



AVAG News

Fall 2021 • Volume 8 Issue 4



Over 75 volunteers participated in our yearly Serve Day by taking part in a beach clean-up on July 10, 2021. The group, shown above, gathered at Hope Chapel and traveled from there to do clean up at Huntington Beach. Story on page 7. (Doreen Matsumoto).

Memorial Day, 2021

AVAG and Cottonwood Church

American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG) and Cottonwood Church in Los Alamitos, for the fourth time, brought together our Veterans, families and community to honor and mourn U.S. Military personnel who gave their lives during their service in the U.S. Military.

This year's event was held on May 28 at Cottonwood Church. The event included honoring Howard Koch, a 96-year-old World War II and Korean War veteran, the 82nd Airborne Memorial Team Color Guard, the releasing of doves by veterans, a classic car and motorcycle parade/show, music, raffle and lunch.

The event began with the 82nd Airborne Memorial Team Color Guard leading the parade of classic cars and motorcycles while Ariana Warde sang patriotic songs. White doves, provided by Torres Mortuary, an event sponsor, and Bob Flight of DAV Chapter 23, were given to each veteran lining the parade route to honor their fallen comrades. As the color guard passed their position, they each released their dove. Following the 82nd Airborne was the Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley and Guest of Honor, Howard Koch. Howard's entourage closely followed, made up of several beautiful models sporting camo fashion by Veteran Couture. The parade then finished off with the classic cars and motorcycles.

Continued on Page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

Memorial Day 2021

AVAG and Cottonwood Church honor and mourn U.S. Military personnel who gave their lives in service to their country.

It Was a Day of Thank You's

Speaker Phil Downer reflects on speaking at the Veterans Appreciation Lunch on June 16.

Serve Day – Beach Clean-up Day

Over 75 people from various AVAG partners teamed up for a beach clean-up day.

Daughter Requests QOV for 100-year-old Dad

A WWII veteran receive a Quilt of Valor on his 100th birthday.

Recliners Delivered to Joint Armed Forces Training Base Active Duty Soldiers and Airmen

AVAG delivered eight recliners to active duty soldiers and airmen this quarter.

Veterans Helping Veterans

AVAG Veterans lend a hand to other veterans in need in a variety of ways.

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 @AmericanVeteransAssistanceGroup  @socal.avag

or learn more about us at AVAGUSA.com

Memorial Day 2021 – AVAG and Cottonwood Church continued

Photos courtesy Doreen Matsumoto

The 82nd Airborne then performed an American Flag folding ceremony, describing what each of the thirteen folds in the flag represents. The folded flag was presented to Howard Koch in honor of his meritorious service during World War II and Korea. During the ceremony Howard was flanked by Korean War Veteran Carmen Erickson and Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley.

After several picture taking opportunities with the Camo Models and Howard, lunch was served in the building. Individual lunch plates provided by Above and Beyond Catering were sponsored by Cottonwood's Veterans Outreach and AVAG. All guests were served lunch and seated at tables decorated by volunteers.

Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto, event coordinator and Master of Ceremonies, welcomed everyone and started off with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer by Pastor Ray Huab. Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley had a few words of appreciation for our veterans and awarded Certificates of Recognition to Cottonwood Veterans Outreach, American Veterans Assistance Group, Richard Breunig Foundation,

Charles Cruz Foundation, 82nd Airborne Division Association Memorial Team, and the numerous volunteers. Certificates of Appreciation were also provided by California State Senator Tom Umberg.

To honor the recent passing of Army veteran Charles Cruz, the Cruz family established an annual honorarium of golden dog tags to be presented to a selected veteran. The first recipient of the golden dog tags for 2021 was Jack Hughes, Vietnam veteran, Air Force.

Lana Martinez, once again, baked, decorated and individually packaged dozens of delicious cupcakes enjoyed by the guests. The cupcakes were sponsored by Army Veteran Mike Keele. Sarge's Resource Center and Veterans Stand Together each had resource tables set up to offer veterans assistance.

John Underwood of Los Alamitos Community Television was also in attendance and filmed the entire event (visit [LOSALTV.ORG](https://www.losaltv.org) or [LOSALTVSTUDIO1](https://www.losaltvstudio1.com) on YouTube), including interviews with the Guest of Honor, Howard Koch, and other attendees. To view the show, go to <https://www.losaltv.org/2021/06/memorial-day-at-cottonwood-church-luncheon/>. *Veterans Helping Veterans.* 🦋



AVAG News

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Guest of Honor, WWII and Korean War veteran Howard Koch was presented with the ceremonial folded flag in honor of his service.



Below, O.C. Supervisor Katrina Foley awarded Certificates of Recognition to (top left, clockwise) Charles Cruz Foundation, Richard Breunig Foundation, Cottonwood Veterans Outreach, and the 82nd Airborne Division Association Memorial Team.



Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley presents AVAG a Recognition Plaque to World War II Veteran Harold Gomer and Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto

Reflecting on Memorial Day

By Supervisor Katrina Foley, District 2

Every Memorial Day, we take the time to honor and pay our respects to the fallen Americans who have lost their lives serving our country. Their sacrifices are felt deeply in cities and towns around our nation, from the quiet and sacred spaces of Arlington National Cemetery to local cemeteries and American Legion Halls, to the empty seats at our dinner tables.

It is our task to remember them, and never forget their sacrifices.

This is why I was so appreciative of the invitation to visit the AVAG Memorial Day presentation. Having the opportunity to engage with families taking the time to remember their loved ones and speaking to the men and women celebrating their departed friends in service, felt especially meaningful after the past sixteen months. We are reunited in our commitment to honor, reflect and remember.

One of my core commitments as Supervisor is to ensure our veteran community in the Second District has access to the resources they need, especially after they leave service.

Since taking office in late March, I have created a Veteran's Advisory Committee for the Second District. Our committee will help focus on key issues, from veteran's health to addressing affordable housing. I look forward to sharing monthly updates on our work.

I have also appointed former veteran Alexander Gonzales to the OC Veterans Affair Committee, where he helps advise the Board of Supervisors on important issues for veterans and their families.

And finally, during County budget meetings, I plan to pursue every opportunity to ensure the needs of our veterans and their families are considered and integrated into the framework, such as enhancing veteran employment opportunities and supportive housing.

If anyone in the AVAG community is ever in need, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I can always be reached at Katrina.Foley@ocgov.com.

In gratitude,
Katrina

AVAG Veteran Gives Back

By Tom Umberg
(Photos Courtesy Tom Umberg)

George Washington once said: “The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by our nation.”

As a career military family, I like to think that my wife and I were both motivated by this sentiment (among other things) and that we continue to work daily to reinvigorate this feeling with young Californians today.

I was fortunate enough to graduate from UCLA in 1977, where as part of the university’s Army ROTC Program, I was immediately commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. I was shortly thereafter promoted to Captain where I served with the 2nd Infantry Division in South Korea (where I met my wife) and with NATO forces in Italy. I was privileged to also served as a paratrooper with the US Army Special Operations Command, US Army Special Warfare Center and the XVIIIth Airborne Corp.

