



Listening Post

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

October 2010

Officers

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David Ha, Chaplain
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POW/MIA – Dave Betti
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Listening Post – Jan Camacho
(805) 384-9138
James Ray Scholarship – David Ha
(805) 482-3772
Membership – Marie Pounds
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Parades – John Cabrera
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Presidents Column:

Greetings all:

I want to thank all involved for your dedication to the VVVC, and for making the recent Moving WALL a success.

I think you all know who you are, and you are to be commended.

This month at our recent meeting we welcomed (8) new members, and we could not have been prouder; it's the veterans who keep organizations such as the VVVC going, and strong. Curtis Bensen, Joseph Catrambone, Michael Coates, Stan Leighton, Andrew Martinez, Michael Normand, Alan Templeman and Carl Wade we are honored to have you as members.

I want to respectfully give my condolences to the family of Skip Thomas for their recent loss, you are in our prayers, and we are here if you need anything.

This month is the 20 year anniversary of the VNVMC (Viet Nam Veterans Motorcycle Club). They will be having food and music, and the event is scheduled for October 9th at the VFW in Port Hueneme, Calif., which is located on Surfside Drive. Please try and attend and honor with them as they celebrate 20 years!

The next VVVC meeting will be on October 16. I will not be able to make it as it is my daughter's birthday. I hope that you will continue to support the VVVC in each and everything they do, it's for the veterans.

The recent DAV (Disabled American Veterans) seminar held at the Oxnard family Circle was a huge success, and there were lots of veterans in attendance. I can tell you that Shannon, of Oxnard Family Circle knows how to put on a seminar, thanks Shannon!

One more bit of info, congratulations to all of you who received plaques at the last VVVC meeting, it was well deserved, and you all know how to do things right.

We are discussing our Christmas party at the Vets home for our December meeting of this year! If you have any suggestions, please, let us hear from you, we have been discussing a possible BBQ or dinner which of course would include the residents at the home. We have already contacted Santa Claus, and he has been informed and is ready to suit up!

So keep reading the newsletter, and make the meetings and we shall move forward with this idea.

Respectfully,
Dave Betti,
VVVC President

Vice Presidents Message:

On behalf of the VVVC I offer our deepest condolences to Skip and Becky Thomas' on the loss of their son Tommy. When Skip called us, we went over to see him and Becky to offer whatever support we could, especially since I had experienced such a loss 18 years ago.

I want to thank those VVVC members that attended the funeral and the reception following, it meant a lot to Skip. I also want to thank the VVVC for cash donation that was given to Skip and Becky, at this time they really could use it. I also want to thank Terri Taylor-Gonzales for her support in working with the Thomas family on guiding them on preparing for the funeral.

For those members that didn't make the September meeting, you really missed a great meeting. The Jimmy Ray Scholarship winners read their essays, which were great, and we had new members as well. Some many showed up that we had to order extra pizzas. We will be sending the essays to Paul Lamar and have him load them on the web site, as they are too lengthy to publish in the Newsletter. Both were very touching and from the heart.

Many of the new member mentioned that they came out because one of our members greeted them and "Welcomed" them home. It's amazing what a power affect those two words have.

Award Plaques were passed out to several members for their support at the Wall; more plaques are on the way for our sponsors.

Until next month,
Semper Fi
Richard Camacho

Treasurer's Report:

At our monthly meeting on September 18th, we awarded 2 scholarships. One to Brianna S. Deyling and the other to Diana T. Engle, from the James M. Ray scholarship fund. This scholarship fund is available largely because of proceeds from the Vietnam Vets Motor Cycle Club, who were also in attendance.

It has also been noted that between the visit of The Moving Wall and last night's meeting, we have gained eight new members.

Doug Temple, Treasurer

I am a member of the Mascoutin Society of Chicagoland, and for the last several summers I have attended their O-Sa-Wan (Pow Wow). A year ago I was presented with the Warriors Medal of Valor from the Native American Nations of the United States of America, the same medal which was awarded at our last meeting. This past summer I was involved in awarding it to someone else. This Mascoutin Society is particularly interested in veterans, for veterans, especially combat veterans, are the warriors of today. Some say there is no higher honor.

