Listening Post

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

November, 2014

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President's Message:

Many times I've been asked why I stay so involved with the VVVC and in veteran issues in general. To answer this question, I have to go back to 1967, when I served as the radio operator for the Forward Observer Team for 81mm mortars, artillery and Naval Gun Fire. It was the FO team's job to detect the enemy and call in fire missions to destroy possible enemy positions, thus protecting whatever company or platoon patrol we were attached to at that time. I was assigned to 1st Battalion 4th Marines, however, according to my personnel file; our FO team was also attached to the Ninth Marines during some operations.

After my discharge from the Marines, I became a Field Service Material Planner for Xerox Data Systems (the computer side of Xerox Corp.). My job was to support the Field Engineers in the western half of the Unites States, by providing them with needed spare computer parts, which required that I be on call 24/7. When a main frame computer was down over a certain time limit, Xerox had to rebate the customer for lost computer time.

Later I became a Contract Specialist for Defense Contracts Management Agency (DCMA), supporting programs within Ventura County for all branches of the Military. My job was to ensure the government was receiving the correct items or services per the contracts, to ensure that the end users (front line personnel) would be properly equipped.

I later became an Administrative Contracting Officer for DCMA, with a Warrant that gave me the authority to sign contracts on behalf of the U.S. Government for any amount. It was during this time that one of my contracts was for a counter measure for the IEDs in Iraq. It was my responsibility to make sure the contractor meet the requirements of the contract, or once again, the end users would be affected to the point of losing their lives.

My final job was a Contract Specialist for the Navy at Port Hueneme (Specialty Contract Acquisition – NAVFAC), Ocean Engineering Group. Once again, all of my contracts affected military personnel, ships and ports.

As you can see, my whole life has been in support of others, whether civilian or military. I view my positions within the VVVC in the same light, I do what I do to protect our members and all Vietnam Veterans and their families within Ventura County. I take my responsibilities very seriously; I don't consider the VVVC as a Social Club.

There have been times in the past that my coworkers and management didn't or couldn't understand my dedication to my job or a position within an organization, I was labeled an "Overachiever" at work, because I wouldn't let up until the job was finished. That was due to my thinking, that if I didn't complete the job, someone would die. Non military/non combat people don't understand this train of thought.

Then there is the fact that I try to live my life to honor my fellow Marines that didn't come back, I owe it to them for keeping me alive.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on November 15, 2014.
Semper Fi
Richard Camacho

Vice President's Message:

With Thanksgiving coming soon, I was reminded of a prayer that Peter Marshall prayed in the Senate on Wednesday, November 26, 1947. "Our Father in Heaven, if ever we had cause to offer unto Thee our fervent thanks, surely it is now, on the eve of our Thanksgiving Day, when we, the peoples of this Nation, are comfortable, well-fed, well-clad and blessed with good things beyond our deserving. May gratitude, the rarest of all virtues, be the spirit of our observance. Let not feasting, football and festivity end in forgetfulness of God. May the desperate need of the rest of the world, and our own glorious heritage, remind us of the God Who led our fathers every step of the way by which they advanced to the character of an independent nation. May the faith and conviction of George Washington be renewed in us as we remember his words, 'There is no truth more thoroughly established than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness; between duty and advantage; between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity; since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained'. For if we do not have the grace to thank Thee for all that we have and enjoy, how can we have the effrontery to seek Thy further blessings? God, give us grateful hearts. For Jesus' sake. Amen."
Dave Wilson

On October 7th,the VVVC presented the Ventura County Board of Supervisors with the above POW/MIA flag, to remind them and all who see it, that there are four Ventura County residents that are still missing in action from the Vietnam War. Jim Cavender, David Gonzales, Luis Holguin, and Eric Huberth.

Parade/Work Party Chair Person's Message:

Thurs. 11/6 - Color Guard at Ventura County Court. For information/participation call John C.

Fri. 11/7 -Start putting up Family Flags (approx. 75) at 8:00AM @ Ivy Lawn.

Sat. 11/8 - People needed to oversee the Sea Cadets putting the remaining 425 flags and poles at Ivy Lawn.

Tues. 1//11 - 10:00AM VETERANS ceremony at Ivy Lawn.
Tues. 1//11 - VVVC members will be in Las Vegas Veterans Day Parade at 10:00AM.

Fri. 11/14 - Start taking down Family Flags and putting them away at 8:00AM.

Sat. 11/15 - People needed to oversee the kids taking down remaining flags and poles.

