

WALKING FOR REMEMBRANCE



Ron Maloney/Gazette-Enterprise

Veterans Tony Santos, left, Samuel Cardenas and Daniel Martinez are walking from Houston to Del Rio in recognition of those killed, captured or missing in Vietnam and those who serve our country in the War on Terror. The men hope to make it to Del Rio by Sept. 21.

Veterans march across Texas for awareness

By RON MALONEY
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SEGUIN — They were ready to fight. They were ready to be captured. They were ready to be hurt and, if necessary, they were even ready to die.

But the nightmare of any soldier or Marine is to be abandoned on the field of battle.

And more than 30 years after Americans left Vietnam, a group of veterans walking from Houston to Del Rio in a memorial to the dead, prisoners of war and the missing want to be sure those fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan know they will not be unappreciated or forgotten.

The Texas Vietnam Veterans POW/MIA out of Alice are walking from Houston to Del Rio on "Operation USA Proud." The group, which includes 74-year-old Korea vet Samuel Cardenas

MORE INFO

The POW/MIA Patrol of the Texas Vietnam Veterans is walking from Houston to Del Rio in honor of POW/MIA's and all Iraq and Afghanistan vets. For information or to make a donation to support the walk, call (281) 331-1197. The American GI Forum Seguin-Manuel Castilla Chapter has about 50 members. It sponsors scholarships, help for veterans and their families and community service in the Seguin area. For information, call Paul Soto at 660-0602.

and Vietnam vets Tony Santos and Daniel Martinez, walked the Luling to Seguin leg of the trip, in which the group will walk more than 300 miles of the way as road conditions allow.

Seguin police escorted the group through town Wednesday on U.S. 90. The group stayed with Roy Aguirre of

the Seguin-Manuel Castilla Chapter of the American GI Forum, which is sponsoring this leg of the trip. They expect to arrive in Del Rio by Sept. 21, which is POW/MIA Recognition Day.

Paul Soto, chapter vice commander, was making arrangements for them here. Local Forum Commander J.P. Amador agreed with Soto to help the group through Seguin and Guadalupe County.

"Veterans' organizations should always be proud and ready to support such events," Amador said. "The entire membership of the local GI Forum embraced this event."

The GI Forum, initially begun during the World War II era to ensure Hispanic veterans received benefits promised them for their service, is open to membership of all groups and races and still works to help veterans and their families.

Watts said the do when confronting "change" seem to be control of the situation or slowing it down to immediate attention or manager. Then, call the "We want to nesses that this said. "Be care something like Seguin Police reached at 3 city limits, to Sheriff's Off 379-1224.

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rial Hospital. She was named the hospital's Employee of the Year in 1997 and was recognized by the Hondo Area Chamber of Commerce as its 2005 Citizen of the Year. She was named

The Rehabilitation Services Department at Medina Regional Hospital named in her honor features a new open gym area offering improved access

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Vietnam vets to lead Memorial Day walk

'Operation USA Dustoff', a group of Vietnam Veterans led by Commander Tony Santos, will arrive in Hondo on Memorial Day, May 25, after their arduous walk to Laredo in remembrance of Prisoners of War, Missing in Action (POW/MIA), Killed in Action, (KIAs) and local fallen heroes. They will convene at the intersection of U.S. 90 and SH 173 tentatively at 10 a.m. and then proceed to Memorial Park Square.

The American Legion Post 524 of Hondo will be holding its traditional Memorial Services at 9 a.m. on May 25 and will await the group at Memorial Square. Representing the Hondo group will be Commander Evarardo Torres, Vice Commander Abundio Gonzales, Sgt. of Arms Joe Ramirez, Adjutant Alfonso Treviño, and Treasurer Armando Treviño.

The Vietnam Veterans group welcomes any supporters/walkers from the local area to join them as they proceed to the Hondo Square. There, the Vietnam Veterans group will display a small, traveling wall that contains the names of fallen Texans of the Vietnam era including those from Medina County. The local heroes whose names appear on the wall are as follows: Robert Yates, J.L. Chambers and George Proctor all of Hondo; Victor Bermea and Oscar Gomez of D'Hanis; and Angel Martinez of Bandera. Relatives or acquaintances of these fallen heroes are encouraged to come view the wall honoring their valiant actions.

Tony Santos and his wife, Celinda, are native Hondoans who strongly believe that we must never forget our fallen

Americans who gave all they had, their life. Two years ago, in September, the Texas Vietnam Veterans made the journey through Hondo honoring local heroes from other eras.

The entire walk, which originated in Alvin, is an annual event motivated by Santos' personal experience. He was wounded in Vietnam and was told he would never walk again. Vowing that if he could walk again, he would never forget his comrades, his pure determination and gratitude is what drives him to take on these grueling treks. Arthritis and diabetes plague him, but nothing deters him from keeping his vow, honoring our gallant veterans.

The personal connection that the group has with the saying, "All gave some and some gave all," drives them to continue their walks year after year.

Also, an 6:30 p.m. observance will be held Monday at Holy Cross Cemetery in D'Hanis.

Buddy Poppies will be sold by Veterans of Foreign Wars at various locations, raising funds for disabled vets and their families. The distinctive red poppy became associated with war via the poem, *In Flanders' Fields*, in which red poppies are seen blowing among the crosses of the fallen soldiers.



Memorial Day

Celebrate

Monday, May 25

9 a.m. Memorial Square in Hondo
6:30 p.m. Holy Cross Cemetery, D'Hanis

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