



THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA

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Fairmount Legion to recognize local hero pilot in Vietnam Commemoration

FAIRMOUNT, Ind., – American Legion Post 313 is scheduled to host a 50-year-to-the-day commemoration of a local heroes' aerial combat actions over Vietnam and a "Salute to Vietnam Veterans" on Saturday, May 20 at 1 p.m.

An F-4C Phantom two-seater-aircraft that once flew that day now sits proudly on display in front of Post 313. The paint scheme shows Tail Number 63-7623 and a red battle star on the engine intake signifying the confirmed kill of an enemy MiG.

The two young men who piloted the aircraft, then Major Robert Pardo and 1st Lt. Stephen Wayne, a 50-year-member of Post 313, had their limits and resolve tested under pressure in a historic action popularly known as "Pardo's Push."

Pardo and Wayne were one of two F-4C Phantom jets on a mission to destroy a steel mill north of Hanoi, North Vietnam March 10, 1967. They were hit by anti-aircraft fire resulting in leaking fuel and heavy damage to both aircraft. Their wingman was forced to shut down his engines and losing altitude at a rate of 3,000 feet per second.

Pardo and Wayne made a quick decision to fly their plane under and making contact with their wingman's aircraft, pushing it out of Vietnam into neighboring Laos where all four could eject into safer territory.

Pardo's Push has been featured on a number of documentaries including War Stories with Oliver North on the History Channel, and the Air and Space Smithsonian Magazine.

Later, May 20, 1967, eight F-4C Phantoms faced between 16 – 22 enemy MiGs in air-to-air combat in two different battle areas. Four MiGs were downed that day. Pardo and Wayne were credited with one.

This action took place exactly 50 years to-the-day of the scheduled commemoration at Legion Post 331.

Wayne is scheduled to be a featured speaker at the commemoration. The American Legion, Department of Indiana Cmdr. James B. May and former Department Cmdr. Ed Trice are also scheduled to speak.

In coordination with President Donald Trump's announcement of National Vietnam Veterans Day via executive order on March 29, 2017, a salute to all Vietnam Veterans in attendance will be conducted.

For more information and for the full story of "Pardo's Push" visit the Indiana Legion website at www.indianalegion.org/news/fairmount-legion-to-recognize-local-hero-pilot-in-vietnam-commemoration, or contact Post 331 Adjutant Steve Herniak at 765-661-5100 or by email at hurn65@yahoo.com.

If you have any questions, please contact the Indiana Legion Communications Director John Crosby at 317-416-5956 or by email at communications@indlegion.org

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