



AVAG News

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Our communities mourn the loss of two of its members.



Members of the 82nd Airborne Association Lew Millett Memorial Medal of Honor Chapter lead dignitaries at the front of the parade kicking off the AVAG Memorial Day Luncheon.

Honoring Our Heroes: The AVAG Community Observes POW/MIA Recognition Day

On Friday, September 20, the AVAG community gathered to celebrate National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Robert Crebbs of the 82nd Airborne led a solemn Pledge of Allegiance to kick off the event, which was held at the Brookhurst Community Center in Anaheim. Melissa Ramon followed with a reading explaining the significance behind the folding of the American flag. While guest speaker Nelson Cook offered insightful ideas on how we might have a positive impact on our children today, Chaplain Doug Zimmer honored U.S. military POWs and MIAs by explaining the history and meaning of the POW/MIA flag and the symbolism of "Missing Man Table."

A highlight of the morning was Senator Tom Umberg presenting AVAG (American Veterans Assistance Group) founder, Richard



Simonian, with a certificate of appreciation for his tireless efforts in serving veterans across our communities. Mr. Simonian also received additional certificates from Sharon (Continued on page 2)

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Honoring Our Heroes: The AVAG Community Observes POW/MIA Recognition Day continued

Quirk-Silva's office and the City of Santa Ana. His speech was filled with inspiring insights and stories.

We want to extend a special thank you to all the dedicated volunteers who made this year's POW/MIA Recognition Day such a resounding success. The event would not have been possible without the efforts of Mellissa Arriola Breunig, who orchestrated the raffle and decorations, as well as the remarkable contributions of volunteers like Wayne and Marla Ogelvie, Martha Rivera Barreras, Mary Cruz, Raine Broussard, Bonnie, Ginny, Lani, Megan Ramirez, and Lisa Abbott.

Our community partners played a vital role, offering valuable resources to attendees. We're grateful to Heart of Compassion Distribution, Torres Mortuary, VA Long Beach Healthcare System, DAV Chapter 23, American Legion Anaheim, Home Health Southern California, Navy Federal Credit Union, Orange Field of Valor, Coaches of Influence, Humana, VVA Helicopter, and Crispin Tenorio and his church staff for their support.

Together, we honored the memory of those who sacrificed for our freedom while strengthening our commitment to serving our veterans and community. 🕊



Honoring the Sacrifice: The Symbols of the POW/MIA Flag and Missing Man Table

By Douglas Zimmer
CMSGT (ret.), U.S. Air Force
AVAG Chaplain

Today, we are pausing to remember our country's Prisoners of War (POW) and those Missing in Action (MIA).

First of all, let me draw your attention to the official POW/MIA flag.

The flag is primarily black in color. Words and graphics appear as white, or black on white. There is a silhouette of a prisoner of war (POW) in front of a guard tower and barbed wire. The letters "POW/MIA" are printed above the silhouette and the words, "You are never forgotten" appear underneath the symbols on the flag.

The POW/MIA flag represents care and support for the many members of our country's military branches during the Vietnam War, particularly those who were captured by the enemy. The last U.S. POW in Southeast Asia was returned to the United States in 1973, but there are still a number of "MIA's" that have yet to be accounted for.

The POW/MIA flag that we are familiar with was first proposed as the National League of Families POW/MIA flag and was adopted in 1972 as the official emblem of that organization. It was officially called, "the National League of Families of American and Missing in Southeast Asia". It was flown over the White House for the first time in 1982. Congress officially recognized the flag later. The flag was installed inside of the U.S. Capitol Rotunda in 1989. Finally, in 1990, Congress passed a US Public Law (101-355) recognizing the flag "as a symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation.

The POW/MIA Flag Act was signed into law, requiring the POW/MIA flag to be flown on certain federal properties, including the Capitol Building, on all days the U.S. flag is flown. Since then, it has been a symbol for POW/MIAs from all U.S. wars.

The POW/MIA flag is part of the "Missing Man Table", also known as the fallen comrade table. The table consists of:

- A small table set for one, symbolizing the isolation of the absent service member.
- A white tablecloth symbolizes the pure intentions of the service members who responded to the country's call to arms.
- A single red rose in a vase symbolizes the blood that service members have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of the United States of America. The rose also represents the family and friends who keep the faith while awaiting the return of the missing service members.
- The red ribbon represents a love of country that inspired the service members to serve the country.
- A slice of lemon on the bread plate represents the bitter fate of the missing.
- Salt sprinkled on the bread plate symbolizes the tears shed by waiting families.
- An inverted glass represents the fact that the missing and fallen cannot partake.
- A lit candle symbolizes a light of hope that lives in hearts to illuminate the missing's way home.
- An empty chair represents the absence of the missing and fallen.

