



Hispanic-American Veterans of Connecticut, Inc. (HAVOCT)
Connecticut's First Hispanic-American Veterans Community Organization
A 501 c 3 Organization

HAVOCT INC Year July 2014 – June 2015 Accomplishments

Executive Directors

SFC Juan L. Cruz
President

LTC Lesbia I. Nieves (Interim)
Vice-President

SSG Miguel A. Figueroa
Treasurer

SFC (RET) Julio Diaz
Secretary

Luis M. Vera
Sergeant at Arms

Nathaniel Davis
Parliamentarian

Board of Directors

Vacant
Chaplain

Miguel Torruella (Interim)
SFC Juan L. Cruz (Interim)
Program Development

SFC Juan L. Cruz (Interim)
Public Affairs

SFC (RET) Carmelo Figueroa
Legislative Services

SFC (RET) Larry Kennedy
Color Guard, NCOIC

Vacant
Personnel Services

LTC Lesbia I. Nieves
Social Services

ALL
Historian

HAVOCT INC members and associates;

Below are the accomplishments that HAVOCT INC as an organization accomplished during the period of July 2014 through June 2015.

July 2014

- SFC Juan L. Cruz took over the position of Interim President on July 08, 2014 as a result of some changes in the administration. He discussed a lot of issues that had to be addressed in order for HAVOCT INC to continue in operation.

August 2014

- West Indian Parade – AUG 09, 2014 – the HAVOCT INC Honor Guard participated in this event once again and the cost was \$100.00 which was donated by SFC (RET) Carmelo Figueroa.
- Winding Trails - AUG 23, 2014 – during these event members of HAVOCT INC participated in our yearly PICNIC, which consisted of members, families and friends. This was a great event were we shared great stories and built a great sense of care for our service members. It was success. The cost was a total of \$400.00.

September 2014

- Hispanic Heritage Award Ceremony - (09/18 thru 09/19) - SFC Cruz went to Washington DC with SSG Jose G. Pickard and SSG Celestino Cordova where they were recognized at the Hispanic Heritage Award Ceremony for their participation during the Korean War. These two soldiers were joined by 4 other Korean Veterans. It was a great event.

October 2014

- Strategic Meeting – October 18, 2014 – during this day we discussed the HAVOCT INC Strategic Plan and we discussed the election procedures for November 2014. The meeting was a success since we were able to clear the path in reference to the positions that needed to be filled.

November 2014

- Veterans Day – November 11, 2014 – SFC Juan L. Cruz participated at Charter Oak Elementary, where he sang the National Anthem and shared stories with the 2nd Grade students.

- Bowling Event - November 15, 2014 – This was another great event coordinated by Ms. Edith Miller, we had participation from some members and friends and we were able to raise funds for the Spring 2015 HAVOCT INC Veterans Benefits & Health Symposium. The event took place at Vernon Lanes located in Vernon CT. The event raised a total of \$1,337.00.
- South Park Inn – during the week of Thanksgiving HAVOCT INC and members donated part of the meal that it was given to the homeless. This action has been taking place for several years now. We are great to know that we can support those in need to include several homeless Veterans that reside at the shelter. LTC Nieves, SFC (RET) Figueroa, PFC Torruella and MAJ (RET) Acosta Newson has been involved in these efforts.
- Military Ball – postponed for November 21, 2015.

December 2014

- HAVOCT INC Annual Christmas Gathering – Dec 13, 2014 –CTDVA Commandants House. This was an event with a large of participation of members, families and friends. We had a live band with music from Puerto Rico and the participants brought food, plus we hired a cook to bring additional food. Overall the event was total success.
- Wreaths across America Ceremony - December 13, 2014 - Every December HAVOCT INC honors those who have served and are now gone in the form of participating in this event that happens throughout the United States. Lucy Goicoechea Hernandez have done this for the past 5 years in collaboration with the Windsor American Legion Post #59 and Carmon's Funeral Home and also SFC (RET) Carmelo Figueroa has done it for 5 years at the Coventry Vietnam Memorial and at the Soldiers Field Cemetery in Hartford CT.

January 2015

- New Treasurer – January 17, 2015 – SSG Miguel A. Figueroa-Torruella took over the responsibilities of the Treasurer, relieving MAJ (RET) Edna Acosta-Newson who also did an outstanding job while she held the position and she still mentoring SSG Figueroa. He has done an outstanding job so far.

