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CB2 DIRECTORS
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James Morgan
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The Bugle Call



June, 2023, Volume 13, Number 6

Warminster, Pennsylvania

Ann's Choice Residents and Guests are invited to attend Veterans Group Programs and Events
(Meetings are open to ALL with no charge)

Military Movie Nights in the PAC July and August

On Tuesday, July 18, the Veterans Group will present the 1951 feature *The Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel*. This biopic movie follows the final years of the respected WW II German general, Erwin Rommel. The film was based on a book by British army officer and North African Campaign veteran Desmond Young; his life was personally spared by Rommel's insistence on military law being scrupulously adhered to.



On Tuesday, August 15, the Veterans Group will present *Guadalcanal Diary*. This story concentrates on the personal lives of some of the marines in a task force bound for Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands in 1942. The movie was shot from May to late July, 1943, mostly at Camp Pendleton, near Oceanside, California. Many of the Marines stationed there were filmed on maneuvers, and others appeared in the picture in small parts.

Both movies will be shown in the PAC at 7:00 pm with a pre-show at 6:45.

Why Do You Need the Veterans Group?

The Veterans Group provides several services to veterans and fellow residents of Ann's Choice. These include -

- Color Guard for presenting the U. S. flag at Veterans Group programs and some Ann's Choice programs.
- Annual Memorial Day remembrance service in the Chapel for veterans.
- Annual program on Veterans Day.

Meeting Schedule for 2023

The Veterans Group will meet in the PAC these days, except as noted:

- Jan. 17 – Business Meeting, Program
- Feb. 21 – Program Only
- Mar. 21 – Program Only
- Apr. 18 – Business Meeting, Program
- May 16 – Military Movie Night
- May 30 – Memorial Day Service (Chapel)
- Jun. 20 – Business Meeting, Election, Program,
- Jul. 18 – Military Movie Night**
- Aug. 15 – Military Movie Night**
- Sep. 18 – Program Only (New day – Monday; new time – 10:00 am, new location – Multipurpose Room)**
- Oct. 16 – Business Meeting, Program
- Nov. 10 – Veterans Day Program
- Dec. 12 – Military Movie Night

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- Deploying and retrieving memorial flags in front of the clubhouses.
- Deploying and retrieving small flags around the campus.
- Valet service for mobility devices.
- Free transportation to the Horsham VA clinic.
- Military movie nights in the PAC.
- Having this newsletter to read.

It takes volunteers to make these things happen.



Even if you don't use some of these services now, there may come a time in the future when you need to take advantage of them.

“Needed” is continued on page 4

Operation Homecoming

Fifty years ago, one of the most controversial military conflicts took a major step toward completion. And that completion was not seen as an honorable result by many in this country.

When it can be said to have begun is a point which can be discussed and debated. Wikipedia sets the date as November 1, 1955, when the second of the Indochina Wars - officially fought between North Vietnam and South Vietnam - began.

After the French defeat in the First Indochina War and the withdrawal of troops from Indochina pursuant to the 1954 Geneva Conference, the Viet Minh took control of North Vietnam, while the U.S. assumed financial and military support for the South Vietnamese state. The Việt Cộng (VC), a South Vietnamese common front under the direction of the north, initiated a guerrilla war in the south. The People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN), also known as the North Vietnamese Army (NVA), engaged in more conventional warfare with U.S. and South Vietnamese forces (ARVN). North Vietnam invaded Laos in 1958, establishing the Ho Chi Minh Trail to supply and reinforce the VC. By 1963, the north had sent 40,000 soldiers to fight in the south. U.S. involvement increased under President John F. Kennedy, from just under a thousand military advisors in 1959 to 23,000 by 1964.

