



Listening Post

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

November, 2012

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Presidents Column:

Greetings all:

I hope everyone is having a great year, I know we have been!

Well, the time is here, and now! The next few months the VVVC will be busy with ceremonies at Oxnard Family Circle, on Nov. 9th, and then us Marines will be celebrating our birthday on Nov. 10th, and then on to Veterans Day at Ivy lawn on Nov. 11th. I know, I know, I missed Election Day on the 6th of November, gee, how could I forget that day? Then we have one of my favorite days, Halloween, October 31st, the same day as the American Legion in Oak View, Calif. is having their Wednesday night dinner at 6 PM. So, now all of you know that just in November how busy the VVVC will be, so now on to some more news!

I want to proudly announce that not since Dec. 7th, 1985 since the VVVC has been in existence have we ever thought about having to replace our colors, well, the time has come, and we have! Our parade chairman John Cabrera who has been searching and searching for a flag company to make the VVVC a new flag unveiled our new VVVC flag during the October general membership meeting! I cannot thank John enough for all of his phone calls, searching for the right flag maker and making sure it is exactly what we wanted, and what we had endure in getting it done down to the specs of our original flag, and you are going to really be impressed, thanks John for all your hard work!!

A few more things before I end my column, welcome home to Doug "SPAIN" Temple and his wife from their trip to Spain, glad you had a great time & you have been enjoying retirement.

The December meeting we will be celebrating the VVVC's birthday, believe it or not, they have been in existence since Dec. 1985, wow, I hope that you will join us and celebrate our birthday; it's all about the Veterans of Vietnam.

Okay, just a couple more items, I will be telling you about a Marine reunion I recently attended in another part of the Listening Post, I hope they let me, hahaha, and want to "SHOUT OUT" to my dear hunting buddy, Simon C., Davy is back, now we can assume where we left off, and thank you for standing by patiently waiting for me to return.

One more item, we now have a good friend to all of us, our Marine L/Cpl. Rafael Tinajero who is now in Kuwait, and I now have his address, we are going to start to send him care packages as he was kind enough to send me his address, and now we can do what folks did for us while we were stationed so far away back in our day, so, if you have any items you want to send to our Marine, and please don't make it too heavy, I will list his address below, he did tell me that he likes Mexican candy and books, and anything that will make it there and not perish along the way due to the length of mail getting to the GI's out in the field.

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President's Message (cont.)

I was also told that all of the men & women in the military do share their items with others, so that's cool, we just have to remember that it takes anywhere from 3-4 weeks to arrive once it is sent, so let's send him anything to let him know we are thinking of him and support our men and women in the military!

Thanks all, see you at the meetings, or parades, or events, or in public, but always seeing you.

Semper Fi:
Dave Betti

ADDRESS

LCPL TINAJERO, RAFAEL M.
MAG 40 FWD/ARFF 274
UNIT 78367
FPO AE 09509-8367

Vice President's Message:

One metaphor my father use to say when describing someone or something slow is, "They are slower than molasses flowing up hill in January". As a youth living in New York and Massachusetts, I understood the winter's cold and how syrups hardened. What I didn't get was the "flowing uphill" part. Nothing flows up hill. I guess that is the point. The metaphor describes not only someone or something that is really slow, it describes someone or something that is going nowhere at all.

In July of 2010 I applied to the VA for compensation for exposure to Agent Orange, as well as PTSD and other combat related effects. Two years later, after numerous doctor appointments and testing in 2011, I still did not know my status or rating. This whole process was frustrating. Finally in September I heard from the VA. I hear constantly veterans expressing their frustration with the VA concerning their entitlements. I just want to encourage you all to hang in there. There are people and agencies available to assist us. I know, I think I called them all. Ask around a get some help with you claim(s) and remember, the process is slower than molasses flowing up hill in January.

Dave Wilson,

VVVC Vice President

Treasurer's Message:

I talked to Tom Moore (from Australia) this week and he advised me that he had sold his house and was in the process of packing and cleaning up to be out in two weeks. He will notify us of an address change. I suggested an email address and he said he was working on getting a computer.

Doug temple

Parade/Work Party Chairman's Message:

It's been a busy month repairing poles and flags in order to have them ready for Veterans Day. At this point we should have all the flags as well as the poles done for all of Ivy Lawn Cemetery. I couldn't have done it without the work crews on Wednesday. Those of you who helped know who you are. Thank you very much.

