



# Listening Post

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

May, 2012

## Officers

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Chaplain – David Ha  
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James Ray Scholarship – David Ha  
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Parades – John Cabrera  
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## Presidents Column:

Greeting all:

Well, by now most have already heard about the recent passing of Ave. of Flags co-founder Garland Middleton.

I want to thank all who attended his funeral and made the family of Garland Middleton very proud to hear of how much this man was loved and respected!

Kudos to the VVVC color guard and all who participated at the recent grand opening of the new Oxnard Family Circle at their new location in Oxnard at Outlet Center Drive, it was great!

The next VVVC participation will be in May for Memorial Day on May 28, 2012 at Ivy lawn Memorial Park. The VVVC will also have their color guard in attendance, and also will be laying the wreath on this special day, so we hope to see all of you at Ivy Lawn.

In case you have never made an American Legion potluck in Oak View, Calif., you all are invited to attend the next one which will be on May 30, 2012 at their post in Oak View, Calif. The dinner starts at 6 PM and everyone is invited to attend, and you can even bring a side dish to share or just show up, but it's a great dinner with some great veterans.

Happy Mother's Day to all of the Mothers out there who read this newsletter, and may you all have a great day.

I want to say get well wishes to VVVC long time member, and photographer Kevin Sheahan. In case some don't know, Kevin has been admitted to St. Johns Hospital in Oxnard, Calif. due to his lung condition and is possibly awaiting a lung transplant, so get well Kevin, and if you wish to contact Kevin you can send an email to the VVVC for his phone number and call him if you cannot visit him.

If you haven't had the chance, and your membership has expired, won't you please send in your renewal, or contact the VVVC at their web site and they will send you a new application, remember, you are what's keeps this organization going strongly, and your voice counts!!

I better mention hello and get well wishes to Fabio Allodolli before he pays me another visit, we sure miss you at the meetings Fabio, and everyone says hello!

There will be a job fair for Veterans this month at the Crowne Plaza here in Ventura, so I hope you all can make this big event, there will be many employers, local and out of town looking to hire veterans, and this event will be for the veterans first, and is being sponsored by SBBC (Santa Barbara Business College), so look at the info in this month's newsletter, to see what the times are, and the parking arrangements.

I will have a brief message at this time, but wish all happiness and see you at the meetings, unfortunately I was out of town last month and missed the meeting..

Have a great one, and see you all soon.  
Dave Betti

### **Vice President's Message:**

I want to take this opportunity to thank those who wanted me to be the Vice-president of the Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County. I am both honored and humbled that I get to serve our organization, and especially our esteemed President, Dave Betti, in this capacity. There is no way I could ever fill Richard Camacho's shoes, nor would I even try. I'll just have to go get my own pair. The war may be over but our battles continue. We do not have to fight them alone; we have each other. We are a Band of Brothers. Welcome Home! We, and others like us, have served with honor and integrity and we will continue to do so.

It is also an honor to get to share our experiences with the young people in our schools. Richard, Dave, Tim and I had a great time at Moorpark High School. Our thanks to Jeanine Alexander, the staff and the fine students at Moorpark! We are looking forward to sharing with other schools in the upcoming weeks.

David H. Wilson,  
Vice-president  
Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County

### **Parade/Work Party Chairman's Message:**

We have had a busy month. Stephanie from the Government Center called about a new POW/MIA flag. The one out there is fraying very badly due to the high winds that we have had. I called the dealer and they are sending a new one. I repaired the one that is fraying and it will be okay until the new one arrives.

I'd like to thank all that have helped put up the flags for Garland Middleton and for removing them. It meant a lot to the family and we got six bags donated to us from the Society of Military Widows, Chapter 40 from Cora Turner.

Our last event was the BBQ for Vung Tau. I personally thought we had a good turnout, servers and cooks, as well as meat cutters. All went very well. I hope this helps out with the scholarship program, which is handled by David Ha.

We are back to working on Wednesdays so we can finish up flag poles, eyelet bolts and straightening the pipes out, getting ready for Memorial Day.

Thank you,  
Brother John

### **Treasurer's Message:**

Just a note about memberships:

(1) New annual membership is \$20.00, and a renewal membership is \$15.00.

(2) A lifetime membership is \$150.00, payable in three monthly installments.

Also please fill out an application so that I have a name and a current address to put with the money and pass on to the membership coordinator. Your help would be deeply appreciated.

Doug Temple

Greetings all:

I spoke to Kevin Sheahan today, and I wanted to thank all of you who have been visiting him while he is in the hospital. He has been transferred to another room now so you won't have to suit up in the special clothing that was required while he was in ICU (Intensive Care Unit).

His new room number is 2217 at St. Johns hospital, and he will be there until they can either give him a lung transplant, or there has been discussion on moving him to UCLA where they would do a lung transplant at that time.

He was in good spirits while I talked to him, a little out of breath, but seems to be doing okay considering what he is going thru.

He just wants all to keep him in your thoughts and prayers and that soon he may be taken care of and out of this situation regarding his lungs, so thanks to all who have been stopping by, and you know who you are!