Following the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution that gave President Lyndon Johnson broad authority to increase U.S. military presence in Vietnam, without a formal declaration of war. Johnson ordered the deployment of combat units for the first time, and dramatically increased the number of American troops to 184,000. U.S. and

South Vietnamese forces relied on air superiority and overwhelming firepower to conduct search and destroy operations, involving ground forces, artillery, and airstrikes. The U.S. also conducted a large-scale strategic bombing campaign against North Vietnam, and continued significantly building up its forces, despite little progress being made. In 1968, North



Vietnamese forces launched the Tet Offensive; though it was a military defeat for them, it became a political victory, as it caused U.S. domestic support for the war to fade. By the end of the year, the VC held little territory and were sidelined by the PAVN. In 1969, North Vietnam declared the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. Operations crossed national borders, and the U.S. bombed North Vietnamese supply routes in Laos and Cambodia. After the election of Richard Nixon in 1969, a policy of "Vietnamization" began, which saw the conflict fought by an expanded ARVN, while U.S. forces withdrew in the face of increasing domestic opposition. U.S. ground forces had largely withdrawn by early 1972, and their operations were limited to air support, artillery support, advisors, and materiel shipments. The Paris Peace Accords of January 1973 saw all U.S. forces withdrawn; accords were broken almost immediately, and fighting continued for two more years. In April 1975, Saigon fell to the PAVN and the US embassy was evacuated. The 1975 spring offensive saw the Fall of Saigon to the PAVN on 30 April, marking the end of the war; North and South Vietnam were reunified the following year.

This war was not supported by a large percentage of Americans. (Editor's note: Initially I was in full support of the war as a way to restrict and limit Communist influence in Southeast Asia. Later, I became disillusioned at the way the war was being conducted, though the intention still seemed to have merit.)

Members of the US armed forces were held as prisoners of war (POWs) in significant numbers during the Vietnam War from 1964 to 1973. Unlike POWs in World War II and the Korean War, who were mostly enlisted troops, most of Vietnam-era POWs were officers. Primarily they were Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps airmen; a relatively small number of Army enlisted personnel were also captured, as well as one enlisted Navy seaman, Petty Officer Doug Hegdahl, who fell overboard from a naval vessel. Most U.S. prisoners were captured and held in North Vietnam by the People's Army of Vietnam; a much smaller number were captured in the south and held by the VC. A handful of U.S. civilians were also held captive during the war.

Thirteen prisons and prison camps were used to house U.S. prisoners in North Vietnam, the most widely known of which was Hỏa Lò Prison (nicknamed the "Hanoi Hilton"). The treatment and ultimate fate of U.S. prisoners of war in Vietnam became a subject of widespread concern in the United States, and hundreds of thousands of Americans wore POW

bracelets with the name and capture date of imprisoned U.S. service members.

American POWs in North Vietnam were released in early 1973 as part of Operation Homecoming, the result of diplomatic negotiations concluding U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. On February 12, 1973, the first of 591 U.S. prisoners began to be repatriated, and return flights continued until late March. After Operation Homecoming, the U.S. still listed roughly 1,350 Americans as prisoners of war or missing in action and sought the return of roughly 1,200 Americans reported killed in action, but whose bodies were not recovered. These missing personnel would become the subject of the Vietnam War POW/MIA issue.

The Paris Peace Accords of 1973 included provisions for exchanging prisoners of war. The plan to bring American prisoners home was called OPERATION HOMECOMING. Prisoners were to be returned to U.S. control during February and March 1973, with the longest-held generally returning first.

The North Vietnamese assembled the POWs and told them the war was over. As the POWs prepared to leave, the North Vietnamese tried to issue them brightly-colored sweaters and suits with ties -- another of their endless propaganda attempts. The POWs did



When the C-141A Hanoi Taxi left the ground, the POWs knew they were really free (USAF photo)

not want to look well-treated or like civilians, but they compromised to keep from jeopardizing their release. They accepted low-key outfits of dark pants, shirts, and wind-breakers.

At Hanoi's Gia Lam Airport, the men were thrilled to see C-141A Starlifter aircraft landing to pick them up. The happiest moment came when the aircraft left the ground--and POWs knew for certain that they were free.

