



# Catholic War Veterans of the USA

## Father Vincent Capodanno Memorial Post

### *To Heal, Serve, Love, Listen*

Twenty-fifth Edition

est. 11/24/2015

May 2018



**Father Vincent Robert Capodanno, M.M.**

**MEETING NOTICE**  
**NEXT MEETING IS WEDNESDAY**  
**June 6, 2018 AT 7:00 PM**  
**At Our Lady of Mercy Country**  
**Home**  
**2115 Maturana Dr.**  
**Liberty MO 64068**

#### **What's Happening**

On Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, Post 1974 with the St. James Military Outreach Ministry conducted a Veteran Fair at St. James parish hall. The Knights of Columbus Council 6780 of St. James parish were extremely generous in assisting in the setup, providing the food, and cleaning up.

We were honored to have the American Legion Band of Kansas City. They are always great.

Rev. Windy Lovett, our keynote speaker, spoke about the need for total person healing, physical, mental, and spiritual.

Also present was a representative from the Honor Flight Network of Kansas City who spoke about what the honor flight is all about and who goes and what goes on during the day of the flight.

I have applications for both veteran and sponsor/guardian. Veterans are totally free, everything is paid for by the network.

#### **Honoring Vietnam Veterans**

Every Vietnam Era Veteran present at the fair was presented the Vietnam Commemoration Pin and Presidential Citation for his/her service.

Something to think about: not every Vietnam Era veteran had the honor of traveling to the lush jungles of South Vietnam or having Agent Orange dumped on or being shot at by the VC.

I enlisted with two of my friends. After boot camp and "A" schools, one never left the states and the other was sent to Rhoda Spain for duty on a sub tender. I was sent to a destroyer out of San Diego and experienced two cruises to Nam. The only difference

between their duty and mine was the orders we received. We all served at the same time. We all experienced the wonderful reception from our country when we came back. We are all veterans. ALL Vietnam Era veterans deserve the same respect and thanks for whatever and wherever their orders sent them

the other day and then emailed me two blogs that he shares with his parish back home. Here is one of them:

**Chaplain's Update:  
an Answer to a Prayer**

**Vol. 5 Issue 1  
Day 80**



**Service Officer presenting Pin and Citation to Veteran**

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**Commander Kopp was honored to be presented with a beautiful handmade quilt presented by Quilts of Valor Foundation.**



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**CHAPLAINS**

Over the past several months Ann Roberts and I have been sending letters to every Catholic Chaplain associated with our military. We obtained their names from the Catholic Directory, which our Chancery graciously provided for us.

Once we had the names we would write the letters and place the name of each chaplain on a separate envelope and then send the letters to the Archdiocese for the Military Services. They would address the letters and send them on their separate ways.

In the letters we expressed what a chaplain meant to us while we were in the service. I talked about being at sea and how Father Murphy was let down to our ship from a helicopter and what it meant to the Catholic sailors onboard the ship.

We received several "thank you" letters back. But one Chaplain, Fr. James Krische, who is presently with the army in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He called me

Greetings family and friends,

The origins of this adventure go back some 17 months when the Command Chaplain for the Army Reserve asked me during a phone conversation when my mandatory release / retirement date from the Army was. For colonels like myself, this date is either at the end of one's 30th year of service in the officer corps or at the beginning of the month of one's 60th birthday. In my case they both happen around the same time, May 2018.

I replied with that date and indicated that I was willing to stick around if the Army needed my help. To this the Command Chaplain asked "Would You Deploy". I responded that I would but that the Army would not send me because I was too high in rank. He retorted "We would now" further explaining that there was a need for priests in Afghanistan and the Middle East and that the lower ranking/younger Catholic Chaplains have already gone multiple times. Concerned that they would burn out or quit if he kept calling on them, it was decided to ask the Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel priests to take a tour down range for 9 months or 18 in my case.

I repeated my willingness to deploy and clarified that I would first need to be released by my bishop from my diocesan parish assignment and second, have the Army extend my mandatory release date out a few years. The Command Chaplain assured me an extension was easy to obtain when the need is so great. At this point I had a sense of job security as I recalled meeting an Army priest in Afghanistan in 2012 who was 73 years old.