After completing my required service and receiving advanced degrees (including my law degree), I remained in the U.S. Army Reserve, eventually rising to the rank of Colonel. I never imagined a call to duty involving something like 09-11. And yet, I was reactivated at that time as a prosecutor of terrorist suspects in Guantanamo. I was again recalled to active duty in 2009 to serve as Chief, Anti-Corruption in Afghanistan in the ongoing War on Terror.

My wife, retired Brigadier General Robin Umberg began her career in a similar fashion when, at the age of 18, she enlisted and received a four-year military scholarship from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing. She was commissioned a First Lieutenant in 1977. Her active duty assignments included Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington D.C., the USAMEDDAC Fort Carson, Colorado, the 121st Evacuation Hospital, Seoul, Korea, and the United States Army Hospital in Vicenza, Italy. After 12 years of active duty, Robin also transferred to the US Army Reserve. She served in a variety of command assignments at Army hospitals in California, Arizona, Virginia, And Georgia focusing on battlefield readiness, training, and career management for more than 27,000 Army medical personnel.

In 2012, she joined the board of the Public Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan working in collaboration with the State Department to expand the Rule of Law in Afghanistan. She was a part of the delegation traveling to Kabul in 2012 and 2013.

In 2011, then-California Governor Jerry Brown appointed Brigadier General Robin Umberg to oversee the Veterans Homes Division in the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). As part of



Robin and Tom Umberg (Photo courtesy Tom Umberg)

his organizational review of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Secretary Peter J. Gravett elevated Brigadier General Umberg to the position of Undersecretary for Veterans Homes. In 2014, she received the “Lifetime Achievement Award” for her service to veterans CalVet.

While collectively, Robin and I may be “U.S. Army babies,” our loyalty and passions lie with the active duty military members, families, and veterans of California. California has the largest population of veterans in the nation, with some 3.5 million former members of the armed services residing within its borders. This is over 13 percent of the nation’s veteran population and about 20 percent of the state’s total population. California’s veterans have served with valor in the Mexican War, the Indian Wars, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and Desert Storm. Today, many of them are again serving with distinction in the war on terror, though gratefully that appears to be winding down.

As those men and women in uniform continue to put themselves in harm’s way, legitimate questions must continue to be asked about the governmental policies designed to assist these brave soldiers and their families. As the current State Senator from California’s 34th District (Orange County) and a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, I work daily to keep the needs of military families and returning soldiers at the forefront of my priorities. In this role, I am committed to working with my local colleagues to bring a Southern California Veterans Memorial and Cemetery to Orange County. This effort continues unabated with our local, state, and federal partners and I look forward to breaking ground in Irvine on this project in the near future. Our Orange County veterans and their families deserve a place where they can rest and be memorialized for their service.

Additionally, I regularly dedicate a large portion of my annual legislative package to improving the lives of veterans in California. This year, some of those most important measures are:

SB 43 – Veterans Cemetery: Requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs to work with local government entities in Orange County to develop the Southern California Veterans Cemetery.



SB 498 – Legal Aid for Indigents Veterans: Expands free and low-income legal services to veterans on disability.

SB 665 – Veterans Hiring Preference: Allows private employers to establish, and maintain, a written veteran's preference employment policy and hiring program.

SCR 3 – Vietnam Armed Forces Day: Recognizes June 19th as Veterans of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Day, in memory of the Vietnamese gave the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War.

For her part, Robin continues to serve on the CalVet board where she actively assists our American heroes with healthcare, employment, housing, education and much more. Together, we take important days like Memorial Day, the 4th of July, and Veterans Day seriously and with reverence. In her role as Brigadier General, Robin has had the honor of representing the U.S. Army at military funerals. It is a duty that she has never taken lightly. In fact, she regularly still communicates with the families of those she has seen buried. It is an emotional weight that few could manage, but one that gives both Robin and veteran families ongoing peace knowing that military sacrifices have not been made in vain and will not be forgotten. As Senator, I take these days to walk my district neighborhoods with staff members and volunteers to personally thank those who take the time to fly the American Flag. While this may seem like a small gesture, it is personally deeply meaningful as it serves to remind families that we care – and, I adore the opportunity to make connections and learn the individual stories of our nation's heroes.

As we rise from the ashes of the COVID-19 Pandemic and approach this year's 4th of July, we hope that every one of you will tell your story, share your family's memories, or work to make a new connection with a veteran in your community. By keeping these spirits alive, we hope to inspire a new round of American heroes and military leaders. 🦋



It Was a Day of Thank You's



By Phil Downer

Photos Courtesy Doreen Matsumoto

They came from all the wars — from Korea, even a couple from World War II, many from the tragedy of Vietnam, and also younger men and women from the FOBs (Forward Operating Bases) of the cities in Iraq and the encampments of Afghanistan...all to be shown appreciation for their service.

I was the speaker and I wanted to express words of gratitude to these warriors and their spouses who had fought for our country and for the most part, paid a great price.

I've always said that the government could have saved a lot of dollars and pain, mental health issues, and homelessness, if they had just thrown a few parades for the returning Vietnam and Korean veterans. But, instead, too often, we were vilified — many of us were, at least.

So, I was there to say "Thank you!" But, surprisingly, it also turned into a time of people thanking me, including older veterans who appreciated the commitment of my era of infantrymen.

As I went to one table to thank the veterans and their spouses, they jumped up and gave me hugs and thanked me — which I have to admit, even after all these years, felt really good.

After the meeting, I continued to personally reach out and thank those who had served. I was particularly surprised and blessed by one woman in a black and white dress who thanked me for "fighting for her country."

She warmly grabbed my hand and squeezed it, not letting go, while saying "Thank you for fighting for my country of Vietnam. Even though they took my country and took our freedom, you were one of those who helped and tried to prevent it, and I'm very thankful for you. And I'm sorry for the friends you lost."

She said she had escaped Vietnam and had come to the US on a rickety boat seeking the freedom and opportunity we enjoy. She was so kind.

I thought about the men who didn't come home, and about their families — many of whom fell apart after losing their hero son or in some cases, their husband who had gone off to war. I thought about how many loved ones of warriors would have so treasured the kind words this woman shared with me.

Before I could ask her name, she slipped away. But I did get her picture. 🦋



Sharing my story — honoring veterans.



A very kind lady expressing gratitude.



Left to right, Mike Keele, Phil Downer, and Scott McReynolds, who, along with Richard Simonian and Doreen Matsumoto, organized this wonderful Veterans Appreciation Luncheon.

Serve Day Beach Clean-up Day



Photos Courtesy Doreen Matsumoto

What a great turn out! Over 75 people came out from different groups to give their support.

Thank you *Hope Chapel Huntington Beach* for your hospitality.

Thank you *Mellissa Arriola Breunig* and *David Breunig* from the *Richard Breunig Foundation* for our raffle prize gift cards.

Thank you *Larry and Karen Martinez* for your beach bag raffle.

Thank you to all of our *Unleash Your Purpose* ministry team who came out and supported today.

Thank you to the *Cottonwood Church* volunteers.

Thank you to our *Veterans Outreach*.

