



AVAG News

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Vietnam veterans posed for a photo together in front of the Vietnam Veterans Day banner and in front of the Vietnam-era helicopter at the commemoration ceremony held at Hope Chapel in Huntington Beach on March 29, 2022.



Vietnam Veterans Day – Welcome Home!

AVAG's commitment is veterans helping veterans. We never want to forget these amazing men and women who served our country.

March 29, 2022 was National Vietnam War Veterans Day

We commemorate those who fought in the Vietnam War on National Vietnam War Veterans Day, March 29. There's no doubt that the Vietnam War was one of the most brutal. In fact, over three million people were killed during the 20 years it went on. It was known as the Second Indochina War to Americans, and considering its long fighting time and brutality, National Vietnam War Veterans Day was created to honor all the men and women who fought during its time.

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration—a national 50th anniversary commemoration, [authorized by Congress](#), established under the secretary of defense, and launched by [President Barack Obama](#) in [2012](#). Congress penned a total of [five objectives](#), with the primary being to thank and honor our Vietnam veterans and their families, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the Nation. Visit www.vietnamwar50th.com to read details.

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AVAG honors those who fought in the Vietnam War.

AVAG Celebrates Veteran's 100th Birthday

WWII and Korean War Army Veteran Leslie Neilson's 100th birthday

AVAG Community Activities

AVAG activities in La Verne, Orange, Moreno Valley, and Diamond Bar are presented, from free gas, to grocery shopping excursions, to birthday parties, and community meetings.

AVAG In Action

Veterans helping veterans, AVAG puts words into action. Read the stories of the veterans we serve.

In Memoriam

Our communities say goodbye to members lost in this new year.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

 @AmericanVeteransAssistanceGroup  @socal.avag

or learn more about us at AVAGUSA.com

Vietnam Veterans Day – Welcome Home continued

Thousands upon thousands of organizations—our Commemorative Partners—have joined us in the noble mission of honoring our 6.2 million Vietnam veterans, living at home and abroad, and the 9 million families of all who served. Publicly and individually, Vietnam veterans are being presented with a [Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin](#) ... a lasting memento of the Nation's thanks.

"The History and Legacy Branch of the U.S. Vietnam War Commemoration strives to provide historically accurate material and interactive experiences that will help the American public better understand and appreciate the service of our Vietnam veterans and the history of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War."

Barbecue Luncheon at Hope Chapel

To celebrate our Vietnam Veterans, we had an amazing barbecue luncheon with so many different side dishes like fried chicken and pizza and our friends at Bracken's Kitchen sent over chili beans, fruit and pasta salad. Army veterans David Breunig and Charlie Aroz cooked up hamburgers and hotdogs.

Desserts were provided by Lana Martinez who donated her delicious cupcakes.

Also, Residence Inn in Cypress made homemade cookies for everyone. Thank you to their wonderful representative Gina for joining our event.

In addition to the delicious food served, we also provided Resource Tables to provide our veterans with more information to help them have a productive life.

Thank you to our Chaplains at Hope Chapel Huntington Beach. Our team of 12 are committed to providing care for our communities.

Thank you to:

- The Richard Breunig Foundation, Melissa and David Breunig for donating raffle prizes.
- Hanya and Don Galitzen for donating raffle prizes.
- Jimmy Arita for donating raffle prize and pizza.
- Patrick Duffy for donating a raffle gift.
- Army Caroline Hernandez of *Veterans Stand Together* with her friend Shamid Chaudhry, an Army veteran.
- So Cal Quilts of Valor for presenting there beautiful quilts to our Vietnam veterans and other veterans that were attending our event.
- Victor from Caption Call who provided information about no cost phone for seniors and veterans.
- Jesus Christopher Villanueva, MSgt, USAF, Events & Current Operations for the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration.

Special thanks to the VVA Dennis Phelps (ARMY), Lenny Vanek (NAVY) and Robert Harrison (Marine Corps) for bringing out the Vietnam Veteran helicopter. They bring the helicopter out for awareness so people will know and see what a helicopter look like in Vietnam.

Special thanks to US House of Representatives Michelle Steel for certificates of recognition for our veterans saying "In honor of your commitment to service during the Vietnam War, we thank you for fighting for freedom and democracy in our world and we recognize your courage bravery and dedication to service of our country.

Also special thanks to California State Legislature Assemblywoman Janet Nguyen for certificates of recognition saying "In Honor of your unwavering display of bravery and courage while in the service of the United States of America. Thank you for your service. National Vietnam Veterans Day.

And last, but not least, a special thanks to all the amazing volunteers. 🦋



Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin (Front)

The Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin – "A Lasting Memento of the Nation's Thanks!"

The Commemoration is providing Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins to Commemorative Partners for dignified public presentations to U.S. military veterans, living at home or abroad, who served during the Vietnam War period as a lasting memento of the Nation's thanks.

Living U.S. veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time during the period of November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location, are eligible to receive one lapel pin.

At the March 29 event, all of the Vietnam veterans in attendance were able to receive commemorative pins along with their spouses and Vietnam veteran supporters.



Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin (Back)



Justin Chang from Representative Michelle Steel's office and George Boutros from Assemblywoman Janet Nguyen's office presented Certificates of Recognition from U.S. Congress and the California State Assembly to the veterans attending the Commemoration event.

Certificates of Recognition were also presented to Hope Chapel and AVAG (Bottom photo, from left to right, David Breunig, Sean Hersey, Kathleen Rowden, Mellissa Breunig, Doreen Matsumoto, George Boutros, and Amanda Breunig.

At left, Kathleen Rowden and her father Bob Schrader attended the event together.



Rep. Michelle Steel Commemorating Vietnam Veterans Day, April 6, 2022



As we reflect on the recent commemoration of Vietnam Veterans' Day, I am particularly grateful to the more than 560,000 Californians who served our nation in uniform during the Vietnam War.

Despite their service and sacrifice, Vietnam Veterans did not always receive the thanks of a grateful nation upon their homecoming. Instead, they were subjected to harsh criticism due to public frustrations with the war. Those who put their lives on the line in support of our allies and to defend our freedom deserve nothing less than our thanks and admiration.