This past summer I worked the gate, and we had a small gift for those who had served in the military. Admittedly most of those who came were far younger than we are, but we asked each if they had served. What was most surprising, and most gratifying, was that most of those who said no, said it with a sense of regret. This is far different than the reception we got some 40+ years ago.

As an aside, they had a ceremony honoring all the combat veterans, which was very nice. The recent combat veterans were also very appreciative of the Vietnam veterans, who have made their life back home much better.

Not all is good, though. Some two years ago at lunch I was asked to get into the line by some young mother. I muttered something about an allergy I had developed to lines while in the military. She said, "No, but you don't understand. You are the third oldest here, and we can't get served till after you." Thanks a lot. Just what I wanted to hear!

Henry Soper
VVVC Life Member

Congratulations to:

Jess Echavarría on the birth of his granddaughter. River Christine was born on September 16th at 10:00 PM in Santa Monica, CA. River weighed 5 lbs ½ oz and was 18 ½ inches long. Mom and baby are doing well. We expect to see pictures soon.



HAPPY
HALLOWEEN!

Ventura DAV Van Schedule:

Times are approximate. The DAV van will transport any qualified Veteran, at no cost to the Veteran, to the Sepulveda VAMC Out-Patient Clinic. Veterans should call the DAV Reservation Line Office at (805) 659-7525 for rides and information. Transportation is also provided from the Sepulveda facility to the West Los Angeles Medical Facility at no cost to the Veteran. **Reservations must be made at least three days in advance of their appointments.** The Veteran must be able to enter and exit the van without assistance. **DAV vans are not wheelchair accessible.** Priority is reserved for service connected patients. Veterans must arrive at least 15 minutes early of the pickup time. Drivers may wait up to five minutes if the schedule allows. Van departure for Sepulveda is 2:00 p.m. or sooner from the north end of building 200.

Times are approximate.

06:45 a.m. – California Veteran’s Home, Ventura
06:55 a.m. - Mimi’s Restaurant (Near Main & Mills)
06:58 a.m. – Old Rite Aid Building (Bus Stop near Telegraph)
07:12a.m. - Carl’s Jr. Restaurant (Victoria Ave.)
07:30 a.m. – Carl’s Jr. Restaurant (Channel islands Blvd. near Victoria Ave.)
07:35 a.m. Center Point Mall (Channel Islands Blvd. at Saviers Road)
07:40 a.m. – Oxnard Transit Ctr. (Fourth St. near Oxnard Blvd.)
07:50 a.m. –Carl’s Jr (Las Poses Rd. near Hwy. 101)
08:05 a.m. Public Service Bldg. (near Hwy. 101 in Thousand Oaks)
08:20 a.m. – IHOP Restaurant (Kaman Rd at Hwy. 101, in Agoura Hills.)

POW/MIA Report:

Below is just a small list of names that have been recovered since three conflicts had ended.

You will note that some are from different conflicts!

- **Maj. Woodrow W. Vaden**, U.S. Air Force, 1131st Special Activities Squadron, was lost on Dec. 10, 1964, aboard a C-123 Provider aircraft that crashed into a mountain near Da Nang Air Base, South Vietnam. His remains were identified on Aug. 11, 2010.
- **Sgt. John P. Bonnassiolle**, U.S. Army Air Forces, 392nd Bombardment Group, was lost April 29, 1944, near Hannover, Germany. His remains were identified June 14, 2010.
- **Cpl. Frank H. Smith**, U.S. Army, 5th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, was lost on July 25, 1951, in South Korea while under enemy attack. His remains were identified on May 25, 2010.
- **Capt. Clyde W. Campbell**, U.S. Air Force, 602nd Special Ops Sq., was lost on March 1, 1969 while flying his A-1J Skyraider over targets in Houaphan Province, Laos. His remains were identified on May 18, 2010.
- **1st Lt. Paul G. Magers and Chief Warrant Officer Two Donald L. Wann**, U.S. Army, Company D, 158th Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, were lost June 1, 1971, while flying in an AH-1G Cobra helicopter over South Vietnam. Their remains were identified on March 22, 2010.