Let's have a moment of silence to honor our POWs and our service members that are still missing and unaccounted for...

Thank you. 🦋



AVAG and Cottonwood Church Partner for a Successful Serve Day

In September, the American Veterans Assistance Group (AVAG) partnered with the Cottonwood Church Hope Team for their annual service day in Santiago Creek Orange Estates. With the invaluable assistance of Doug Darrah, who provided a trailer for hauling away junk, volunteers tackled a variety of tasks to improve the lives of the community's seniors and veterans.

From yard cleanups and building a shed to window washing and junk removal, the volunteers worked tirelessly to address the needs of 22 homes in the community. Here's what we accomplished:

- Yard cleanups
- Building a shed
- Washing windows
- Junk removal
- Weeding
- Changing light bulbs and patio lights
- Fixing lattice
- Digging up small trees
- Small repairs
- Cleaning front porches
- Removing ivy

A huge thank you to the Cottonwood Church Hope Team and all the volunteers who contributed to making this day a success. Your support and dedication have made a significant difference in the lives of the seniors and veterans who call Santiago Creek Orange Estates home. 🦋





"I was able to bring my two kids with me on our clean up day at Creek Orange. We had the privilege of serving Mr. Charles by cleaning his windows and watering his plants. It was an honor to help him with a few small tasks around his home, but the highlight was when my ten year old son had the opportunity to pray for him during our visit. We enjoyed our time serving Mr. Charles and look forward to our next serve day at Creek Orange."

Natalie
Do good, bring hope.

Oath to Country Foundation Brightens 99-Year-Old Veteran's Home with Yard Overhaul

The Oath to Country Foundation (OTCF) contacted one of AVAG's partner organizations and was asked if they knew of any military veterans who needed help with yard work or landscaping around their homes. It was suggested that they get in contact with our AVAG Chaplain, Doreen Matsumoto.

Dr. Justin Gracieux, the OTCF founder, contacted Doreen straight away. He explained the mission of his foundation and asked if she knew of any veterans that could use help with their home landscaping. Doreen immediately thought of Howard Koch, a 99-year-old World War II and Korean veteran.

Doreen contacted Howard and his caregiver, Susanna, to see if they were interested. They said yes, and a meeting with Howard, Susanna, Doreen, and Dr. Justin was scheduled for a Thursday afternoon.

At around 3:30, Dr. Justin arrived at Howard's home. Introductions were made, and Dr. Justin outlined what his foundation did. Howard, Susanna, Doreen, and Dr. Justin surveyed the yard and came up with a plan to get Howard's yard cleaned up.


Dr. Justin said he would contact his volunteers, bring the necessary tools, bring a bin to haul away all the debris, and pick up new plants to be placed in the yard. He then told Howard and Susanna that he and his group of volunteers would show up on Saturday morning, only one day away.

On Saturday morning at 8:00, OTCF showed up at Howard's with all the tools, bins, and volunteers. The volunteers included families with their children. They all wanted to meet Howard and learn about his life and time in the Army 10th Mountain Division during World War II.

The volunteers, including the children, got to work removing some plants and shrubs, trimming other shrubs and trees, planting new drought-tolerant plants and flowers, fertilizing, and spreading new ground cover along with U.S. flags along the planter edges. Everyone worked well together and was in good spirits.

All the debris, dirt, and dust were cleaned up, leaving Howard with a beautiful new yard. To complete the visit, OTCF replaced his U.S. flag hanging in front of his house with a brand-new flag fully equipped with a solar light to illuminate his flag at night.

Howard and Susanna were ecstatic and flabbergasted about all the fantastic work Dr. Justin and his OTCF volunteers accomplished. Howard said that he felt truly blessed!

For more information about the Oath to Country Foundation, please visit their website or look them up on Instagram at @oath_to_country_foundation. 





Supporting Our Veterans at the VA

AVAG Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto has been hard at work supporting veterans through visits to the Veterans Administration (VA) offices in Long Beach.

In July, she accompanied Veteran Rick Lazarin, who had previously struggled to secure his benefits after an initial denial. Together, they navigated the VA process, resulting in Rick receiving an eye appointment, an ear appointment, and a primary care visit. Inspired by this progress, he's ready to begin applying for his service-connected claim. During their visit, they reconnected with Ken, a VA staff member, who is always a great help.