I have been looking all over for someone to make out Logo Flag. The best deal I got was a company in Carpinteria. He did a great job. Now we have a new flag as well as two new flag poles.

I would like to thank Sue and David Wilson for the donation for the new "Eagle top" for the new flag. Also thank you all for the donations for the flag fund, as well as the 50/50 drawing that helps support the project.

We still have another project at the Veterans site at the Government Center. We will be replacing the US Flag and POW Flag sometime in February.

Mark your calendars for the Santa Paula Christmas Parade to be held Saturday, Nov.24th. We will meet at Santa Barbara & 10th St. at 8:00 AM.

Thanks again for all your help. It is greatly appreciated.
Brother John



Airmen Missing from Vietnam Identified:

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced that the remains of two servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be buried as a group with full military honors.

Air Force Col. Wendell Kell of Fargo ND and Capt. Virgil K. Meroney III of Fayetteville, AR will be buried as a group, in a single casket representing the crew, on October 9th, in Arlington National Cemetery. Meroney was interred individually on June 9th in his home town on March 1, 1969, Keller and Meroney were the crew of an F-4D Phantom II aircraft that while carrying out a nighttime strike mission in Khammouan Province Laos. Nearby US aircrews reported seeing the aircraft hit by enemy fire. No parachutes were seen after the aircraft hit. Heavy enemy presence in the area prevented recovery efforts.

From 1994 to 2011, joint US-Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) teams, led by joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) conducted several investigations and excavations of the crash site in Khammouan Province, Laos. The teams located human remains, military equipment, a military ID card and aircraft wreckage from an F-4, including an engine data plate and radio call sign plate. During the 17 years of investigations, analysts evaluated the material evidence and the accounts of more than 40 eyewitnesses to confirm the information correlated with the crew's loss.

To identify the remains, scientists from JPAC used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools including dental comparisons and radiograph comparisons.

Expiring Memberships:

The following memberships will expire in November:

Ken Dalrymple 11/19

Michael Stark 11/8

Stan Leighton 11/19

Carl Wade 11/4

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

Thank you on behalf of Marie Pounds, Membership Chair



A Community of Healing:

After attending a VVVC meeting last September, I spent a long drive to LA reflecting on the community they had built. From the moment I stepped into the Ventura County Veteran's Home, to the last goodbyes exchanged, I felt a sense of belonging that can best be described by Dr. Sarason (1919-2010), who was Professor of Psychology Emeritus at Yale University:

"The perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure."

From 2011-2012, I was attached to a Combat Stress Control Unit in Afghanistan, where my job was to help service members work through adversity in various forms. I wasn't boots on ground for long when my team was called upon to support a company of Soldiers who were mourning the loss of one of their own. To make matters worse, the KIA was the "funny guy", the one who made everyone laugh in the best and worst of times. His jokes and distinct laughter were gone, replaced by a heaving, almost-audible silence.

Months later I saw some of KIA's friends, a short distance, laughing at some joke at the miles-long base in Kandahar. I engaged them in conversation, and left with the impression that, while their loss still hurt, they had relied on each other to get through the worst of it. Of course there are more details to the story, but that's the gist of it.

Back to point, the members present at the VVVC meeting described to me their feelings, generally speaking, of being "part of a larger dependable and stable structure". They proudly talked of their contributions through the organization to Ventura County, shared stories of their time in uniform, and I observed a certain kind of camaraderie, which distinctly reminded me of a specific group of Soldiers who I saw laughing away their grief in Afghanistan.

What the VVVC has done is much deeper than their mission of honoring and supporting veterans of the past, present, and future. Even their many community projects in Ventura County shallow in comparison to, what I feel, is their greatest achievement: the VVVC has touched the lives, the very souls of our local veterans by creating a community where old wounds can heal, and new opportunities can blossom.

It was a highlight of September to see you all in action and, when my Unit allows, I'll be present again.

SPC Legoski, Saamon

* To respect the privacy of the deceased Soldier's Company, I've omitted the KIA's name.

** SPC Legoski Saamon is one of the 2012 James M. Ray Scholarship winners.

A Note From Dave:

Hello all, again:

I have to tell you about a trip I recently took to Laughlin, Nevada a few weeks ago. My buddy, Richard C. and his wife Jan had been asking me to go to Richard's 1/4 Marine reunion for a couple of years now, but due to medical issues I had not been able to go, until I promised him one day I would go! I did go, and let me tell you, I took my brother-in-laws father, Mr. Dan Lopez (keep in mind Mr. Lopez is 84 years old and a veteran of World War II and an Army vet) as my wife Carrie could not go. We left on a Thursday, and stayed at the Tropicana in Laughlin, Nevada, we drove and it was great!

