



In Observance of Memorial Day – 2015

Memorial Day remains one of America's most cherished patriotic observances. The spirit of this day has not changed – it remains a day to honor those who died defending our freedom and democracy.

Memorial Day this year is especially important as we are reminded almost daily of the great sacrifices that the men and women of the Armed Services make to defend our way of life. While that fight has been waged for over 10 years in the Middle East, the new warfare may find itself on our shores someday--hopefully not--as we continue to remind ourselves of the sacrifices of all our brave young service men and women abroad in previous battles.

As America celebrates Memorial Day, we pay tribute to those who have given their lives in our nation's wars. Some of our C.A.C.A. members may not have ever known anyone who has died in active combat, but I hope most of our members know or have known a veteran, even a family member, who fought in a conflict. This year, I'd like to tell you about a friend, George Colunga, a middle school classmate and the funniest person I knew. When we got separated as our study tracts in high school took us in different directions, I rarely saw him again except in the neighborhood and even less when I went to college and then I heard he entered the Marines from a mutual friend--during the era of the Vietnam War.

Less than 2 years into college, I was told that the funniest guy I knew, a PFC in the Marine Corps, was killed in Vietnam. At the time, I didn't understand what it meant to be in the military, what they fought for because other than the fact that I was eligible to be drafted someday, I thought war was fought by people I didn't know for

reasons I knew less about. As a Chinese American kid in college trying to do my best to have a career, I didn't understand that the really smart kid who understood his life's responsibility to his fellow man and country was actually the funniest man I knew. His sacrifice was great for the love of our country and our communities.

It wasn't until the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall was built did I have some opportunity to pay respects to George and to revisit his memory when the Wall became a travelling exhibit. Since then, when I've had the opportunity to make a trip to Washington, DC such as during our recent C.A.C.A. Legislative Education Trips in May, I've wanted to honor him in my small way by making a visit to the Wall each time. This year, I wanted to get a picture to share with you. (See if you can find his name.)



At the same time, I made my way over to the World War II Memorial to honor those men and women of "The Greatest Generation" with a visit. Those young men and women who served in that war also deserve our utmost respect and honor for how they accomplished so much on two continents to preserve our American way of life.





My simple message on this Memorial Day is "Remember and honor those who served. Respect and thank those who serve." I ask that we reflect on this National Day of Remembrance to think about those who gave their all so we might have opportunities to be our all as Americans and wherever we are on Memorial Day, I ask that every member participate in the National Moment of Remembrance by pausing for one minute at 3:00 p.m. local time to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

---by Ed Gor, National President

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Chinese American Citizens Alliance

The Chinese American Citizens Alliance, established in 1895, is among the oldest civil rights organizations in the United States. Headquartered in San Francisco with chapter/lodges in Albuquerque (NM), Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), Greater San Gabriel Valley (CA), Houston (TX), Las Vegas (NV), Los Angeles (CA), Mississippi, Oakland (CA), Peninsula (CA), Portland (OR), Phoenix (AZ), Salinas (CA), San Antonio (TX), San Francisco (CA), Seattle (WA), Tucson (AZ), and Washington, D.C., the Alliance addresses issues regarding voter education, political participation, racial discrimination and hate crimes, youth leadership training programs and equal employment opportunities for all Chinese Americans.