Thank you to *American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG)* for supplying all the food.

Special thank you to all of our AVAG members who came out and supported especially David Breunig who cooked up the hotdogs and hamburgers.

Chris Long who provided the trash bags.

Our friends at *Grateful Hearts Storehouse* who provided the waters and soft drinks.

Thank you to our friends at *LBVA Hospital*.

Long Beach Veterans Hospital for volunteering.

Thank you too all the team from *Surfing The Nations* for helping us.

Thank you, *Paul Buron*, for helping with the AV stuff.

Stevie Rivera of *Rivera Fitness* and his fitness friend, *Jimmy*.

Most of all *we love all of our volunteers*; you are true Patriots

We hope everyone enjoyed it! 🦋



Art Flores and son



Beach Clean-up Day was a Blast!

By Pastor Ainsley Harmon, Hope Chapel

Who says you'll never get people to work together to pick up trash? Ask the over 75 volunteers that came to Hope Chapel on July 10 for a Beach Clean-up Day. They will tell you that they did and it was a blast!

Coordinated by AVAG's Chaplain, Doreen Matsumoto, diverse ages from several different groups came together to clean up Huntington Beach. There were representatives from the American Veterans Assistance Group, Surfing the Nations (a humanitarian non-profit), Cottonwood Church, Hope Chapel, the Richard Bruenig Foundation, Veteran's Outreach, Unleash Your Purpose Ministry, and Women In Networking.

Everyone met together, paired up, took a trash bag and headed down to the beach. The duos came back to Hope Chapel to show off how full their bags were. Each person who participated was entered in a raffle and treated to a delicious barbeque hamburger and hotdog lunch perfectly prepared by Army veteran David Bruenig-master chef. The happy sounds of music, munching and cheerful chatter could be heard all over the grounds.

In the end it didn't matter who won prizes or who gathered the most garbage. What mattered was that Huntington Beach was a more beautiful place because people were willing to join forces to accomplish a goal. Would they do it again? A resounding YES! 🦋



Pastor Harmon of Hope Chapel inspires the volunteers to action.



Two happy winners of Subway gift cards, one of the event's raffle prizes donated by the Richard Breunig Foundation.



David Breunig, barbecuing up hotdogs and hamburgers.



Local fitness pro Stevie Rivera from Team Rivera Fitness brought his clients out to serve (exercising their soul).

Veterans Participate in Serve Day Beach Cleanup



Megan Reyes

My children and I were given the opportunity to participate in the Huntington Beach cleanup done by Hope Chapel, Richard Breunig Foundation and AVAG. With all of us teaming up together, to make our beach pleasant, to go with our family and friends was an experience I would want to have over and over. As a team, we picked up trash, plastic and other debris, that birds, fish and mammals often mistake for food, which can lead to fatal consequences. Being a part of saving the wildlife and our ecosystem is amazing.

We all met up at Hope Chapel in Huntington Beach and received trash bags, gloves etc. and broke off into groups. We all walked to the beach, and worked our way into the surrounding areas, including the shoreline, the parking lots and the bike paths. Finding everything from pizza boxes to plastic bottles, and lids to cigarette butts to candy wrappers. We all worked hard to try to pick up everything we could that didn't belong. Over seven large trash bags were filled.

They even had a fun contest — whoever filled their bag the most wins a prize. All the children were having so much fun to get all the trash picked up. It was fantastic seeing people my kids and I never met before appreciating the clean up being done. It also taught my kids that throwing trash away is very important at beaches and anywhere. "It is keeping our planet safe," as my kids say. It's what Jesus wants us to do, to be a community working together and respect what God created. This was an incredibly special day for all of us and we are eager and excited for the next beach cleanup. We know that working together with the community and our wonderful neighbors, we can all help work to protect and save one of our most precious, natural resources — our oceans, and all of the wildlife that depend on its clean, safe existence every single day. 🦋

Michael Goens

A letter of appreciation and personal closure from AVAG Veteran Michael Goens. Michael and his son participated in a beach clean-up serve day in Huntington Beach and shared the following experience:

I have to admit that my original reason for volunteering for this event was a bit selfish, the idea of giving two hours of my time to pick up trash on the beach in exchange for a free lunch and an afternoon at the beach was a no-brainer! After my son Robert and I arrived at Hope Chapel I realized that we were participating in something incredible, and as the day went on it was also personally bittersweet (more on that in the postscript). I was truly amazed at the turnout for this event, not only AVAG but a number of other organizations volunteered to help out! Our time out on the beach was so much fun and having so many people come up to me and thank me for my service was mind boggling! I truly hope we have another chance to do it again this summer!

P.S. I mentioned to you and Amanda that the last time I was at the beach in Huntington was July 4th 1987, that was also one of the worst days of my life! My first wife and I had been going through major marital problems for about two years and we had separated pending a divorce earlier that year. I had gotten romantically involved with a wonderful lady who I had been friends with for a few years. She was an RN at C.H.O.C. After getting off work the evening of July 3 she was broadsided by a drunk driver. She passed away around 4am on July 4th. My ex and I had already made plans for a day at the beach for the kids so you can see why the day last Saturday was a bit rough on me emotionally! As it turned out I finally got some closure on that! 🦋



AVAG Community Members Play a Key Role in an Award Winning Film

Long Beach Family Shows Nation How to be Caregivers in New Documentary

By Amy Orr, Press Telegram contributing writer
(Press Telegram, May 28, 2021, https://www.prestelegram.com/2021/05/28/long-beach-family-shows-nation-how-to-be-caregivers-in-new-documentary/?utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_source=newsletter-daily&utm_medium=email)

Note: This story first appeared in the Grunion Gazette. Rocio and Brian Alvarado are active members of the AVAG community, attending events and lending a hand in any way they can.

A Long Beach family plays a key role in a recently released, award-winning documentary that shows the everyday lives of spouses, children and grandchildren as they support and care for loved ones with disabilities.

The family of Brian Alvarado, a retired sergeant in the U.S. Marines who has skin cancer, is one of five featured in the documentary, titled “Sky Blossom: Diaries of the Next Greatest Generation,” produced and directed by MSNBC news anchor Richard Lui.

Alvarado’s wife and teenaged daughter, Rocio and Rhianna Alvarado, care for the veteran, which has taken a considerable toll. He now uses a feeding tube to eat and often communicates via text message.

“What made us decide to select the Alvarado family was this sort of supreme care for each other,” Lui said. “We called the Alvarado family ‘The Love Story’ because of Rocio and Brian living through some of the most difficult times any family can go through and yet still laughing.”

Lui became a caregiver himself eight years ago when his father was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. The experience, he said, inspired him to join public discussions about caregiving and caregivers.

He then decided to direct and produce a film — with support from the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and the Asian American Journalists Association — to spark further conversation on the topic. Lui assembled an all-female team and interviewed potential families across the country. Ultimately, the team chose five, each with a different background — but a common purpose.

The film took three years to make and came out on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, last year. It is available on DVD and digitally on the film’s website: skyblossom.com.



