

North Lake Tahoe Bonanza

Guest Column: Thanks to Biltmore, community for memorable veterans event

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BY JACK SCHROEDER
SPECIAL TO THE BONANZA

INCLINE VILLAGE, Nev. — On behalf of the Incline Village/Crystal Bay Veterans' Club, I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Tahoe Biltmore Hotel for the amazing Memorial Day celebration they hosted on Saturday, 26 May 2012. I would especially like to recognize Ms. Kristi Freeto, and her assistant, Mr. Bryan Gaffaney, who planned, organized and directed the set-up of the displays and activities.

Originally planned as an outdoor event, it was changed, on the day before, into an indoor activity in the main meeting room when snow, sleet and rain were forecast. A forecast that proved to be very accurate. The many organizations that provided exhibits also showed their ingenuity as they changed their plans from the unlimited space of the outdoor parking lot to confined indoor space. Even the chefs managed to transition from BBQ grilled hot dogs to hot dogs prepared indoors for the free lunch.

The Nevada Highway Patrol seat belt demonstrator and the US Army's National Guard armored vehicle remained outdoors, due to their size. The indoor exhibits were highlighted by Mr. Curtis McLachlan's exhibit on the Vietnam war, Mr. Craig Shean's exhibit on the Afghanistan war, and Mrs. Amy Roby and Professor Marilee Swirczek with Western Nevada College's exhibit of Always Lost: A Meditation on War, featuring the Wall of the Dead.

Other exhibits included: Mrs. Cathi McGathey of the Veterans' Guest House in Reno, the Children's Bounce House, Face Painting, the Incline Village Historical Society's panning for gold and children's finger prints by the Sheriff's Auxiliary. During the afternoon, music was provided by the Serina Dawn band. At the end of the day the weather cleared just long enough for a fly-by of a Nevada Air Guard C-130 Hercules.

The weather also forced the formal remembrance ceremony including the presentation of the colors by the Incline Village High School JROTC Color Guard, under the direction of Command Master Sergeant Del Lepley and 1st Sgt Larry Porter, to move indoors. The change didn't faze the Highlanders and they performed flawlessly under the command of Cadet Sergeant Major Steven Scheid. The Cadet Color Guard was composed of 1st Sergeant Alesha Garcia, 1st Sergeant Sarai Garcia, 1st Sergeant Karla Fragoso, and SFC Isabell Marquez.

Our special thanks to Mr. Roger Wittenberg who introduced Mr. Caleb Cage, Executive Director of the Nevada Office of Veterans' Services. Mr. Cage spoke on the functions of his agency and his experiences working with veterans' organizations.

Again, Thank You to all who participated in honoring those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for: our country, our freedoms and our liberty. And in honoring those who have served and are presently serving.

— Jack Schroeder is resident of the Incline Village/Crystal Bay Veterans' Club.

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