February 2015

- HAVOCT INC Website – February 03, 2015 – on this day the website was re-opened after we made changes in the template. The feedback from the members was positive however, we still need more input as to how to make it better. The website is www.havoct.org.
- Yale University, Veterans Legal Services Clinic – February 21, 2015 – The most recent accomplishment for the organization is the collaboration with the Yale University's Veterans Legal Clinic and Attorney Michael Wishnie and his staff – Attorney Bethany Li and law students Emma Kaufman and James Flynn in creating a "Know Your Benefits" Book. This is an instructional manual on how our Veterans can reach out to the VA in obtaining their benefits, how to appeal if they are denied and how to apply for a discharge upgrade. This clinic is also pursuing providing us assistance in becoming a VSO accredited organization in order to embark on our next program March 2015. SFC (RET) Figueroa was a great instrument in making contact with Atty. Bethany Li.

April 2015

- Yale University, Veterans Legal Services Clinic – April 18, 2015 – we continued working with the Veterans Benefits Pamphlet, which is scheduled to be completed by May 20156. (See website www.havoct.org for more details)

May 2015

- Danielson “Veteran's Coffeehouse” in Danielson CT – We donated a total of 10 brand new chairs to the Veterans Coffee House of Danielson, CT on Saturday, May 16, 2015. Thomas Pandolfi attended our meeting to receive the donation from our organization. It is a great feeling to be able to assist our fellow Veterans. The program is receiving more and more participation and was looking for chairs to be donated and we were able to assist in this case. This is an entity that it is meant to bring service members together and for them to share stories in a Café setting. The total cost was \$164.80.
- 25th Anniversary of Troop 125 Hartford Boy Scout – May 23, 2015 – HAVOCT INC, via LTC Lesbia I. Nieves & SFC (RET) Carmelo Figueroa participated at this event at the Soldiers Field Cemetery in Hartford CT.
- 7th Annual Veterans Health and Benefits Symposium - 29 MAY 2015 – this was another great event that took place at Goodwin College. During this event we had the participation from different agencies federal, state and local.
 - In addition, we had a great presentation during lunch where Official Borinqueneers received a copy of the Bill signed by President Barack Obama on June 10, 2014, when it became official the approval for the Borinqueneers to receive the Congressional Gold Medal. During the event we counted with the participation of SGT Antonio Del Carmen Rivera Villareal (Deceased) son Mr. Hector Rivera, CPL Manuel Giuliano, SFC Luis Rodriguez Rodriguez, MAJ Frank Medina and SSG Luis Centeno. We also had a representative from the office of Sen. Richard Blumenthal, Ms. Heather Sandle. In addition we had the participation of Mr. Frank Crose and Diane Alverio for being supporters of the CGM initiative. In addition, LT GOV Nancy Wyman attended the event and provided a speech.
 - On this day the Veterans Benefit Pamphlet was unveiled and given to the participants. This was a result of our work with the Yale University, Veterans Legal Services Clinic.

June 2015

- South Park Inn – June 11, 2015 – Flag Day – during this day HAVOCT INC participated in this annual event which attracts service members and the community in general. Mr. Brian Baker and his staff always do a great job and HAVOCT INC always supports this event with the HONOR GUARD and members of HAVOCT INC.
- Saint Joseph University (SJU) – June 27, 2015 – on this day we started a wonderful relationship with the personnel from SJU. The purpose of it is was to have a screening on the History of Latinos in the United States (PBS

Documentary). The event will take place on November 19, 2015. In the meantime we are also working in a committee (LTC Nieves and SFC Cruz), where we are going to create a program with the intent to provide Art Therapy to our community by showcasing paintings from USJ. We are focusing in the community at large; but HAVOCT INC will look to attract the attention of service members (all). We expect to have it roll out by Spring 2016.

Overall, HAVOCT INC and its members, LTC Lesbia Nieves, SFC (RET) Carmelo Figueroa, SFC (RET) Larry Kennedy, Lucia Goicoechea Hernandez, MAJ (RET) Edna Acosta-Newson, Edith Miller, SSG Miguel Figueroa, Luis Vera, SSG Joe Pickard, SSG Celestino Cordova, Nathaniel Davis, Santiago Malave, SFC (RET) Julio Diaz, PFC Miguel Torruella and SFC Juan L. Cruz, etc. also participated in many other events are organizations, such as:

- South Park Inn
- American Legion, Hartford CT
- American Legion, Windsor CT
- Wreath Across America
- OIF/OEF Veterans Organization – Federal DVA
- CT Veterans & Military Coalition
- AFSCME- Council 4
- Borinqueneers CGM Design Liaison team
- Borinqueneers Congressional Gold Medal Alliance
- Bilingual Outreach Center of Massachusetts
- Troop 125 Hartford Boy Scout

HAVOCT INC and its board members are very proud of the success of the organization. We look forward to another year of more success stories and accomplishments.