



YOLO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Dr. Jorge O. Ayala, *Superintendent*

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News Release

Contact: Gayle McLevich
(530) 668-3710
Patti Robles, probles@ycoe.org

OPERATION RECOGNITION – War Veterans Receive Long-Awaited High School Diplomas

The Yolo County Office of Education Student Services Department celebrated Operation Recognition on Wednesday, May 14, 2008 at the Yolo County Office of Education Conference Center.

During the 1940's and 1950's, thousands of young men and women left high school and the comforts of home to serve in the United States Armed Forces. After these wars, many veterans were not able to finish high school and receive a high school diploma. Nevertheless, these veterans and citizens lead productive lives and contributed to our communities over their lifetimes.

Senate Bill 1517 authorizes a local educational agency to provide for retroactive granting of a high school diploma to a former student who is a veteran of World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War.

The Yolo County Office of Education was once again honored and proud to be able to award an honorary high school diploma to 3 War veterans. Family, friends and community members were present on Wednesday evening to see Dr. Jorge Ayala, County Superintendent of Schools and Gayle McLevich, Director of ROP and Student Services, present diplomas to the following veterans:

Gale James Marlow, Sr., living the Capay Valley, served as an Aircraft Mechanic in the United States Air Force for 4 years during the Korean War. Marlow trained and served in Texas and Illinois. Upon receiving his High School Diploma, Marlow thanked others, including another Veteran, who was a POW, who was also honored for serving our country. During his service, Marlow earned the National Defense Service Medal.

Tony B. Montoya, from Woodland, served in World War II and was captured in the Philippines and was a POW during the Bataan Death March, in which over 10,000 US troops died. Montoya served in the 200th Coast Artillery Regiment. Montoya talked proudly of serving his country and the flag of the United States, especially while living for three years in captivity. Montoya said his high school diploma was "90 years in the making!" Montoya has received many medals, including the Victory Medal and the Purple Heart.

The evening was opened by the UC Davis Army ROTC, led by Sergeant Schmidt and several UC Davis Cadets.

Unable to attend the event, was Kenneth Earle Minor, from Winters who served in the Vietnam War for 6 years as a Duty Soldier.

A high school diploma is and always has been a symbol of accomplishment. The Yolo County Office of Education is honored to award a high school diploma to these well deserving veterans for the personal sacrifices and contributions made on behalf of the United States of America.

A picture is attached showing Marlow, his wife, Montoya, his wife, UC Davis Army ROTC and Supt of Schools for Yolo County, Dr. Jorge Ayala.