



NEWSLETTER

December 2004

“Veterans Helping Verterans”

Fellow Veterans,

Wow FAVS is almost 1 year old and it has been an exciting year from the beginning. We started with few veterans and now we have grown to over 50 members. We have become an icon in the community not only among the Filipino veterans, but also to our American friends. I am truly blessed and that I have your support during our first year of existence. In the next few days we are having our election of new set of officers and there's going to be more challenges ahead. There are many supporters and members I like to recognize.

I would like to thank several people who participated in the Veterans Day Parade last week and they are: Will Hux, the Chairman of the parade committee who allowed us to use his facility to construct our "Nuclear Submarine" float the USS Philippines (SSBN-911).

Our construction team: Don Villanueva, David Malinag, John Wilde, Ceasar Pagarido, Will Hux, Romy Go, Pat Patangan, Nes Papel, Ed Callao & myself.

The marchers: Fred Cabales, Pat Patangan, Bob Bontilao, Willie Reyes, Rudy Alcantara, Nes Papel, Nena Reed, Romy Go, Dong Bolante, Greg Dorado Deo Balandra (photographer), and yours truly.

Other FAVS members who marched with the Fil-Am Council: Ed Obrero, John Wilde, Al Montemayor, Ron Quitevis, and Ray Deleon. Ding Sabio. And Don Villanueva marched with the Veteran's Center.

Also, thanks go to the planning committee. These are the members who attended the meeting between the month of June and November 2004. If I forgot anybody, please accept my apology.

Once again, thank you all for participating in the Veterans Day Parade, either as a participant or just viewing from the sideline. Next year it will be bigger. The submarine is now in dry-dock and will be outfitted with torpedo tubes, a working propeller, battle station alarm, bow planes and battle ribbons next year. FAVS will carry the flags of all branch of military service including the U.S., P.I. and the State of Florida. Until then keep up the good work and be safe throughout the year. I also would like to extend to everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God bless our troops.

Art Gandionco, FAVS President

Veteran's Day Parade

The zenith of many months of planning and preparation finally came on November 11th as our nation honored its veterans. Jacksonville honored its veterans with a much-celebrated parade in downtown. The city assembled 20 divisions of entries for the parade. Divisions 1 thru 9 consisted of Active, Reserve, and Retired Armed Forces members and veteran's organizations, while divisions 10 thru 20 consisted of civic, social and other organizations. As

Armed with a well-crafted, “ballistic nuclear submarine USS Philippines (SSBN-911), FAVS deployed its submarine and went underway in the streets of downtown Jax. Onlookers, especially the children of all ages were delighted to finally see a sub in downtown Jax. In their excitement, they clapped, they cheered, they waved their hands, and they made noise. The crowd joined in and waved and thanked us for the service to our country



Veteran's Ball

The icing on the cake for the Veteran's week was the Veteran's Ball sponsored by the Visayas- Mindanao Association held at the National Guard Armory social hall in Normandy Blvd. It was indeed, a night to remember as many vets chose to wear their uniform, and they all looked fit, trim and squared-away. The VMA installed their officers with an oath-taking ceremony. We honored the oldest veteran, - retired Master Chief Sam Sanchez and LTJG Liezel A. Papel, NC, USNR, respectively, with a cake-cutting ceremony. We also recognized CWO Ron Quitevis, USN, retired, for the best impersonation of General Douglas MacArthur.

The guest speaker, Dan McCarthy, City of Jacksonville Chief of Veterans Affairs, spoke from the heart as he shared with the audience his experience living in the Philippines during his tour of duty early on in his career. He "came without a prepared speech", but he told his story of how getting stationed there literally changed his life. You can't help but admire this remarkable veteran, and his wife as they made friends with the locals and learned the Filipino customs and traditions.

The heart of the program was the bone-chilling rendition of the plight of a POW. Made to honor our POW/MIA, particularly Captain Scott Speicher, Emcee Conrad Mangune honored these heroes, while John Wilde played the stricken POW captured by the enemies (Fred Cabales and Frank Templo). They capped it off with a warm patriotic song "I'm Proud To Be An American", led by Frank, which had the audience standing up, holding hands and singing along. What a class act!

The evening went on with the usual dancing (line-dancing too), more eating, chatting, raffles, and 50-50

NEFVC Update

On November 22nd, nine FAVS members attended the Northeast Florida Veterans Council (NEFVC) meeting with Hon. Mayor John Peyton as their speaker, Dr. Delphia Williams, Director of Community Services, Dan McCarthy, Division Chief of Veterans Affairs, and Faye Rustin, Councilwoman, Group 1 as their guest. Chairman Dan Guthrie read the congratulatory message from the FAVS



President to the body and phrases our group for participation in the Council.

During a 10 min. recess, FAVS had a photo opportunity with the Mayor and were able to network with other special guests. Before the meeting adjourned, 3 sets of Jaguar tickets were raffled as door prizes and 2 FAVS members, Art Gandionco and Bob Luna won. Another member, Fred Cabales won the 50/50 raffle. On the next meeting in January 2005, FAVS will ask the Council to support the WWII Filipino veterans pass the bill pending in Congress for their benefits and entitlements. The attendees were: Rudy Alcantara, Al Delorito, Willie Reyes, Robert Luna, Nes Papel, Joe Flores, Fred Cabales, Nena Reed, and Art Gandionco.

General Meeting/End of Year Celebration

Do not miss this big event. Our first annual end of year bash, potluck and general meeting. Election of officers for the year 2005 will be conducted during this meeting. This will be held at Pat Patangan's northside office located at 4628 Norwood Avenue. Come one, come all and bring a fellow vet and family.

FAVS ELECT OFFICERS FOR YEAR 2005

During the regular meeting on December 11, 2004, of the Filipino American Veterans Society (FAVS), new officers were elected for the next term - one year after it was founded in late 2003. The event was also a sort of end of the year celebration with potluck lunch held at the office of FAVS charter member and Southside-Mandarin Area Officer in Charge (AOIC), Pat Patangan.

Reelected to a second term as president was Art Gandionco who successfully completed his first term with a number of activities that inspired the members and encouraged others to join and support the cause of Filipino American Veterans in Northeast Florida. He was the only candidate for that office which made it an election by acclamation. For vice president, Will Hux and Nena Reed were the two candidates, but Hux got the majority votes and Reed was subsequently elected to the office of the society's treasurer. Bob Bontilao was easily elected secretary for another term.



Appointed officers were: Ding Sabio, public relations officer, Fred Cabales, chaplain, Willy Reyes, sergeant at arms, Rudy Alcantara, AOIC, Arlington, Pat Patangan, AOIC, Southside and Mandarin, Willy Reyes, AOIC Mayport and Beaches, Claro Magpantay, AOIC Orange Park, Fred Cabales, AOIC Westside.

The election was presided over by Nes Papel, chairman of the nominating and election committee. A formal induction of officers ceremony is planned in January 2005 – the exact date, time and location to be announced later.

Finally:

**From the officers, members and families of FAVS...
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**