

NOCVA News

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION of CHAMORRO VETERANS in AMERICA
NATIONAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER



FROM THE FOUNDERS

Cel Aguigui, Larry Cruz, and Frank Blas

March, April, and May 2014 have been busy months for NOCVA, both at the national level as well as for our regional chapters. We continue to build connections with decisionmakers in Congress who are in positions to make a difference on matters important to Chamorro veterans. Many of these initiatives are behind-the-scenes and take time to develop, but we believe that they are critical in building NOCVA's influence and reputation as a powerful and effective advocacy organization for Chamorro veterans.

In March 2014, we attended NOCVA's first Western Regional Coordinators Conference in San Diego, CA, with over 40 Chamorro veterans and supporters. Attendees represented chapters from six regions. The success of the conference was due to the careful planning, organization, and coordination of NOCVA's **Greg Camacho** (regional coordinator, San Diego), **Brienda Diaz**, and **Joanna Torre** (regional coordinator, Sacramento).

On 26 May, we observe Memorial Day, a day to commemorate the men and women who died while in military service. Chamorro veterans from Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands have a long tradition of military service to our country, often at great sacrifice. For example:

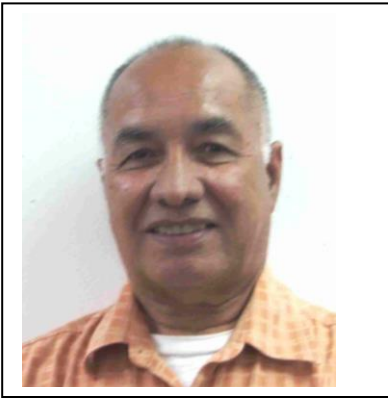
- Although the population of Guam at the time of the Vietnam War was less than 130,000, Chamorros served in disproportionately high amounts, many paying the ultimate sacrifice. During the Vietnam War, at least 70 servicemen from Guam were killed, a death rate nearly three times the national average. *[Department of Defense official records]*
- In the current wars, the death rate for troops from Guam and other Micronesian islands during service in Afghanistan and Iraq is higher than that of any other jurisdiction. Guam (and other U.S. islands in the Pacific): 5.8 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. *[Washington Post database]*
- Iraqi War Casualties per capita: ranking 2nd is Northern Mariana Islands (3.733 per 100,000) and ranking 6th is Guam (1.78 per 100,000)
http://www.statemaster.com/graph/mil_ira_war_cas_percap-iraqi-war-casualties-per-capita

This year, we are proud to feature a special Memorial Day message from one of our Chamorro veterans, **Joaquin S. "Danny" Santos Jr.** We honor the memory of all our fellow servicemen and women who have served bravely and with distinction.

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SPECIAL MEMORIAL DAY MESSAGE



Joaquin S. "Danny" Santos, Jr

photo provided by Santos family

Joaquin S. "Danny" Santos Jr., is a retired Marine Colonel and a Vietnam Veteran. He and his wife of 55 years, **Rosalia Bamba Castro Santos**, are residents of Asan, Guam.

Patriotic Americans, along with Veterans and family members, will gather at this time of the year to pay tribute and respect to service men and women who gave their lives while serving our Country. There will be inspirational speeches reminding us of the need to maintain, protect and defend freedom and the pursuit of happiness. We will hear the need to remain vigilant in the war against terrorism, and that our Armed Forces is technologically superior and well prepared to respond anywhere when the Country is faced with imminent threat by a leader who poses danger to his or her neighbor and the international community. We will be told that to avoid conflict, diplomacy will be exhausted before placing our troops in harm's way. Finally, we will be reminded of the price and burden necessary to protect our National interest. Veterans of all wars and family members will take time to pray for those dear to them and place flowers on their graves.

Those who once wore the uniform of our Armed Forces and experienced danger in a hostile environment will reflect on the bond between each member of the unit who would undeniably protect each other in a mission when confronted with imminent danger and death. They will reminisce that no Veteran has any intention of becoming a hero but circumstances often propel someone to perform valorous acts at the cost of his or her life.

On this Memorial Day, every Veteran will pay homage and remember someone in the unit who unselfishly gave up his or her life so that others may live. Lest we forget, those who paid the ultimate sacrifice were denied the freedom, the ability to discuss issues of the day or to raise a family and see their children grow to maturity and enter the world as adults.

Today, as we look at the face of each Chamorro Veteran, each one has a story to tell of the pain and suffering endured in the Pacific campaign in World War II, the freezing cold and blistering wind at the Chosin Reservoir in the Korean War, the humid jungle and booby traps fighting the elusive Viet Cong during the Vietnam War, and the devastation and toils on human lives caused by improvised explosive devices in Iraq and Afghanistan in the Gulf War in the fight against Al Qaeda and the global war on terrorism.

The Chamorro Veterans of WW II, Vietnam and Korean era served with pride, humility and dignity answering JFK's call to "... ask not what your Country can do for you but what you can do for your Country." That generation of Chamorro Veterans responded well and left behind a legacy of professionalism, sacrifice and exemplary leadership for others to emulate. And indeed the generation of service men and women that followed and fought in the Gulf War served honorably with distinction, focused on the mission, and some paid the ultimate sacrifice.

All Chamorro Veterans can be assured that the torch of honor, service and commitment deeply ingrained in their faith in God has been successfully passed on to the new generation of Chamorros who continue to serve our Country with pride, professionalism and dignity. Indeed, as we reflect on this Memorial Day, let us give thanks to all Veterans who unselfishly gave of themselves for the freedom we enjoy. Well done and Si Yuus Maase. We are proud of you.

