



Listening Post

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

October, 2024

Officers

Richard Camacho, President
(805) 630-7657
Joe Richardson, Vice President
(805) 207-1670
Debora Ehrich, Secretary
(805) 775-9987
Kay Gray, Treasurer
(805) 890-7645
Ron Fitzgarrald, Public Affairs
(805) 218-3489

Board of Directors

Jess Echavarria
(805) 200-7386
Donald "Skip" Thomas
(N/A)
Ed Evans
(805) 524-3594
Howard Tench
(805) 312-1977
Fred Hoff
(N/A)

Committees

Chaplain/Housing Improvements

Luis Morris
(805) 207-8692

Merchandise

Open

Parades/Work Party

Open

Fundraising

Open

POW/MIA

Ron Fitzgarrald
(805) 218-3489

Listening Post

Bob Citron
(805) 673-6184

James Ray Scholarship

Joe Richardson
(805) 207-1670

Membership

Joe Richardson
(805) 207-1670

President's Message:

The views and opinions I express in the monthly president's messages are my own opinions only, and not necessarily those of the other Officers or Board Members of the VVVC.

During the August 2024 General Meeting, I opened nominations for Officers and Board Members for 2025.

The following members were nominated by members in attendance for next year's slate:

President:

Vice-President:

Secretary: Joe Richardson

Public Affairs: Ron Fitzgarrald

Treasure: Kay Gray

Board Members: Skip Thomas, Bud Gray, Fred Hoff, Bob Citron

As you may have noticed, no one was nominated or volunteered for President or Vice-president.

I will be opening nominations once again during the October and November meetings. Elections will take place during the December meeting.

(Continued on p.2)

(President's Message, continued from page 1)

This is the first time in my 38 years that no one has been nominated for the two top positions. If those positions remain vacant, it may cause problems next year, if there is not sufficient officers or board members to make a quorum.

As of the August general meeting, we have 141 members. The VVVC is your organization, it is time for others to step up and take control.

Until next month

Respectfully,

Richard F Camacho

President

VVVC - Oct 2024
Membership Report

Annual Members: 35
Life Members: 107
Total Members: 143

VP/Membership Chair
Joe Richardson

Sick Call...

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

Robert Martinez (Stage 4 glioblastoma)
Laurie Richardson (recovering)
Barry Jenkins (myeloma)
Richard Cabrera (neck surgery)
Manuel Gonzales (broken foot)

Members: As Richard Camacho has indicated in the President's message, we need folks to step up and nominate for the open positions of President and Vice President. Once that's done we can vote on them at the October and November meetings. These two positions basically represent us with other groups, as well as to run the meetings.

"Bravery is being the only one who knows that you are afraid."

- Franklin P. Jones

POW/MIA REPORT Aug '24 – Sept '24

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

European & Pacific Theaters: 21

*U.S. Army Air Forces Sgt. **Henry H. Packard**, 34, of Plymouth, New Hampshire, who was captured and died as a **POW** on September 17, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Common Grave 445. He was accounted for November 30, 2023. He will be buried in Plymouth, New Hampshire, on a date to be determined.

*U.S. Army Pfc. **Joseph C. MacDonald**, 20, of Avenal, California. MacDonald died as a **POW** on December 28, 1942, and was buried along with other deceased prisoners in the local Cabanatuan Camp Cemetery in Common Grave 721. He was accounted for July 19, 2024. MacDonald will be buried at sea, on a date to be determined.

U.S. Army Air Force Staff Sgt. **John A. Tarbert**, 24, of Port Deposit, Maryland, was accounted for May 10, 2024. He will be buried in Schuylerville, New York, on Nov. 8, 2024.

U.S. Army Air Force Technical Sgt. **Lynn M. Farnham**, was accounted for July 31, 2024. He was KIA when his plane was shot down by enemy fighter aircraft fire on Feb 25, 1944.

*U.S. Army Air Force Pvt. **Bernard J. Curran**, who was captured and subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March. He was held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. He died as a **POW** and was accounted for August 2, 2024.

*U.S. Army Air Force Tech5 **William E. Eby**, who was captured and subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March. He was held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. He died as a **POW** and was accounted for August 7, 2024.

*U.S. Army Pvt. **Willard D. Merrill**, who was captured and subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March. He was held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. He died as a **POW** and was accounted for August 19, 2024.

U.S. Army Tech Sgt. **Thomas O. Moss**, was accounted for August 6, 2024.

U.S. Army Air Force 1st Lt. **Wylie W. Leverett**, was accounted for August 21, 2024.

*U.S. Army Air Force Pfc. **David C. Hansen**, who was captured and subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March. He was held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. He died as a **POW** and was accounted for August 23, 2024.