On Thursday, after checking in, we went to the hospitality room and checked in with everyone, and man, they greeted us like we were related, my guest, Dan L. was so taken back by how they all greeted us, and he was so comfortable he immediately had vets from 1/4 converging and visiting with him!

The next day (Friday), was time for the Oatman Gold Mine tour, and I was looking forward to this, as was everyone! We had I think (3) different buses, but we all went to the same place, which was the town of Oatman, Arizona after the gold mine tour! We were able to visit an actual gold mine, and go inside a real cave, man, what an experience, we didn't find any gold, but I did run in to a bat, and it wasn't no bird, not that size, hahaha, Richard told me I better not tell Jan, hahaha. I did get to go deeper in the mine after talking with one of the guides, but I kind of went little too far and started to run out of breath, so I turned back, but what a thrill!

Then it was on to the old town of Oatman, named after Olive Oatman, and what history about that lady, the Indians had captured her and tattooed her chin to make sure that if she ran off she would be returned, wow, that had to hurt! There are still mules roaming the streets of Oatman to this day, they are left over from that era, and they just walk around the town, in the streets, and really anywhere.

So, after watching the local gunfight it was time to go back to the hotel! Then here comes the rain, and some got stuck at the gold mine waiting for it to end, and it finally did, but if any of you have been to Nevada or Arizona, you know it rains hard, and washes out roads, because it did!

Saturday was the Memorial Service in Laughlin, and it was packed and a very well done ceremony, with the Colorado River in the background, it was the most beautiful ceremony I have ever seen. The 1st Bn 4th Marines (active from Camp Pendleton) provided their Color Guard in attendance, and boy they were sharp!

After the memorial service, myself, Mr. Lopez and Richard and Jan headed off to have lunch at this place called the Cracker Barrel in Kingman, Arizona, and what a beautiful drive it was. The lunch was out of this world, it was fantastic, and man, you cannot beat the price, remember, this is Arizona, hahaha, it was worth the drive.

(Cont. next column)

A Note from Dave (cont.)

After lunch, we visited Don Laughlin's Automobile Museum in Laughlin, Nevada. There were all of these exotic cars and motorcycles and as we were upstairs on the third floor I saw this map of the United States and it says that this map has all of the pins and decals left by visitors to the museum, so I thought that's cool, so I look at California, and what do you think I see? There it is, hanging in the State of Calif. is this key chain from the VVVC, our colors, and key chain? Now, how in the hell did that get there? I want to know if John C. made a trip to the museum before we got there, hahaha, I was so proud, who would have thought!!

The next event (Saturday evening) was the BBQ at the American Legion Post 60 in Laughlin, and this place was great, the food was out of this world, chicken, ribs, beans, salads, man, those guys from 1/4 can cook and BBQ! This night they had their auction, and they had stuff you would not believe, and what the guys were bidding on, and the money they were spending, you would have thought they won the lottery, holy smokes; we are talking big bucks here.

The highlight of the evening was the incoming Commander for 1st Battalion 4th Marines, Major Bronzi. This Major was so young, I felt old, hahaha, and I had the 1st Bn 4th Marine Color Guard autograph my shirt I was wearing so I would not have to turn it in, and they did, with a sharpie, hahaha.

A special presentation was made to Richard and Jan Camacho for their work in putting together the reunion site, hospitality rooms, and setting up the Oatman tour, and making sure everything was in order for this reunion, as they were the hosts for this year's reunion! They did a fantastic job and they stayed with it the whole time, long hours, and early mornings, heck, Richard was even up early for his morning walks, and I was still sleeping thinking of my losses, haha!

Then came Sunday, it was time to leave, we headed out about 6:30 Am and got back to Ventura by 2 PM. I want to thank Richard and Jan for inviting me, and bringing me in to the 1/4 family of Marines, both Dan and I left feeling like we just left a huge family reunion, and knowing that even though everyone was a Marine or the wife of a Marine, it didn't matter, that feeling of being with folks who love you this much, who care about you, and embrace life to its fullest, this was a chance of a lifetime to belong, to belong to folks from our era that have gone through what we have, shared their feelings, and still have a place in their hearts and let it all go!

It sure as hell doesn't get any better than this!

