



**Our Lady of Prompt Succor Nursing Home & Rehabilitation
Center
C'est la Vie Apartments
News-Notes ~ July 2011**

Haven of Healing and Hope

During the month of June, I had the opportunity to travel with some of my family to visit parts of New Mexico. We enjoyed the beauty of the desert landscape and the mountains surrounding the valleys. While there we had the opportunity to visit the Vietnam Veterans National Memorial in Angel Fire.

Situated on US Highway 64 along the Enchanted Circle of northeastern New Mexico on a hilltop between peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the monument arose from the ashes of one family's grief and their solemn pride in a son who gave his life for his fellow Marines, for his country, and for a people oppressed. On May 22, 1968, *First Lieutenant Victor David Westphall III, USMC*, a rifle platoon commander, was killed in an enemy ambush in Con Thien, Republic of Vietnam. His parents, Victor and Jeanne Westphall, and his younger brother, Douglas, decided to erect a permanent memorial to honor his spirit and that of his twelve comrades who died along with him in that battle.

Dedicating their own time and resources, at a time in our history when little support was offered to veterans and victims of this conflict, this family built an inspirational monument rising nearly fifty feet in dramatic architectural lines, resembling a huge white sail, overlooking the Moreno Valley. When dedicated on the third anniversary of David's death in 1971, it was the first, and for many years the only memorial to our Vietnam veterans. After receiving national media attention and recognition, it ultimately inspired the establishment of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC which was completed over ten years later in 1982. This memorial at Angel Fire is currently the only *state park* dedicated exclusively to veterans of the Vietnam War and visitors are inspired by the breath and depth of its beauty and its message.

Upon arriving at the Memorial, visitors are greeted by a dark grey helicopter, poised to take flight. In stark contrast to this image of battle, the helicopter is surrounded by a wreath of daisies in full bloom dancing in the wind and deep blue bearded-irises dazzling in the sunlight. On March 26, 1967, this Huey helicopter, known as "Viking Surprise," was badly damaged while rescuing service personnel in Vietnam. Over 135 bullet holes marked its battle scars. It was sent to the United States for repairs and was redeployed to Vietnam. Later it was given to the New Mexico National Guard and was then donated to the Angel Fire Memorial. The dedication of the Huey to the Memorial was attended by CWO-4 Larry McDonald who was one of the Army pilots that flew the aircraft in Vietnam.

Continuing along the path, visitors are rendered speechless by the sculpture of a young soldier. He is found sitting on a rock – his rifle hangs from his shoulder, his helmet rests on his knee and with pen and paper in hand, he begins to write a letter home. The sculpture is entitled “*Dear Mom and Dad.*” The artist, Doug Scott of Taos, New Mexico, presents to us the face of youth with intense eyes gazing onto the distant horizon.

One wonders:

What is he seeing? What will he write? Will he have time to finish the letter?



The addition of a Visitor Center in 1986 features photographs and banners from some of the 210 units which served in Vietnam. There is a media room which shows the 86-minute Home Box Office documentary film: “*Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam.*” A Veteran's Room honors the military personnel killed or missing in action. The POW/MIA flag waves outside the center. The center seeks to be an educational site while it offers healing and reconciliation. In 2005, the Memorial became New Mexico's 33rd state park. Today it is operated in partnership with the David Westphall Veterans Foundation which allows it to be the only New Mexico State Park that is freely open to all without

any admission fee.

The chapel at the Memorial features a walk down to a single, tall, clear glass window and solitary candle. On the floor at the base of the candle, notes have been left - messages of healing, of hope, of distress, of comfort. When the Memorial was originally built, the chapel was closed at night. One morning when Victor Westphall (who was present at the Memorial each day until his death) arrived to open the chapel he found a veteran sitting at the door in tears. The man had a note in his hand which read: “Why did you lock me out when I needed this?” Since that day, the Memorial and chapel have remained open 24 hours a day to provide a haven of healing and hope for all veterans and victims of war. Pictures on the wall of the chapel show faces of Vietnam veterans - the photos are periodically changed. The center photo remains the same – that of First Lieutenant David Westphall with his words inscribed on the wall:

“At the sight of the heavenly throne Ezekiel fell on his face, but the voice of God commanded:

‘Son of man, stand upon your feet and I will speak with you.’

***If we are to stand on our feet in the presence of God,
what, then, is one man that he should debase the dignity of another.”***

As we celebrate July 4th, let us remember all our service personnel, veterans and their families. Please take a few minutes and visit this memorial online at: www.angelfirememorial.com and/or www.afdasf.org/angelfire or www.sangres.com/newmexico/colfax/angelfire/vietnammemorial

May God bless America and our world with hope and healing!

Sr. Mary Kay Kinberger, msc

We remember our own residents deceased in June:

Lierra Meche 6/1/2011

Dena Muller 6/10/2011

Sr. Philip Schexnayder, MSC 6/18/2011

May they rest in the peace and joy of the arms of our God.

Celebrating Birthdays in July – Praying in gratitude for each of you!

Sybil Boudreaux	7/25/23	Marlene Miller	7/20/36
Beatrice Bourdier	7/7/1911	Sr. Mary Andre Mouton	7/1/1919
Bertha Cary	7/22/1926	Ellen Jane Ortego	7/12/1922
Dot Dupre	7/20/1931	Delphine Richard	7/1/1928
Sr. Audrey Fontenot	7/13/1928	Joseph Sebastien	7/25/1927
Cecil Larcade	7/21/21	Sr. Mercedes Spotorno	7/10/1924

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