We can and must strive to do better for our veterans. In February, I introduced the bipartisan *Hire Student Veterans Act*, which would provide a tax credit to businesses that hire part-time veterans who are using their VA-administered educational benefits and taking advantage of paid internships and other work opportunities while still in school. Our veterans deserve our support as they make the transi-

tion from active service to civilian life. The *Hire Student Veterans Act* will expand opportunities for student veterans and help them gain invaluable experience in the workforce, and I'm proud to support our country's heroes with this bipartisan bill. I also introduced the bipartisan *Driving Veterans Success Act*, legislation that would establish a Veterans Business Enterprise Program. This program would require the Department of Transportation to set a goal of ensuring that at least 10% of federal highway and transit contracts go to veteran-owned small businesses.

We can never thank give enough thanks to our Vietnam veterans, but we can and should recognize their service at every opportunity. I am a proud partner of the Vietnam War 50th Commemoration program, which was authorized by the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and established under the Department of Defense. One of the main objectives of this program is to give long overdue thanks and honor Vietnam Veterans for their selfless service to our nation. All Vietnam veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975, regardless of location are eligible to receive one lapel pin. It has been a personal highlight and a true privilege to hear the stories of more than fifty Orange County Vietnam veterans and award them these pins in honor of their service.

Additionally, my office is equipped to help veterans who need assistance navigating the VA or other federal agencies. One of the most frustrating and common concerns I hear from constituents is about individual struggles with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans shouldn't have to fight tooth-and-nail to receive the benefits that they've already earned, and I am honored to be able to provide assistance to our heroes navigating government bureaucracy.

To get help with the VA, learn more about the work I'm doing to support our Veterans, or if you or someone you know is an eligible Vietnam veteran who would like to be honored with a Vietnam veteran lapel pin, please visit my website at steel.house.gov or call my Huntington Beach office at (714) 960-6483. 🦋

Veteran's Experience at Event



Bob Schrader, 1968-1969
Saigon, Air Force

"I think it's super and it's nice to do it. There are forgotten Heros here. I help with PGA Hope, a professional golf event that helps disabled Veterans."



Gil Morales, 1968-1969,
Marine-E2

"This event is great! I go to Hope Chapel. I love it and we have a good pastor. We didn't get the warm welcome when we got home. But this is great, and it is really nice that we're finally getting one."



Perry Mayba, 1968,
Coast Guard

"I think it's awesome there's not a lot done to commemorate the men that fought and lost their lives, or even if they didn't die."



Wayne Cleary, 1969-1972,
Navy – Radioman

"I think Doreen is an angel sent from Heaven and I appreciate the benefit you're doing today."



Navy Veteran Paul Rodriguez

Paul Rodriguez joined the Navy in 1967 and served until 1970. He did his basic training in San Diego and served on the USS Constellation aircraft carrier CVA-64. He was stationed in Vietnam and from there he traveled all over. Paul's job on the ship was mechanic mate in engine room 3. He said they were called the "evaporator gang" because they

took care of the steam and made sure the smoke coming out was clear and not black, so the enemy wouldn't see them.

"While on the ship I met a pilot who use to come eat with us and talk with us sometimes, even though we had different mess halls. He was a great guy to talk with. He actually was shot down and became a POW, but later I was able to see him again after I was already out of the service.

"Back then they made it very difficult, even impossible to move up. I made \$100 a month and eventually made \$300 a month, which I would send to my wife. I promised her that when I got out, I would make \$300 a week and that's what I did.

"My father was in the Army during WWII and fought against the Japanese. I remember him always telling me about his days in New Guinea and the Philippines. My brother joined the Navy three weeks after I did. I didn't know until I saw him, when he came up to me and surprised me. I said, 'Wow, why are you here?' He said, 'Because you made boot camp sound so fun hanging around drinking.' I told him 'I only said that so mom wouldn't worry. How do you like it?' My brother told me he didn't like it at all and we just laughed.

"One night when we were going to bed, I heard my top bunk mate talking and I thought he was having a nightmare or something. I ask if he was okay. He said 'yeah I'm okay I'm praying to God.' I asked him 'You can do that? Pray directly to God?' He said, 'Of course you can, do you believe God made the sun the stars the sky and the



earth?' I replied, 'No, I know so. I know he created everything. I don't believe because I know. Knowing and believing are very different.' My bunk mate asked, 'If you know than why couldn't you talk to Him directly?' He was right. I had only thought that you pray to the priest and he brings it to God. Now I was able to pray and talk to God whenever I wanted. I really needed that; I pray 100 times a day whenever I feel I want or need to talk to Him.

"I am very proud to have served my flag and country. I tell this to other service men and women; we have to remember that we look at the flag a lot different than most people, because we would have died for that flag in a heartbeat."

AVAG was able to honor Paul Rodriguez with Certificates of Recognition from Congresswoman Michelle Steel and Assemblywoman Janet Nguyen at our Vietnam Veterans Day Luncheon.

One of our volunteers, Vietnam veteran Charlie Aroz, recommended that Paul Rodriguez receive a La-Z Boy recliner. It was our honor to be able to gift him one for his service. Thank you to Charlie for helping us deliver it to his home. 🦋

Navy Veteran Tony Malvin

Tony Malvin enlisted in the Navy and served from 1972 to 1975. He then continued his service in the Naval Reserves. The highest rank he achieved was Airman E3. His most memorable time was serving overseas in the South Pacific. His tours took him to Japan, Philippines, Hong Kong, and Singapore. He learned in the Navy how to work on airplanes. He continued to use these skills after leaving the service,

working on the MD-11, DC-9-50, MD-80, and the C-17, first with McDonnell Douglas and then Boeing, from where he eventually retired.

He heard about AVAG through Gloria Rodriguez with the One Breath Foundation, which helps people waiting for lung transplants. He was recognized for his service at the first AVAG event he attended. He had never been recognized before, and he cherishes that moment. He enjoyed our Vietnam Veterans Day, which he called 'a kick in the pants'

and was excited that AVAG gave him a La-Z-Boy recliner. When AVAG delivered the recliner all his neighbors came out to cheer him on.