My Chaplin

It was April 6th, 1969. Lying in an Army hospital bed in Pleiku, Vietnam, I was awaiting transport to Cameron Bay. April 5th had been traumatic. We lost 8, and I was one of 25 wounded in combat action outside Kontum Province. After surgery to remove bullet fragments, I remember fading in and out through the Morphine, hearing men crying as they woke up and found they had lost arms or legs in surgery. It was horrific.

In Recovery I saw a familiar face, “making rounds” talking to everyone. He helped us through our agony. Virgil Iverson was no ordinary Chaplin. I once told him that he was in the right company, but the wrong squad, (I was Catholic and he was Protestant.) Virgil was a, “make lemonade out of lemons” kind of guy. His attitude and sense of calm made him easy to speak to. He liked to just mingle with all the troops out in the jungle firebases. Many guys, “got religion” after a firefight, but Virgil didn’t take advantage. He focused on listening as guys drained their heavy hearts and then he prayed with them comforting their weary souls.

Why is he my Chaplin? Virgil was the only one who came to see me in the hospital after that battle. I told him how so many of us truly appreciated him. He was modest so he changed the subject. “You’re a little older than the others aren’t you? I said “Yes, (23) but apparently I’m not too old to get shot.” Virgil, (then 38) was the last person to see me in Vietnam.

Now fast forward 41 years, 2 months and 9 days. I’m nervous. I found Virgil online and I have flown from Burbank, California to Seattle, and driven out to the Puget Sound city of Long Branch. Columns of hundred foot tall green fir trees line the 2 lane road for miles. A sign on a tree says, “41st street!” Two miles down that dirt road on the bluff overlooking the ocean. That’s where I found Virgil. I was so happy I cried. At a spry 79, he was all that I had remembered.

Virgil and I covered a lot of ground about what happened after the battle that day. I told what happened during the battle because as I mentioned to his wife Norma Jean, when we went into battle Chaplin’s were sent to “the rear.” In combat they wouldn’t listen to us, because all Chaplin’s answered to a Higher Authority! Norma liked that one.

I spent 2 amazing days in June with Virgil and Norma Jean. We laughed, we had moments, and enjoyed each other’s company. I left there comforted as only Virgil could have done for me. He gave me closure. There are people who pass through our lives. Some we touch. Others touch us. I will always be touched by Virgil. And he will always be my Chaplin. May God Bless you always Virgil.

Tim Tobin
11B40 Combat Infantry Squad Leader
1/22 Infantry, 4th Infantry Div.
Pleiku, Vietnam

Important Dates:

Monday, October 11th – Columbus Day

Saturday, October 16th – VVVC Meetings

Ventura Veterans Home
10900 Telephone Road
Ventura, CA
Board Meeting – 5:30 PM
General Meeting – 6:00 PM
Pot Luck, bring your favorite dish.

Sunday, October 31st – Halloween

Tuesday, November 2nd – Election Day

Sunday, November 7th – Daylight Savings Time Ends

Set your clocks back one hour.

Saturday, November 20th – VVVC Meetings

Ventura Veterans Home
10900 Telephone Road
Ventura, CA
Board Meeting – 5:30 PM
General Meeting – 6:00 PM
Potluck, bring your favorite Dish

Thursday, November 11th – Veterans Day

Thursday, November 25th – Thanksgiving Day

September 21, 2010

VA Improving Veterans' Access to Health and Benefits Information

21st Century Technology Will Improve Service

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs is launching a multi-year initiative called Veterans Relationship Management (VRM) that will greatly improve Veterans' access to health care and benefits information.

“VRM will transform Veterans' interactions with VA by using innovative 21st century technologies,” said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. “Veterans will have a better experience when they contact VA for assistance, and our employees will be able to quickly convey accurate, up-to-date information through call centers and the Internet.”