The first group of POWs to leave Hanoi on Feb. 12, 1973, flew on a C-141 later dubbed the Hanoi Taxi. This historic aircraft is part of the National Museum of the USAF's collection. The Hanoi Taxi, though modified over the years, was also maintained as a flying memorial to Vietnam-era POWs and MIAs. In 2002, during the aircraft's last PDM (Periodic Depot

Maintenance), it was repainted in its 1970s gray and white scheme, and it ended its flying career with the USAF Reserve's 445th Airlift Wing at Wright-Patterson

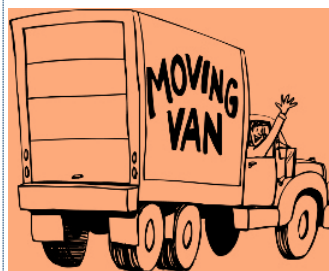


The C-141A Hanoi Taxi in the National Museum of the USAF.

AFB in 2006. It has since been restored and is now in Hangar 4 of the National Museum of the USAF instead on the tarmac.

Recalling his own journey out of North Vietnam on Feb. 18, 1973, Maj. Gen. Ed Mechenbier, the last Vietnam POW to serve in the USAF, said, "When we got airborne and the frailty of being a POW turned into the reality of freedom, we yelled, cried and cheered."

Sources include articles on Wikipedia on the end of the Vietnam War, articles on the website of the Nat. Museum of the USAF, and the editor's photos.



Veterans Group Meetings

Beginning in September the Veterans Group will gather for regular meetings and program in the Keystone Multipurpose Room at 10:00 am. The September meeting will be on September 18, and the October meeting will be on October 16.

Bucks County Veterans Affairs

The new Director of Veterans Affairs for Bucks County is Matthew Allen. He can be reached at (215) 345-3881.

Veterans Flags

For certain national holidays, the Ann’s Choice Veterans Group deploys government-issued U. S. flags in front of each clubhouse. The holidays are Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Veterans Day. There are twenty-one in-ground mounts in front of the three clubhouses and Rose Garden. These



flags have been donated to the Veterans Group by families of veterans.

Twenty-one flags are deployed on the three holidays. Volunteers deploy these flags and take them in after the holiday. **Volunteers are needed.** If you would like to join this team as a way to honor veterans, contact Gordon Larson at (630) 926-7334.

Membership Open

At the Veterans Group meeting in June 2022 the membership approved changes to the By-Laws to expand eligibility to all residents for membership in the Veterans Group. Veterans may apply to be a Member, and non-Veterans may apply to be an Associate Supporting Member. Lifetime membership fees are \$50 and \$35 respectively.

All members 1) receive a copy this monthly newsletter, *The Bugle Call*, 2) will not be asked for a donation at Military Movie Night if wearing their Veterans Group shirt, and 3) may participate in any of the service projects of the Veterans Group. Note: Associate Supporting Members are not eligible to be elected to the Board of Directors.

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Continuation of “Needed” from page 1

Our concern is that due to the declining number of veterans or the lack of awareness of the need for volunteers, we may not be able to provide needed services in the future.

If you are a veteran or an interested resident and would like to help provide these services in the future, please contact one of the officers and volunteers listed in the left-most column on page 1.

Volunteer for the Color Guard

The Veterans Group Color Guard needs you!



This service opportunity requires three members for proper presentation of the colors. We also need to have a couple of alternates to fill in if someone is unavailable. Without alternates there is the possibility of not being able to have a color guard at our meetings.

This volunteer opportunity requires no more than thirty minutes of your time each month to present the colors plus two special programs – Memorial Day and Veterans Day. If you can help, please contact Jim Seyboldt at (267) 401-4420 or cbolt35@gmail.com.

Flags on Campus

Volunteers deploy these smaller flags around the campus for Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Veterans Day.



All of us enjoy seeing the flags around the community on these special holidays. **More volunteers are needed for this service to the community.** To join the team helping with this project, contact Jim Kibelstis (215-837-7660).

AV Opportunities

There is an opportunity to help with the Veterans Group during the meetings and Military Movie



Nights by volunteering in the AV booth in the PAC. Contact Keith Lawrence at (215) 444-0116 for more information about this service opportunity.

VA Benefits

You may have received an application for VA benefits recently in a mailing from PA with the renewal for your driver’s license. If you are not already registered for VA benefits, take this opportunity to sign up. The Veterans Group Service Officer, Jerry Byrnes will be available both before and after the movies on July 18 and August 15 to answer questions; he will also have blank forms.