In August, Chaplain Matsumoto continued her mission. She spent a full day at the Long Beach VA assisting veterans Dennis Hines and Art Dolick in resubmitting their service-connected claims. She also visited Don Winkler in the hospital to check on his progress. She met Liz from the Blind Rehab Center, who introduced her to Kathleen Ellertson, founder of the Veterans Art Institute. She also crossed paths with Santiago Rios from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) in Whittier, who sought her input on helping a homeless veteran.

These visits underscore AVAG's commitment to advocating for our veterans. With each visit, Chaplain Matsumoto brings practical assistance and also the warmth of community, reminding each veteran that they are valued and supported. 🦋



AVAG and Special Forces Association Chapter 78: Connection and Support

For several months, AVAG Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto, often accompanied by AVAG member Mary Cruz, has attended the monthly meetings of Special Forces Association Chapter 78, a group composed mostly of retired Army Special Forces members. Since the group's chaplain has not been able to attend meetings

lately, she helps out by giving the invocation at the start of the meeting. Her presence provides a bridge of support and encouragement, and she's there to connect with members, offering assistance wherever she sees a need. She also adds a bit of fun with the giveaways she brings along for the members, which they all really enjoy.

These gatherings serve as a place of camaraderie, where retired servicemen reconnect and support one another. Doreen's role as chaplain adds a layer of care, as she's there to listen and lend a hand, honoring each veteran's journey with the dignity they deserve. 🦋



AVAG Celebrates First Responders

On August 16, 2024, Hope Chapel in Huntington Beach opened its doors to welcome a large gathering for our fourth annual First Responders Appreciation Barbeque. This event, aimed at honoring the community's dedicated police officers, firefighters, marine safety teams, and lifeguards, was a resounding success thanks to the participation of our local heroes and the support of volunteers and sponsors.

Our chaplaincy team once again did an outstanding job orchestrating the event. A special welcome to Tom and Wendy Loveless and Marla and Wayne Ogelvie, the newest members of our team. Both couples, with the husbands being veterans, were instrumental in securing raffle prizes and donations of hotdogs and hamburgers, which helped make the day even more memorable. We are incredibly grateful for their contributions.

Hope Chapel graciously provided the drinks, condiments, and all the essentials like plates, napkins, and utensils, ensuring everyone had what they needed for a carefree afternoon. Our friends at Children's Giving Gifts made the day brighter with gift bags specially prepared for our first responders.

Additionally, several local organizations set up resource tables for the attendees. Torres Mortuary was present to offer information about their Veterans Burial Program, with resources for first responders. Navy Credit Union also provided helpful services, and Travis Mayfield's Elite Fitness team sent chiropractors and doctors to offer wellness consultations to our guests.

The food was a community effort. David Breunig, along with Michael and Charlie, expertly manned the grill, serving up hotdogs and hamburgers, while Chaplain Jimmy Arita brought pizza for everyone to enjoy. Brackets Kitchen generously donated delicious side dishes, rounding out a satisfying meal.

We would also like to express our deep thanks to the numerous volunteers who gave their time to set up, serve, and tear down after the event. Without their dedication, this luncheon would not have been possible.

To all our first responders, thank you for your service, and we look forward to celebrating with you again next year! 🦋





AVAG Veterans Enjoy a Memorable Night at the Anaheim Ducks Game

On September 26, AVAG had the privilege of hosting a group of veterans for an unforgettable evening at the Honda Center to watch the Anaheim Ducks face off against the San Jose Sharks. This game, the second of seven preseason games, provided an exciting opportunity for our veterans to experience the thrill of live hockey before the regular season began.

Thanks to the generosity of Vicky Murphy, Executive Vice President of Wilson Automotive, our veterans were treated to an exclusive experience in one of the company's suites. The atmosphere was electric as our group settled in to enjoy the game. As an extra special touch, AVAG

Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto arranged for the Anaheim Ducks' mascot to make a surprise visit to the suite, bringing smiles and excitement to everyone. The veterans were thrilled to see the mascot up close!

Although the Ducks put up a good fight, they unfortunately lost to the Sharks 3-2. Despite the outcome, everyone in attendance had an incredible time, sharing laughs, creating memories, and appreciating the opportunity to come together for a night out.

