



Vietnam Veterans of America



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VVA Yuma President in Yuma Play "South Pacific"

The Yuma Community Theater presented multiple plays of the Rodgers-Hammerstein Tony Award winning Broadway musical "South Pacific". This

world famous show tells the love and life stories of two couples in the early years of World War II. This was a wonderful story with **Bob Lukas** playing the part of a radio operator (Rafferty) and with parts of singing, dancing, speaking; we enjoyed the show very much. If you have not seen it yet, you missed an excellent time.

Golden Knights in Yuma at Yuma Proving Ground

The Golden Knights, the Army's precision parachute team, will begin winter training at Yuma Proving Ground starting last Wednesday. Weather permitting, the Knights will jump onto YPG's Cox Field from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.



Admission is free. The Knights come to YPG each winter for training prior to making demonstration jumps around the nation. Training will conclude March 5th 2009. Visitor passes, available from YPG's Police Services, are needed to get access to Cox Field. A valid driver's license, proof of valid vehicle registration and insurance are required to obtain a pass. Phone is 328-6033.

Yuma Soldier Loses Right Arm

A soldier **SSG Gabriel Garcia**, from Yuma is hospitalized in Germany after he was struck by shrapnel in a suicide bombing in Afghanistan. Staff Sgt. Gabriel Garcia's wife, Christina, says surgeons had to amputate her husband's right arm after last Thursday's bombing. Garcia graduated from Kofa High School in Yuma in 2001 and has been in the Army for seven years. His wife says he's in stable condition and awaiting evacuation to a U.S. hospital. Garcia is assigned to the 1st Infantry Division. The couple has a 3-year-old son.

Army Has New Recruiting Methods

That's the latest come-on from the U.S. Army, which continues to refine its approach toward engaging teens and twenty something's. Having seen amazing success with recruiting thanks to its *America's Army* home computer game, the military is now taking the pitch to the mall. Specifically, to the Franklin Mills shopping center in Philadelphia, where it has set up 60 gaming PCs, 19 Xbox 360s, plush couches, and "rock music" for potential recruits to enjoy. There's even a real Humvee that players can shoot from installed as part of a 15-foot-high projected battle simulation and an Apache helicopter simulator that recruits can fly. Sounds like a killer gaming setup... but of course there's a not-so-ulterior motive at work. It's all part of a plan to get younger kids interested in signing up for service, thinking that shooting terrorists in active combat is all part of a day's-work.



Disneyland Tickets



DISNEY'S ARMED FORCES SALUTE: On 4 January 2009 the Walt Disney Company started its "Disney's Armed Forces Salute" offer. All active and retired military personnel, including activated members of the National Guard and Reserve are included. There are two separate offers: At Disneyland in

California through 12 June 2009 all qualified members can receive one complimentary three-day pass valid for admission to both Disneyland and Disney's California Adventure parks. Additionally the qualified member can also make a one-time purchase of adult or child three-day "Disney's Armed Forces Salute Companion tickets for up to five family members or friends for the price of a 1-day Park Hopper ticket. For more information for the Disneyland offer call (714) 956-6424.

Veterans Secretary Update



Retired Gen. Eric K. Shinseki pledged to move quickly to fix gaps in health care if confirmed as Veterans Affairs secretary, saying he will reopen benefits to hundreds of thousands of middle-income veterans denied during the Bush administration. In a 54-page disclosure President Barack Obama's choice to head the government's second largest agency also urged Congress to set VA funding a year in advance to minimize political pressures. And the former Army chief of staff said he will step down from the corporate boards of defense contractors to alleviate potential conflicts of interest. "If confirmed, I would focus on these issues and the development of a credible and adequate 2010 budget request during my first 90 days in office," Shinseki wrote to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, noting that VA funding in the past created "significant management difficulties" that delayed medical care. The Senate committee is scheduled to hold Shinseki's confirmation hearing on 14 January 09. If confirmed, he will be the first Asian-American to hold the post of Veterans Affairs secretary. Some things he intends to improve:

Cut down six-month waits for disability benefits in part by switching from paper applications to "an integrated, all electronic claims processing system." Shinseki said his starting point will be achieving VA's strategic goal of roughly 145 days, a benchmark that has eluded the agency. Initiate an "independent, thorough" review to ensure that the VA will not delay rollout of millions of dollars in new GI benefits in August. The VA initially suggested it might not be able to meet the deadline, but after criticism insisted it could handle the needed improvements to its information technology systems. At least 520,000 veterans are expected to take advantage come this fall, up from about 250,000 veterans currently. Work more closely with the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Labor and the Small Business Administration to increase economic opportunities for veterans and reduce homelessness.

From A Worried Wife

I would like to thank all you people at YPG are doing what you do on a daily and nightly basis. Many of us here in Yuma have love ones, friends still over there doing what they have to do. With all of you out there day in and day out sometimes without seeing your families for only minutes a day, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. You all out there are saving many lives, maybe a lot of those people who work out there also have friends and family still overseas and they may be a few who didn't forget like most have in the country.

Highway Cleanup

Will be held on 31 Jan09, meet at MP 5 or 6 on I-8 Frontage Road, going southbound. It takes about 2 hours to pick up trash and we keep our name on the sign

Rodeo Parade Coming Up

The Silver Spur Rodeo Parade is scheduled for 14Feb 09. We will meet at the back parking lot of the Yuma Police Station at 0730; and the parade begins at 0830 with a Color Guard and we are looking into getting a trailer for those that prefer to ride. This year's theme is "Legend of the Wild West". Hope you can all come out this year.

American Legion Dance on Valentine's Day



The Son's of the American Legion is sponsoring a dance at Post 56 (14th Ave & 3rd St) in Yuma on the 14th of February 2009. Starting at 8:00pm, you can dance all night if you prefer, a fee of \$7 per couple or \$5 if you single and you can also enjoy some snacks as well.

Arizona State Council Meeting

The Arizona State Council met on 24 January 2009, all day to discuss the state council and chapter business in Laughlin, NV. As that day, Arizona has a new chapter named 1020 from Cochise County. Details of interest from the meeting will be in the next newsletter.

In Closing

We too, did a job and an excellent job while in Vietnam. World War II used to be the theme for making movies and seeing what the war was all about, but now it is us that should turn our attention for **WHAT WE HAVE DONE** to help that little country that was in despair, and now here it is, almost 35 years later and we should be a proud group of people that have changed the shape of South East Asia. May I recommend that we hold our head high and show America what Vietnam was all about?

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held on February 17th 2009 at Post 56 at 3rd St and 14th Avenue. We had a couple of visitors that evening and would sure like to see some of permanent party show up. Time is from 7-8pm. Trust you're having a good month.