



# Listening Post

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

February/March, 2023

## Officers

Richard Camacho, President  
(805) 630-7657  
Joe Richardson, Vice President  
(805) 659-2387  
Debora Ehrich, Secretary  
(805) 775-9987  
Kay Gray, Treasurer  
(805) 890-7645  
Ron Fitzgarrald, Public Affairs  
(805) 218-3489

## Board of Directors

Bob Martinez  
(805) 368-7001  
Jess Echavarria  
(805) 200-7386  
Bud Gray  
(805) 890-7645  
Bob Citron  
(805) 320-7767  
Howard Tench  
(805) 312-1977

## Committees

**Chaplain/Housing  
Improvements**  
Open

**Merchandise**  
Open

**Parades/Work Party**  
Open

**Fundraising**  
Open

**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:

What an honor it was to have Robert Merchant as a guest speaker at our January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, it was a full house. If you were not there, you missed a chance to provide feedback to Robert, or ask questions.

Robert brought us up to date with the current status of the new Ventura CBOC, and the difficulty in bringing additional medical providers on board. It's not just a VA problem, but one that is affecting the entire medical profession.

Our meeting lasted until 8:00 PM, due to the questions and feedback provided. Overall, it was an excellent informative meeting.

As we go forth in 2023, all I ask of each of you is to support the VVVC in any way that you can. I know that we are all getting up in age, even more reason to get involved. Please check on each other as much as you can.

It has been brought up that the County Veterans CVSO office is overwhelmed with new cases, especially with the new PACT Act.

*(Continued on next page)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

I remind you, that our own Debora Ehrich is a Veterans Service Officer for the Ventura DVA Chapter 24. The one difference between Debora and the CVSO office, is that Debora comes to your place of residence to assist you in filing a claim.

On Thursday February 23<sup>rd</sup> Ron Fitzgarrald, Joe Richardson and I met with Brian Miller, aide to Ventura County Supervisor Kelly Long. Brian took us to meet with GSA regarding our plans to add two military statues to the Veterans Monument. As I understand from Ron, the students from Architecture Construction & Engineering Charter High School, are busy working on our model and diagrams that we will use when we go before the Board of Supervisors for their approval.

Please keep Howard Tench, Laurie & Joe Richardson, and Dave Wilson in your thoughts as they continue with their healing.

Until next month,

Respectfully,

Richard F Camacho, President

**VVVC Feb/March 2023**  
**Membership Report**

Annual Members:	21
Life Members:	98
Total Members:	119

**VP/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  
Mike Logie  
Howard Tench  
Laurie Richardson  
Joe Richardson

***“Veterans leave a war, but war never leaves a Veteran”***

***-CJ Kalish***

# POW/MIA REPORT Jan '23 –Feb '23

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

## **European & Pacific Theaters: 3**

Army Air Forces 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. **Porter M. Pile**, 24, of Harlingen, Texas, was accounted for Nov. 28, 2022.

Army Air Forces 1st Lt. **George W. Winger**, 25, was accounted for January 24, 2023.

\*Army Pvt. **Leroy M. Slenker**, 28, who was captured and died as a POW during World War II, was accounted for Feb. 3, 2023.

## **USS *Oklahoma*: 0**

## **Total from World War II: 3**

**Currently there are 72,240 Americans (approximately 26,000 are assessed as possibly-recoverable) still unaccounted for from World War II**

## **Korean War: 1**

Army Cpl. **Donald L. Dupont**, 22, was accounted for Jan. 24, 2023.

**Currently there are 7,498 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:** Note that the site is currently being updated.
- Steven Thompson and/or his staff from the **Ventura CBOC will be attending our monthly meetings (third Saturday of each month)**. This will be your opportunity to bring up any issues or comments that you might have with the clinic.
- Now you can **set up appointments with doctors outside of the VA system**. Community providers (non-VA) will work with your VA medical facility to give you timely and appropriate care. Many of your medical records can be transferred to your My HealtheVet account. You will need to have the My HealtheVet Premium account to set it up.
- **Veteran Peer Access Network:** The LA County Department of Mental Health can support you. Mental health, substance misuse, housing assistance, workforce development and employment, healthcare, education, legal services, and social connection/recreation, all in one place. Call the **Veteran Support Line, 1-800-854-7711 \*3**. Available 9am-8pm PT, 7 days/week.
- **PACT ACT scams are out there!** You can see them in social media posts, emails, even in TV commercials. These predatory companies charge absurd fees or require you to give them a portion of your benefits you may be entitled to. A bulletin about the **PACT Act was added to last month's (January 2023) Listening Post**. Best to refer to that if you think you are entitled to file a claim.
- **Homeless Veteran Resources:** If you need help, call 1-877-424-3838. Available Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm ET.



# 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.



**COUNTY OF VENTURA**  
Human Services Agency

**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)



**Veteran Services Office**

### FIELD OFFICES

<p><b>Camarillo</b> Gold Coast Veterans Foundation (GCVF) 4001 Mission Oaks Boulevard, Suite D Walk-in hours of availability ▶ Wednesdays, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Simi Valley</b> America's Job Center, East County 2900 N. Madera Road, Suite 100 Walk-in hours of availability ▶ Wednesdays, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Thousand Oaks</b> Supervisor Linda Parks' Office 625 West Hillcrest Drive Thursdays, 9 a.m.-noon By appointment only</p> <p>Thousand Oaks Senior Center 1385 East Janss Road Walk-in hours of availability ▶ Second Tuesday, 1:30-4 p.m.</p>	<p>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</p>

