

NOCVA News

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION of CHAMORRO VETERANS in AMERICA
NATIONAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER**



FROM THE FOUNDERS

Cel Aguigui, Larry Cruz, and Frank Blas

This holiday season, we are filled with wonder at how far NOCVA has come in such a relatively short time. From our perspective at the national office, we see great strides being made to build NOCVA into a vital and dynamic organization to serve Chamorro veterans, now and well into the future.

The national office and regional chapters (15 to date) continue to work together to establish an active network of members throughout the 50 states, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands to help share information, effectively organize, and build political power. The driving force behind this effort is a dedication to work for a greater purpose, to right past wrongs, and to leave a legacy for future generations. Chamorro veterans from all walks of life bring a wealth of skills and talent, and they are ready and willing to join this effort.

Despite this deep desire to serve, building a grassroots advocacy organization from the ground up isn't easy. It takes time, perseverance, and commitment to a long-term vision. It relies on the generosity and skills of volunteers and the willingness to cover costs with personal funds. Even so, we remain as committed as ever to doing whatever it takes to make NOCVA a world-class, effective, and powerful organization known for getting results. We are encouraged by the various efforts of NOCVA regional chapters to build and organize their members, create initiatives to support NOCVA's mission, and work together to unite Chamorros to speak with one voice.

In this issue, we are proud to feature news from some of our regional chapters. Some chapters will be more active due to their location and number of members; however, all of us can benefit from learning about what the various chapters are doing so we can support their efforts. In the true spirit of camaraderie, we all share in each other's accomplishments as well benefit from lessons learned. Through each of our many efforts, we can accomplish great things.

**"Many small people
who in many small places
do many small things
that can alter the face of the world"**

- Quote painted on the Berlin wall

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NATIONAL OFFICE ACTION ITEMS

OFFICIAL VISITS/ACTIONS

NOCVA national coordinators Cel Aguigui and Larry Cruz attended the following events in October 2013

- Meeting with Edward Chow, Jr, Secretary of Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs: Introduced purpose of NOCVA; established relationship and received pledge for ongoing support
- VA Capitol Health Care Network, Management Assistance Council conference: Participated in various veterans' health-related discussions and attended presentations addressing improvements to veterans' services, claims processing backlogs, and various VA health facility updates

REGIONAL CHAPTER NEWS



photo by Deena Carbullido

Pictured (l-r): Roland "RC" Combado, Fred Benavente, Jess Carbullido, and Roland Taitano

San Bernardino-Riverside County Chapter

Current Officers

President: RC Combado

Vice President: Jess Carbullido

Secretary: Roland Taitano

Treasurer: Doroteo Diaz

Since it was established, the Southern California San Bernardino-Riverside County Chapter has focused on increasing its membership to NOCVA in record numbers and raising funds for operational needs. Under the leadership of Chapter President **Roland "RC" Combado**, membership registration has soared from a startup core of only five members in April 2013 to over 80 active members just six months later, in October 2013.

The leadership and organizational skills of fundraising chair **Jess Carbullido** have been instrumental in the chapter's recruiting and fundraising efforts. The chapter hosted a dinner dance event that was attended by over 200 people and raised over \$2,000.00.

The highlight of the event, a "Chelu, We Remember You" special tribute, was conducted in honor of US Army SP4 James Santos, a fallen Chamorro Vietnam veteran. His surviving spouse, **June Santos Gulla**, of Riverside, CA, was present to receive the honor. The tribute was given in English and Chamorro. Following the tribute, a NOCVA flag, a rubbing of James' name etched in the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, DC, and a floral arrangement were presented by President **RC Combado**, then-Vice President **Fred Benavente**, and **Adelina Carbullido**.

A Fallen Heroes table was set up to display the names of Chamorro Vietnam veterans to honor and celebrate their service and contribution. A CD featuring photos of the event was prepared by **Deena Carbullido** and later made available for sale, providing yet another fundraising opportunity to contribute to the growth of the chapter. The chapter continues to hold monthly/quarterly meetings and pursue efforts to increase membership by word of mouth as well as by distributing brochures at local events that celebrate Asian/Pacific Islander cultures.

