

Vets hope to connect

□ Despite losing their camp site, the members of the Vietnam Veterans in Canada are still hosting a picnic, and veterans of all stripes are invited to attend.

By Bonnie Bowman
TIMES CONTRIBUTOR

If you're a vet, you're invited.

Military veterans of all stripes are cordially invited to an upcoming picnic at ALLCO Park hosted by the Vietnam Veterans In Canada.

Due to the unfortunate trashing of VVIC's Firebase Canada site at Sayres Lake camp last year, the all-inclusive picnic plan seemed like a good idea for this year.

"The camp was totally destroyed," said VVIC Adjutant Woody Carmack of the Sayres Lake destruction.

"We couldn't come up with another appropriate site, so we came up with a picnic.

"We decided to have an all veterans' picnic in ALLCO. We wanted to reach Korean vets, World War II vets, South Vietnamese vets, Canadian peacekeepers - in fact, any vet."

And the door is also open to non-Canadian military veterans, Carmack added.

"If they're in Canada and they can make it, we don't care," he said.

Picnic in the park entertainment will include

"folk-type music", barbecuing and children's games.

"There will be some children's games like the hand grenade toss," Carmack cracked, adding, "No, I'm only joking."

But he does promise a good time for all ages, and despite the obvious fun a picnic can entail, Carmack hopes the veterans can connect in other ways.

"I am hoping people will take the time to talk to one another and reach a better understanding of one another. Combat veterans have a lot in common and it doesn't matter what war it was," he said.

"I'm hoping everybody who comes has a decent time and walks away having met new people."

Although the group's Firebase Canada plans were unexpectedly doused for this year, Carmack said they plan to carry on next year with the popular event.

"We have found the site and we'll probably open that up to everybody," he said.

Last year's event was a tremendous success, as scores of veterans turned out with their families.

The event helped to forge new friendships, as well as renew some old, but not forgotten ones.

This year's Veterans' Picnic begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, August 20 at ALLCO Park.

The park is located on the Alouette River at the north end of 248th Street in Maple Ridge.

Take Dewdney Trunk Road to 248th Street and head north until you see the signs posted nearby.

■ For more detailed information on this event and how to attend, please feel free to call 462-0450 or 530-5481.

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