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

4/2022

**Federal Benefits:** <https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefitsbook.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%20VeteransBenefits\\_Checklist.pdf#search=CHECKLIST%20FOR%20BENEFITS](https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Documents/2012%20VeteransBenefits_Checklist.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/tgV60laOui0> (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:

- **On March 3<sup>rd</sup>**, there will be an Honors Detail for Air Force Korean War Veteran Sid Russell at Ivy Lawn Cemetery in Ventura. Time will be 12 noon. Members of the Honor Guard should arrive by 11am.
- **Point Mugu Air Show** will be **March 18, 19**. The Thunderbirds and Blue Angels will be performing, and hopefully the VVVC will have a booth again.
- **On March 26, Many Mansions** will be hosting their annual **“Bowls of Hope”** event from **11:00 am – 2:00pm** at California Lutheran University, Kingsman Park 100 Memorial Parkway in Thousand Oaks.

This event raises awareness of housing insecurity and raises funds for programs and services provided by ManyMansions. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to: [MMinfo@manymansions.org](mailto:MMinfo@manymansions.org)

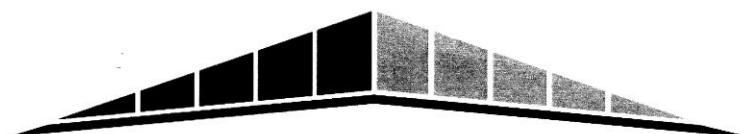
- **The Wall That Heals:** This moving wall will be coming to the Madonna Inn in San Luis Obispo on **March 16, 2023 at 10am**. Several members of our group will be attending and possibly participating in the Color Guard ceremony with other visiting organizations. If you want to go, contact Ron Fitzgerald (Public Affairs Officer) at (805) 218-3489.



San Luis Obispo County Veterans Services Office  
&  
Central Coast Veterans Memorial Museum



Proudly  
Presents



## THE WALL THAT HEALS

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL REPLICA & MOBILE EDUCATION CENTER



A PROGRAM OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL FUND  
FOUNDERS OF THE WALL

**OPEN  
TO ALL**

INVITED: EVERYONE  
COST: FREE  
OPEN: 24 HRS A DAY

**WHERE**

MADONNA MEADOWS  
100 MADONNA ROAD  
SAN LUIS OBISPO

**WHEN**

MARCH 16th-19th, 2023

In Partnership with

**MADONNA INN**

For more information on how to donate  
or volunteer scan the QR Code or visit:  
[www.vetmuseum.org/the-wall-that-heals](http://www.vetmuseum.org/the-wall-that-heals)



- **Golf Tournament:** On **Sunday, May 7, 2023** the Ventura Elks #1430 will be sponsoring a golf tournament at the Olivas Links golf course as a fund raiser for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 24 of Ventura. It will be a Scramble format, with prizes and a BBQ afterwards at the lodge which is located at 2126 Knoll Dr., Ventura 93003. For further information and registration call **Rayner Spencer at (805) 407-3405**.
- March 11 – VVVC may be participating in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Ventura. This hasn't been defined at this point in time.



## Recent Events:



On Feb 2, 2023 the VVVC provided an extensive Color Guard at Ventura College for the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Ventura County High School All Star football game. This was a real crowd pleaser with an excellent rendition of the National Anthem.

*VVVC Color Guard – Joe Richardson, Horace “Bud” Gray, Bob Citron, Ed Evans, Ron Fitzgarrald, Dickie Pina, Debora L. Ehrich, John Cabrera and Richard F. Camacho*



*VVVC Color Guard on Ventura College Football Field of Stadium – Set up to march to center of field for Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem*



*Notice U.S. Marine Veteran Richard F. Camacho showing off the U.S. Marine Corps Flag. Patrick D. Pothier of Downtown Ventura Lions Club posing with VVVC Color Guard in front of Downtown Ventura Lions Club's inflatable Logo*



On Saturday, February 25, 2023 the VVVC did a Color Guard presentation at the surprise birthday party for 100 yr. old WWII Veteran Jim Mather. He was also presented a VVVC Challenge Coin and a signed Certificate of Appreciation of his service from Congresswoman Julia Brownlee. There was quite a crowd present and Jim was overwhelmed with joy and emotion with the celebration. (unfortunately no photos of this one!)



## **Story Board**

(Continued from the January issue)

The next morning (May 10<sup>th</sup>), I was hoping GQ would be over pretty soon but no such luck. Planes were being launched again, and we stayed at GQ for several more hours. After what seemed like an eternity, GQ was finally cancelled and I went back to my rack to try and catch a little shuteye. Couldn't really fall asleep though, just seems like once you're that tired it becomes a real challenge.

As a lowly Seaman, I wasn't privy to classified information. We always got daily briefings from our Captain over closed circuit TV of each day's bombing strikes, but this was different; we didn't hear any specifics. Maybe because the ship was actually at GQ, not sure. But I later learned what actually happened. The North Vietnamese had deployed a large squadron of MIG's to come out and attack the carrier group in retaliation for our attack and mining of Haiphong harbor, and there had been a heavy dogfight. In the end, there was a total of 11 confirmed kills of enemy MIG's but at the cost of 4 US planes. Turned out that it was the most significant dogfight of the entire Vietnam War. I'd say we won that one, but in light of the losses it didn't really feel much like a cause for celebration.

Bob Citron – Editor



*(declassified photos from gettyimages.com)*

**Note: Always looking for stories from other members. Just submit to me as an email or MS Word document and I'll make sure we include it!**

**Email: [cshanty1@outlook.com](mailto:cshanty1@outlook.com)**