Thanks all:  
Dave Betti



Once again, the VVVC cooked for Vung Tau, sponsored by the Viet Nam Veterans Motorcycle Club. We had a beautiful day, great people and a great time.



## Chaplain's Corner:

### World War II Passes Away:

Ed Savko, who bought a small-town grocery known as the Rock Store on Mulholland Highway in 1961 and turned it into an internationally recognized motorcycle mecca frequented by celebrities, businessmen, outlaw clubs and other bikers, has died. He was 86.

Savko joined the U.S. Navy immediately after graduating from high school. He served on a destroyer for three years during World War II.

### KIA:

Cpl Robby A. Reyes, USMC, Los Angeles, Ca.

### Welcome Home Events

Marines from 4th LSB Reserve Unit - San Jose Ca  
US Marine Corps Detachment - Sacramento, Ca

### Fallen Veterans

Dick Oxford, US Veteran, Bakersfield, Ca.  
Robert Mollenkopf, USA, Vietnam Vet, Santa Maria, Ca  
John Thode, USN, WWII Veteran, Igo, Ca. John served in the United States Navy during WWII, as a submariner, radar tech, with the rank of first class. He served in both the Atlantic and the Pacific. He was also present during the signing of the Japanese surrender.

Please continue to pray for our friends, especially Kevin Sheahan, and the families and all of our service men and women. Pray especially for their safe return.

David Ha  
Chaplain VVVC

## Ventura County Training for Employment Program Job & Resource Fair

**Wednesday, May 23, 2012, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

Veteran Job Seeker Registration : 10:00 AM  
Veteran Job Seekers: 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Open to Public: 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Crowne Plaza – Ventura Beach  
450 E. Harbor Blvd, Ventura CA

Local employers will be represented at this event with a variety of positions available.

Job Seekers:  
Bring Resume  
Dress professionally

## Important Dates:

**Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup> – Mother's Day**

**Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> – VVVC Meetings**  
10900 Telephone Rd, Ventura  
Board Mtg. 5:30 PM  
General Mtg. – 6:00 PM  
Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

**Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup> – Family & Organization Flags Set up  
At Ivy Lawn Memorial Park**

**Monday, May 28<sup>th</sup> - Memorial Day Services at Ivy Lawn  
Memorial Park 10:30 AM**

**Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> - Flags Taken Down at Ivy Lawn  
Memorial Park**

**Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup> – VVVC Meetings**  
10900 Telephone Rd, Ventura  
Board Mtg. 5:30 PM  
General Mtg. – 6:00 PM  
Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

**Sunday, June 17<sup>th</sup> – Father's Day**

**Wednesday, July 4<sup>th</sup> – Fourth of July  
4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade Ojai  
(More information coming)**

**Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup> - VVVC Meetings**  
10900 Telephone Rd, Ventura  
Board Mtg. 5:30 PM  
General Mtg. – 6:00 PM  
Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

**Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup> – Ventura County Fair Parade  
(More information coming)**



**Swearing in of 2012/2013 Officers and Board members.**

L to R – Richard Camacho, Larry Seguin, John Cabrera, Dave Wilson, Bobby Holmes & Ron Fitzgaarld.

## VA to Increase Mental Health Staff by 1,900

April 19, 2012

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki today announced that the department would add approximately 1,600 mental health clinicians – to include nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers as well as nearly 300 support staff to its existing workforce of 20,590 mental health staff as part of an ongoing review of mental health operations.

“As the tide of war recedes, we have the opportunity, and the responsibility, to anticipate the needs of returning Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “History shows that the costs of war will continue to grow for a decade or more after the operational missions in Iraq and Afghanistan have ended. As more Veterans return home, we must ensure that all Veterans have access to quality mental health care.”

VA’s ongoing comprehensive review of mental health operations has indicated that some VA facilities require more mental health staff to serve the growing needs of Veterans. VA is moving quickly to address this top priority. Based on this model for team delivery of outpatient mental health services, plus growth needs for the Veterans Crisis Line and anticipated increase in Compensation and Pension/Integrated Disability Evaluation System exams, VA projected the additional need for 1,900 clinical and clerical mental health staff at this time. As these increases are implemented, VA will continue to assess staffing levels.

“Mental health services must be closely aligned with Veterans’ needs and fully integrated with health care facility operations,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. “Improving access to mental health services will help support the current and future Veterans who depend on VA for these vital services.”

VA will allocate funds from the current budget to all 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) across the country this month to begin recruitment immediately. Under the leadership of President Obama and Secretary Shinseki, VA has devoted more people, programs, and resources toward mental health services to serve the growing number of Veterans seeking mental health care from VA. Last year, VA provided specialty mental health services to 1.3 million Veterans. Since 2009, VA has increased the mental health care budget by 39 percent. Since 2007, VA has seen a 35 percent increase in the number of Veterans receiving mental health services, and a 41 percent increase in mental health staff.

VA has enhanced services by integrating mental health care into the primary care setting, developed an extensive suicide prevention program, and increased the number of Veterans Readjustment Counseling Centers (Vet Centers). VA’s Veteran Crisis Line has received more than 600,000 calls resulting in over 21,000 rescues of Veterans in immediate crisis.

