 feet in a staggered right formation until over the area of operation. The flight leader (Blue 1) had visual contact with the command and control aircraft and gunships, but stated that the command and control aircraft did not have the flight in sight. After proceeding northwest of the area of operations, the flight leader informed the command and control aircraft of his location and that he was encountering clouds at 1000 feet. He did not have visual contact with the ground or the command and control aircraft at that time. He informed the command and control aircraft he was going to establish a left hand orbit, as he was passing the area of operations. The command and control ship acknowledged the left orbit and suggested the flight go to 900 feet as the weather was better at that altitude. The flight leader established a standard turn to the left and descended to 900 feet, after turning from northwest through south and east to a heading of 060 degrees he entered a cloud. Immediately upon emerging from the cloud the flight leader saw an unidentified helicopter approaching at his immediate right front at the same flight level."
The approaching aircraft was the C&C ship. BLUE 1 and the C&C ship both took immediate evasive action and missed each other - but BLUE 2's rotors hit the C&C ship's fuselage, which promptly exploded. BLUE 4, immediately behind BLUE 2, sustained severe damage as it flew through the debris, while the remaining eight Hueys avoided damage. Twenty-nine men - 12 240th AHC aircrew and 17 Thai soldiers - were aboard the three Hueys (tail numbers 66-16601, 66-16592 and 66-16206); all died in the accident
Dave Betti,
POW/MIA Chairperson

Parade/Work Party Chairman's Message:

Preparing for Memorial Day was really a challenge, but the help of VVVC members, the Sea Cadets and Boy Scouts; we were able to put up some 450 flags. In fact we only had 5 extra flag poles and not many more flags left over at the end.

Again, I want to thank all of the VVVC members and other volunteers that come out each Wednesday work party to help us maintain the sleeves, poles and flags. I'm sure the public saw all the hard work and dedication the VVVC has put into the Avenue of Flags when they drove into Ivy Lawn for the Memorial Day Service.

We also put up new flags at the Oxnard Plaza Park for Memorial Day, we need to thank Jean Clark of Ivy Lawn for donating Flags and for the new POW/MIA flag at the Vietnam Veterans Rock at Ivy Lawn.

Upcoming parades:

July 4th in Ojai 8:00 AM, the VVVC will once again lead off the parade. Meet near County Club Drive.

August – Ventura County Fair Parade.

Brother John

Veteran Suicide:

It's estimated 22 Veterans committed suicide each day in 2010. The number of suicides per day has ranged from 18 – 22 since 1999. These alarming figures come from a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) report released in February 1, 2013.

On June 16, 2010, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki engaged governors of all 50 states, requesting their support in helping to collect suicide statistics. With assistance from state partners providing real-time data, VA is better able to assess the effectiveness of its suicide prevention programs and identify specific populations that need targeted interventions.

The severity of the problem extends beyond 2010. We read and hear the stories all most daily. In fact, last year the Army set another record with 324 suicides. For active duty, the 183 suicides in 2012 far exceeded the previous record of 148 in 2009 (Megan McCloskey, Stars and Stripes, March 21, 2013).

So what's being done to assist our brothers and sisters in arms? VA has completed hiring and training of additional staff to increase the capacity of the Veterans Crisis Line by 50 percent. The Veteran Crisis Line has made approximately 26,000 rescues of actively suicidal Veterans to date. Additionally, VA has initiated a year-long public awareness campaign, "Stand By Them," to educate families and friends on how to seek help for Veterans and Service Members in crisis. VA has launched a national public service announcement "Side by Side."

(Cont. next column)

Veteran Suicide (cont.)

VA is currently engaged in an aggressive hiring campaign to expand access to mental health services with 1,600 new clinical staff, 300 new administrative staff, and is in the process of hiring and training 800 peer-to-peer specialists who will work as members of mental health teams.

The Department of Defense's Defense Suicide Prevention Office, opened in 2011, is conducting a review of the service's programs. By the end of September, it should complete its comprehensive inventory and will have identified gaps and overlaps in the various efforts. From there the office will begin to streamline and unify what is offered across the services. Each of the services is implementing their own suicide awareness and prevention efforts, but clearly more must be done.

What is available locally for Veterans in need? If a Veteran is in eminent danger of harming him or herself or others call 911 and ask for a Crisis Intervention Team trained officer. Immediate help is available at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net or by calling the Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (push 1) or by texting 838255.

I encourage Veterans to enroll in VA health care (http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/) and to seek help from the Oxnard Community Based Outpatient Clinic and VA Medical Center in Los Angeles. Veterans with PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), substance abuse and anger issues, and survivors of military sexual trauma (MST) can also be seen at the Ventura Vet Center by call 805-585-1860. The Department of Defense's (DOD) Military One Source (800-273-8255; http://www.militaryonesource.mil) is also a great resource for face-to-face, telephone and online counseling.