In the months that followed, I was transferred from my Command Chaplain position at Fort Dix, NJ into a Chaplain Detachment and recruited two Chaplain Assistants to join another priest and I on this ministry adventure. As the senior ranking person on the team, I became the Officer In Charge. Like other deploying Army Reserve Units, we had to shift to a Road To War mindset and start accomplishing the many pre-mobilization essential tasks. These included: being issued a gas mask, being medically checked out, and completing over 30 online courses covering topics such as Anti-terrorism, Army Values, Biometrics, Fraternalization, Law of War, Medical Threats, Media Engagement, Proper Handling of Islamic Religious Materials, Prevention of Sexual Assault, Operational Security, Suicide Prevention, What To Do If Captured and How To Be Rescued. I am not sure which one was my favorite.

After saying goodbye to my parishioners in Brooklyn as well as family and friends around New York, taking a vacation and packing necessary gear, I reported for Active Duty with my detachment to Fort Hood, Texas on November 12. For the next 3 weeks, with a break for

the Thanksgiving holiday, our focus was on completing another medical screening as well as being issued uniforms, bullet proof vests and cold weather gear. We also attended classes about the Afghan culture and local language. Since chaplains are not permitted to carry weapons, it was only our assistants who had to qualify at the shooting range with their M4 rifle and M9 pistol so they could protect us. I and the other priest did not have to participate in training about how to minister in a war zone since we already had been there 4 and 3 times respectively. I was pleased that the trainers and validators, without my saying I come from New York City, gave me life experience credit. If they didn't, class could have had some embarrassing moments when we students showed we knew more than our instructors.

Have completed all the pre-deployment requirements and gathered our gear, my team boarded a chartered aircraft for the long flight to the Middle East with around 230 lbs of baggage each. Since the plane was only a third full, we each had our own row of seats to stretch out on. Following a cycle of takeoff, eat, sleep, land and walk around a terminal for an hour, we traveled from Texas to Newfoundland, then to Ireland, then to Greece and finally landed in Kuwait where the other priest and his assistant would be working. After 40 hours on the ground at the American military base there called Arifjan, I and my assistant boarded a C-17 military transport plane with 122 soldiers, some civilian contractors, several Department of Defense employees and a number of pallets of cargo for a 4 hour overnight flight to Afghanistan. Although not my favorite way to spend a Saturday night, I found comfort seeing that the pallets contained boxes of toilet paper and cases of Coca Cola.

Like most people, I prefer direct flights but when one has to fly into a war zone you can't be too choosy. After a stop at Bagram Airfield, our base in central Afghanistan, we headed for Kandahar Airfield in the south, my old base from 2011 and my home base for the next several months or more. During this flight, one of the civilians, noting the cross on my uniform, asked me if I was the priest that the base had been waiting for. I answered yes and he replied: 'Thank God'. He went on to explain that the last resident priest left 3 months prior and that another priest was only able to stop by to offer Mass once in October and once in November. At this point I was truly beginning to sense that my presence and ministry would make a difference.

One of the pilots also noticed my cross and invited me to sit in the cockpit for landing. I accepted the offer, recalling that military aircraft don't turn their headlights on when landing in combat zones till practically on the ground to avoid attracting enemy fire. I then pondered some of the reasons that may have prompted such a special invitation. Once safely on the ground at 4:10AM December 10th, we were met by another Chaplain Assistant who took us to our rooms. Since it was Sunday morning, I asked him if Mass had been scheduled. He responded yes at 1130 and that the people were anxiously awaiting my arrival. I

congratulated him for setting it up and quipped that I now had to shift the communities focus from my arrival to Christ's arrival on the 25th.

The non-denominational plywood chapel here on Kandahar Airfield, was built in 2005 and dedicated to CPL David Fraise, who was killed here a year earlier. During 2011, I only celebrated a few weekend Masses here as I instead had the responsibility of doing battlefield circulation to offer Mass at over 70 other forward operating bases and combat outposts. Around 11:15am, soldiers and civilian contractors who got the word of my arrival and that Mass would be taking place, started to appear. Some of them set up the chapel, others volunteered to proclaim the readings and the choir of 8 civilian men from Uganda and 2 from the Philippines, took their places. It was a beautiful, heart-warming celebration and at its conclusion I stood outside to thank people for attending. Their responses of: "No, thank you Father", "I am so glad you are here" or "You are the answer to our prayers" were humbling to hear. It's a wonderful thing to be told you are an answer to someone's prayers. Perhaps if each of us were more attentive to the needy around us, we would be told that.