It sounds like a lot to do, but by the grace of God, David Ha, David Wilson and the support of all my brothers and sisters, I am blessed. All of the time it takes to prepare, you have all turned into a gift for me. Instead of me having to worry about how or when it's going to get done in time, we just work with it and I thank God for that. Without the support and donations received and having all of you at my side it wouldn't happen. You all make me proud to be in the Vietnam a Veterans of Ventura County.
God bless everyone of you,
Brother John

Military Tribute Days

Knott's Berry Farm continues its tradition of honoring the brave men and women who have served in the U.S. military, both past and present, with free admission during its 25th annual Military Tribute. The free-admission offer applies to all U.S. veterans, retired and active military personnel and one guest. Up to six additional tickets may be purchased at Knott's Ticket Booths for only $24 each from November 2 through 21 and for $29 each from November 22 through January 4. Military personnel may also purchase additional tickets at a participating local Military ticket office. U.S. veterans, retired and active military personnel must present military ID or proof of U.S. military service at Knott's ticket booths to receive the complimentary tickets. Veteran, retired and active military personnel must be present.

PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii (Jan. 24, 2014)

A specially trained investigation team from the JPAC is conducting an investigation operation in the Philippines, searching for evidence of those who remain unaccounted-for from World War II.
A nine-member team will conduct investigation operations for 30 days in numerous locations throughout the Philippines searching for individuals who are unaccounted-for from World War II.
There are 7,000 individuals still unaccounted for in the Philippines from World War II.
In the early months of the war in the Pacific, thousands of Filipino-American troops lost their lives defending Luzon, many more died on the Bataan Death March and in the POW camps that followed.
The ultimate goal and of the agencies involved in returning America's heroes home, is to conduct search, recovery, and laboratory operations in order to support the Department of Defense's personnel accounting efforts.
While JPAC will look into any information that leads to a recovery, the U.S. government does not pay for remains, and it discourages anyone from digging or disturbing these sites. JPAC encourages anyone with information about American plane crashes, graves, or possible remains to share this information with the JPAC!
Dave Betti
POW/MIA

Important Dates:

Tuesday. Nov. 11th – Veterans Day
Veterans Day Ceremony @ Ivy Lawn at 10;00 AM.

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

Thursday, Nov. 27th – Thanksgiving Day

Saturday, Nov. 29th - Santa Paula Christmas Parade
Meet at Santa Barbara St. @ 8:00.

Saturday, Dec. 20th – VVVC Meetings
Veterans Home, Ventura
Board Mtg. – 5:30 PM
General Mtg. – 6:00 PM
Potluck, bring your favorite dish.

Message from our VSO:

I am Mike McManus, the County of Ventura – Veteran Services Officer. On October 7, 2014 senior leadership from the Veterans Affairs (VA) Greater Los Angeles Health Care System (GLAHCS) and the LA Regional Office (LARO) meet with veterans, veteran service organizations, representatives of elected officials, and concerned members of the public. We meet at the Ventura County Community Foundation building in Camarillo to learn from the VA what the future holds for veteran's health care and disability compensation claims.

Based on previous meetings with Congresswoman Brownley, her staff, and the VA, I expected to hear how the Oxnard Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) would be expanded to meet the growing demand for medical and psychiatric care. At the October 7th meeting we learned the CBOC expansion, ~4,000 sf, will open in February 2015. It's hoped the new space, across the parking lot from Oxnard Family Circle, will alleviate some of the parking congestion near the existing clinic location. VA representatives further explained they are planning a new ~30,000 sf CBOC to meet the care demands of the county's veterans. Community input will be sought and the model the VA is using is the Santa Maria CBOC. No date was given at the October 7th meeting, however, in previous discussions, June 2016, was given as an estimated timeframe to open the new clinic.

Some of the other issues raised by veterans in attendance were:

- Obtaining VA health care ID cards at the Oxnard CBOC. The VA was gone to a new, safer, and more secure ID card so the CBOC can perform intake/eligibility functions and take the picture needed for the ID, but the actual card will be mailed from Atlanta.

- Lack of veteran's transportation was brought up and VA representatives said they would check into options and get back to us.

The requirement for veterans to provide their full SSN when filing a travel claim was raised and we were told this should not be a requirement and will be looked into.

- Various other topics were raised to include: use of Reserve dental units to help VA provide dental care, clothing allowance claims, West LA parking, and the Veteran's Choice Card.

The Veteran's Choice Card is being created to use for non-VA provider care for veterans enrolled in VA health care who live more than 40 miles from a VA facility or if the veteran is unable to receive a VA appointment within 30 days. Some estimates have 500,000 veterans qualifying for such a card. I have many questions for the VA regarding eligibility, when it can be used, how is the non-VA provider paid, what ensures the veteran will not be billed, etc.

(cont. pg.4)

VSO Message (cont.)

