



# Listening Post

Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County, Inc.

P.O. Box 3218

Ventura, CA 93006-3218

December, 2022

## Officers

Howard Tench, President

(805) 312-1977

Richard Camacho, Vice

President

(805) 630-7657

Joseph Richardson, Secretary

(805) 659-2387

Kay Gray, Treasurer

(805) 890-7645

Ron Fitzgarrald, Public Affairs

(805) 218-3489

## Board of Directors

Debora Ehrich

(805) 775-9987

Jess Echavarria

(805) 200-7386

Manuel Gonzales

(805) 988-4462

Louis Morris

(805) 207-8692

Bob Citron

(805) 320-7767

## Committees

### Chaplain/Housing Improvements

Open

### Merchandise

Open

### Parades/Work Party

Open

### Fundraising

None

### POW/MIA

Ron Fitzgarrald

(805) 218-3489

### Listening Post

Bob Citron

(805) 320-7767

### James Ray Scholarship

Joe Richardson

(805) 659-2387

### Membership

Joe Richardson

(805) 659-2387

## President's Message:

Well, another year has passed. I want to take this opportunity to thank all the VVVC Executive Board members and the Board of Directors for all their support this past year. I wish the newly elected members the best in the coming year. I know they will do a great job for this exceptional organization. Happy new year everyone! I'm going fishing!

Respectfully,

Howard Tench VVVC President



*“The two most important days of your life are when you are born and when you find out why”*

*-Albert Einstein*

## **VVVC NOV 2022 Membership Report**

Annual Members: 22  
Life Members: 100  
Total Members: 122

### **Notice to all Annual Members!**

*Please note that 2023 membership is now due – please submit ASAP. New membership cards along with a receipt of dues will be given out this time as well.*

**Sec/Membership Chair**  
**Joe Richardson**

## **Sick Call...**

Please continue to think about and say a prayer for our brothers and sisters:

Lori Richardson  
Dave Wilson  
Bobbie Mills  
Howard Tench  
Mike Logie

## **New 2023 Officers and Board Members:**

**Officers:** President – Richard Camacho  
Vice President – Joe Richardson  
Secretary – Debora Ehrich  
Treasurer – Kay Gray  
Public Affairs – Ron Fitzgerrald

**Board:** Jess Echavarilla  
Howard Tench  
Bob Citron  
Bud Gray  
Bob Martinez

# **POW/MIA REPORT Nov '22 – Dec '22**

**6 Brothers-in-arms have been accounted for and/or returned home &  
6 remain MIA and unaccounted for**

## **European & Pacific Theaters: 2**

Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. **William Scott**, 21, was accounted for Nov. 28, 2022.

Army Pfc. **William L. Simon**, 20, was accounted for Nov. 29, 2022.

## **USS *Oklahoma*: 2**

Navy Seaman 2nd Class **David J. Riley**, 25, of Juda, Wisconsin, was accounted for on Feb. 24, 2021.

\*Navy Fire Controlman 3rd Class **William F. Gusie**, 19, was accounted for on Sept. 23, 2021.

## **Total from World War II: 4**

**Currently there are 72,246 Americans (approximately 26,000 are assessed as possibly-recoverable) still unaccounted for from World War II**

## **Korean War: 2**

Army Pfc. **Dale D. Thompson**, 18, was accounted for Nov. 28, 2022.

Army Pfc. **James L. Miller**, 21, was accounted for Nov. 28, 2022.

**Currently there are 7,500 Americans still unaccounted for from the Korean War.**

## **Vietnam: 0**

**Currently there are 1,568 American servicemen and civilians still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War**

## **Iraq Theater & Other Conflicts: 6**

### **Operation El Dorado Canyon, 1986 MIA: 1**

Capt. **Paul F. Lorence**, of San Francisco, U.S. Air Force, was lost on April 15, 1986, over Libya.

## **Operation Desert Storm, 1991 MIA: 2**

Lt. Cmdr. **Barry T. Cooke**, of Austin, Texas, U.S. Navy, was lost on Feb. 2, 1991, in the Persian Gulf.

Lt. **Robert J. Dwyer**, of Worthington, Ohio, U.S. Navy, was lost on Feb. 5, 1991, in the Persian Gulf.

## **Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003-2010 MIA: 3**

Mr. **Kirk Von Ackermann**, of Albuquerque, N.M., DoD contractor, was lost on Oct. 9, 2003, while working in Forward Operating Base Pacesetter, Iraq.

Mr. **Timothy E. Bell**, of Mobile, Ala., DoD contractor, was lost on April 9, 2004, while working in Baghdad, Iraq.

Mr. **Adnan al-Hilawi**, of Orlando, Fla., DoD contractor, was lost on March 3, 2007, while working in Baghdad, Iraq.