Rocio Alvarado cares for her husband Brian. (Courtesy Sky Blossom Films)

The documentary’s title refers to heroes who would parachute in and rescue soldiers in the field. Troops awaiting rescue, Lui said, would look up and say, “Here come the sky blossoms.” The news anchor said he sees young caregivers as modern sky blossoms and calls them the “Next Greatest Generation.”

Brian Alvarado and his family happen to reflect both the military inspiration for the first part of the title and the strength implied by the end.

The Marine served in Fallujah, Iraq, working near burn pits and breathing in fumes daily. Diesel fuel was used in the fires, but protective masks were not worn, Alvarado said.

The sergeant returned to Long Beach in 2006 and a year later, he and Rocio Alvarado celebrated the birth of their daughter, Rhianna. That same year, though, he was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma, the second-most common type of skin cancer, in his neck and throat.

“He started having issues with the tonsils, Rocio Alvarado said. “He started seeing pieces of tissue from the mouth that were falling.

“It’s not a type of cancer,” she added, “that a guy his age would have.”

The average age for those who get diagnosed with skin cancer, in fact, is 65, according to the American Cancer Society. And while the kind Brian Alvarado has is not usually life-threatening, it can be aggressive, according to the Mayo Clinic, a nonprofit healthcare organization.

Brian Alvarado developed fits of intense coughing as his body reacted to chemotherapy and radiation treatments. His daughter, even in her earliest days, would look at him and worry, Rocio Alvarado said.

“It’s all she knows,” Rocio Alvarado said, “but it’s not something that’s normal.”

Brian Alvarado’s challenges increased over time. He lost the ability to eat solids. He now receives food through a feeding tube in his stomach and breathes through a tracheostomy tube in his throat.

Speaking has become difficult, so he often communicates through text messages.

His daughter, now 14, has spent her life helping her father, in large and small ways. When people stare at him in public, for example, Rhianna Alvarado protects him and tells gawkers to look away.

Daughter Requests QOV for 100-year-old Dad

We received a request from George and Pat Roth from Creek Orange for a Quilt of Honor for Pat's dad. George is a veteran who participates in our AVAG events, and Pat's dad, George L. Hipson, an Army Air Force veteran, was turning 100 years old.

The photos at right were taken at the presentation, which was held on his 100th birthday.

He was very happy and moved at receiving this beautiful quilt and appreciated the time, effort and TLC that went into the making of it. "He uses it all the time. Thank you again for this beautiful quilt and helping to make his 100th birthday so special."

About George L. Hipson

By Pat Roth

George L. Hipson was born in Canada in 1921, came to the USA in 1923 and grew up in Boston, MA. Growing up his brother taught him to fly and he developed a fascination for airplanes, flying, and the mechanics of the planes he flew. He received his pilots license and enjoyed flying for many years, as well as working on the planes. He joined the faculty at New England Aircraft School and taught students to become licensed aircraft mechanics.

When the war came along he decided to join the Army Air Corps., it was at this time that he found he was not a citizen. Like a lot of babies and small children at the time, when his family entered the United States he came in on his mother's passport. He was not the only enlistee in that situation, and he and his fellow soldiers who were not citizens were taken as a group and sworn in as citizens.

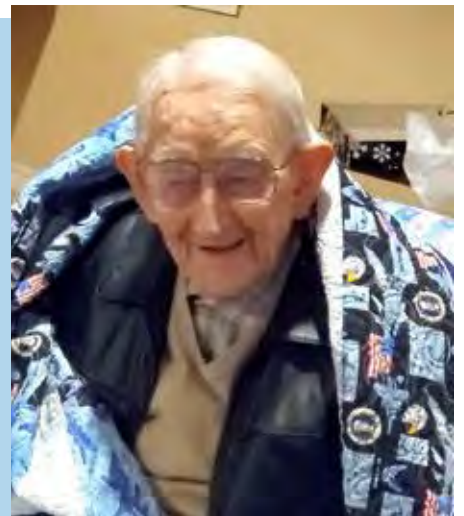
George wanted to be a military glider pilot. The gliders carried not only troops but also heavy equipment to the combat zones. Instead, he was assigned to be a flight engineer on B29's. Stationed on Tinian Island in the Pacific, he flew bombing raids over Tokyo.

During this time, several specially equipped aircraft came in that were kept away from the other planes, in a high security area. It turned out one of these planes was the Enola Gay. George and several of his friends were able to sneak into the bomb bay of one of the planes and check it out. The Enola Gay flew with his squadrons tail markings to fool the enemy as to its real mission in bombing Hiroshima.

On one of his missions his plane took heavy fire and was badly damaged, some of the crew badly injured. Due to bad weather, damage to the aircraft that caused a loss of fuel, and having to fly over Iwo Jima for so long to try to land, they had to ditch the plane in the water as they were going to run out of fuel and so they had to bail out! He and the entire crew, injured included, bailed out over Iwo Jima. He was not injured, however, there was ground fighting being waged on the island and he found himself under fire from Japanese soldiers.

Planes, helicopters their mechanical operation, and flying remained passions with George throughout his life. As a Maintainability Engineer, he worked for several aircraft companies including Sikorsky Aircraft, Los Angeles Airways, Lockheed Aircraft, from which he retired in the 1980s. He was lucky enough to travel the world for these companies.

George Hipson is my father! He and my mother were married for 72 years when she died. He has three children, ten grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren. He celebrated his 100th birthday this year. He is doing well, regularly walking the grounds at his senior apartment complex with his lady friend. He still has his own apartment in the assisted living complex and takes care of himself with a little help. He has made us very proud and grateful to have him in our lives. ♡



And she's not alone — 24.5 million children care for family members with disabilities, according to "Sky Blossom" promotional materials.

Rocio Alvarado said she and her husband were reluctant to share their private lives at first. But they chose to join Lui and raise awareness of America's young hidden heroes, she said. People often forget how deeply children are involved and affected by these situations, the mother added.

"When you're around somebody who's ill," Rocio Alvarado said, "you're taking that with you emotionally and psychologically. I think this is a really good film, to learn from it and talk to your kids more."

Critics appear to agree.

"Sky Blossom" received the Christopher Award last month for "affirming the highest value of the human spirit." The Christopher Awards is a Christian organization.

Then, last week, it received the San Diego GI Film Festival's Founders Award.

And the documentary has already qualified for consideration in the 2021 Academy Awards. ♡

Recliners Delivered to Joint Armed Forces Training Base Active Duty Soldiers and Airmen



Above, standing in the back row, left to right, Amanda Breunig, SSG Grossman, TSgt Uribe, Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto, Major Gilbert Sanchez, SSgt Chloe Schulman. Seated in the front row, left to right, MSgt Lisa Blass, SSG Jeremy Tilt, and SFC Castaneda.



At left, Sgt Lisa Blass signals her approval while relaxing in a recliner they are about to deliver. Right, SSG Grossman enjoying the comfortable recliner he had just received .



We met Sgt Lisa Blass, from Operations/Training NCOIC Sunburst Youth Academy (sunburstadmissions.com), at our monthly Regional Military Affairs meeting at the Join Forces Training Base (JFTB) in Los Alamitos, CA. We wanted to support our active duty military and this group of soldiers lead the Sunburst academy.