After reacquainting myself with the base and meeting the 5 Protestant chaplains serving here, I had to focus on Christmas and the 26-hour visit of Archbishop Broglio, head of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. He is the archbishop I and other military priests serve under when we are on Active Duty. Due to his position, he is treated like a four-star general and given Distinguished Visitor status. His visit included: an office call with the Commanding General here, a tour of the airfield, dinner with the chaplains, celebrating two Masses and lunch with the Catholic community. All activities went beautifully and then we sent the Archbishop up north to visit the troops there.

For our liturgical celebrations for Christmas, there was a very nice turnout for Midnight Mass and the Mass at 11:30am with the Ugandan Choirs adding some delightful harmonies to the traditional carols. Then as is tradition, the dining facilities put out an impressive spread of food from 11am till 8pm which is served by the military officers. Even though the troops ate their fill, they still snacked on the many treats and home-baked goods sent over in thousands of care packages by caring families, friends and strangers.

Thanks for your interest in my mission and ministry. If you want to see pictures of my base or troops, just go to Google Images and enter 'Kandahar Airfield'. Feel free to share these updates with others folks and if you have any questions about the troops and life here, send them over. I will answer them to the best of my ability without violating operational security. Please remember the troops in a prayer and I hope you often have the experience of being told YOU are the answer to someone's prayer.

CH Jim Krische



Amen

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**Veteran Retreat**

The Retreat originally scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> had to be cancelled due to lack of interested participants. We discussed a future date and decided on August 18<sup>th</sup>. It will be a one day event and will include Lunch and Dinner. I have included a flyer with this newsletter.

I believe it could be a very meaningful day for all and should be well worth your time. Please make plans to attend.

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**SICK CALL**



Bud McCay ,Robert Emery

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**Coming Up**

Here are the activities, so far, for the upcoming year.

- Wreath Laying Ceremony – Memorial Day
- Fr. Capodanno Memorial Mass – September
- Veteran Stand Down – June 8
- One day Veterans Retreat- August 18

As the dates become available I will let everyone know.

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**Prayer to Obtain a Favor(s) Through the intercession of Father Vincent Capodanno**

Almighty and merciful God, look with favor on those who plead for Your help. Through the intercession of your servant, Father Vincent Capodanno, missionary and Catholic priest, grant the favor(s) I/we earnestly seek. May Vincent, who died bringing consolation to the Marines he was privileged on serve on the field of battle, intercede in my/our need(s) as I/we pray in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

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**Post Name**

Our post has been named after Father Vincent Robert Capodanno, MM. He was a navy chaplain who gave his life while serving the marines during Operation Swift. His biographical timeline goes something like this:

- 13 February 1929** – Born in Staten Island NY
- 13 February 1939** – Received news of his father's death on his tenth birthday
- January 1943** – Graduated from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Public School 44
- 04 February 1947** -Graduated Curtis High School
- 1947 – 1949** – Attended Fordham :University and worked on Wall Street
- May 1949 – June 1957** – Attended seminary in Ossinging NY
- 14 June 1958** – Ordained a Maryknoll priest
- 1958 – 1965** – Served as missionary in Taiwan and Hong Kong
- 28 December 1965** - Commissioned in U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps
- 16 March 1966** – Arrived for training in Newport RI and Camp Pendleton, CA
- Holy Week 1966** – Arrived in Vietnam
- 30 April 1966** – Reported for duty and assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 7<sup>th</sup> Marines
- 03 July 1967** – Reported to 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 5<sup>th</sup> Marines
- 04 September 1967** – Killed in action during Operation Swift
- 07 January 1969** – Awarded Medal of Honor
- 17 November 1973** - USS Capodanno commissioned
- 21 May 2006** - Declared Servant of God

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**On The Go**

It takes a lot of work and expense to put on a Veteran Fair and the outcome is always iffy. Finding a suitable location, contacting all of the participating agencies, advertising, etc. takes a lot of time and work. And if there is food involved, purchasing, preparing, and serving is tedious and expensive. Our post, still being rather small, help is always a problem.