Tony was born in Cincinnati in 1954. His family moved to Long Beach, California and then to the city of Los Alamitos in 1963. There, he grew up right behind the Navy base, now called the Joint Forces Training Base. From behind his house, he and his friend would watch the pilots wave to the kids as they took off. He would also see the Marines on the base doing their exercise runs. When asked if he would do it again, and he said yes. 🦋



Special Delivery to Commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day

On March 31, 2022, Chaplain Doreen pinned the Commemorate Vietnam Veterans Day pin on Navy Veteran Ron Arciniega and Marine Corps Veteran Tom Ols at the Casitas La Verne community luncheon. 🦋

Ron Arciniega

Ron was in the Navy from 1974-1978. He did his basic training in Orlando Florida then went to San Diego where he was stationed on the USS Okinawa LHP-3. After his home port was in the Philippines and in 1975, he got orders to go the Vietnam. On the ship he was a landing signalmen enlisted (LSE), he helped land the helicopters onto the flight deck on board. He spent two years on the ship. Ron became a 3rd class AG-3 (Aerographers) mate. He took visual sight of the sky and collected new and past data from other ships to create a forecast. "On our ship the forecast was critical because the pilots had to know what the weather is or was going to be before coming and landing on the ship." 🦋



Left to right, Doreen Matsumoto, Marine veteran Tom Ols, and Navy veteran Ron Arciniega



From left to right, Ron Arciniega today, Ron as a young man, and with his fellow crew members.

Tom Ols

Tom was in the Marines from 1970-1973. Tom did his bootcamp in Parris Island, South Carolina, then went to Camp Le Jeune and attended Military school at Fort Gordon, Georgia where he became a MP with the Army base. After Military school Tom was stationed at Cherry Point Marine Airbase. "I worked the front gate and did a lot of patrol work at night and drove around making sure everything was secure. I also did a few funerals and did jobs like a police officer would do. I had surgery on my knee, so I had to walk around with crutches and my leg in a cast. One day they were short on men and told me to come fill in. So, there I was with a 45 on my hip, hobbling around with my crutches, and a full leg cast working on the traffic lights. It was quite funny to see." 🦋



Tom Ols, at left, and at right, relaxing in his new recliner.

AVAG Celebrates Veteran's 100th Birthday

Army Veteran Leslie Neilson served in WWII and the Korean War from 1939 – 1946 (1 year in the National Guard). He was a Lieutenant in the infantry division. He received a Bronze Medal, a Silver Star, two Purple Heart Medals, and an Asiatic Pacific Service Medal.

It was an amazing celebration. We had city officials show up and give him a special certificate from the office of Lisa Bartlett, Orange County Supervisor in the Fifth District.

Thank you to Tom Barry, Mario Mejia, and Roy Gonzales for directing all of the cars, police, fire, and motorcycles that drove by his house. Chaplains David Breunig, Mellissa Breunig, and Kathleen Rowden for helping with the Quilt of Valor presentation. The extra help in volunteering from Paul Buron and Joe Penna. Thank you Cory Vigil from the Newport Beach American Legion for connecting us. Special thanks to the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the County of Orange Fire department. 🙏



Casitas La Verne

AVAG Luncheon at Casitas La Verne

We put on a beautiful luncheon for our seniors and veterans at Casitas La Verne. Our group is getting larger every time we do this. Our guest speaker was Vince (pictured below speaking to the group) from Caption Call; a government program for seniors and veterans who are hard of hearing to receive a phone at no cost. 🦋



Meet Casitas La Verne Veterans

Jack Reed served in the Navy from 1954-1962 — four years active duty and four years Naval Reserves. The highest rank he achieved was 2nd Class Petty Officer.

He served aboard the USS Lenawee, an Attack Transport Troop Carrier (APA-195). While ashore, he was stationed in San Diego and worked for the Commander Amphibious

Services. With a Top-Secret Clearance, he became an assistant to the Commander Top Secret/Secret Control Officer.

Jack said he would certainly serve if he had to do it over again. He almost stayed in the Navy, but there was nothing going on. So he decided to become a civilian and see what else was going on. Following his Honorable Discharge, he attended college on the G.I. Bill and went into Law Enforcement as an Insurance Investigator.

While in the Navy he really enjoyed being out in the open sea. During his longest deployment, seven months in the Western Pacific, he was able to go to Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. During a particularly sensitive crisis with Communist China, the USS Lenawee was part of the U.S. Navy deployment to the Taiwan Straits. He remembers having nothing but good duty during his time in the Navy. During time aboard the USS Lenawee, he was a Yeoman with administrative duties and was a “Captains Talker” that repeated and passed command orders from the ship’s bridge to other parts of the ship. 🦋



Del Trevino joined the Army at age 18. He served from June 1959 to May 1962 in Germany during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The highest rank he achieved was E4 in the 24th Infantry Division. He was a tank communication radio operator who worked with Morse code. The lessons he learned were to be independent and learn how to care for himself. He took the Veterans benefits and used the G.I. Bill to go to school and learn to be an electrician. He attended LA Trade Tech for four years. One of his closest friends in the service was Fred Zabataski who received the Medal of Honor. 🦋

Casitas La Verne Community Celebrates a Birthday

What an awesome opportunity for the community of La Verne to gather together to celebrate 98-year-old World War II Veteran Frank Paglia. City council member, Wendy M. Lau, brought desserts for the whole community. Mayor Tim Hempburn and the pro tem mayor came out present a certificate to Frank Paglia. We had items from our Bed, Bath and Beyond donations and we shared them with the community. Everyone took something home. Also, Veteran Christina Bester shared information regarding Medicare and also provided the birthday cake and ice cream for Frank. 🦋



Creek Orange Estates



Free Gas for Creek Orange Residents

It is so awesome to see how grateful people are to get \$50 worth of gas. Now that the pumps are at \$6.00 a gallon, our veterans and seniors are really grateful.

The lucky recipients were JP, a Marine Corps Veteran, Marine Corps Veteran Glenn Williamson, David and Nancy, Air Force veterans, George and Pat Roth, Army Veterans, Joe Vietnam, Army Veteran, Mike, Sue, Pepe, and Manny and Phyllis. 🦋



Shopping Spree at Creek Orange

We received a very special donation of \$2500 from Cory Vigil, Service Officer, from the American Legion Post 291 in Newport Beach. We couldn't do what we do without our amazing donors.

With the help of Cory Vigil, we were able to take 10 veterans grocery shopping at Stater Brothers in Orange. They were so excited lined up with their shopping carts. All our Creek Orange veterans were wearing their AVAG T-shirts. We invited James Trabert and Alex Aguirre from the local Army recruiting office to join in on the fun.

It was amazing to see them walk around and look for the things that they haven't bought in a while. Most of them said that meat was so expensive that this was going to be an extra treat. They filled up their carts, got in line at the checkout, and still couldn't believe they were getting their groceries for free. We had one veteran's widow, Pat Miller, participate.