Sunburst Youth Academy is a volunteer quasi military-style High School that partners with the Orange County Department of Education to help 16-18 year old at-risk high school students. While they are here they get 65 high school credits in 5 ½ months. The program is a yearlong program with 5 ½ months residential and 6 ½ months post-residential. During the post-residential time, the students go back to either high school, jobs, college, or military. They come with a mentor who volunteers to help them when they leave this program.

Lisa Blass said, “Working with the AVAG team was great. You all are awesome and everyone is so appreciative of those LZ-BOY chairs and what you do for us.”

In the Summer 2021 AVAG News, you met SSgt Chloe Schulman (Romero), who received a recliner earlier this year. Last July, AVAG delivered recliners to SSG Edward Chang, SSG Eric Grossman, SSG Jeremy Tilt, SGT Michael McCool, SFC Cesar Castaneda, MSG Tim Edward, TSgt Joshua Uribe and SGT Justin Caldwell. 🦋

SSG Edward Chang

"I joined Active Duty Air Force in 1989 and served at McClellan AFB, Sacramento, CA from 1989 to 1994 then Nellis AFB, Nevada until 1997 as a Bioenvironmental Engineer. Had a break in service until June of 2000 when I joined the Army National Guard at Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, CA as a Chemical Specialist. In 2004 transferred to the 146 Airlift Wing, 115 Airlift Squadron Air National Guard, first as Aircrew Life Support, then moved to Personnel, from there I deployed to Afghanistan and Germany twice, and retired in 2013 at 20 years. Joined Youth Programs in Aug 2003 as a cadre and Operations and Administer NCO at Grizzly Youth Academy in San Luis Obispo. Transferred in 2007 to help start Sunburst Youth Academy as the Operations/Admin NCO. I also joined the California State Guard in 2013."

**SFC Cesar Castaneda**

Castaneda lives in Moreno Valley. SFC Cesar Castaneda has served for 26 years.

"The military has been good to me, and I appreciate the fact that I have been able to serve in some capacity for as long as I have."

**MSG Tim Edward**

Edward lives in Temecula and has served for 34 years

"I have served since the age of 18, and honestly feel the military is what I was meant to do. I continue to serve to pass on the blessings that I myself received as a soldier in the United States Military."

**TSgt Joshua Uribe**

TSgt Joshua Uribe is an 8 year Air Force Veteran as a Security Forces Raven member, 4 years Active Duty and Air National Guard. I'm privileged to have worked for great mentors and alongside some of the hardest working people I've ever met. Being deployed multiple times to different countries and I tried to make an impact and leave each unit better than it was when I got there. With support of my leadership, I was able to do that and am grateful for the experience each mission and airman provided me. After 8 years of service I decided to continue by joining the California State Guard and serving at the Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy. My wife and I are enjoying our new recliner and thrilled to have it in time for our baby due in 2022! Thank you Chaplain Doreen and team for your generous gift.

**SGT Justin Caldwell**

"I enlisted at 17 while in high school, went to Basic in Fort Sill, OK, and then trained to become a combat medic at Fort Sam Houston. After I completed that program, I went back to NJ to the 3/112 Field Artillery. I eventually had a chance to move to CA, so I transferred units to join the 40th Military Police Company. Still a medic, I cross-trained with the military police on the Hazardous Emergency Response Force. I learned about Sunburst Youth Academy. I've been working here as a medic since May 2015. I served my 8 ½ years in the National Guard, then transferred to the California State Military Reserve."

SGT Michael B. McCool

SGT Michael McCool has served for 16 years. He is from Cypress, CA. He joined the California National Guard 26 August 2001.

"I followed in my father's footsteps who was also in the United States Army during Vietnam. He joined right after high school, as did I. I wanted to serve and protect my country and the State of California. I was deployed to Iraq in 2004, and in 2009 I was deployed to Afghanistan. I love what I did and still do for the military and the State of California."

Veterans Helping Veterans

A Veteran Receives a Donated Car

Huntington Beach Police Department

We love a chance to celebrate our community success stories! Maggie, a Marine Corps Veteran who served in the Gulf War, was the happy recipient of a vehicle donated by **The Deserted — Military MC** and **ExperTec Automotive**.

Maggie, a single mom who works hard at the VA Hospital to support herself and her daughter, was finding it challenging to get to and from work in Long Beach without a vehicle. When ExperTec contacted our Homeless Task Force looking for a veteran in need of a donated vehicle, we called **Hope Chapel Huntington Beach** lead Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto, who knew Maggie was the perfect person.

This is an example of the importance of community partnerships. Collaborations like this make successes like this possible.

Meet Marine Corps Veteran Maggie Najera

I joined the Marine Corps at age 19 and went to boot camp in Parris Island in 1989. I went to Admin school in Del Mar, Camp Pendleton, and was stationed in Camp Pendleton with 1st FFSG during my tour there. I was sent to Saudi Arabia, then received orders to Okinawa, Japan.

One of many things that I have really admired, appreciated, and have been so thankful for about the Marine Corps is no matter where you are there will always be another Marine to help. I never felt alone. The Marine Corps motto is “Semper Paratus” which means always faithful.

Self employed for many years, but due to divorce things started to look very hard for me. Becoming a single mother again with four children, I had to let go of my business. I went to the Long Beach VA to enroll, and then became a volunteer there. After that, I became a Federal employee with the Environmental Management Services (EMS) as a housekeeper. As a housekeeper, things didn't get any better, this being one of the positions that gets paid the least. Due to this, I almost became homeless, now with three children at home.



I had no money, no car — but one thing I've always had was, and is, hope. I loved helping and giving back because there's always someone less fortunate than me. That is what kept me going, and I always knew my time would come, when it was the right time.

I have been in a few committees at the VA, and I love what they represent. Employee Appreciation, Veteran Appreciation, and in December, I graduated from the Emerging Leaders program. I am still with EMS, but I work as Program Support Assistant. I truly enjoy what I do, because I get to help my fellow veteran employees with their pay among other things.

In May, Cory Vigil posted an invitation on Facebook to all single moms for a free Mother's Day brunch in Newport Beach. He sent me a message via Messenger, and I gladly accepted, taking my three children with me. The service and the place were amazing. The best part was Cory, and how he made sure everyone was taken care of, and he asked how it was and how it could get better. I gave him my input and asked him if there were any volunteering opportunities. Cory said at that time there was nothing, but he would keep me posted on any changes.

Two weeks passed, and I hadn't heard anything from him. I decided to reach out to him. Cory mentioned he had the perfect person for me and gave me Doreen's information. I contacted her. Doreen and I spoke, and immediately I felt a connection. On Memorial Day, I signed up to volunteer at





Cottonwood Church in Los Alamitos. I felt like it was the perfect place for me, what I had been missing, and, yes, Doreen was the perfect person. I had been going through so much depression due to COVID and work-related issues, among other things. I noticed that my depression decreased a little, but with that alone I feel so thankful and blessed.