-Submitted by Roland Taitano

REGIONAL CHAPTER NEWS

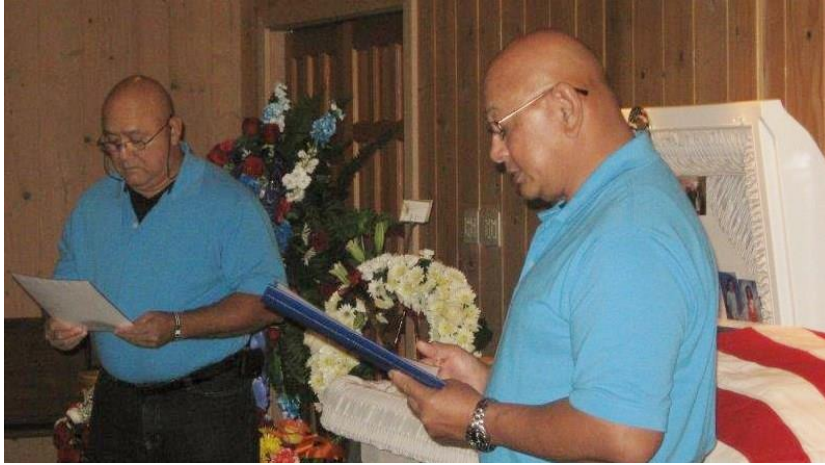


photo by John Marquez

Washington State Chapter

Current Officers

President: Roberto T. Maanao

**Vice President: Antonio
LeonGuerrero**

Treasurer: Atanacio "Ace" Untalan

Sergeant-at-Arms: Anthony Aguon

Chamorro Veterans Honoring a Fellow Chamorro Veteran

Tony Aguon (above left) and **Roberto Maanao** (right) conducted a special tribute for **SFC Anthony Santos Trinidad** (Army, retired), formerly from Chalan Pago, Guam. Anthony was called to his eternal rest on 17 October 2013 and buried at Tahoma National Cemetery, Kent, WA. He is survived by his wife, **Doris Herrero Trinidad**; sons **Tony & Rodney Trinidad** and daughter **Sheena Trinidad Naputi**; and grandchildren. Tony was born on 6 August 1953.

-Submitted by Roberto Maanao

"Chelu, We Remember You" Special Tribute

The "Chelu, We Remember You" Special Tribute was first recited at the first Chamorro Veterans Commemoration Ceremony, held in Washington, DC, on 24 March 2012. The special tribute was adapted from "Litany of Remembrance," written by Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn (*The Gates of Prayer*, 1975), who adapted a poem by Rabbis Sylvan Kamens and Jack Riemer, written in the 1960s.

In preparation for the historic Chamorro Veterans Commemoration Ceremony, NOCVA's founding members adapted the "We Remember Them" litany to include phrases that would uniquely reflect the island heritage of the fallen Chamorro soldiers; a Chamorro translation was later added. Since then, the "Chelu Special Tribute" has been recited at funeral services of Chamorro veterans as a way to honor not only their military service, but also their island identity.

NOCVA is committed to honoring Chamorro veterans by providing support for conducting "Chelu, We Remember You" Special Tributes as requested. For more information about the Special Tribute and the "Chelu, We Remember You" Project, please visit our website at www.nocva.org.

VETERANS SPOTLIGHT: Antonio “Tony” Blas



Vietnam veteran **Tony Blas**, who served with Company B, 1st “Garryowen” Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division in Vietnam from 1968-1972, rides on board a Huey as part of the farewell and retirement ceremony for three UH-1 “Huey” helicopters at Fort Hood, TX, 18 August 2012.

For the complete story, “Vietnam vets join 21st Cav aviators for Hueys’ final lift at Hood,” and other photos, please see link at <http://www.army.mil/article/85964/>

Caption and photo credit: Daniel Cernero, III Corps and Fort Hood Public Affairs

Source: US Army, www.army.mil

Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Ceremony in Fort Hood

To celebrate the service of Vietnam veterans and give them the long-overdue welcoming home ceremony they deserved, Fort Hood hosted a Phantom Warrior Week in May 2012. Veterans from across the nation participated in numerous events, including a pass in review and parade with Fort Hood units. **Antonio “Tony” Blas**, a NOCVA regional coordinator in Texas, participated in the parade. According to Army sources, nearly 700 Vietnam veterans and 500 active-duty Fort Hood soldiers were side-by-side during the Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Ceremony on Sadowski Field on 21 May 2012. About 2,000 friends, family, and community members welcomed them home.

Thank you to Tony for providing the following links:

<http://www.hood.army.mil/pww/>

photos

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/forthood/sets/72157629833134150/with/7243163268>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/forthood/sets/72157629879398692/>

Welcome Home ceremony

http://www.dvidshub.net/video/145138/vietnam-veterans-welcome-home-2012#Uph6_MRDuRl

Sources: US Army, Fort Hood: www.hoodarmy.mil/pww and Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System

NOCVA NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF

Celestin “Cel” Rivera Aguigui, *Founder/National Coordinator*

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NOCVA is a non-political, non-partisan national advocacy organization based in the Nation’s capital that seeks to unite and organize Chamorro veterans and their supporters to leverage their collective political influence in the United States to work on behalf of the Chamorro people – in the US, in Guam, and in the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

To become a member, visit our website at www.nocva.org to download a membership form.

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and suggestions to *Editor*

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