During our last fair, we talked with the representatives from Catholic Charities. They received information about every Veteran Fair in the local area. So, we are going to partner with them and they will keep us informed as to when and where the fairs are being held so we can register and have our table set up at as many as possible.

At the fair last month, we picked up one new member and possibly two more. At the writing of this newsletter we presently have 33 paid up members with six members who still have not paid their dues for 2018.

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## Capodanno Speakers

Miss Ann Roberts and I are presently speakers for the Guild for the Canonization of Father Capodanno. We are more than willing to give our presentation to any group. If you have a group of people who might be interested in the life and service of Father Capodanno, contact one of us to make arrangements. The presentation is free of charge. For areas outside of the Kansas City area, financial assistance may be needed. We are not paid for the presentation, and can possible travel throught the state of Missouri, depending upon circumstances.

So, ask the various parish groups, Knights of Columbus Councils, or other groups that you think might be interested.

Contract either one of us:

John F. Kopp:  
2400 NE 59<sup>th</sup> St.  
Gladstone, MO 64118  
(816) 699-8719

Ann Roberts, Service/Wellfare Officer  
1104 Pier St  
Liberty MO 64068  
(818) 469-0271

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## ELECTIONS

We will have our annual election of officers during our June meeting. If you are interested in being an officer in our post, please let me know.

Officers are:

Commander  
1st Vice Commander  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander  
3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander  
Service Officer  
Welfare Officer  
Officer of the Day  
Director (3)  
Historian

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## Memorial Day

Once again Post 1974 will conduct a Wreath Laying Ceremony at Mount Olivet Cemetery. The ceremony will take place immediately after the Mass. I encourage all of you to try to attend. We can always use assistance.

- May CWV Post Service Officer, & VA & R Update, News. (5/22/2018)
- (1) FYI: VA Updates & Improves Assistance Program for “TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS-(If YOU know of a Guard person, other leaving Military service permanent or temporary: WASHINGTON — As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ongoing efforts to help transitioning service members navigate and understand VA’s various benefits, the agency recently updated VA’s briefing portion of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) – an interagency initiative authorized as a voluntary program in 1991 under the National Defense Authorization Act and made mandatory under the VOW to Hire Heroes Act in 2011 to help service members adjust to civilian life.WEB LINK: <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4039>
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- (2) IMPORTANT: If you know of a Military Family, veteran in need of your help in areas such as: ride to VA Clinic, sit with veteran, cut grass, repair porch, help family with grocery shopping, find jobs so that a family member can work while taking care of veteran, please help, contact Hidden Heroes, Home Front Heros.org.
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- (3) WHAT IF? POST MEMBERS WERE A PART OF A VETERANS HELP LOCAL-“COMMUYNITY ACTION BOARD.” WOULD YOU PARTICIPATE? Few members do so in the Liberty-Kansas City, MO area. Let Commander or Service Officer know or ask questions.

# *A Veteran Retreat*

## *We Were Called to Serve Then and Now*

### *Come Explore How*

#### **Presented by the Veteran Retreat Team**

Fr. Ron Will, CPPS; Fr. Garry Richmeier, CPPS; Kathy Keary;  
VA Chaplain Windy Lovett; and veterans, Ann Roberts and John Kopp

The Veteran Retreat Team will present on the following topics: We are the Beloved of God, Dying and Rising, We are Called, and We are Sent followed by group discussion and personal reflection. The day will also include prayer and fellowship as we explore that as the beloved of God we are called and sent to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world.



**Saturday, August 18th, 8:30 AM—6:30 PM**

**Suggested donation: \$40.00 (includes lunch and dinner)  
Scholarship Funds Available**

**Register by August 11th  
at [info@pbrenewalcenter.org](mailto:info@pbrenewalcenter.org) or 816.415.3745**



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2130 St. Gaspar Way  
Liberty, MO 64068

[pbrenewalcenter.org](http://pbrenewalcenter.org)