Special thanks to the manager, John, for opening up check stands for us. 🦋



Cory Vigil, Service Officer for American Legion Post 291 presented AVAG with a \$2500 donation.



Doreen Matsumoto with James Trabert and Alex Aguirre from the local Army recruiting office.



Meet Creek Orange Estates Veterans

Leo Carillo

Marine Corps veteran Leo Carillo served from 1971-1973. The highest rank he achieved was E5. He was stationed in Quantico, Virginia.

What he liked best about serving in the military was serving his country and the camaraderie. We asked him what did he like least about serving in the military. He said, "Most people say the food, but it was better than at home — we were very poor. There was no worst."

He learned so many lessons in the military like discipline, physical training, and weapons training. He became a police officer when he got out of the military. He entered the police force and found using acceptable vocabulary was difficult. In the military the language is a little rougher.

He liked to hang out with the gunnies and E8/E9's because they were helpful but mean.

He is currently 70 years old. Was 20 years old when joined the USMC and due to his college degrees was able to enter the Officers Candidate School (OCS).

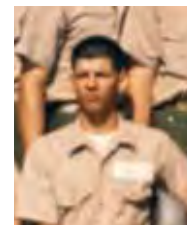
He finished high school at 17 and went on to earn an AA degree in biology and oceanography from Fullerton Community College then went to Cal State Fullerton and earned a BA degree in Communications and Business. At age 14, he joined the USN Sea Cadets at Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base and remained for 4 years during high school. He got to visit Annapolis as a Sea Cadet and wanted to attend the school as a Mid Shipman, but did not have an endorsement of a congressman.

Following an Honorable Discharge from USMC, he joined the LAPD in 1973. In 1974 moved to the Santa Ana PD. While with the police

department, he had assignments as a body guard for celebrities and political figures and liaised with the Secret Service for Presidential visits.

He wanted to go to Vietnam, but was told he would not be able to go as a result of the reduction in force in 1973. That is one of the reasons he elected to leave the service when his enlistment was up.

He has so many interesting stories even working at Calvary Chapel and ministering to people. We really enjoyed talking to him and learned so much about his humanity to so many other people. We were able to bring him a La-Z-Boy recliner. It was nice to do it because he has been so giving all his life. 🦋



Kenneth Boheim

Army Veteran Kenneth Boheim served from 1960-63. He was an SP4. He served in Germany during the Vietnam era with the 11th Armored Cavalry. Their purpose was to guard the German and Czechoslovakian borders with the USSR.

We always ask our veterans, if you had to do it over

again, would you serve? he said, "Yes!" Kenneth said it was an honor to serve our country but, the worst thing was the food. The lessons he learned in the service that he used in civilian life was the value of exercise, discipline, following rules, and maturity.

Influential role models were General George W. Seignous, III and Colonel Bowden.

He entered the service at the age of 19 and got married at 20. After finishing basic training, his regiment was being deployed to Vietnam. On the way over, his regiment first stopped in Germany. It was there that Ken ignored the first rule – never volunteer! In Germany there was a need for people with administrative training. Ken had taken typing and short hand during his short stay in college before he enlisted. He raised his hand and was reassigned to a post in Germany while his regiment went on to Vietnam. While with the 11th Armored, he became the secretary for the regimental commander, General George W. Seignous, III. While stationed in Germany, his wife was able to join him. They enjoyed traveling throughout Germany. There were many areas still under reconstruction following WWII. At the end of his enlistment Ken was offered a promotion to Warrant Officer to remain in the Army for 3 more years. He and his wife discussed it, and decided they were homesick and wanted to see family so they returned to the United States.

Upon their return, using the G.I. Bill, Ken received a BA in History from Long Beach State and a Master's of Science in Library from USC. 🦋



Chris Long

Chris Long served in the United States Marine Corps for 4 years and his highest rank was Corporal E4. He served in MCAS El Toro and Marine Corps helicopter base in Tustin. During his service, he was able to visit Mexico. What he liked best about serving in the military was the camaraderie and the idea of everyone working together to accomplish similar goals. What he

didn't like is sometimes he saw favoritism among the ranks. The most important lesson he learned was being prompt and giving his best effort. When he got out of the military, he was able to get a job within the first few months. He had a very good friend staff Sergeant Rovinelli, who was a gunny and a warrant officer. If he had to do it all over again, he definitely would.

Chris Long Creek Orange Home Repair

Repairs to the stairs and new paint to Chris Long's home have been completed. With the help of Marine Corps Veteran Glenn Williamson, a park resident, two brand new front windows were installed. He also cut down the bushes so you could see the beautiful windows. Chris is so excited that his house is looking beautiful. His roommate Sherry is excited because she can safely walk down the stairs. 🦋



A Thank You to AVAG Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto

My name is Christopher Long and I reside in the Creek Orange community with my roommate Sherry Borden. Over the past 5 or 6 years, Sherry and I have been recipients of Chaplain Doreen's, in conjunction with the American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG), tireless generosity, her thoughtful prayers, and material blessings both large and small. Her story is worthy of national recognition and I wanted to share with anyone reading this article what it is exactly that Doreen does, how she does it and why she does it.

Many of you know that living in Orange County is very expensive. In June 2021, Doreen blessed me with a grant that provides a \$100 per month stipend towards the cost of my rent. Doreen partners with various Veteran organizations and she uses her ability to partner with those organizations in an effort to provide various assistance to Veterans who oftentimes struggle financially as they are retired and/or have disabilities that prevent them from working or as in my case, simply don't earn quite enough per year to keep up with inflation and yearly increases in rent. Her contributions are truly a blessing to the Veterans here in Creek Orange.

During the past holiday season, a few days before Christmas, I received a call from Chaplain Doreen who shared with me that I was awarded a home improvement grant courtesy of AVAG. The grant provided Sherry and I a beautiful, safe new porch and greatly needed wood protecting paint and trim for the outside of our entire residence. The difference that these very necessary repairs have made to our home is amazing and have given Sherry and I a new hope as well as improving our community here in Creek Orange.

Every holiday season since 2015, Chaplain Doreen, in partnership with the Cottonwood Church, distributes Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners with all the fixings. I've had the honor of volunteering to help distribute the bags, but what a wonderful thing to do for the Veterans and Seniors who reside here in our community. Also, at the very beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic, Chaplain Doreen and her partners distributed greatly needed packages of essentials to include hand sanitizers, disinfecting wipes, and toiletries at a time when panic buying made it very difficult to obtain such items-she did so for all of our community's Veterans and Seniors.