. The VA representatives at the Oct 7th meeting informed the audience the new Veteran's Choice Card regulation is due out November 3rd and that the VA will mailing information to potentially eligible veterans.

Many issues were discussed in the two-hour meeting and I have only provided some highlights. If you have questions about any of the above topics, concerns about the VA, or questions about your veteran's benefit, please call the County of Ventura, Veteran Services Office at 805-477-5155. You can also find benefits information at www.vchsa.org/veterans.

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Dave Betti
POW/MIA

. ROBERT G. "BOB" ALLEN scholarship!

Greetings all:
I am sure by now all of you are aware of the recent passing (June 20, 2014), of our World War II buddy, Robert G. Allen who was 93 years old.

Prior to his passing, I had talked with Robert about a scholarship in his name, and he was ecstatic.

To Honor this World War II hero, beginning January 2015, I am establishing the Robert G. "Bob" Allen scholarship, which will be funded by me and Ronnie Allen, Bob's son. I will also be sending out emails seeking donations for this scholarship from Ventura and veterans' community. This scholarship will be offered as long as there are funds available.

Anyone wishing to donate to the Robert G. "Bob" Allen Scholarship can do so by sending their donation to the VVVC P.O. Box. The donation should be earmarked Robert G "Bob" Allen Scholarship.

The scholarship package will be given to the VVVC scholarship chairperson for distribution to local high schools and colleges.

The rules for the scholarship as set forth by the Allen Family are:
-Applicant must be the child of a veteran.
-The written essay is limited to 500 words or less.
-The topic for 2015 will be on **Chemical Warfare.**
-The topic must have a title.
-The scholarship winner will receive a $350 check and a plaque with his/hers name from the family.
-The check will be made out to and sent to the college of their choice, (this information must be provided with submission).
-The winner of the essay must be able to attend the Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County meeting to accept this award.

Thanks:
Dave Betti and the family of Robert G. "Bob" Allen

SALES SERVICE

Art & Jenny's
SEWING MACHINE CENTER

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Ventura, CA 93001
805.643.8536
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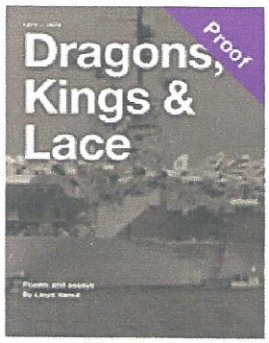
www.artandjennys.com

Art Cumberledge
Brian Cumberledge

Art & Jenny's have supported John Cabrera by servicing the sewing machines John uses for the Avenue of the Flags, and has always offered him a discount.



VVVC Life Member Lloyd Vancil, has a new book available on iTunes. "Dragons, Kings & Lace", is a collection of poems and essays inspired by Lloyd's experiences while deployed to Southeast Asia and the years and journeys since.

From 1971 through 1973, Lloyd was a member of Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 130 detachment 3 on board USS Oriskany (CV-34). He was temporarily assigned duty to Da Nang RSVN and Cubi Point, Phillippines. Lloyd witnessed terrible things and lost friends and survived. Most of all, these are from his heart.

Half of the proceeds from the sale of Lloyd's book will go to the VVVC as a donation.

VA Telehealth Services Served Over 690,000 Veterans In Fiscal Year 2014

WASHINGTON –The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that its national telehealth programs served more than 690,000 Veterans during fiscal year 2014. That total represents approximately 12 percent of the overall Veteran population enrolled for VA healthcare, and accounted for more than 2 million telehealth visits. Of that number, approximately 55 percent were Veterans living in rural areas with limited access to VA healthcare. With more Veterans seeking health care, telehealth is rapidly becoming an attractive option, especially for those Veterans who don't have a VA health care facility close to home.

"We have to adapt to meet Veterans wherever their needs are," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "A brick-and-mortar facility is not the only option for health care. We are exploring how we can more efficiently and effectively deliver health care services to better serve our Veterans and improve their lives. Telehealth is one of those areas we have identified for growth."

Currently, there are more than 44 clinical specialties offered to Veterans through VA's telehealth programs. One program at the Miami VA schedules close to 90 clinic connections every week for dermatology, eye exams, the women Veterans program, podiatry, mental health and other clinical specialties. One tangible example of the success of VA's telehealth program is its burgeoning TeleAudiology program because of large population of Veterans living with hearing loss. The TeleAudiology program has grown from 1,016 Veterans in fiscal year 2011 to more than 10,589 in fiscal year 2014.

For more information about VA's telehealth program, visit www.telehealth.va.gov/.

Vietnam War Nurses Memorial
Lasdon Park
Somers, NY

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