



THE BUGLE

A monthly publication by the Village Veterans Club, Ocean Hills Country Club

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web site: oceanhillscountryclub.com

The History of Memorial Day

Originally called Decoration Day, from the early tradition of decorating graves with flowers, wreaths and flags, Memorial Day is a day for remembrance of those who have died in service to our country. It was first widely observed on May 30, 1868 to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers, by proclamation of Gen. John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of former Union sailors and soldiers.

During that first national celebration, former Union General and sitting Ohio Congressman James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, after which 5,000 participants helped to decorate the graves of the more than 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers who were buried there. After World War I, it became an occasion for honoring those who died in all of America's wars and was then more widely established as a national holiday throughout the United States.

When Is Memorial Day?

In 1971, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act and established that Memorial Day was to be celebrated on the **last Monday of May**. Memorial Day is celebrated at Arlington National Cemetery each year with a ceremony in which a small American flag is placed on each grave. Traditionally, the President or Vice President lays a wreath at the Tomb of the

Memorial Day is a **federal holiday** in the United States for remembering the people who died while serving in the country's armed forces.

Memorial Day was born out of the Civil War and a desire to honor our dead. It was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of former Union sailors and soldiers.

The following are places in San Diego County that have Memorial Day Celebrations:

Wednesday – May 25

Del Mar: St. Peter's Episcopal Church will hold its annual community Memorial Day service at 11 a.m. May 25 at 334 14th St. Traditional service of hymns and prayer, followed by "memorial roll call" of deceased members of the armed services. Service concludes with a playing of "Taps." This year's speaker is Capt. Tim Eichler, the current Navy Region Southwest regional chaplain. To include the name of a deceased military member for remembrance and prayer during the service, call (858) 755-1616.

Encinitas: Ceremony is at 10:45 a.m. at Cottonwood Creek Park, 95 N. Vulcan, followed by open house and food at Post 416, 210 W. F St. May 25; hosted by the American Legion Post 416 and Encinitas Elks. (760) 753-5674.

Oceanside: The Veterans Association of North County (VANC) holds a remembrance starting at 10 a.m. May 25 in the VANC Resource Center, 1617 Mission Ave., followed by refreshments. The speaker is Dr. Linda Dudik, a retired college history professor who is recording the stories of WWII Veterans. (760) 967-7254.

SUNDAY – MAY 29

Miramar National Cemetery

5795 Nobel Drive
San Diego, CA 92122
(858) 658-7360

Ceremony: May 29 at 1:00 p.m.

MONDAY - 30 MAY

Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery

Cabrillo Memorial Drive
San Diego, CA 92106
(619) 553-2084

Ceremony: May 30 at 10:00 a.m.

Veterans Museum in Balboa Park

9:00 a.m. - Formal Observance of Memorial Day with Guest Speakers from the community and the Playing of Taps.

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Open House at The Veterans Museum in Balboa Park, 2115 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92101
(619)239-2300

Escondido: Escondido Allied Veterans Council, including American Legion Post 149, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1513 and Disabled American Veterans Chapter 70 will host a ceremony at 10 a.m., Oak Hill Memorial Park, 2640 Glenridge Road, followed by light lunch at

the Veterans Memorial Building, 230 E. Park Ave.; donations accepted; (760) 745-1159.

Need a flag to fly on these important days or any day? Call Tom Brennan at 760-842-1470. He can arrange to install the complete package that consists of bracket, non-furl pole and a long-lasting embroidered flag or just a new flag.

VILLAGE VETS MEETING

Buck Ramsey, a docent from the USS Midway Museum will be our speaker. His subject is the fall and evacuation of the city of Saigon in 1975.

The fall of Saigon occurred on April 30, 1975 when the Viet Cong entered the capital of South Vietnam. The event marked the end of the Vietnam War and the start of a transition period to the formal reunification of Vietnam under the Socialist Republic.

Without the support of the United States, the South Vietnamese struggled to stop the advance of the North Vietnamese forces. In the spring of 1975, President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam asked President Gerald Ford for support, it was denied. President Thieu resigned on April 21 and fled the country.

Under the command of General Van Tien Dung, the Viet Cong began their final attack on Saigon on April 29, 1975. Saigon suffered heavy losses under heavy artillery bombardment that cost the lives of the last two American Servicemen serving in Vietnam. By the afternoon of the next day, Viet Cong had occupied the important points of the city and raised their flag over the South Vietnamese presidential palace and the government capitulated soon afterward.