One may ask, how does Chaplain Doreen do so much for so many? The answer is, she does it by organizing and mobilizing people with similar backgrounds, church members, pastors, and military organizations but it's her outstanding leadership abilities that make her mission possible. She delegates well and most importantly she is very kind. Chaplain Doreen is a great motivator and a person who loves to "build up" and encourage others-always.

In closing, there is only one reason Chaplain Doreen does all that she does for our veterans and seniors. The reason is Chaplain Doreen has been called by God to do His good works. Chaplain Doreen is not just a hearer of God's word — she's a doer of God's word. Romans 8:28 states, "in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and who have been called to his purpose". On behalf of Sherry, the Veterans of Creek Orange, our Seniors, and myself, to Chaplain Doreen-a very warm heartfelt thank you for all that you have done, are doing, and will do in our lives. We are eternally grateful for you. Warm regards, Chris 🦋

Santiago Estates Sunnymead

Delivering Recliners to the Sunnymead Moreno Valley Community



So far, we have delivered five recliners to Sunnymead and Moreno Valley.

At left, Vietnam Army veteran, Evan (Hap) Phillips, stationed at Ft Knox and Ft Dix during his service, relaxes in his new recliner.

It's been amazing how our veterans are starting to come forth. 🦋



Arnie Parkaren

Arnie served in the Navy from 1974 until 1978. He served at North Folk, Virginia military base and the highest rank he achieved was E5.

"If I had to do it over again I would and I would have served longer even though I did long for home during the 4 years I was in. But I wanted to stay longer and retire with the military, that's one thing I would have changed. The best part about serving in the military was the brotherhood that the military had to offer and I

loved to travel. I also loved working on the old destroyer the USS Hawkin DEH-73 which is now decommissioned. Some lessons I learned in the service was cleanliness; we always had to have everything clean and the bed was always made. Also learned how to communicate with others and serving.

"Coming back from serving was great because I came home to a loving family and friends. I'd say we became even closer than before I left for the Navy. I still keep in touch with some of my military brothers too. There was one officer that really helped me in my military career and his name was Maddoch."

We reached out to Arnie and asked him if he would like a La-Z-Boy recliner. He was so surprised and happy that we were thinking of him. It's a blessing to be able to spend time with these veterans and hear their stories. 🦋



Rosa Peters

Meet veteran Rosa Peters from Sunnymead in Moreno Valley. She served in the Air Force from 1980-1984. She was an E6 and her job was a personnel specialist. She was stationed at March Airforce Base where she also did another 10 years in active reserve. She served for a total of 14 years.

"If I could do it over again I would and I would have stayed in active duty longer, I would have applied for the officer training and become an officer.

What I liked best about serving was the feeling of family and the camaraderie especially in active duty. I made a lot of friends.

The transition from the service to civilian life was difficult, the outside world had a different mentality than in the military. In the military there's more structure, people knew their place but outside of that it was like every man for themselves. I had a lot of great officers and sergeants that helped me; there was Sir Master Sargent Crowe, she was great and eventually made chief. Sargent Cynthia Kendrick and Master Sargent Wallace E. Smith really took the time to tell me things.

Some places I've been to were London and Germany. Germany was my favorite. I was there in the reserves for 2 weeks and I was actually able to meet my brother, Clifford Hearne, there. He served in the Airforce for six years."

It was great to surprise her with a new La-Z-Boy recliner. Special thanks to Amanda Breunig and Roy Gonzales for doing the heavy lifting. 🦋





John Thomas Richards

John served in the Navy from 1979-1986 as a petty officer first class. He did basic training in the Great Lakes, served in Long Beach, California, then did survivors school in Warner Springs, California. Grenada was going on during this time.

"If I had to do it over again I would in a heartbeat. I found my life in the Navy interesting and enjoyable, I got to see half the world that I would never have seen. I've been from here to Long Beach and all the way to Okinawa, Japan and went up to the Aleutians.

What I liked best about serving was the traveling, the structure, and the camaraderie I had with my shipmates. I also liked the fastness of getting my rank, because at the time my position was wide open, which was being aviation fuels.

We ran the pump rooms and fueled the helicopters, the landing craft when they needed it, we worked around UH1s, 56s, 46s and 53s and we had Cobras on board. We were an



amphibious ship and also carried a marine detachment when they needed to be transported. We would try to get them as close to the shore as possible because we were told that since we worked the flight deck our life expectancy during a conflict would be 10 minutes. That's how close to shore we had to get.

We did a lot once when we were on board. We saved a ship load of Indonesians that were trying to flee their country for better works. We had them on board till we could take them somewhere safer.

I spent 4 years on the ship and I was part of the pre com crew, I was a plank owner on the USS Peleliu. We went from Seattle straight to the Aleutian Islands where we intercepted a soviet submarine and a couple barrier aircraft. The sub popped up next to us and the aircrafts came behind it. We were a task force with a commodore because we were his flag ship so we had a lot of other ships around and a few of our own submarines,

The only thing I didn't like sometimes were the long hours. We had 18-20-hour flight ops. We were supposed to be in Japan for a week but a typhoon came and we had to leave but once it was over, we became part of an operation to off load supplies and medical stuff. Once we got rid of the marine contingent, our ship became a hospital ship. We had operating rooms on board, a whole medical team, and even dentists.



Some lessons I learned from being in the service I used in civilian life was how to stay calm and how to schedule my time and have routines. Transitioning back from the service was a little rough at first. I always regretted getting out but at the time I had my first wife and our young daughter to think of. After I got out, I worked security at a casino and then an opening came up at Moffit Airfield for a fire-fighter and became one over there.

Chief Officer Jones was very instrumental for me and kept me on track. I was actually able to get back in touch with him just before 9/11 while he was working at the Pentagon but haven't been able to contact him since. Chief Petty officer Carter was good people, could be a jerk but good people. The one I really enjoyed working with was commander William Schillers. He was our air boss and also a prankster but he made the time a lot of fun when I was in pre com, I worked in his office and sometimes I had to fill in for his office staff. We had a good captain named TP Scott, 20 naut Scott, never left port without doing 20 nauts. He was a good skipper. Every time we would leave a port, we played On the Road Again because that was his favorite song.

