



Veterans' Affairs  
Committee

The Honorable Mayor Jonathan Rothschild  
And Honorable Council Members  
City of Tucson  
P.O. Box 27210  
Tucson, AZ 85726

Subject: Veterans Affairs Committee 2012 Annual Report

In 2012, the Veterans Affairs Committee (VAC) pursued its function to provide a common forum to member organizations for discussion and coordination of activities. Each meeting participating organizations including the AM VETS, American Legion, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services, Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame, Association of Vietnam Veterans of America, DAV Auxiliary Cactus Chapter 2, DAV Cactus Chapter 2, Korean War Veterans Association, Marine Corps League, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Missing in America Project, Southern Arizona VA Health Care System, Tucson Jewish War Veterans, Tucson Veteran Home, Tucson Veterans Cemetery Group, VFW Post 549, Veterans Employment and Training Service, Vietnam Army Corps Veterans Association, Vietnam Veterans of America, Women Marine Association, Women's Army Corps Veterans Association, and the Tucson Airport Authority (Airport Military Lounge) had a chance to distribute information and report on upcoming events, programs and projects.

The Committee's activities rely on the contributions of its member organizations and the generosity of local businesses and citizens. The VAC sponsored or had members participate in several Tucson 2012 events:

- The Four Chaplains Ceremony usually held in February honors the four military chaplains of different religious faiths and denominations who gave their lives to save others when the U.S.A.T. Dorchester was torpedoed and sunk during World War II. 2012 marked the 69th Anniversary of the sinking of the U.S.A.T. Dorchester.
- The VAC continued to maintain a presence on the United Arizona Veterans (UAV) meetings held in Phoenix. The UAV is an organization whose purpose is to support and endorse legislative actions at state and federal levels that further the general welfare of all Arizona Veterans and their families. It is dedicated to activities and objectives that stimulate love of state and country. Committee Chairman Vern Pall and member Norman Ross alternate as the Tucson representative to the UAV.
- A welcome home parade, the Special Salute to Veterans Parade, was organized by Mr. Alan Toppel for returning

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Combat Veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The parade was held on Saturday, March 31, 2012. The VAC provided Mr. Toppel with contact information in order to assist his efforts in the welcome home parade. Mr. Toppel was given a plaque for his participation at the June 26, 2012 Mayor and Council meeting.

- The Veterans Day Parade was held November 11 and sponsored by the American Legion Post 7. The VAC participated in the honoring of all veterans by providing a committee car and inviting Mayor Jonathan Rothschild to ride along in support.
- Operation Exodus sponsored by the VAC, took place December 19<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup>, just before the Christmas holiday. It is an annual event designed to make the trip of young soldiers on their way home at Christmastime more comfortable by providing healthy snacks, refreshments, and other essentials to ease their journey. For many of the troops, some expected to have late flights and long layovers; it is their last stateside leave before being sent to Afghanistan or other military installations overseas. Committee members and volunteers provided conversation and thanks for the soldiers' service.

Presentations during the 2012 Committee sessions were made by:

- February 8, 2012 Ms. Lisa Watts, American Red Cross. Mr. Scott McDowell gave a presentation in Ms. Watts' absence.
- Mr. Alan Toppel, organizer for the Special Salute to Veterans Parade which was to be held on March 31, 2012.
- September 12, 2012 Steve Kreamer, representing Vietnam Veterans, gave a presentation on NamJam, which was held at Reid Park on October of 2012.
- November 14, 2012 Melinda Jacobs and Mary Ellen Wooten reported on the World War II Memorial. (See more detail in December's presentation.)
- December 12, 2012 World War II Memorial artists Lauri Slenning and Rebecca Thompson presented a model of the World War II Memorial and answered questions regarding design and location of same. **[The WWII Memorial is currently slated to be installed at Armory Park. The VAC, in a letter to the Mayor, stated its opposition to**

**the placement at Armory Park due to concerns of vandalism and a lack of parking. The VAC feels the Memorial would better serve veterans if placed at the Kino Veterans Memorial Park.]**

Phyllis Russell from Esperanza En Escalante gave a brief presentation on transitional housing for homeless veterans and families.

The Veterans Affairs Committee appreciates the Mayor, Council, and City Clerk support.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vern Pall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "V".

Vern Pall  
Chairman, Tucson Veterans Affairs Committee