

# Veterans at war with school district

It's disappointing that San Dieguito Union High School District officials think a veterans' memorial



**TOM MORROW**

plaque on the campus of San Dieguito Academy, (formerly San Dieguito High School), is "not appropriate."

A group of alumni want to erect a campus memorial to honor SDHS graduates who were killed during the Vietnam War.

Thus far, five SDHS grads have been identified: Marine 1st Lt. **James M. Mitchell** of Encinitas; Navy Lt. j.g. **Michael R. Zerbe** of Del Mar; and Marine 1st Lt. **Charles B. Henricks**, Army Spec. 4 **Victor Lopez** and Army Pfc. **Thomas L. Mericantante**, all of Solana Beach.

Last week I told you about the three fellow graduates behind this worthy project: Cardiff's **David Gonzalez**, Encinitas' **Sam Hernandez**, and Oceanside's **Bill Roebuck**, all SDHS graduates.

Now, they've been told the campus was not an appropriate place for a war memorial.

"We just felt the kids who attend the (S.D.) Academy would not have any positive connection with these individuals," Assistant Superintendent **Eric Hall** told Gonzalez and company of their memorial idea.

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I don't know upon what planet Mr. Hall is living, but memorializing deeds and accomplishments of graduates is something schools everywhere do with pride — including here in coastal North County.

And, giving one's life for one's country is the ultimate sacrificial deed. Students do make the "connection."

For more than 25 years, Vista High has had a plaque on the outside of its campus library with the names of graduates who lost their lives in Vietnam.

Annually, El Camino High celebrates Veteran's Day by inviting World War II and Korean War veterans to talk with students, ensuring that "positive" connection.

Rancho Buena Vista High does the same.

Encinitas' William Wetzel, commander of that city's American Legion Post, also is a San Dieguito High School graduate and Vietnam veteran.

He's miffed at the shortsightedness of the administration.

"How can they say no?" William asked. "These were kids who went to that school and they died fighting for their country."

This is something the public should weigh in on, and I have a feeling the district might lose this battle.

Call Dave at (760) 420-5249.

**SCHOOL HELP** — Encinitas' Niels Lund says San Diego National Park has an