U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. **John E. Edwinson Jr.**, On Sept. 24, 1942, he was killed during a firefight with Japanese forces. He was declared non-recoverable in Aug. 1950. He was accounted for September 11, 2024.

U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class **Charles R. Reiser**, 20, of Washburn, North Dakota, was accounted for June 25, 2024. Reiser will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery, on a date to be determined.

*U.S. Army Cpl. **Malcolm S. Webb**, who was captured and subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March. He was held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. He died as a **POW**. He was accounted for September 11, 2024.

U.S. Army Sgt. **Norman H. Drewes**, He was killed June 15, 1944 during Operation Forager on the island of Saipan. The War Department declared him non-recoverable in June 1949. He was accounted for September 13, 2024.

U.S. Army Pfc. **Robert L. Bryant**, MIA during World War II. On Sept. 23, 1943 Bryant was reported KIA in the vicinity of the Pietre, Italy, during Operation Avalanche. The War Department declared him non-recoverable on July 19, 1949. He was accounted for Sept. 18, 2024.

U.S. Navy Pharmacist's Mate Third Class (PhM3c) **Gilmore V. Rix**, he is believed to have been killed while his unit attempted to secure Red Beach 3 on Nov. 20, 1943. His remains were not identified after the war. Rix was accounted for on June 18, 2024.

U.S. Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. **Loring E. Lord**, was accounted for Sept. 18, 2024.

U.S. Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. **Donald W. Sheppick**, crew member of the B-24 Liberator "Heaven Can Wait" was accounted for on Sept. 20, 2024.

U.S. Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. **Eugene J. Darrigan, killed during World War II**, crew member of the B-24 Liberator "Heaven Can Wait" was accounted for on Sept. 20, 2024.

U.S. Army Air Forces Sergeant **Edward S. Kovaleski**, was accounted for June 4, 2024.

** *U.S. Army Sgt. **Howard L. Hasselkus**, who was captured and subjected to the 65-mile Bataan Death March. He was held at the Cabanatuan POW Camp #1. He died as a **POW**. He was accounted for Sept. 23, 2024.

USS Oklahoma: 1

Navy Fireman 1st Class **Edward D. Johnson**, 24, of Hurdsfield, North Dakota, was accounted for on Sept. 29, 2020. In October 1949, a military board classified those who could not be identified as non-recoverable, including Johnson. Johnson will be buried on Oct. 25, 2024, in the Punchbowl.

USS Canopus: 1

*U.S. Navy Chief Electrician's Mate **John J. Campbell**, who was captured and died as a **POW**, was accounted for August 9, 2024.

Total from World War II: 23

Currently there are 71,999 Americans (approximately 26,000 are assessed as possibly-recoverable) still unaccounted for from World War II

Korean War: 6

*U.S. Army Private 1st Class **Robert J. Wright Jr**, 20, of Hollybrook, Virginia, in March 1951 who died as a **POW** at Prisoner of War Camp #5. He was accounted for Apr. 28, 2023. Wright will be buried in Hollybrook, Virginia, on a date to be determined.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class **Walter A. Ross Jr.**, He was reported **MIA** on Feb. 14, 1951. He was accounted for June 7, 2024.

U.S. Army Corporal **Billie C. Driver**, KIA on Sept. 5, 1950 during the Korean War, was accounted for September 9, 2024.

U.S. Army Pfc. **Jack M. Cash**, In September 1950, he was KIA and was accounted for August 26, 2024.

U.S. Army Pfc. **William A. Wheeler**, In September 1950, he was KIA and was accounted for August 27, 2024.

U.S. Army Cpl. **Eriverto Ortiz**, 27, of Batesville, Texas, was accounted for August 10, 2023. He will be buried in Elgin, Illinois, on Oct. 28, 2024.

Currently there are 7,446 Americans still unaccounted for from the Korean War.

Vietnam: 0

Currently there are 1,575 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 Fitzgarrald
POW/MIA Chairman

To respect the next-of-kin, individuals are only displayed as “Accounted For” in the grids and case profiles when (1) DPAA has made the identification, and (2) the next-of-kin has been notified.

Veteran Resources:

For VA emergency care, call (844) 724-7842



Note: Beginning July 1st, the Veteran Services Office is relocating to The Palms, 2000 Outlet Center Drive, Suite C-220, Oxnard, CA 93036.

Upcoming Out of Office Dates for 2024:

September 25 – October 1

Federal Benefits: https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

CalVet Benefits: 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

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

● If you are unsure of how to report the death of a Veteran (to stop veteran benefits, for example):

1. The easiest way is to **call 800- 827-1000 (TTY:711) and select option 5.**
2. **In person:** go to your regional VA office.
3. **By mail:** Department of Veterans Affairs Claims Intake Center, PO Box 4444, Janesville, WI 53547-4444. Include your relationship to the Veteran and any supporting documents that can help us verify the Veteran's identity. Examples of supporting documents are: **Death certificate** or other public record of the Veteran's death, or a copy of the veteran's **discharge document (like a DD214)**
4. Other documents you might want to include: Social security number of veteran, VA claim number, DOB certificate, branch of service.