NOCVA WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATORS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS and PHOTOS



photo by Peto Santiago

On 27 March 2014, NOCVA held its first Western Regional Coordinators Conference in San Diego, CA. The event was hosted by NOCVA's San Diego Chapter and held at the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club of San Diego. Over 40 Chamorro veterans and supporters participated in the all-day conference.

The purpose of the conference was to discuss ways to further NOCVA's mission and to establish procedures to follow as required by NOCVA's nonprofit framework under the direction of the national office. The conference provided a forum to exchange ideas and information in a constructive and positive manner. Attendees represented chapters from San Bernardino, San Diego, Sacramento, Washington State, North Carolina, and Maryland.

Thank you and congratulations to everyone who participated and supported our efforts to make NOCVA a leader in improving the quality of life for Chamorro veterans.

To see more photos taken at the conference, visit the NOCVA-San Diego Chapter facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10201945516142052&set=o.1393309667548143&type=3&theater>

NOCVA WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATORS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS and PHOTOS, continued



photos by Peto Santiago



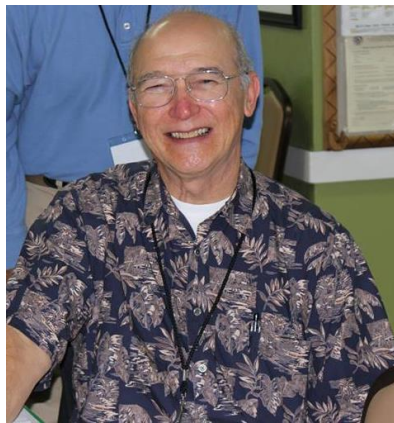
Clockwise, top: NOCVA Western Regional Coordinators Conference organizers and coordinators; **Greg Camacho**, conference organizer and San Diego regional coordinator; **Joanna Torre**, Sacramento regional coordinator; and **Brienda Diaz**, recording secretary, San Diego Chapter

NOCVA WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATORS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS and PHOTOS, continued



photos by Peto Santiago

**NOCVA WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATORS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS and PHOTOS,
continued**



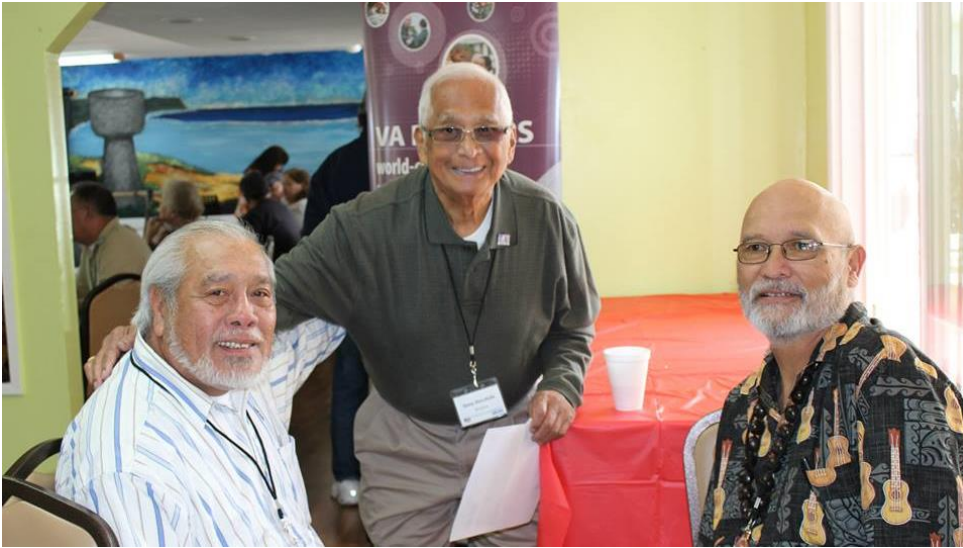
photos by Peto Santiago

NOCVA WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATORS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS and PHOTOS, continued



photos by Peto Santiago

**NOCVA WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATORS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS and PHOTOS,
continued**



photos by Peto Santiago

NOCVA WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATORS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS and PHOTOS, continued



photos by Peto Santiago

For additional information about the conference, see “Chamorro veterans organization has big goals,” by conference attendee **Sandy Uslander**.

<http://www.guampdn.com/article/20140406/LIFESTYLE/304060015/Chamorro-veterans-organization-has-big-goals>

NOCVA WESTERN REGIONAL COORDINATORS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS and PHOTOS, continued



Special thanks to **Island Rain** for performing the Guam Hymn and musical entertainment, the **Sons & Daughters of Guam Club of San Diego** for providing the conference facility, and **Tio Chino restaurant** for preparing a Chamorro specialty menu for conference attendees

<http://tiochino.com/about-tio-chino/>



photos by Peto Santiago

REGIONAL CHAPTER NEWS

NOCVA's San Diego Chapter received a commendation from the San Diego Mayor's Office and the Asian Pacific Islander Association at a recent recognition ceremony for their service to veterans in the San Diego community.

For more information about the commendation, see "Chamorros honored in San Diego," by **Sandy Uslander**.

<http://www.guampdn.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014305250017>

submitted by Greg Camacho

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NOCVA is a non-profit 501(c) (3) 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.

NOCVA News is published from September through November and from January through May by the National Office Staff, based in the Washington, DC, metro area.

Members receive the newsletter as a free service. Contributions to NOCVA are deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.

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