**Ron Fitzgarrauld,**  
**POW/MIA Chairman**

## **Helpful Resources:**

- **The VVVC Website:** The site is currently being updated.
- **Regarding your healthcare:** Note that the VA is required to send you for community care if they cannot accommodate you within 30 days for things like doctor appointments.
- Be advised that when you call the **National Cemetery Scheduling Office**, the phone menu has changed to add a “frequently asked questions” option. These questions will enable you to be redirected to the appropriate VA office. The primary options will remain the same.
- **Good News!** Beginning January 1, 2023 VA Compensation Benefits will increase by 8.7%. This is the largest increase in 30 years.
- **Veteran Career Transition Assistance Program:** On January 9 at 6:00 pm (PST), the VetCTAP program will offer an online event to help Veterans develop resumes, effectively network, interview with confidence and more. This program goes from 6-9 pm PST for 8 sessions. Contact: **Email: [Betsy@vetctap.org](mailto:Betsy@vetctap.org)**  
**Call/Text: (858) 831-8667**
- **Virtual Legal Clinic:** Questions about your rights as a tenant? Register for the free online workshop presentation on January 5 from 6-8 pm PST. To register, contact: **(213) 896-6537**
- **National Call Center for Homeless Vets:** Promotes recovery-oriented care for homeless Vets or who are at risk of being homeless. Call: **1-877-424-3838**. (Mon-Fri, 8 am – 8 pm EST)



**Your Ventura County Veteran Services Office**

We're available to serve you online, by phone, email, fax, drop-off/mail-in services, and in person.

**Main Office**  
 2901 N. Ventura Road, 3rd Floor  
 Oxnard, CA 93036  
 Call with questions or to schedule an appointment:  
**805-477-5155**  
[www.vchsa.org/veterans](http://www.vchsa.org/veterans)

**COUNTY of VENTURA**  
 Human Services Agency

**FIELD OFFICES**

**Camarillo**  
 Gold Coast Veterans Foundation (GCVF)  
 4001 Mission Oaks Boulevard, Suite D  
 ▶ Walk-in hours of availability  
 Wednesdays, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Thousand Oaks**  
 Supervisor Linda Parks' Office  
 625 West Hillcrest Drive  
 ▶ Thursdays, 9 a.m.-noon  
 By appointment only  
 Thousand Oaks Senior Center  
 1385 East Janss Road  
 ▶ Walk-in hours of availability  
 Second Tuesday, 1:30-4 p.m.

**Simi Valley**  
 America's Job Center, East County  
 2900 N. Madera Road, Suite 100  
 ▶ Walk-in hours of availability  
 Wednesdays, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
 Simi Valley Senior Center  
 3900 Avenida Simi  
 ▶ To schedule an appointment  
 please call: 805-583-6363  
 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday, 9 a.m.-noon

Walk-in clients are seen on a first-come, first-served basis within office hours.

**Federal Benefits:** [https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits book.asp](https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits%20book.asp)

**CalVet Benefits:** [https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Documents/Veteran %20Resource %20Book.pdf](https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Documents/Veteran%20Resource%20Book.pdf)

**CalVet Benefits Checklist:**

[https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Documents/2012%20Veterans Benefits Checklist.pdf#search=CHECK LIST%20FOR%20BENEFITS](https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Documents/2012%20Veterans%20Benefits%20Checklist.pdf#search=CHECKLIST%20FOR%20BENEFITS)

**Veterans Collaborative of Ventura County**

<https://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/veteran-collaborative-ventura-county-2/>

**Veteran in crisis? Call 1 800 273-8255, press 1**

<https://youtu.be/tgV60la0ui0> (veterans' mental health – you are not alone)

**In Humble Service,**

Tammy Bender

Veterans Program Coordinator

HMC, USN(Ret.)

(805) 477-5155 (main office)

(805) 477-5485 (desk number)(805) 477-5418 (fax)

Website: [www.vchsa.org/veterans](http://www.vchsa.org/veterans)

## **Upcoming Events/Ceremonies:**

- Robert Merchant, GLA Director of CBOC, is currently planning to attend our February meeting (Feb 18) to answer questions about the new VA Outpatient Clinic in Ventura. **As always, the General Meeting starts at 6 pm at the Oxnard Family Circle, 2100 Outlet Center Drive, Oxnard, CA.**



- On Saturday Feb 14, (11:00 am) the DAV will be hosting a seminar on benefits for Veterans and their families. It will be held at the Ventura Elks Lodge #1430, 2126 Knoll Drive in Ventura. Lunch will be offered for \$10. Please RSVP for meal reservations (805) 794-0093.

## **Events in November/December:**



*Ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the clinic*

A dedication of the new VA clinic in Ventura was held on Nov 9. The Captain Rosemary Bryant Mariner Outpatient Clinic opened in late September, and was named for one of the first 6 women to earn wings as naval aviators in 1974. She was later stationed at Naval Air Station Point Mugu for 3 years, and became the first woman to command an operational aviation squadron.