When we were in Perth, Australia, a couple of our Marine crew went out to have pizza and stuff. There was a birthday party going on for a little girl and I don't know how it got started but we gathered all of our change and gave it to her for her birthday. Her mother was so happy that they invited us out to their ranch.

My first night in after I was off of shore patrol, I was out with a friend. We went to McDonald's and we were sitting there eating, two ladies were sitting behind us and two guys came up trying to talk me out of my ship cap but when they failed, they tried to get the ladies to come get it from me. Out of the blue one of the ladies said, 'I'm not going to ask my husband to do that' and I just about choked on my sandwich.

Another time in Perth we had a British ship with us because they came in at the same time we did. My first night doing shore patrol, we had one drunk British guy crying because he couldn't get back on board because he didn't have his hat "dixie cup". So, I escorted him back, gave him my dixie cup, and got him back on his ship. I had to go back to my ship to get another dixie cup. The duty officer asked where my hat was and I pointed at the British ship. He just said to get another one. The British guys were really cool and they ended up inviting me over to their ship after the guy sobered up." 🦋



Diamond Bar Estates Special Donation

AVAG Chaplain teaches Bible study classes 5 times a week. Each group is growing in the relationship with the Lord. As a result of our Discovering Your God Given Gifts class, Bible study member, Josue “Sway” Franco, showed his gift of giving by donating \$500 for veterans and seniors to receive \$50 worth of gas for free. With the rising prices at the pump, this was a blessing to so many people. Thank you to Julie Saczawa, who has the gift of administration. She organized the residents who would receive the free gas.

We lined up and headed out the local Arco gas station. It was kind of like herding cats; I never seen so many people race to the pumps. It was fun and the Arco attendant was very helpful and kind of confused that someone would do that.

Thank you, Josue Franco, for your support. 🙏



AVAG In Action

ACL Recliner Giveaway

In March we gave away seven recliners to residents at Ninth Street, Sequoia Plaza, and Pacific Palms Mobile Home Parks. They were completely blessed and surprised to receive such a beautiful gift. ✈



Meet Roxanne Rios, who is Richard Reynosa's daughter. She volunteers and participates in every AVAG meeting. In this photo she is with Mike Goens at Sequoia Plaza Mobile Home Park.



Meet Ruth Hernandez, a resident of Sequoia Plaza Mobile Home Park. She lives with her husband who is legally blind. She is such a sweet lady and we're so excited they got one.



Carmen Gonzalez from Ninth Street Mobile Home Park. She takes care of her disabled son. She well deserved this recliner.



Jose Rea is the maintenance man at Pacific Palms but he also lives at Sequoia Plaza Mobile Home Park. He is such a helpful individual that we were happy to give him a recliner.



Meet Steve, from Ninth Street Mobile Home Park. Steve had been taking care of his mother, but she passed away a month ago, and his son passed away last year. He had a hard year and this gift brought him a lot of joy.

"Hi Doreen I just want to thank you for the recliner. I'm sure it's going to make my life so much better after I get home from work. I just want to let you know that I really appreciate it so much, and thank you so much for getting me one of these. Also, I wanted to let you know that I lost my mother about a month ago. She finally let go and is upstairs with God, and my dad as well. Thank you for all your prayers that you give for my family you are very much appreciated."



Maria Mena from Ninth Street Mobile Home Park. She always comes to our give back days. When we talked to the manager regarding who to give recliners to, she was on the top of the list.



Victor Saucedo and Patricia Saucedo live at Pacific Palms. We met them when we walked the park a few years ago and gave out flyers for one of our events. Since then, his daughter got married, had a baby, and now they are grandparents. They always come to our events and are so nice to us. What a blessing to give them a recliner.



Harold Collins

Navy Veteran Harold Collins was so excited to see what the Lord Jesus provided through AVAG and the power of the Holy Spirit.

He served during Vietnam, from 1967 to 1991 — 3 1/2 years active and the rest of the time he served in the Reserves.

In the photos at right, he's holding up the flag in his Navy uniform in one, and the other photo is him after winning the basketball championship with his team and his captain presenting the trophy.

Harold went on to be a Los Angeles County Firefighter and retired from Local 1014. I don't think we had anyone as grateful as he to receive a La-z-Boy recliner. 🦋

Charles Drake

Army Veteran Charles Drake served from 1948 to 1951 in Japan and Korea. His son-in-law reached out to Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto about finding Charles a scooter. Charles had been riding a three-wheeler, but had crashed it.

While we worked on fulfilling this request, we were able to offer him a new lift recliner. His neighbor Ricky came over to help us bring it in the house, as well as our volunteers Roy and Elijah Gonzales. Paul Buron (in photo) is showing Charles how to use the chair.

When we delivered the recliner, I asked him what did he like best about the service and he said, "leave time" because he was stationed in Japan. He even learned Japanese. He also learned how to be a mechanic in the military, which helped him in civilian life. He was thankful to get out of the service and come back home. He is still in contact with his buddies that were in the Air Force, a first lieutenant and a colonel. They were interested in being his friend because he liked to build and fly model airplanes.

Later we were able to deliver a new scooter to Charles. He was so happy and surprised! 🦋





Joe Pendleton

Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto was contacted regarding a veteran in need of a recliner. His wife shared how he physically needed help. He suffers from PTSD and a brain injury. We were able to grant the request.

Joe Pendleton joined the Navy when he was 17 years old, serving from 1997-2000. He served aboard the USS Fletcher destroyer off the coast of Pearl Harbor.

“I was an E2 deck seaman, a jack of all trades basically, painted the ship, helped drive it, and drove the line. I also washed dishes for 6 months straight before becoming the lead helmsman for a year and 8 months. We were located in the battle station and the master helmsman was in charge of steering and I did the throttle as the lead helmsman. In the back of the ship there’s a second steering that I was qualified to take over if anything happened to the front. We had some big guns on the ship, one was called the sea sparrow and that was shot up Shrapnel that would distract and redirect any missiles that were coming towards us.

“If I had to do it over again, I would serve again. It felt good and takes commitment. I would do it differently though; I would have given my time there more thought. The lessons I learned and brought to civilian life were that you always have to stay true to what you believe in.

“When I returned to civilian life it felt like a new experience and I felt alone. You get used to being around all of the fellow servicemen all the time and I didn’t know what I was going to do.

“The main officers that were my favorite and helped me were first division officer Lieutenant Shanks and commanding officer Co Noble.

