



For Immediate Release

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Mineral Wells, Texas

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Update – June 5, 2010

Under a clear, blue, Texas sky, on June 5, The National Vietnam War Museum unveiled a new panel on their replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. On Memorial Day 2009, the name of Gunnery Sergeant Enrique Valdez was added to the wall in Washington, D.C. Because of logistical issues, our updates will always lag those in D.C. by one year.

The gates opened at 8:00 a.m., with the ceremony, hosted by United States Marines, beginning at 11:00 a.m. Breakfast burritos were provided for visitors by Meals on Wheels, and bottled water by the local AMVETS chapter. Prior to the official ceremony, guests were treated to a parachute jump by Sergeant First Class Dana Bowman (USA Ret.). SFC Bowman, a former member of the Golden Knights parachute team, lost both legs in a mid-air collision in 1994, but his subsequent determination to succeed, in both the Army and the civilian world has earned him international recognition as a motivational speaker. Dana travels extensively inspiring people with his motto, "It's Not the Disability, It's the Ability™, Never Quit."

The official ceremony began with introduction, including our special guests the children of Gunnery Sergeant Valdez; daughters Yolanda, Tina, and Lyndora, and son Enrique. After the guests were told about our new computer kiosk, used to locate names on the Wall, and the new Soldier's Cross sculpture in the Vietnam Memorial Garden, the ceremony was turned over to Master of Ceremonies Colonel Richard Gilson (USMC Ret.).

Prior to the introduction of our guest speaker was the Invocation, posting of the colors by a Marine Corps Color Guard, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the playing of the National Anthem. Col. Gilson then introduced our guest speaker Lieutenant General John W. Bergman (USMC Ret.) At the conclusion of General Bergman's remarks, the updated Wall panel was unveiled and the Marine Corps flag was raised on the flagstaff behind the wall. A Marine Corps bugler then sounded Taps, and the formal ceremony was concluded.

In addition to the approximately 500 guests, we were surprised by the arrival of a U.S. Air Force company that was training at nearby Wolters Industrial Park. We hope in the future to have additional participation by other service branches as well. Afterward, guests were encouraged to visit the Wall and use the new kiosk to locate names, as well as visit the numerous vendors around the museum grounds. In addition, they were able to view a sculpture by Robert Henderson entitled "I knew you would come" that was on display near the Camp Holloway replica wall in the Contemplation Garden. Mr. Henderson was kind enough to personally bring the life size sculpture down from his Colorado studio for this event.

Plans are already underway for next year's update ceremony, June 4, 2011, which will add six more names to the Wall (3 Army and 3 Marines) to match those added this Memorial Day in Washington, D.C.

Please visit our website for more information about the museum, our gardens, future events, and donation opportunities at www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org.

The National Vietnam War Museum is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the state of Texas.



Dana Bowman



Guest Speaker LTG Bergman



Museum Treasurer Jim Messinger presents plaque to LTG Bergman as COL Gilson looks on



The Valdez family

L to R: Manuel Castro (Husband of Lyndora), Valdez daughters Lyndora & Tina, son Enrique, and daughter Yolanda



Henderson sculpture



Computer Kiosk

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