We are deeply grateful to Wilson Automotive for making this experience possible. 🦊



WWII Veterans Honored at Santa Ana Post Office Dedication for Judge James Perez

On September 6th, Representative Lou Correa (CA-46), along with state and local officials, gathered to officially rename the U.S. Post Office at 615 North Bush Street in Santa Ana in honor of Judge James Perez, who holds the legacy of being the first Latino attorney and the first Latino judge in the county. The ceremony paid homage to Judge Perez's remarkable contributions, not only as a trailblazing judge but also as a World War II veteran from the revered "Greatest Generation."

Alongside the commemoration of Judge Perez, several distinguished World War II veterans were present, representing the valor and sacrifice that defined their generation. In tribute to their bravery and commitment, each veteran in attendance received a special Quilt of Valor. The Quilts of Valor were provided by AVAG partner Southern California Quilts of Valor.

Veterans honored at the event included:

- Martin Ortiz, U.S. Army Veteran and Purple Heart recipient
- Harold Montoya, U.S. Army Veteran
- Albert Robles, U.S. Army Veteran and Bronze Star recipient
- Joseph Juarez, U.S. Army Veteran and Purple Heart recipient
- Howard Koch, U.S. Army Veteran
- Warner Olsen, U.S. Army Veteran

Thank you to Representative Lou Correa for putting on this amazing event. This tribute to Judge Perez and the World War II veterans present served as a momentous reminder of the heroes among us, whose legacies continue to shape and inspire our community. 🦋



Veterans Connect at Hope Chapel:

A Growing Community of Support, Faith, and Fellowship

Veterans Connect meetings at Hope Chapel Huntington Beach have become a vibrant gathering for veterans. Meetings are held every fourth Saturday of the month at 12 noon – 1:45 p.m. at Hope Chapel, located at 715 Lake St., Huntington Beach. Veterans Connect brings together veterans from all walks of life for a day of friendship, reflection, and community building.

Each gathering features opportunities to connect, delicious food, and raffle prizes. The group continues its journey through Operation Timothy Book 3, preparing to move into Chapter 5. A highlight of August's gathering were the attendance of veterans from the Long Beach VA Blind Rehabilitation Center, adding even more diversity and depth to the group. In September, the Operation Timothy Book study delved into the concept of developing a new character in Christ, a topic that resonated with everyone involved. Members paired off to discuss their readings and reflections, which led to a lively and meaningful engagement throughout the group.

The July gathering held a special surprise: the church was set up for baptisms, and two attendees—Karen Martinez and Charlie Aros—decided to make their faith commitment through baptism during Veterans Connect. This spontaneous and moving experience highlighted the personal growth fostered within this community.

These monthly gatherings are a source of blessing and encouragement as veterans enjoy each other's company and share experiences.

Join the community! AVAG's Veterans Connect is a great opportunity to meet fellow veterans and for spouses to connect with others, share stories, and be inspired. *We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!* 🦋



AVAG and Partners in Action

American Legion Post 295–Cypress

This past summer, AVAG (American Veterans Assistance Group) partnered with American Legion Post 295 of Cypress to support local causes through several community events.



Special Olympics Fundraiser

The summer events kicked off on Friday, July 12, when AVAG, the American Legion, and the Richard Breunig Foundation joined forces for a fundraiser benefiting the Special Olympics. The event raised a total of \$1,575. Attendees enjoyed a fantastic selection of food, participated in a 50/50 raffle, and enjoyed a night of camaraderie and purpose.

This event's success was a team effort, and much of the credit goes to the hardworking volunteers who dedicated their time to ensure every detail was perfect. 🦋



August Bike Night for AVAG – A Roaring Success

August saw another memorable event when American Legion Post 295 and the Richard Breunig Foundation hosted a Bike Night at the American Legion facility in Cypress. This event raised \$2,311 for AVAG, thanks to the generosity of attendees and supporters. From thrilling competitions to raffles and prizes, the evening was a lively display of community spirit.

The Mayor of Cypress, Scott Minikus, was a special guest and selected Daryl Barge's bike as the "Best Bike of the Night." Frank A. Waldrop took home \$148 from the Dollar Game, while Paul Hogan won the 50/50 raffle. The community's support was amazing, with countless prize donations and enthusiastic participation from the attendees. A sincere thank you goes out to everyone who made this event possible, especially the volunteers who put in countless hours to create a memorable evening. 🦋



Golf Tournament Invitation

In August, the commander of American Legion Post 295 extended an invitation to AVAG to join their annual golf tournament. A team of AVAG veterans was thrilled to participate, taking this chance to engage with the broader community and support a friendly and competitive cause. The foursome enjoyed the day, embodying the spirit of camaraderie and fellowship that AVAG, the American Legion, and the Cypress community share. 🦋

Heart of Compassion (HOC)

In June AVAG donated \$2665 to Heart of Compassion (HOC) Distribution. Founded in 1993 by Pastor Eric Tietze, HOC is a 501(c)(3) food bank and social service organization located in Montebello, CA. HOC works to alleviate hunger, food insecurity, and the suffering of those who have fallen on hard times.