(Cont. next column)

## VA (Cont.)“

The mental health of America’s Veterans not only touches those of us at VA and the Department of Defense, but also families, friends, co-workers, and people in our communities,” said Petzel. “We ask that you urge Veterans in your communities to reach out and connect with VA services.”

To locate the nearest VA facility or Vet Center for enrollment and to get scheduled for care, Veterans can visit VA’s website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). Immediate help is available at [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net) or by calling the Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (push 1) or texting 838255.

## Vietnam War pararescueman finally brought

**home:** by Tech. Sgt. Richard A. Williams Jr.

Air Force Public Affairs Agency

4/8/2012 - ARLINGTON, Va. (AFNS) -- Air Force pararescuemen were able to bring home one of their fallen comrades April 6 here.

As the ceremonial caisson rolled to a stop in Arlington National Cemetery, Tech. Sgt. Allen Avery, an Air Force pararescueman who lost his life during combat operations in Vietnam, was escorted to his final resting place by family and more than 60 PJs past and present in their traditional maroon berets.

“Honor and service,” were the words retired Chief Master Sgt. Cole Panning, a fellow PJ who served with Avery in Vietnam, used as a quick description of Avery’s service.

“He had the integrity of the best but wasn’t afraid to take a chance,” Panning said.

Airmen from the Air Force Honor Guard stood overlooking Avery’s final resting place as they performed the traditional rifle volley. A lone bugler stood apart from the group to play “Taps”, a tradition at U.S. military funerals since 1891. As the ceremonial flag was folded for the last time, the Air Force chaplain presiding over the ceremony quoted the inscription on the John Paul Jones Memorial, “In life he honored the flag. In death the flag shall honor him.”

When the service concluded, PJs past and present lined up to render a final salute, remove the pararescue flash from their maroon berets and place them at Avery’s final resting place, a sign of respect shown to a fallen PJ, said Chief Master Sgt. Lee Shaffer, Air Force pararescue career field manager.

When one of our warriors falls, we want to attempt to give back as much as we can to both the service member who lost his life and the family,” Shaffer said. “This beret and the flash that stays on it is probably the single most important thing to a pararescueman.”

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## **Vietnam War pararescueman finally brought home (Cont.)**

It takes two years to earn it and for us it represents our heart and soul, and we want our fallen warriors to be buried with what is most precious to us and what was the most precious to them," Shaffer said.

The maroon beret symbolizes the blood shed by past PJs as well as the blood current PJs are willing to shed to save lives. The flash, which is a guardian angel wrapping its arms around the world, symbolizes the scope and responsibility as a worldwide rescue and recovery professional. At the bottom of the flash are the words "So others may live," the Air Force Pararescue credo.

Avery, along with Capt. James H. Alley, Capt. Peter H. Chapman, Capt. John Hall, Tech. Roy Prater and Sgt. William Pearson, were flying a combat search and rescue mission April 6, 1972, to recover the downed air crew of call sign "Bat 21" in their HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter over Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam, when they were hit by enemy ground fire and crashed.

During Avery's previous mission, he had been a tail gunner and his helicopter had taken a lot of enemy fire, Panning said.

"The flight engineers couldn't believe he was still alive, and he had a red fluid all over him which turned out not be blood but hydraulic fluid all over him and he didn't have a scratch on him," Panning said. "To go through what he did, having his helicopter shot up previously he could have said, 'Hey, I have already been through this. Pick someone else,' but he didn't he just said, 'Hooah, a chance for another save, I want the mission'."

It wasn't that he had to take the mission because it was his turn, he wanted the mission because he wanted to save lives, Panning said.

"That was the type of man he was," Panning said.

The crew, all except for Avery who had not been positively identified at the time, received a full honors funeral were buried at Arlington Nov. 17, 1997. However, advancements in DNA testing allowed the Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office to officially identify his remains and release them to his family for service at his final resting place.

## **VA Adding Family Therapists and Mental Health Counselors to Workforce**

### ***Follows Announcement of Additional 1900 Mental Health Staff Nationwide***

April 24, 2012

WASHINGTON— The Department of Veterans Affairs has expanded its mental health services to include professionals from two additional health care fields: marriage and family therapists (MFT) and licensed professional mental health counselors (LPMHC).

"The addition of these two mental health professions is an important part of VA's mission to expand access to mental health services," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "Veterans and their families can face unique challenges. By providing a complete range of services, we can help them address those challenges and help keep more families together."

The two fields will be included in the hiring of an additional 1,900 mental health staff nationwide that VA announced last week. Recruitment and hiring will be done at the local level. The new professionals will provide mental health diagnostic and psychosocial treatment services for Veterans and their families in coordination with existing mental health professionals at VA's medical centers, community-based outpatient clinics, and Vet Centers.

VA has developed qualification standards for employment as LPMHCs and MFTs and has announced the appointments of mental health and health science professionals to serve on professional standards boards. The boards will review applicants for LPMHC and MFT positions in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to determine eligibility for employment and the government grade level appropriate for the individual in the selected position. The boards will also review promotions in these positions.

For more information about mental health care that VA provides, visit:

<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/>

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