I had been praying for a promotion. Living payday to payday, with now three children still at home, I needed a better paying job to make ends meet. But God had something better for me. He put Cory and Doreen in my path, and I have been so blessed with their friendship. I participate in a Bible study for the first time ever, and I have been blessed with so much furniture from Lori, and a Ford Expedition — now I can actually ride with my children and not be tight or uncomfortable.

I didn't expect this at all, and I don't know what I have done to deserve such an amazing gift. When Doreen had mentioned the car,

I had told my fellow coworker, also a Marine with small children, to go for it. I didn't think about myself or my situation. I thought it would be perfect for him since his car had been acting up. As we Marines do, we watch each others backs and help each other. He thought of me and felt I needed it more than him.

I have volunteered with Hope Chapel cleaning up the beach. I made a promise once to a Marine to pass it on, and I have kept my promise. I highly encourage anyone to volunteer. Sometimes we think that we are helping someone, and it turns out they are helping us.

Thank you, Doreen, Cory, Amanda, Hope Chapel, Huntington Beach Police Department, Veterans Homeless Task Force, the Deserted Military MC, Expert Tec Automotive, and everyone that came together to give me the vehicle. I am forever grateful, and I will never forget great people do exist. 🙏



A Furniture Donation Helps a Veteran Housing an Extended Family

We received a phone call from Veteran Segretti that he had some items he wanted to donate to a veteran these items were a Samsung flat screen TV, along with wall mount hardware, and a loveseat and chairs.

We were able to connect Marine Corps Veteran Ben Tedios and Liza Segretti together to pick up these the four items to help his family.

We want to say a very special thank you to Veteran Cory Vigil who introduced us to the Segretti's.

Benedict Tedios , U.S. Marine Corps

Ben served in the United States Marine Corps from Feb 2005 – March 2013. He was born and raised in Waipahu, HI. He joined the military to change his life because he wasn't moving into the right direction. "If it wasn't for the Marines," he says "I wouldn't be where I am now and who I am today."

He and his wife, Sharlene have four beautiful children, Shayrie, Shaylynn, Shaylee and Shaylexx. Ben is currently working for the VA in the payroll department. He wanted to work for the VA because he wanted to continue his federal time and to help his veteran brothers and sisters and also anyone else that needed assistance.

Ben's career in the Military was as a Personnel Administrator/Administrative Specialist. He was stationed in MCAS in Yuma, AZ for four years and then transferred to I&I Indianapolis, IN. Ben's highest rank held in the military was Sergeant E-5.

Throughout the whole time while serving in the military Ben welcomed multiple people in his home to shelter and feed them. Currently he is housing his brother-in-law and his three kids along with his family to try and help him get back on his feet. They all live in a 3-bedroom home in Cypress, CA and are trying to buy a home that can fit all of them. Ben says "It is something that I have been very passionate about, helping others and not asking for anything in return. Seeing people happy is good enough for me."

AVAG was able to hook up Ben with some furniture. Ben was such an angel! Just the sweetest guy imaginable. He had to make two trips to pick up the furniture and television. Couldn't believe he came back so quickly for the chairs. Truly an incredible story of seven children from two families living together in a three-bedroom townhouse. Can't you just see all the children lined up in the chairs and couch, watching TV?

Donald Segretti and Liza Segretti

Donald was drafted into the Army in 1967. While in basic training at Ft. Ord he applied for a commission in JAG, as he had graduated law school and passed the bar in 1966.

As an Army JAG captain, he spent a year teaching military law at the JAG school on the campus of University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

The following year he was in Vietnam in Long Bien and Chu Lai. During his sole tour in Vietnam, he was aide to the Judge Advocate General. Later he spent two years at Ft. Ord.

Donald was awarded a Bronze Star during his service in the Army. ✈



Army veteran Donald Segretti



Liza Segretti and Ben Tedios

Phil Simpson Donates Electric Wheelchair

An electric wheelchair was delivered to disabled veteran Wayne and his wife Carol. What a beautiful opportunity to help others. One of our veterans, Phil Simpson from Diamond Bar Estates, had an electric wheelchair and wanted to donate it to a veteran. We received a call from Laurie Kristin who came to one of our Veteran's Recognition nights at Cottonwood Church. She asked if we knew anyone who could help Wayne and Carol with some of their needs.

On the day of delivery, as Wayne rested inside his house, little did he know that we were delivering the electric wheelchair.

Special thanks to David Breunig and Amanda Breunig. Without David's trailer we wouldn't have been able to deliver this amazing gift. There are so many ways that you can get involved and help. 🦋



Richard Breunig and Phil Simpson



Wayne's wife Carol, at left, and Richard Breunig, at right.



A Veteran Receives a Much Needed Mobility Scooter

On August 3, we delivered an electric mobility scooter to retired Marine Corp Veteran David Holland. Thank you Tom Barry for supplying this amazing gift for our AVAG veteran.

Thank you to Rocio and Brian Alvarado for introducing us to Tom — he is a blessing.

Tom Barry

Tom is from Huntington Beach, CA, and is an ex-police officer of Orange County. He also was a general contractor for several years helping seniors with modifications on their homes. He has a big heart for helping those in need.

Tom has been with AR Mobility for 15 years and just recently retired. He's stuck around to help the owner, Julie, and deals with the donated electric chairs and other mobility assist chairs that come in, making sure they go to those in need. They work with several Veteran organizations including Patriot Guard. Through Patriot Guard, he heard about the American Veterans Assistance Group and got in contact with Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto. We were able to find David Holland, a veteran in need of an electric mobility scooter.

David Holland

David joined the Navy when he was 18. He joined before telling his mom because she had told him, "get a job or go to school." He'd gone to school, but wasn't doing very well, and had always wanted to be in the Navy since he was a little boy. He used to watch *Victory at Sea* about the WWII activities and was motivated to be apart of something bigger.

He was in the Navy for 36 years, from 1958-1994. There's almost nowhere he hasn't been. He spent a lot of time working and helping the Marines with anything they needed from him.

He did a lot of undercover work that was classified top-secret, but he was an enlisted person and a commissioned officer. He was involved in meteorology, or an Aerographer's Mate (weatherman).

"I was observing weather and there's about 10-12 different categories, like wind — if there's clouds or if it's sunny — and we track those things. Weather is predictable and unpredictable. It will do what it wants. When I was doing weather, I was also involved with the National Security Agency and did weather intelligence, and spent 2 years in the Philippines doing that. A long time ago I had top secret clearance, so that's why I can't talk about some of that. But we were studying the weather patterns regarding the Vietnam war, and we would follow the codes, because the coding is standard around the world. By breaking those codes, we could apply it to their regular coding, so you discover what's observable. And, then you learn what they're doing — that is their secret."

In 1976, David asked to return to active duty and became a Chaplain.

"I was in Desert Storm, in the desert of Saudi Arabia, right on the front lines next to Kuwait. One night a Marine from a reserve came to my tent and said, 'Chaplain!' I said 'Come on in.' 'I want to know the Lord like my brother,' he said. I said, 'Well you came to the right place.' And, we talked about the way of salvation, and he prayed to receive the Lord Jesus that night. That was at about 10 o'clock at night, and he went back to his tent a brand new Christian, knowing nothing. He started to tell those other Marines what had happened to him, and about 8-10 Marines that night learned about the Lord Jesus from this brand new Christian, only knowing that He's in their life and none of them got much sleep that night."