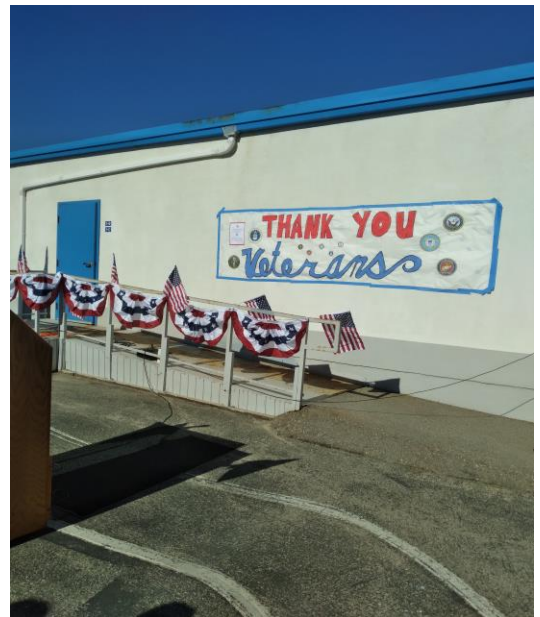


*Host Robert Merchant, Executive Director  
Ambulatory Care Centers*



*Woman Veteran Debora L. Ehrich – A VA  
Veteran's Reflection*

A *“Thank You Veterans & Military Members Appreciation Day”* tribute was held at Hollywood Beach Elementary School on Veterans Day, Nov 10. This was a **very special, heartwarming event** with all the children at the school participating. It culminated with a ceremony on the beach, with flowers being tossed into the surf while water was sprayed into the air by a fireboat from Port Hueneme. Awesome!



*A real welcome home tribute*



*VVVC Members present colors during Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem*



*“10 Reasons to Appreciate Veterans” presented by 6<sup>th</sup> grade class of Pelicans*





*Delivery of Wreath of Flowers to Ocean for Fallen Heroes by U.S. Naval Boat*



*The flower toss into the surf*



*DAV Ventura Chapter 24 Adjutant Robert Cruz with VVVC Color Guard Horace "Bud" Gray, Louis Morris, Ron Fitzgarrald, Bob Citron, Skip Thomas, Debora L. Ehrich, and John Walker*



The VVVC also participated in the Veterans Day parade in Las Vegas. While there, the group (and wives) were treated to a free meal at the South Point Casino. They were able to put the POW/MIA table for fallen soldiers on display, inside the casino itself. A good time was had by all!

*Howard Tench, Richard Esquivel, Richard Cabrera, Dickie Pena, John Bowers, John Lopez, Doug Temple, and RJ all enjoy their ride along the parade route. John Cabrera, Tom Moore, Jess Echavarilla and David Ha were also present but are not shown.*



*Missing Man/Fallen Soldier table*

## **35 Years with the VVVC**

My first visit to the Moving Wall was March 1985 in Santa Barbara, CA. I remember I drove to Santa Barbara from Ojai by myself that night. When I got there, I couldn't remember a single name of the Marines I served with in Vietnam.

My second visit to the Moving Wall was the week of Thanksgiving 1985; the Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County were hosting the Moving Wall at the Ventura Government Center, where it had rained all week. I remember hearing the names of places that I had been in Vietnam and had forgotten. Dong Ha, Phu Bai, Hue, Cam lo. I was given a black arm band that read Vietnam Veteran.

I would often stop by the VVVC food both at the Ventura Street Fair, talking with the guys working it. Then in June 1986, I became an annual member of the VVVC.

During the election nominations of 1986, then Board member Richard Brandl asked me if I would consider running for VP? I said yes, what harm would that cause? I was elected to the position, and Robert Keuser (Fox) was reelected to President. The very next day, Robert called and advised me that due to personal reasons, he would not be able to fill the position of president. I contacted the Board and notified them that I would take over the position of president, a position I held until 1992, when I stepped down after the loss of my youngest son. During the last eight plus years, I've worked with Congresswoman Brownley as well as Assemblywoman Irwin, on veteran issues.

During my 36 years with the VVVC I've held every position as an Officer and Board Member. Until 1996, my life was the VVVC.

I wouldn't change any of the experiences that I encountered while leading the VVVC, my only regret is that I didn't attend the kick off barbeque held at Camp Comfort for the VVVC, which at the time was only 5 minutes away from where I lived in Ojai.

Through the VVVC I served on the original committee for the Veterans Home, as well as working with then Congressmen Robert Lagomarsino and Elton Gallegly. I was invited to Hope Ranch to meet President Reagan. I've worked with many of the Ventura County Supervisors as well as county staff on Veteran issues as well as some of the Mayors of this County. One of my proudest achievements was ACR 135, the renaming of Pacific Coast Highway through Ventura County to Ventura County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway, and raising \$20,000 for the four signs.

In 2019 when I lost my wife Jan to cancer, it was the VVVC that kept me going with Color and Honor Guards. I'm thankful for that. As well as the many members that came to say their final good byes to Jan in her last days.

Thank you for allowing me to serve along with you all during the last 36 years.

Richard Camacho