AVAG has been blessed with our partnership with HOC. Since partnering with them in 2023, their generous donations have enabled us to provide for our veteran communities.

Many of the items, including bottled water, food items, over-the-counter medications, toiletries, and even flip-flops, are used to for our Affordable Community Living Communities. Recently we placed a request with HOC's Pastor Eric for drinks and snacks for a Sequoia Mobile Home Park event, and he generously gave us waters and plenty of goodies to pass out.

Thank you to HOC for their generous donations, which have blessed so many in our communities. To learn more about HOC visit heartofcompassionca.org. 🦋



Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

AVAG Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto attended the DAV Chapter 23's July monthly meeting, and was presented a special gift to support AVAG. Thank you to DAV Chapter 23 for donating \$1100 in gift cards to help our veterans in need. It is such a pleasure to see the smiles on the faces of veterans who receive the cards. When the last cards had been passed out, DAV 23 agreed to request another \$1000 worth of gift cards for our organization. We are so very grateful for the support and generosity of DAV! 🦋



SoCal Quilts of Valor

Founded in 2003, the mission of the Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor. SoCal Quilts of Valor as a chapter has awarded more than 7,800 quilts to veterans, many of them AVAG veterans. The WWII veterans pictured earlier in this issue all were awarded Quilts of Valor.

In the past quarter the veterans pictured on this page have been the proud recipients of their own beautiful quilts. Thank you to SoCal QAV for honoring our veterans. 🦋



AVAG Communities

Celebrating 10 years of providing support to veterans in need.

Sequoia Plaza MHP

Sequoia Celebrates AVAG 10 Year Anniversary

AVAG, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of Veterans residing in mobile home communities, recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary at Sequoia Mobile Home Park, one of the first of its communities. The event was filled with laughter, great memories, and delicious food, including a cake provided by Michael Goens and In-N-Out burgers for all Veterans and residents in attendance.

Veterans from Sequoia, Pacific Palms, Orangewood, and Glen Aire Mobile Home Estates gathered to commemorate the anniversary.

A Brief History of AVAG

Founded in 2014, AVAG has grown from its roots in the Veterans Assistance Housing Program (VAHP), launched in 2011. VAHP continues its legacy through AVAG.

Today, AVAG continues to serve approximately 40 communities across five western states: California, Arizona, Nevada, Washington, and Oregon. 🦋



A Fun-Filled Community Family Day

Our recent community family day was a huge success! We enjoyed delicious pizza and a lively game of bingo. Thanks to generous donations, we were able to share exciting Disney items with everyone. The kids had a blast and the day felt like a big birthday party for all of them.

We're grateful for the opportunity to bring our community together and give thanks to God for these special moments. 🦋



Bible Study at Sequoia Mobile Home Park

Monthly Bible study meetings at Sequoia are always well attended. The group has been make its way through Operation Timothy, an investigative Bible study with the goal of helping Christians lay a strong foundation for a lifetime of spiritual growth. The group at its last meeting was in Chapter 6 of Book 2. 🦋

Sequoia Concert in the Park!

Sequoia Mobile Home Park hosted an incredible community event filled with fun, fellowship, and faith! AVAG Chaplain Doreen partnered with Park Manager Julisa to bring the festivities to life.

Ekklesia. Today's Senior Pastor Crispin Tenorio opened the event with an inspiring message. Julisa provided delicious bacon-wrapped hot dogs, a huge hit with everyone, as were the snow cones and cotton candy! Refreshments were thanks to Heart of Compassion. A freebie table overflowing with goodies donated by Heart of Compassion and Cottonwood Church kept everyone smiling. Marla and Wayne Ogelvie and Mellissa and David Breunig volunteered their time to run the table.

Julisa's daughter decorated a photo booth for attendees to capture the fun with Mickey Mouse ears and costumes. A giant water slide, courtesy of a resident's bounce house business, kept the kids cool and entertained. The pool was open, and beach balls and volleyball equipment

provided more outdoor play. Ekklesia. Today's band brought the music, and even the summer heat couldn't dampen the festive atmosphere.

A prayer booth offered a quiet space for reflection, while an AVAG booth shared information about the organization's work with Veterans. Three resource booths provided valuable community connections; a Veterans burial program donated raffle prizes, and local residents, a nail technician, and a chef all offered their services and products to support the event.