I was able to see most of the Hawaiian Islands. There was this one bay where the water was crystal clear I loved it and you were able to snorkel there.” 🐬

Chuck Cowart

Navy Veteran Chuck Cowart served for four years from 1958 to 1962 and the highest rank he achieved was a third class. He served during peacetime and traveled in the South Pacific, Japan, Hong Kong, and spent two years in Hawaii. Chuck was stationed on the USS Oklahoma City CLG-5. Before that he was on the USS Radford.

He got married while he was in the Navy to Lois Ely Cowart in 1960. They were married 50 years before she passed in 2011

He learned the basics to be an electrician which helped him with his transition to civilian life where he retired from Chevron as a supervisor. His MOS was radar man CIC (combat information center) back up to the bridge. He would do it all over again but he would want to perform better.

He was tickled pink to receive his brand-new La-Z-Boy recliner. He couldn’t stop giggling. 🐬





Army Veteran Mark Johnson enjoying his new recliner.

Meet An Incredible U.S. Army Veteran

Army Veteran, Mark Johnson, not only does he takes care of his wife, Laura, who has MS, but he also takes care of his neighbor, Air Force Veteran Shigeru Nakahara. Mark saved his life and is now his caregiver too.

It was an honor to present a brand-new La-Z boy recliner to Mark not only for his service to our country, but his service to humanity.

He was a sergeant in the Army from 1983 to 1991. He served at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, and was deployed to Desert Storm. He also served in the Army reserves, and if he had a choice to do it all over again, he would. There was nothing he didn't like about the service. Mark especially enjoyed the history and the culture, food and various locations he was able to visit. The one thing he didn't like is when there were cold showers or cold chow in the field. What he learned is to have a good work ethic, accountability, and teamwork.

When he came back from the service, he at first had struggles but was lucky he had his loving wife. He is still in contact with many of his fellow officers and noncommissioned officers. Facebook works out good for him because he can keep in touch. He also received three good conduct medals.

Thank you for all you have done for so many. Special thank you to our volunteers Paul Buron, Roy Gonzales, and Elijah Gonzales. 🦋



Mark and Laura Johnson



Doreen Matsumoto with Laura and Mark



Laura with Elijah Gonzales



Shigeru Nakahara

Air Force Veteran Shigeru Nakahara served in Alaska from 1958 -1964.

During his time serving in the military, Mr. Nakahara was given a top-secret clearance because the work he worked on was classified. His job in the Air Force was getting reports and information, then entering them into an IBM database.

While working with other soldiers, Mr. Nakahara figured out a better, faster, and more accurate way of doing these reports. What would normally take weeks to do, Mr. Nakahara got it down to hours. 🦋



Meet Rodney Redding

Korean War Army Veteran Corpsman Rodney Redding was 19 years old in 1952 when he was drafted into the Army. When he was 20 years old, he was sent to Korea where he served from 1953-1954.

Rodney served in a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) unit. He said most of the people in the service with him had previously served in World War II. When I interviewed him, he became emotional about his time with the Seventh Infantry in Korea. Anytime there was a casualty they would work hard to get a helicopter and transport the wounded to the base where there was more surgical equipment. Seeing people injured you realize that “there isn’t anything glorious about war.” War has so many tragic casualties.

One casualty he remembers specifically was when the soldiers walked through minefields with Bouncing Betties, a type of mine would “bounce” up 5 feet and explode. Almost all who activated one of those mines would die or get seriously injured. “Another casualty was when I first got there, I traveled by train. When the train would stop, young children and young girls would run up and ask for food. We would be eating and we would give them half our sandwich. This showed you how destitute the country was and how much the children and the women suffered.”


Rodney was discharged from the service when he was 22. He then used the G.I. Bill to attend college where he earned a BS in Biology from La Sierra in Riverside, CA., a MS in Rehab Counseling from Boston University, a PhD in Education, Psych Education, (basically psychology) from the University of Denver. He used his degrees to work in higher education. During his first years after getting his doctorate he worked in college administration and then the last half of his career was as an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Maine, Augusta. He was awarded the honor of Professor Emeritus after he retired.

This a perfect example of how to use the benefits that veterans are entitled to. He would do his Army service over again because it changed his thinking in many ways which affected his life. He was grateful he was there when they got the word that there would be a cease fire to end hostilities.

We need to remember that any war tears populations apart and people get displaced, injured, and killed.

We were honored to present Rodney with a Quilt of Valor. His son, Sean, reached out to us regarding his father’s service. He requested a special presentation on the Huntington Beach pier. He was here visiting from Maine and was so shocked that people stood around watching as we did the presentation. His words were “my cup runneth over.”

There was a Korean family watching who came over and thanked him for his service and what he did for their country. They wanted to make sure that their son saw what a real Korean War Veteran looked like. What a blessing to see them interact together.

The chaplains were able to pray over him; it was a beautiful day. 



Fred "Soldier" Scofield



Fred Scofield was the recipient of a Quilt of Valor in November 2021.

Saying Goodbye to a Veteran

We were able to put on a memorial for Army Veteran Fredrick Scofield who passed away in January 2022. He didn't have any local family but he had two roommates; one was an elderly lady named Beverly and the other was Dusty Hills. The 82nd airborne did the presentation of the flag, the folding of the flag, meaning of the folds, and a 21-gun salute.

Fred Scofield's inspiring story, as told in the Hope Chapel's 2016 Veteran's Day publication follows below:

Stories of Hope

Fred "Soldier" Scofield: Making Peace with God

From November 1, 2016 VETERANS' DAY EDITION
www.HopeChapelHB.org

Frederick Scofield was visited by two military representatives on September 11, 2001. Having served in the U.S. Army as a Special Forces heavy weapons specialist previously, the Army recalled him immediately to assist in our national emergency. He found himself in the Kandahar Pass, Afghanistan only 36 hours later. This is just one of many examples of the intense, sacrificial and yet complicated life of service "Soldier" has given to our country.

His story begins not with the Army, however, but with the Marine Corps. Born in 1965 along with his twin brother David to a Marine family of 15 children at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, Fred's family moved to Fountain Valley when he was in high school. There he participated in both performing arts and football, and he did a two-week mission with his family's Mormon stake in Garden Grove when he was 16.

At 17, he entered the Army, which he jokes was rebellion because all fourteen of his siblings became Marines like their father. He married and started a family with his high school sweetheart, and they went on to have five daughters (including three who are triplets). First a parachute packer stationed in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Fred was quickly picked up by a Special Forces unit for their training in both heavy weapons and linguistics. He has a working knowledge of Croatian, Serbian, German, Farsi, Korean and Japanese.