Ultimately, Veterans will find enhanced self-service capabilities, and VA employees will have the best tools to serve Veterans, their families and survivors better.

(cont. next column)

VA Improving Veterans' Access to Health and Benefits Information (cont.)

By the end of 2010, VRM will deliver improved telephone services to enable Veterans to reach a call center agent faster. Recording and review of calls will ensure the quality of services provided to Veterans. To help guarantee success, VRM enhancements will be rolled out in six-month increments.

An important component of VRM is the Internet site, which puts the Veteran in the driver's seat for information. VA collaborated with the Department of Defense to provide a single sign-on capability for both Service members and Veterans. Single sign-on will quickly establish an individual's identity and allow that person to complete transactions without having to re-enter information.

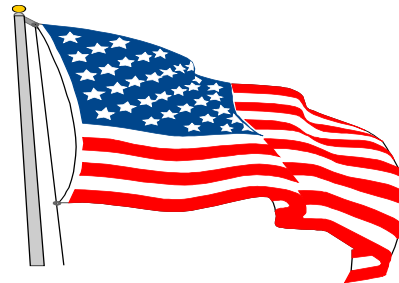
Self-service access through the Internet site (www.ebenefits.va.gov) is already available in some benefit areas, including military personnel records, VA home loan eligibility certificates, and status information on compensation and pension claims.

VRM is just one of the many initiatives VA is launching to help Veterans get timely access to health care and benefits.

VA provides tax-free compensation, pension, education, loan guaranty, vocational rehabilitation, employment and insurance benefits to eligible Veterans, their families and survivors through 57 VA regional offices.

Disability compensation is paid to a Veteran for disabilities that are a result of -- or made worse by -- injuries or diseases that happened while on active duty, active military, naval or air service. Pension is a benefit paid to wartime Veterans with limited income, and who are permanently and totally disabled or age 65 or older.

For additional information, go to www.va.gov or call VA's toll free benefits number at 1-800-827-1000.



ELECTION DAY

TUESDAY, NOV. 7TH

**DON'T FORGET TO
VOTE!**

Mail completed application and fees to:
Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County, Inc.
P.O. Box 3218, Ventura, CA 93006-3218

Application for Membership

Membership Type (Please check one):

- Annual Member** => \$20.00 (Check this line if you are a NEW member)
 Renewing Member => \$15.00 (Check this line if you are renewing your membership)
 Lifetime Member => \$150.00 (May also be paid in three monthly installments of \$50.00)

Membership Class (Please check one):

Formal: Check this line if you were on active duty between **January 1, 1959** and **May 7, 1975**. ALL new Formal applications require a copy of your DD-214. ALL current Formal Members must have their DD-214's on file with the Membership Chair, or they will be listed as Informal Members.

Informal: Check this line if you did not serve in the U.S. Armed Forces, or did not serve during the time specified for Formal Membership. If you did serve at any time, we also ask for a copy of your DD-214.

***NOTE: One applicant and fee per application, please. Renewal requires completion of this form.
=> Please type or print <=***

NAME: _____
Last First Middle Initial

ADDRESS: _____
Street & Number Apt. # City State

PHONE NUMBER: _____ ZIP CODE: _____
(Area Code + phone number)

"I hereby certify that I am at least 18 years of age, of good moral character, and I am dedicated to the purposes and goals of the Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County, Inc. I agree to abide by the By-Laws and amendments in all respects. My word is my bond. If I do so ever fail this pledge, I am aware that my membership in the VVVC may be forfeited."

Signature of applicant Date

***General Membership Meetings are held at 6:00 p.m. the 3rd Saturday of each month at:
The Veterans Home
10900 Telephone Road
Ventura, CA 93004***

Treasurer: _____ Date: _____

Membership Chair: _____ DD-214: Yes No On File

Sponsor: _____

Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County, Inc.

P.O.Box 3218

Ventura, CA 930063218