This event truly embodied the spirit of community. Attendees who RSVP'd in advance received a \$100 gift card, and many residents volunteered from AVAG meetings. Most importantly, 20 individuals found faith through the shared message of the day.

Despite the 108° heat, the Sequoia Mobile Home Park event was a resounding success. It proved that with a little planning, partnership, and community spirit, anything is possible! 🦋



AVAG Delivers Fresh Food and Relief to Sequoia Mobile Home Park

Our food distributions at Sequoia Mobile Home Park have been a consistent success. The turnout most recently has been impressive, with many new faces seeking assistance due to rising grocery prices.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our partners at Bracken's Kitchen for providing delicious, freshly prepared meals, which are especially enjoyed by all. Heart of Compassion also generously donated additional items to distribute to the community.

AVAG continues to serve the San Bernardino area by providing essential food and supplies. We are grateful for the support of our community partners and volunteers who make these events possible.

A special thank you to Bill Bracken from Bracken's Kitchen and Heart of Compassion Distribution for their invaluable contributions. 🦋



Cherokee Senior Mobile Home Park

Cherokee Community Comes Together at AVAG Monthly Meetings

Our July meeting at Cherokee Mobile Home Park was a great event. We are grateful to Atrak of Karta Motorwerks, located in Anaheim, for providing lunch and to Commander Manuel Martinez for donating the raffle prizes, which included watches and a TV.

Our August meeting at Cherokee Mobile Home Park was also a success! We extend our sincere thanks to Commander Manuel Martinez for his generous donation of raffle prizes, including a TV and special watches for both women and men. We also appreciate the continued support of Atrak, who provided a delicious lunch for all attendees.

The City of Anaheim provided updates on upcoming events and resources, while Kevin from Navy Federal Credit Union shared valuable financial information. Janet Brown from the office of Congressman Correa informed us about community happenings.

As a special tribute, we presented a flag to a Veterans' widow.

Our September meeting at Cherokee Mobile Home Park featured a special guest speaker, Mr. Richard Simonian, who shared his experiences in the military and distributed challenge coins. Doug Zimmer presented on POW/MIA Remembrance Day.

Atrak of Karta Motorwerks once again generously provided lunch, and Commander Manuel Martinez donated raffle prizes, including a TV and a watch. AVAG also donated a new flag to the park, which was raised in a ceremony with our partners from the American Legion in Anaheim. 🇺🇸

Cherokee Mobile Home Park Bible Study

The Bible study at Cherokee Mobile Home Park is relatively new, but the attendance is growing steadily —so much so that a request for more study books had to be submitted! The group is currently studying Operation Timothy Book 1. 🇺🇸



Casitas La Verne Mobilehome Estates

Bible Study at Casitas La Verne

A great group of ladies attend the Bible study meetings at Casitas La Verne. Join them at this Bible study which takes place on the third Thursday of the month at 12 noon. The group is currently in Operation Timothy Book 3. 🇺🇸



Santiago Creek Orange Estates

Creek Orange AVAG: Making a Difference, One Meeting at a Time

In July, our AVAG meeting at Creek Orange was a lively gathering with a great turnout from the community. We were honored to host two guest speakers. James Burandt-Nair, a Marine Corps Veteran and Congressional Aide and Military Affairs Liaison for Congresswoman Young Kim, joined us to discuss valuable resources available through his office. We also welcomed James Richardson, a Veterans Outreach Program Specialist from the North Orange County Vet Center, who shared insights on support services specifically tailored for veterans. Attendees enjoyed pizza and the opportunity to connect.

At Creek Orange's August community meeting, we strengthened our partnership with Congresswoman Young Kim's office, working closely with Jason, the congresswoman's veterans liaison, to arrange future guest speakers for our monthly meetings at Creek Orange. We're excited about this ongoing collaboration, which aims to provide our veteran members with even more resources and valuable information.

Thanks to DAV Chapter 23, we were also able to distribute \$50 gift cards to assist our veterans with essential needs. We are also pleased to announce that Glenn Williamson has accepted the role of AVAG Commander, and his wife, Nancy, has joined him in supporting our efforts to serve the veteran community.

Creek Orange's September meeting featured an array of valuable guest speakers. A City of Orange Councilmember Denis Bilodeau addressed our group, and Karen Rossi, MBA, a Community Partner Liaison and Senior Financial Fraud Specialist, shared crucial tips on fraud prevention. Janet Brown provided timely updates on developments in Orange County relevant to our veteran community.