"The best part about being in the service was being with people."

David Holland is truly a lifer. "I never thought I'd have anything to do with the Air Force until 2-3 years ago when I volunteered to be in the Civil Air patrol, and so I'm a chaplain with Cadets out in Los Alamitos. I'm not gonna stop until I die and don't think I'm gonna die anytime soon. I'm using Psalm 91 — part of it says 'with long life I will give you,' so I'm keeping the Lord at his word for a long life." 🦋



James Boudreaux

James Boudreaux grew up in Eiffel Ville, Louisiana, in the bayou. "If I wanted to go out fishing, all I had to do was walk half a block to catch some fish." He enlisted in the Navy in 1962, and hadn't even graduated high school yet. "After bootcamp they sent me to Lemoore, California, and assigned me to Attack Squadron 195. We went on to a ship that was an aircraft carrier where they trained me to be an aviation loader to load bombs on to the A4D Skyhawk airplane."

After his separation from the Navy in 1964, he returned to Louisiana where he joined the Naval Reserves. But after a while, he looked around and thought "there isn't anything here and a lot of mess going on." So in 1968 decided to join the Marine Corps. The day he left he told his auntie he was going into town. His auntie told him "Make sure to come home and don't be late for supper!" James ended up going to Baton Rouge, then on to New Orleans to the Marine recruiter. He finally called his auntie, and when she asked where he was he said, "I'm in Houston, Texas. I joined the Marine Corps." She asked "What am I going to do with the food?" James replied "Give it to the dog!"

"When I enlisted in the Marines, I noticed that we were all country boys, never having been anywhere, but we were all red blooded Americas, all from the south. All these guys volunteered to go in, no one had to force them. That makes a good family. No one made them come to protect their country. So I served with those kinds of guys."

"We were getting trained by older Marines that were in Korea and WWII, you know, real tough guys. Our instructors had all the stripes, and yet were still real guys. In the Marines, I did not experience politics or racial issues."

"After Marine bootcamp, I went back to Louisiana for three days, to see my auntie and my grandparents, to give them a kiss and a hug. I went to Camp Pendleton in California. I got to see my mother because she lived in California."

"I was then attached to the 5th Marines that were going to Vietnam. Before we got there, they transferred me to the 9th Marines. I was in Vietnam for about 11 months and during my tour I got shot during an ambush. We were on patrol and I think one of the guys stepped on a booby trap, or a bomb, or something, and it knocked everyone down. I was wounded, my eye got blown out, and my knee cap was injured, no big deal. They got us back by helicopter."

"After being wounded in Vietnam, they sent me back to Camp Pendleton where they got me well. I stayed in the hospital for about eight months when they released me. My company went back to Vietnam again for a second tour, and even after being wounded, I went back. I guess you can call that gun-ho."

"Technically I feel I was on three tours to Vietnam because in 1964 the ship I was on went to the Gulf of Tonkin, Vietnam, to rescue the USS Maddox. The USS Maddox got hung-up in a mess there and the Naval group I was with went there to help with the rescue. So, I got three tours in combat units."

Veterans Help Veterans Repair Their Homes



"My dad, Nolan Boudreaux, served in four branches of the military, the Navy, Army, Coast Guard and Marines. We made a deal, I said I was going to break his record, I was already in the Navy and the Marines. If I was able to stay in the Marines for six years, after that I would have gone into the Army. But since I got wounded, they put me under non-combat."

My dad had three brothers and they all served. Everyone on my mother's side also served in the military. So, we all tried to break each other's record. They call me a two hitter since I have been in two different military branches, so my dad would be a four hitter."

When James was asked how he felt now that AVAG has helped repair his home, he responded, "I love them! You'd be surprised how much they really help people. You see, before y'all took over, someone else was doing it. But they ran out of money and left me hanging. It's crazy because everything ten years ago was so much cheaper and now you can't do nothing with \$2500. I appreciate everything people do for me, because I'm living by myself and I don't like to bother anybody." 🐦



James Hartsell's home before, at left, and after, at right, the AVAG crew completed repairs.

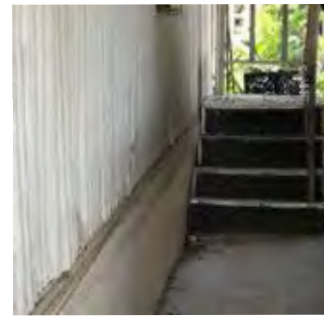
James Hartsell

James was in the Army from 1983-1989. He was on a delayed entry and joined the Alaskan Army National Guard, and was sent to Grenada. Soon after, they found out he was only 17. They got in trouble, but at that point it was already too late. He served in the first Gulf War and had gotten out before any conflict started.

James was stationed in Ft. Irwin, in the middle of the desert, where he had to help load and unload the train that held their tanks and trucks. He was sent to Ft. Irwin seven times because he already knew how to hook up everything. He said it was a hard and tedious job. "February, you better have brought your parka, and any other warm clothing, because it would snow a lot out there. It would be freezing. When it hit August, the low would be 80, and that was in the middle of the night. And in October, you never knew what kind of day you would get — one day it may be really hot, and overnight clouds roll in, and the next day it'll be pouring."

His dad, Lyle, was a Captain for the Alaskan Guard. James' brother, Phillip, is still in the military and has served about 16 years in the Marines and 14 years in the Air Force. He lives in Colorado.

AVAG has been able to help do multiple repairs on his home including new paint, new skirting, and fixing the porch.



"I was very surprised at how much work they were able to cover without me paying, and working with AVAG has been nice. This will help me tremendously, especially because the

manager is always giving me notices for my house. But its really expensive, so this has helped a lot." 🙏



Mr. Green's home before, at left, and after, at right, the AVAG crew completed repairs.



Mr. Green: Pacific Palms

Mr. Green joined the Army during the Gulf War, just before he turned 30 years old. He was stationed in Fort Knox, Kentucky, where he did his basic training. The highest rank he received was Private. After a year, he received a medical discharge because of injuries to his leg during training.

"Since I've been out of the service, it's been difficult, because I wasn't ready to get out. I had a lot of friends when I went in and people that helped me. Now, I keep more to myself. I'm bit of a loner. Getting back to civilian life was a challenge. I find myself more distant. I really miss the people I met and my fellow soldiers. I miss that unity of being a part of something that was greater than myself. Joining the military was the greatest thing I could have done for myself and I wish I could have stayed longer but I had no choice, since I got hurt."

"I'm really happy with what this program (AVAG) is doing for me. Being on a fixed income is very difficult, having to try to save enough to do the repairs needed is almost impossible. It's really stressful having to deal with every emergency or repair that comes up. It takes a while to save the money for the repairs. The AVAG assistance is like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I've been meaning to do all these projects, but never had enough money to get it started. I had to get surgery on my leg so the repairs, kept getting pushed back. I've been living here for the last eight years and never heard of the program until recently when the Manager, Jennifer, told me about it. They're going to fix a leak, install new skirting and new paint for my home. It's definitely less stress to deal with now." 🙏

At left, AVAG volunteers work to repair leaks and to install new skirting onto Mr. Green's home, which was also repainted.