- Meditation and relaxation techniques: The VA has published a story (“Compassion”) on the release of stress with simple breathing techniques. A very good story that can help everyone. Go to: [https://news.va.gov/134662/whole health #238](https://news.va.gov/134662/whole-health-238). The VA also has a great tool that you can use called “**Mindfulness Meditation**”. This is a live phone class you can participate in with other veterans. It is held via Zoom every **Monday morning at 10:00 am PST**. No need to sign up for anything, just join us by calling **(404) 397-1596, Access #1991684350#**. **When it asks for an ID code, just hit # again.**

Recent Events/Ceremonies

- On September 20th, the VVVC held its annual POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony at the Veteran’s Memorial in Ventura. The memorial is located at the corner of Telephone Road and Victoria Avenue. In this year’s ceremony, 10 Anacapa middle school students from **Instructor Laurie Curtis-Abbe’s U.S. History class took turns reading all 160 names** of California military personnel who have not yet returned from the Vietnam war.



- On September 28th, members of the VVVC attended the annual Port of Hueneme Banana Festival. Those in attendance were Bud & Kay Gray, Ron Fitzgarrald, Howard Tench, Debora L. Ehrich, Richard Camacho and Skip Thomas. Donations for the Statues Project totaled \$1,057.00!



- Every now and then, the VVVC recognizes the importance of thanking people, businesses and organizations for their support of our causes. Board of Directors member, Howard Tench, is presenting Pop's of 'Pop's One Stop Repair Shop' in Camarillo a certificate of appreciation for his continued support of the Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County. Thanks Pops!



Upcoming/Ceremonies:

- On Saturday, October 5th the **“Reins of Hope” Event** will take place at 6645 Wheeler Canyon Rd., Santa Paula. VVVC will be presenting the Colors. This organization provides Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) as a means of helping individuals to find relief and overcome challenges such as depression, anxiety, anger, trauma, relationship issues and substance abuse. Interactions with horses can provide coping skills and movement toward restoring mental health.



- September 18-October 9: Adaptive golf Assisting Veterans (AGAVE). Spanish Hills at Spanish Hills Golf Club, 999 Crestview Ave. Camarillo, CA 93010. Monday, November 11 (Veterans Day). Recovery shot, also at Spanish Hills Club in Camarillo. Contact: Cricket Wheeler, (Consultant) at cricketwheeler@recoveryshot.org - www.recoveryshot.org. Phone: (805) 620-0958
- As a final note, donations for the installation of the two statues at the Veteran's memorial in Ventura (corner of Telephone and Victoria) have met the goal! The installation date has yet to be set, but what an accomplishment!

And on the home front:

VA must build more housing on West LA VA campus, and UCLA and Brentwood School leases are illegal, judge rules



"A federal judge on Friday ordered the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to build more than 2,500 units of housing for low-income veterans on its West Los Angeles campus.

In a 124-page decision following a non-jury trial, U.S. District Judge David O. Carter also ruled that leases to UCLA, the Brentwood School and others on the VA property are illegal because they don't primarily serve veterans. UCLA's [Jackie Robinson baseball stadium](#) is on 10 acres leased from the VA, as is Brentwood School's 22-acre athletic facility.

Carter castigated the VA for abusing its mission to use the 388-acre campus to 'principally benefit veterans and their families.' 'Over the past five decades, the West LA VA has been infected by bribery, corruption, and the influence of the powerful and their lobbyists, and enabled by a major educational institution in excluding veterans' input about their own lands,' he wrote.

Carter wrote that the VA has in effect sold the land off, by allowing lease holders to construct concrete facilities on it and then arguing that tearing those facilities down would be wasteful.

'The VA must remediate its mishandling of this resource so that the land may once again be available for its intended purpose: the housing of veterans,' Carter wrote."

More on the topic of Veterans housing:

A new HUD-VASH ruling on the Veteran supportive housing program states that the VA can no longer consider disability benefits as income, with regard to housing assistance. Prior to the new ruling, a veteran was ineligible for housing assistance if their income exceeded 50% of the area's median income. With the new ruling, a veteran's income can be up to 80% of the area's income. While the new ruling says that disability payments now cannot **DISqualify** a veteran from the HUD-VASH program, veterans accepted into it must pay at least 30% of their **adjusted gross family income** toward rent with HUD paying the rest. Once accepted, the veteran has 120 days to find suitable housing.

These changes occur under the backdrop of an ongoing trial where 14 veterans are suing the VA over delays in developing low-income housing for disabled veterans on the 388 acre West LA campus mentioned in the article above on page 9.