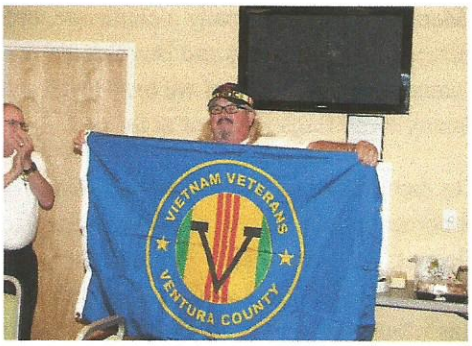
In addition to the VA and DOD resources, there are various organizations that assist veterans to include Reins of H.O.P.E. (equine therapy; 805-797-5539), Healing in America (mediation; 805-640-0211), Soldiers Project (805-647-7628), American Indian Health Services (805-681-7356 x 234), and more.

If you have questions about any of the programs listed or about your benefits, please call the County of Ventura, Veteran Services Office at 805-477-5155.

Mike McManus,
Ventura County Veterans Service Officer

Expiring Members:

Expiring Memberships:
The following memberships will expire in June 2013:
Jeffery Berry 6/6
Das Williams 6/6
John Neil 6/16
Norman Michaud 6/27
David Ogden 6/28
Please renew your membership if you want to continue to receive the LP Newsletter.
Thank you on behalf of Marie Pounds, Membership Chair.



A special ordered one of a kind VVVC flag was presented to Dave Betti t the May general membership meeting to thank him for his leadership as President of the VVVC. Thank you Dave for your time and effort as President of the VVVC.

On May 8th, 2013, six students of the Oral History project at CSUCI, presented their reports on the veterans they had met with and interviewed over the past semester. The students also made a visual display of the veteran's history, prior to, during and after their service in Vietnam. Veterans interviewed were, Roy Villa, Rafael Perez, Dave Betti, John Smiley, Stan Leighton, and Richard Camacho.

Important Dates:

Friday, June 14th – Flag Day

Saturday, June 15th – VVVC Meetings
Veterans Home
10900 Telephone Rd., Ventura
Board Mtg. – 5:30 PM
General Mtg. – 6:00 PM
Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

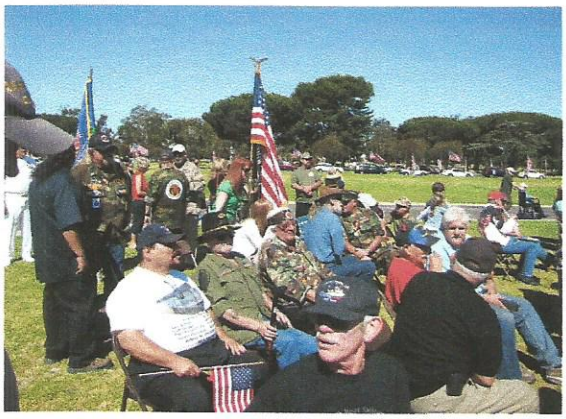
Sunday, June 16th – Fathers Day

Thursday, July 4th – Independence Day
Ojai 4th of July Parade
8:00 AM meet at Country Club Drive

Saturday, July 20th - V VVVC Meetings
Veterans Home
10900 Telephone Rd., Ventura
Board Mtg. – 5:30 PM
General Mtg. – 6:00 PM
Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

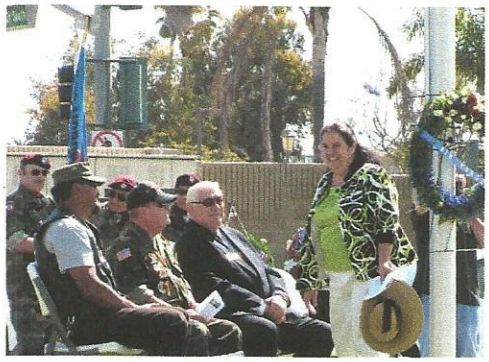
Wednesday, July 31st - 5th Wednesday Dinner Oakview American Legion
415 Old Ventura Ave, Oakview.
Bring side dish or dessert.

Memorial Day 2013
Ivy Lawn Memorial Park



VVVC members waiting for ceremony to begin.

Full crowd, standing room only.



David Ha, David Wilson, Neal Andrews & Brenda Manke

David Ha giving Opening Prayer

Civil Air Patrol Squadron 61

Gun Salute, Civil Air Patrol Squadron 61

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