Over the next 11 years Fred was mostly away from his family, on assignments in "hot spots" around the world, including Granada, Honduras, Kosovo, the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan. His assignments were top secret, so he could not usually disclose his location to his family, nor can he discuss most of those missions even today. Fred's head hangs low as he describes how he has seen horrible things, and how he finally had enough.

After leaving the Army a second time in 2008, Fred began what would turn into a nearly eight-year walk across the country. While his special forces training kept him alive physically on the streets, he had few emotional reserves.

"For the first four years, I walked just because I was mad. I didn't want to be a part of society anymore."

But after awhile, he started to find a measure of peace as he came to terms with what he'd experienced. And even before Fred knew it was the hand of God, he describes the healing that came with standing at the bottom of Niagara Falls, watching the sunrise at Mt. Rushmore, walking along the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, and sleeping in a hammock in the Redwoods.

As Fred puts it, "I was finally able to see the beauty in this world, after 27 years of ugly."

To determine his route, Fred would toss a coin for north versus south, and east versus west every 100 or so miles. That coin toss put him at the Huntington Beach pier on December 16 of last year. Two weeks later a fellow Fountain Valley High School graduate whom he met at the pier invited him to Hope Chapel.

Reluctant because of previous experiences with churches around the country during his years of drifting, Fred was pleasantly surprised at the welcome he received. “When you’ve been homeless for even just a few months and you can’t wash your clothes or take a shower, you are shunned. I went to plenty of churches where I was asked to leave.”

So Fred came to Hope Chapel on January 3 of this year with low expectations of a warm welcome. Fred also came about 30 minutes early, so as he puts it, “I met half the church before the service even started!”

And instead of the hypocrisy he expected, he found “genuine caring; nothing superficial.” He began attending as many weekday events as possible, and has rarely missed a Sunday. He received Jesus on January 21.

As Fred puts it, “One of the biggest burdens finally lifted off me since receiving Christ” —as he vividly describes, knowing he would no longer “check into that special place in hell reserved for me.”

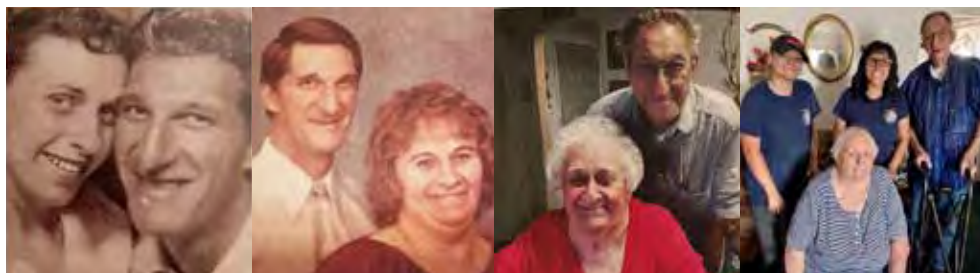
Many other things began falling into place for him after that, too. With the help of so many at Hope and elsewhere, Fred got identification, his military benefits activated, job training, even new eyeglasses.

Prayer by prayer, Fred’s basic needs have been met since finding Jesus at Hope Chapel, including employment as a security guard at the shopping center at Beach and Warner. And he is no longer homeless, having recently started renting with Dusty Hill, whom he describes as a “powerful man of God,” and his new “mom” Bev Richardson whom he describes as “the sweetest ever.” He has even been able to start giving to others in need.

We join with Fred in thanking God for all the blessings bestowed on him in this new season. And we thank him for his service to our country. It seems appropriate to end this article as Fred ends every prayer, with an enthusiastic “HOOAH!” 🦋



In Memoriam



Charlene K. Gibbs

Charlene Gibbs, wife of Air Force veteran John Gibbs and a member of the Sequoia Plaza Mobile Home Park AVAG community, was born February 4, 1941, in Muscatine, Iowa to Chester and Katherine Lepper.

She was baptized February 13, 1983, where she received the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The Leppers moved to San Bernardino, California in 1948, where she attended school and graduated from San Bernardino High School in 1958.

After graduation she met John Cantrell Gibbs and they were married June 6, 1959,

at St. Anthony's Catholic church in San Bernardino. From this union four boys were born: John Jr, Jerry, Jason, Jeffery. Charlene and John were married sixty-four years.

Charlene had a passion for making the holiday season special. As the winter months approached, she would grow excited for her favorite holiday. She was known to decorate her house with a palpable love for the holiday. The holiday season will not be the same without her warm presence.

She was preceded in death by her parents Chester and Catherine Lepper, and her dear sister Charise Angel. She leaves to mourn a host of family and friends.

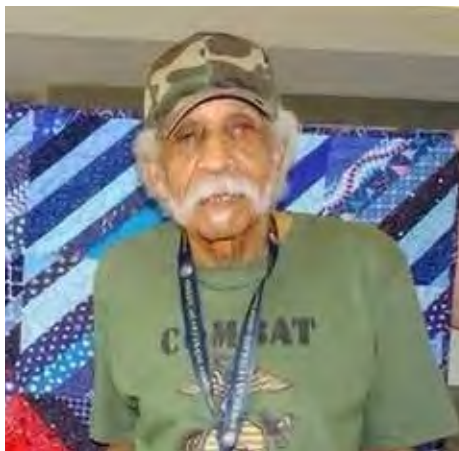
Charlene, You're the one I love

A little more each day
You're in my heart
And there you will always stay
You are the angel
Standing by my side
You are my one and only
Since the day you became my bride
You're the one I love
As time goes passing by
We join together to reach up toward the sky
You are my angel
Standing by my side
You're the one and only
Since you became my bride
Now we are old and grey,
our time has passed away
You are in my heart
And there you will always stay
Now you are God's angel
Standing by my side
For you are still my angel
Since the day you became my bride
(John)

James Boudreaux

James Boudreaux was born December 26, 1942 and went to be with the Lord on January 4, 2022.

I was able to share the story of his life and his career in the military. But before he was even in the military, he was a man of valor he had courage, bravery and bold determination. Then he signed his life away, not only once but two times. Serving in the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps. He faced great danger, especially in battle; he did three tours in Vietnam and received a Purple Heart. To all of us, he was a hero.



AVAG News

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