Thanks all:

Dave Betti

1st. Battalion, 7th Marines

1st. Marine Division

POW/MIA Recognition Day Feedback:

During the POW/MIA ceremony, many students from Anacapa Middle School took part by either reading names or supporting those students that did. That night after Jan and I returned home, we sent an email to Laurie asking her what impact if any was made on her students. Below is her response:

Hi Richard,

Below is verbatim what my 8th graders wrote about the POW/MIA vigil. I didn't edit their responses. Hope you enjoy.

Blessings,

Laurie J

Dante Terry: It was great to go and show my respect for all these people. I can't believe that so many people are missing. I was happy that so many people came.

Tim Tovar: Before I went I didn't think there would be a lot of people. When I got there, there were so many people to show their respects. For me, it felt good to show respects for those fighting for our country.

Julie Barone: Thank you for letting us read the names. It was a great honor to be there.

Nathaniel Waller: At first when I got there, I was expecting it to be a quick little event for extra credit. Then I realized how emotional this was for people, and it made me want to cry.

Nathan Castro: It was an amazing, heartwarming experience. I am so happy that I was able to experience the joy it brought me. Thank you.

Kyleigh Stolla: It was very moving to hear where and when the POW/MIA soldiers went unseen. I am so glad I went and it is something to look forward to next time.

Suvee Ranasinghe: Thank you for this opportunity. It was a great opportunity and honor. I felt warmth, and sadness while there.

Patrick Bacon: I was very honored that I was able to read names of soldiers.

Patrick Barros: I commend you and the people for setting up this event. It was interesting.

Jayne Abbe: Thank you for making this possible for us. It was a very great night. J

Jason Najera: thank you for putting on this event for all those people missing in war. It was nice how so many of Mrs. Abbe's students read names.

Caitlin Johnson: Thank you for inviting us for the candle light visual. Everyone there was so nice, it is a good to be together for a cause. I still wear my bracelet.

Sarah Yavil: I am so grateful that I was able to come to the ceremony. It was so sad to hear all of the names called. It was a life changing experience.

Jolee Nieberding-Swanberg: I'm so thankful they put on this event to honor the POW and MIA. I love to be supportive of people who love and protect this country.

Amelia Ayala: I thought it was a great experience. I would do it again. The ceremony was touching.

Omar Vasquez: It was a very amazing experience. It was very emotional but heartwarming. I am very glad I was able to attend.

Brian Carroll: It was a beautiful ceremony. I had a great experience reading the names.

(Cont. next Column)

POW/MIA Recognition Day Feedback (cont.)

Carly Vallier: It was a great and very touching ceremony. I think I will want to go to it again. It was sad how many people were not found.

Tiana Morris: Thank you so much for this amazing experience. I will never forget it!

Phillip Spira: It was a very humbling experience. I enjoyed reading the names and hope I can go next year.

Georgia Tinsley: It was a really enlightening experience to hear all of the names – made it more personal.

Jacob Harrington: This was an unbelievable experience. I am so glad I was able to read off the names of those missing or killed in action.

Adam West: Thank you for letting me and my father be at the POW/MIA to remember those in action.

Cooper Thrall: This was a terrific experience that was very heartwarming. I was glad to be in attendance and to read of names.

Military Tribute Days:

Knott's annual tribute to our Military, past and present, starts November 1st. FREE admission for Veterans or current serving military personnel and one guest with proper I.D. presented at turnstile. Plus purchase up to six additional tickets for just \$19 each from November 1-21 and for \$25 each November 22 through January 6. Military personnel may also purchase additional tickets at their local MWR ticket office.

*Eligible person must be present. Dependent I.D.s will not be accepted.

*Valid proof of military service with photo I.D. required. Eligible person must be present.

Important Dates:

Sunday, Nov. 4th – Daylight Savings Time Ends

Set your clocks back one hour.

Tuesday, Nov. 6th – Election Day

Sunday, Nov. 11th – Veterans Day Ceremony

Ivy Lawn Memorial Park, 10:30 AM

Saturday, Nov. 17th – VVVC Meetings

Veterans Home

10900 Telephone Rd., - Ventura, CA

Board Mtg. – 5:30 PM

General Mtg. – 6:00 PM

Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

Thursday, Nov. 22nd – Thanksgiving Day

Saturday, Nov. 24th – Santa Paula Christmas Parade

Meet at Santa Barbara and 10th St at
8:00 AM.

Friday, Dec 7th - Pearl Harbor Day

Saturday, Dec. 15th – VVVC Christmas Party

More information coming.

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