

# Ship's Bell Tolls for Veterans Lost

By Jennifer Wake

Lamorinda has garnered national attention for its Lafayette crosses and the area has an abundance of conflicting opinions from its residents regarding the Iraq War. But with more than 5,000 veterans living in the Lamorinda area, Veterans Day continues to be a time of remembrance for its residents – for all the wars fought, all the courageous efforts made, and all the tears shed.

Retired Rear Admiral Vince Anzilotti, of Orinda, served in the Navy from 1948 to 1988. A naval aviator, he flew five different aircraft, has served aboard four Essex class aircraft carriers, and was decorated with the Legion of Merit. For the past seven years, he has helped coordinate a joint Mass among three Catholic parishes in Lamorinda each Veterans Day to honor local veterans who have made sacrifices for our country.

Each year at the Mass, which was held this year at St. Monica's Catholic Church in Moraga, a ship's bell rings out after names of veterans who have died in the past year are read. This solemn reading is followed by Taps.

"We're losing a lot of World War II vets," said Anzilotti, who was a naval aviator in both the Korean War and Vietnam Conflict. "What we're trying to do is have a Mass to remember."

Unlike past years where the Veteran's Day Mass was held as a separate event, this year's Mass was combined with one for young teens. This led to changes in the program: The St. Monica's Mass of the Rock teen band played God Bless America and America the Beautiful; the bagpipe solo of Amazing Grace was swapped for a guitar. The Mass offered a wonderful opportunity for the teens to learn more about these often unsung heroes.

"I hope the teens get an understanding that in our society here, a lot of us served in the military," Anzilotti said. "We're



Retired Rear Admiral Vince Anzilotti holds ships bell at St. Monica's Photo Jennifer Wake

here and we should be respected for what we've done."

Bill Dick of Moraga – who was a Navy submariner during the Vietnam Conflict (and beyond) – has helped Anzilotti coordinate the Mass. "Vince has headed this thing up and brought so much to light," Dick said. "It's important to remember those that served their country gave us the rights and privileges we have today – those same rights used by those who protest."

According to the Census Bureau, in 2000 there were more than 26 million veterans in the United States, (more than 8 million of whom served in Vietnam and over 4 million who served in Korea). In that same year, Lafayette had 2,152 male and 101 female resident civilian veterans, Moraga boasted 1,444 male and 43 female vets, and there were 1,846 males and 105 females living in Orinda who had served in the armed forces.

In the past, women veterans would collect the gifts at the Mass, but Anzilotti says they had trouble finding any who could do it this year. "They are just getting too old," he said.

For Dick, the Mass is an important way to remember those who served. "Between my dad, my uncles and myself, we had over 100 years of service in the Navy," he said. "I think many of those who were present served this country well over the years."



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