A special thank you goes to Mr. Sanchez from DAV Chapter 23, who generously provided \$50 gift cards to three veterans in attendance. His continued support is much appreciated.

AVAG remains committed to building connections, providing resources, and enhancing support for our veteran community. We look forward to further strengthening our partnerships and bringing even more benefits to Creek Orange in the coming months. Thank you to everyone who helps make our meetings meaningful! 🙌



Diamond Bar Estates

Diamond Bar Estates Youth Program: Growing in Faith and Friendship

At Diamond Bar Estates, the after-school youth program is creating a positive impact in our community by providing a space where children can grow in faith and build friendships. Each month, our dedicated Bible study team brings the Word of God to life, offering hands-on activities, scripture reading, and fun-filled games for the kids.

In July, we kicked off the summer with Bible stories, scripture coloring, and the introduction of new Bibles, which were gifted to every child. Together, we read the first chapter, sang our Good Shepherd song, and enjoyed bingo and snacks. The children are learning to connect with the message of Jesus Christ in a joyful and supportive setting.

In September, we welcomed 14 young participants who enjoyed a day filled with reading from the Good Shepherd book, reading



scripture, and a special raffle of items generously donated by Pastor Eric. Disney-themed prizes were a hit! With the help of our amazing volunteers, the kids enjoyed snacks, played bingo, and had an overall great time.

Thank you to our Bible study volunteers for their commitment and kindness, helping make this program a beacon of light and learning for the children. The kids are developing a stronger sense of faith and community each month, and we're blessed to watch them grow! 🐦



Luau Pool Party Recap: Fun, Food, and Aloha Spirit!

Our first luau pool party was a hit! We had a wonderful turnout, and it was heartwarming to see so many residents enjoying the food, fun, and beautiful weather.

One of the highlights of the day was a hula lesson led by Lani, Art's wife from the Special Forces Association group, who generously volunteered her time and talent to teach everyone some authentic hula moves. Residents young and old joined in for the hula demonstration, and we awarded \$25 gift cards to the oldest and youngest participants who impressed us with their skills. A big thank you to Torres Mortuary for donating the gift cards!

We also held a raffle for those who RSVP'd in advance, adding to the excitement of the day. It was truly a wonderful time for all, filled with laughter and aloha spirit.

A special thanks goes out to our manager, Yessie, who worked tirelessly alongside us to make this event possible. We can't wait to see everyone at our next gathering! 🐦



Ninth Street MHP

Ninth Street's First Bingo Night

We recently hosted our very first Bingo event at Ninth Street and the turnout was encouraging. People were eager to join in on the fun and get to know one another better. The atmosphere was lively and the attendees shared a memorable evening with good company and great games.

The winners of the four bingo games were rewarded with \$25 gift cards from Food 4 Less, a little incentive that added extra excitement to each round. In addition to the bingo prizes, we held a raffle with gifts generously donated by Heart Of Compassion.

The response from our participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many asking if we would come back to host another event soon. It's heartening to see such enthusiasm, and we're thrilled to be rallying the Ninth Street community through events like these.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and contributed to this memorable event. 🦋



Pacific Palms MHP

Pacific Palms: Food Distribution, Fellowship, and Fun

Our recent gathering at Pacific Palms had a great turnout, bringing residents together for a day of food, fellowship, and fun. We kicked off with our food distribution, followed by a community potluck. Sharing a meal together was a perfect way for everyone to connect and enjoy each other's company.

After the potluck, we enjoyed a few lively rounds of Left Right Center, adding some friendly competition to the day. The lucky winner took home a \$25 gift card, generously donated by Home Health of Southern California.

Among those who joined us was William, a local veteran who stopped by to express his appreciation for the work we're doing in the community. William, who inherited his father's home in the park, is a park resident. We're looking forward to sharing his story in an upcoming newsletter.

We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Bracken's Kitchen, whose support made it possible for us to send residents home with freshly prepared meals. Their generosity continues to enrich our events, and we are deeply grateful for their partnership.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this wonderful day. 🦋



Santiago Palm Vista

A Summer of Faith, Fellowship, and Giving Back at Santiago Palm Vista

The past few months at Santiago Palm Vista have been filled with meaningful connections, heartfelt support, and a deepening sense of community. Through our ongoing activities, residents have come together to support one another, grow spiritually, and enjoy the bonds that bring us closer.

July Highlights

Our Tuesday morning Bible study group, which meets weekly at 10 AM, recently completed Operation Timothy Book 1 and has begun Book 2.