The capture of the city was preceded by the evacuation of almost all the American civilian and military personnel in Saigon along with tens of thousands of South Vietnamese civilians associated with the southern regime. However, thousands of South Vietnamese desperate to escape were left stranded outside the embassy. The evacuation culminated in *Operation Frequent Wind*, the largest helicopter evacuation in history.



North and South Vietnam were reunited under the control of the Communist North Vietnamese government and renamed Saigon, “Ho Chi Minh City,” after its former president. South Vietnamese soldiers and government officials were placed in camps and the people of Saigon were forced to take up farming in the countryside. The plan to transform Vietnam into a socialist country met with disastrous effects on the economy, but in the 1980s, the government moved to a more market-based capitalist economy.

The meeting will be held in Abravanel Hall on Thursday, May 26, 2016 at 3 p.m. The speaker will include pictures of how the Midway was heavily involved in this rescue

mission. Refreshments will be served and the meeting will be open to all residents.

VETERAN PROFILE

Bob Wong

Bob was never set out to be in the military. No one in his immediate family or his extended family ever considered being a soldier or sailor. Born during the depression years in one of the poorest sections of Los Angeles, Bob was the second of five children whose father was an immigrant from China and a mother born in Portland, Oregon. Bob was not expected to live at birth because of a blocked intestine. He languished for well over a dozen years before he entered high school. Academically he did well, but he enjoyed Army Junior ROTC. It made him feel proud wearing WWI uniforms and using WWI rifles, Sam Brown belts and sabers. He climbed through the ranks and in his senior year, became the Cadet Lt. Colonel of his school battalion.

He attended UCLA only because his family could not afford to send him to USC where the tuition was \$13 per unit. UCLA was far more viable at \$39 per semester. He also enrolled in the Naval ROTC program that paid a small but precious stipend. Upon graduation, he was given a gold stripe and after a few days, he was assigned to the USS Rochester, a heavy cruiser stationed at Long Beach.

The mere fact that he was in the military was a source of pride in the Chinese community in Los Angeles and being an officer was indeed an achievement. In the 1950s, the Navy was still very racially stratified. The Filipinos were the cooks, the Negroes were the stewards for the officers and the deck crews and officers were

white. When Harry Truman in 1948 mandated the armed services be desegregated, word failed to seep down to the ranks with any great speed.

Navy life was a completely different world. He was given the responsibility of watch officer in CIC (Combat Information Center) and on the bridge as assistant to the Officer of the Deck. After a few months of gunnery exercises off San Clemente Island, they sailed off to Korea where they were the guide ship for



Task Force 77 and aircraft carriers off the coast of Korea. It was their job to neutralize the major port of Wonsan in North Korea where the Russian supply ships fortified the North Koreans. With only 5" and 8" guns, they demolished the harbor.

He was assigned to send a damage report daily to CICPAC. There was nothing to report except a destruction of an ox cart (vehicle) or an occasional out house (building) or maybe a dirt pathway (traffic obstruction). After two tours in Korea, he was assigned to a Naval Reserve Center where he pushed paper around. Meanwhile, he found a job at a new growing company called Sav-On Drug Stores.

Soon he married Pat, an RN and a native of Ireland and settled in Cerritos where they raised 3 children. Having completed a lengthy

training period, he was assigned to manage a store in mid-town Los Angeles. Later, he was assigned to manage another store in Alhambra. After thirty years with Sav-On, the chain was purchased by another company and the older employees were encouraged to "retire."

After a period managing the J.J. Newberry stores, he became interested in floral design upon the insistence of his wife. He was soon creating floral arrangements for several churches that blossomed into a thriving wedding business. On top of that, he taught floral arranging four nights a week at the local colleges and adult night schools.

In 1998, he decided they should stop working and retire full time. They relocated to Ocean Hills. While his involvement in the flower business diminished, he was selected to create the environment at the S.D. Convention center for the Diocese of San Diego for several years. His interest also wandered into the area of baking where he bakes pies, cakes, and cookies for Mira Costa College and Camp Pendleton. He teaches a weekly class on Chinese Brush Painting at the Clubhouse. He is also Editor-in-Chief of the Village Voice and he publishes the Bugle. His association with the Village Veterans began in its inception and before that, he worked with Min Mayeda who initiated an album of veteran histories and military events for the Clubhouse library.

Although he is a certified Scuba Diver, he no longer dives because he considers himself too old and too fat. Besides watching the grass grow in his front lawn, Bob anxiously awaits visits from his five grandchildren. He is excited when they arrive and thrilled when they leave. Then he can get back to watching the grass grow.