



VFW Post 5447 Imperial Beach, CA to host the "Public Unveil" of Memorial Panel and serve as the starting point of a Cross Country walk to honor US Service men and women killed in the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This Saturday, Local VFW Post 5447 is hosting the public unveil of a memorial panel that will be carried and displayed across the Nation. The formal unveil and presentation will be at 5pm and the panel will be available for public viewing until 8pm. The memorial panel is 25 feet long by 8 feet tall and contains the pictures of the 6,654 men and women who were lost in the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It is an honor and pleasure to assist in any way we can for such a noble endeavor, we can't wait to see the Panel." said Fred "Duke" Pethes an Officer at VFW Post 5477.

The panel will be carried and escorted by Joe "Tiger" Patrick, of Rhode Island, who did a similar walk for the 10 year anniversary of the attacks of 9/11. During August of 2011, Tiger walked from the Pentagon, to the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, PA and finished Sept 10, 2011 at Ground Zero 9/11 Memorial in time for the commemorative services on September 11. Tiger, who also served during Desert Storm wanted to do something for our Fallen.

"I felt a compelling need to do something to honor to our fallen heroes, to give people a close up view of those we lost. This isn't a political statement, but an expression of love and respect for those who volunteered to put themselves in harm's way to protect us here at home." Tiger added.

Tiger will spend the month of May walking to Phoenix, AZ and will then interrupt the trip for a week to fly back to RI for that state's Special Olympics Summer Games. "I have been a coach and coordinator for about 20 years now for Special Olympics RI and each year my athletes and I put a lot of hard work in to be ready for the competition, I wouldn't miss it for the world. I could also probably use a week off from walking in the hot sun for a little bit too." Tiger admitted with a grin.

The Walk will take about 6 months to complete and it will end with visits to Arlington Cemetery, where many of the Fallen on the memorial panel are resting eternally and then finally Walter Reed Hospital in DC. Tiger will stop in towns and military bases along the way and looks forward meeting many family and friends of the Fallen: "I think my biggest reward/accomplishment will be to hug those who carry the loss everyday... to remind them they are not alone in their grief."

Along the way, Tiger will be staying at Fire Houses, VFW Posts and American Legions. He is carrying a Red Sox player's game used bat that wounded warriors will sign that he will then trade the player, Dustin Pedroia, for another item that will be sold in Auction with 100% of proceeds to go to the Wounded Warrior Project. "All monies I raise on this trip will go to the WWP after my trip costs. "

Tiger is also carrying a turn out coat from Union Fire Co #1 in Carlisle, PA where he spent a few days sheltered from Hurricane Irene. He will have firefighters sign the coat along the way. "First responders have always been big supporters of our Veteran's and I wanted to acknowledge that in a small gesture" replied Tiger.

Date/Time/Location of event

Saturday April 27, 5-8pm

VFW Post 5477

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