In July, we had the opportunity to help two of our members with mobility needs. When Janice's scooter broke down, we were able to provide her with a replacement. Once hers was repaired, she generously passed it forward to Jack, a veteran at Palm Vista. Jack, who has been struggling with his car, was deeply grateful, as this scooter will help him stay active and connected to the community without worry.

August Luncheon and Support for Veterans

August brought a special luncheon at Palm Vista where we shared a meal and lots of friendly conversation. We were able to gift Bibles, and Thanks to DAV Chapter 23 and Torres Mortuary, and distribute gift cards to the veterans in attendance.

In addition to the luncheon, we made home deliveries to residents unable to join us in person, including a visit to Mr. King, who proudly shared an old AVAG newsletter he had saved over the years. We also paid a visit to Richard Messina, a veteran in our community, bringing him lunch and a warm sense of connection.

August ended on a joyful note as our Bible study group celebrated two members, Mark and Ruth, who made the significant decision to be baptized. We were honored to share in this spiritual milestone, and the event brought out more residents who expressed interest in joining the Bible study.

Thank you to all who have contributed to these uplifting events—your kindness is the heartbeat of our community. 🐦



Rancho La Paz MHP

Rancho La Paz AVAG Meetings Foster Community and Connection

The Rancho La Paz AVAG meeting in July was filled with camaraderie, good food, and valuable resources. We enjoyed a delicious spread of chicken, a variety of delicious salads, and, of course, desserts. We were thrilled to welcome several new veterans to our group, and a few AVAG T-shirts and a flag were handed out. Janet Brown shared updates with the group, while our guest speaker from NAMI Orange County offered information on mental health resources and companionship support for seniors. This program, a federally granted 501(c)(3), is dedicated to improving mental health and senior care.

We also took a moment to honor the memory of Rosemary, a cherished AVAG member who recently passed away. Pastor Janus from Ekklesia Today performed a Christian tribute song in her honor, and John Hodges uplifted us with his beautiful piano music.

August's AVAG meeting had a strong turnout and a number of guest speakers. Representatives from Navy Federal Credit Union joined us, along with Nurse Denise from the VA branch in Placentia, who provided valuable health information. Janet Brown shared community updates, keeping everyone informed about upcoming events. Lunch



featured pizza, with additional fruit and salad brought by volunteers from Ekklesia Today church. Commander Pepper assisted with the setup and provided drinks, helping ensure the event was smooth and enjoyable for all who attended.

The September AVAG meeting saw another excellent turnout, with notable guest speakers James Barrett from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Karen Rossi from the Senior Protection Program at the Council on Aging. They offered vital information on veterans' claims, as well as tips on avoiding fraud and scams—a particularly important topic for our community. Lunch was served, and, once again, our veteran John Hodges graced us with his piano playing.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making these gatherings special each month. 🦋



Westmount of Cypress

Westmount Bible Study Group

The Bible study group at Westmount of Cypress has become a beloved gathering for residents, with each session drawing a full house. Our group has been steadily growing, attracting volunteers who come to support and share in the fellowship. In June, we were thrilled to see such a strong turnout, and in July, we added a special touch by bringing beanies for everyone!

As of September, we've moved into Operation Timothy Book 3, where our discussions have deepened. The residents look forward to each visit, not only for the spiritual growth it offers but also for the chance to pray together and for each other. The Bible study has truly become a highlight of the week, fostering connections, faith, and mutual support among everyone involved. 🦋



In Memoriam



Allen Braverman

US Navy Veteran Allen Braverman, who served from December 1958 to January 1964, passed away on July 29, 2024. His funeral was held at the Riverside National Cemetery on August 31, 2024, with AVAG Chaplain Doreen Matsumoto delivering a touching eulogy.

Allen was a long-time member of the AVAG Community. Allen and his wife became

AVAG members several years ago, and they never missed a meeting or event. He will be missed. ✈



Frank Perez

Francisco Manuel Del Valle Perez, known as Frank or Pancho to those who knew him well, passed away peacefully on August 26, 2024, at the age of 76. He was a resident of Lomita, CA. A US Army veteran, he proudly served in the 82nd Airborne Division for six years, earning the National Defense Service Medal and Parachute Badge.

He was buried with military honors at Green Hills Memorial Park in Rancho Palos Verdes on September 18, 2024.

Frank will be remembered for his love for his family and friends, his incredible strength, both mental and physical, his inexhaustible work ethic, and for his love of the Los Angeles Dodgers. ✈



AVAG News

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