A VETERANS LAST WISH



Donald Lee Humphrey II • 02/15/1950–10/11/2020

Don was a fun-loving guy and a great conversationalist. He was the kind of guy that never met a stranger. He was a Marine brat. He always had wonderful stories about his life growing up “in” the Marine Corps with his six siblings. It was a natural progression that when he became of age, he joined.

Don was a hero. He did two tours with the Marines in Vietnam. He was a warrior in the Marine Corps, his job was a machine gunner in Vietnam.

When Don returned home, he was tormented with the ravages of PTSD. Don was one of the first cases with the official diagnosis of PTSD. He suffered with the symptoms of PTSD for the rest of his adult life.

Don married Julie on July 8th, 1978. Don and Julie had one child, Donnie, who was the love of both of them.

Don was always an avid hockey fan. He played club hockey at Miami of Ohio University for a short time. This love of the game helped him to become a Los Angeles Kings fan.

In all the years that he watched the Kings on television, he probably had not missed more than 10 games in nearly 50 years. He really loved his black and white cats, all named after Kings players.

Over the years, Don suffered with many health problems, living the last few years in a wheel chair. He was always a warrior, a warrior on the battlefield and a warrior for God.

Don received most of his medical care at the Veterans Hospital in La Jolla, CA. He

was well known and felt at home there. He received very good care at the VA.

He had a very close bond with the Lord, and spoke to him every day.

Don did have one last wish ...

For the last five years of his life, he was trying to find a church for his wife and mother-in-law to get baptized. It never seemed like the date would line up for them to be baptized. In the last year of his life, he was calling the churches and asking them to come to their house and baptize them. But no luck!

However, his sister-in-law, Tana, and Army veteran brother-in-law, Steve, would meet AVAG's chaplain at a veterans luncheon at Palm Vista in Hemet, where they became friends.

Tana would reach out to Doreen for prayer and then she reached out to her regarding her daughter, Talia, who suddenly passed away. She asked Doreen to do her funeral.

Little did Chaplain Doreen know that there would be family and friends that would hear the message of salvation.

In June 2021, Tana reached out to Doreen and asked if she would come out and baptize a veteran's family at their home. Of course, she said yes! What a blessing it was to baptize Julie and her mother Irene and their friend Sarah.

With the help of Mellissa and David Breunig, all three of these women were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

This combat veteran finally got his wish. 🦋

More about Donald Lee Humphrey II:

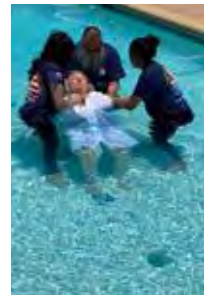
A long-time hockey fan, Don knew that his son would grow up to play, and he did. The whole family moved to Ohio, then New York, for Donnie to play in Canada. These were some of Don's most cherished times; a Dad that could not have be prouder of a young man.

He loved the other warrior in the family, John. They shared a battlefield respect for each other. The two of them always enjoyed good conversation on lots of different topics.

He had a couple of close friends in Rick and Glenn (Moon), that he loved like brothers. Don has now joined his parents, Don and Pauline, as well as his younger sister Mary, in heaven.

Don is survived by his wife, Julie, mother-in-law Irene, son Donnie and wife Jill, his brothers Michael, Sean, and Joseph, and his sisters Elizabeth and Cathy. He also has a lot of nieces and nephews that he leaves behind.

Don received most of his medical care at the Veterans Hospital in La Jolla, CA. He was well known and felt at home there. He received very good care at the VA. Don will really be missed by all who knew him.



Julie Humphrey

From Chaplain Doreen:

It was an amazing experience to baptize these women! Tana Larter had reached out to me about a year and a half ago when her daughter died to ask me to come out to Hemet to do the funeral. Julie Humphry, who is Tana's sister, Irene Wilkenson, Tana's mother, and Sarah Jackson, a family friend, were all in attendance at the funeral. Each one of them had a tug on their heart to come to the Lord. In June, Tana reached out again to ask if I would come out and baptize them at their home.

Mellissa, David and Amanda Breunig, who are in training to serve as associate chaplains, came out with me and did an excellent job.

God moves in mysterious ways connecting each person to move in His purpose. All we have to do is answer the call. 🙏



Irene Wilkenson



Tana Larter, Doreen, and Julie Humphrey



Sarah Jackson

In Memoriam David Lee Crawley

July 11, 1946 – May 11, 2021



David Lee Crawley was born in Danville, Illinois. His parents were Imogen (IMi) and Red (Gene) and was one of six siblings.

David had one son, Jason and two stepchildren, Scott and Brenda. His grandkids are Dustin, Brianna and Rihanna and his great grandchildren are Marley, May and Ryder.

He served in the Navy from September 12, 1966 to September 11, 1968 during the Vietnam conflict. While in the Navy he was a barber. He would smuggle cigarettes to the guys he liked to have a good time with.

He met Pam through his sister Rita. On their first date they went out for drinks. David skipped out on work that night and they danced the night away. He was an amazing dancer and that's what swooped Pam off her feet.

He married Pam on July 16, 1988. Patti and Kevin stood up for them as they were married outside the clubhouse at Creek Orange.

Dustin was just six months old and in his walker, but he danced with Pam and David at their wedding.

David loved to play golf. He even hit a hole-in-one when playing with four guys from the base. He liked to play cards, like blackjack and poker. He also played pool in his community with the racquet club. He was an expert in college at playing darts. When David lived in Wisconsin, he became a huge Packer fan. He just loved the crazy fans. I remember the funny Packer slippers he would wear.

On game day, before Pam would leave the house, she would leave him a pile of white socks. When she got back home, they were all

over the floor in front of the TV. He would scream at the TV and throw the sox at the screen.

He didn't like manual labor but he did build a deck in the backyard with Brenda's Marine Corps friends.

His dad had a pool hall and he taught him how to play pool and cards. The kids would go downstairs in the basement and play cards. His sister, Rita and her son Larry would stop in California to visit him. Every time they came to visit they would tip the caregivers \$100.

David was baptized Catholic.

He loved his grandkids and taught them to garden and play poker. He even had crazy remedies when Dustin got a wart on his foot. He said let's go outside on a full moon and howl out loud then dancer round and rub dirt on it. He was always thinking of funny creative things to do with the kids.

I met David at our AVAG meetings. He always enjoyed talking with John Meyer and afterwards would play poker with the guys.

That man sure liked his pizza and soda.

He always wanted to lend a hand and help others, even when he was in the assisted-living, he'd want to help the nurses.

At the end of his life Pam watched him as he gazed straight ahead and smiled and gasped. Pam said "They're waiting for you, your mom, your dad, your sister Ruth Ann and your brother Pat, they were all waiting to play Euchre card game." 🐦