



# NEWS AND VIEWS

VVA # 223

THE REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER



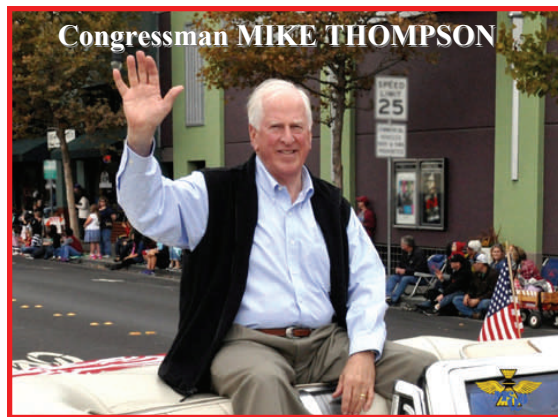
Volume 16, Issue 11

DECEMBER 2014

PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH OTHER VETERANS



At the October membership meeting, President Ken Holybee presents a plaque of appreciation and thanks to the Good Ol' Boys Motorcycle Club "for your generous contributions and support of Sonoma County Veterans in 2014."



Congressman MIKE THOMPSON

## The Petaluma Veterans Day Parade

VVA 223 participated in the Petaluma Veterans Day Parade in a variety of ways, highlighted by Bruce Thomson and his crew showcasing the plight of Missing in Action and Prisoners of War with their moving tribute POW camp tower.

Other notable Redwood Empire Chapter members in the parade included Bruce Carpenter, Gary Casassa, Kate O'Hare-Palmer, Sunny Campbell, Anthony Tata, Jay Matthews, and of course US Congressman Mile Thompson. Please see many pictures from the parade and a couple from the event at city hall on pages 6 and 7. More parade insight by the Press Democrat's Lori A. Carter on page 4.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY MARINES!

By Jil McGivney

A few months ago, Larry Williams, Commander of the Marine Corps League, suggested that perhaps our quilters would be willing to make a quilt for the Marine Corp Birthday.

When I asked Lavella Cassinelli if she would be interested, she immediately went on line and purchased the Marine Corp emblem on line and got started.



As the Marine Corps birthday party approached, it was obvious the quilt was a labor of love, and it turned out beautifully. At the birthday luncheon, Steve Bossard auctioned the quilt with a starting bid of \$1000.00. It didn't take long before the final bid was \$2,700.00. Amazing!

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE

**VIETNAM VETERANS of AMERICA - REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER 223  
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA**

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Color Guard:	Dave Phillips
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**News and Views**

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Contribution Writer:	Bruce Thomson
Brian McKeown	Lori A. Carter
Photos by:	"McQ6"



**State Assembly AB 2098 by Marc Levine, D-San Rafael:  
 [It] Requires courts to consider a defendant's status as a veteran  
 suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or other forms of  
 trauma when making specified sentencing determinations. This  
 bill passed on July 21 2014 - 100% progress. Action: 2014-07-21  
 - Chaptered by Secretary of State - Chapter 163, Statutes of  
 2014. Note: An act to amend Section 1170.9 of, and to add Sec-  
 tion 1170.91 to, the Penal Code, relating to sentencing.**

**NOTICE**

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To make a contribution to the News and Views, submit a story, or a photograph, please call or email: Brooke McKusick @ 537-9003, or [mcq6@vbn.com](mailto:mcq6@vbn.com). To make a complaint about the newsletter, please call: Ken Holybee @ 887-8891, or [holybee@comcast.net](mailto:holybee@comcast.net)

VVA Chapter 223 invites you to place an ad in the News and Views, please call:

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A business card size ad in our newsletter is \$100.00 for a full year... With a 100% Tax Credit!

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# President's Letter



**Ken Holybee**

This has been an interesting and productive year for the chapter. We have been involved in many projects from classrooms to the booths set up at the air show and Wednesday night market. We are planning our annual Christmas party as well as our first of the year poker tournament. We have attended meetings for housing the homeless, mental health, obtaining bus passes

for veterans, creating a veterans village in Santa Rosa, Vet Connect and other local programs to help veterans as well as national and state meetings. We have been involved in writing and passing legislation in the state and the congress. Our members have gained knowledge and been involved in advising others.

We have a very diverse group in regards to our activities and expertise in many fields. We have a very active group that serves coffee and talks to veterans at the Santa Rosa VA clinic as well as spreading good cheer around the community with ducks, pins and hats. This year we have a void because we will not be packing and sending packages to the Fourth Infantry Division members since they are home now instead of being in a war zone overseas. That is a good thing but we still remember these soldiers could be sent anyplace at any time.

We are looking forward to more involvement in these programs as well as new challenges that will be coming up. I have heard unofficially that our Toxic Exposure legislation, S2738 and HR5484 will not be acted on in this congress. This means we will have another battle getting it into the next congress. We will need to hold town hall meetings and keep the focus of this on everyone's minds. We will need to put pressure on our elected officials to make it happen. If we cannot get this assistance for the children of all veterans of our and future generations, we will be watching as more children die or suffer from lack of proper care. What we do as an organization for the future is what is of the most importance.

I would like to spend the next year working with other organizations to create a committee of the leaders to meet with the staff at the VA clinic to address our concerns, not to complain, but to find solutions to the problems we have with access to timely health care. I feel that as long as we do not work together we will be ignored as we were for many years. If we cannot fix the problems the veterans needing help in the future will be spending their lives fighting for what we have as well as what they will need in the future.

I have many ideas about how we can all work together, but very few want to listen or put in the effort to make this happen.

>>>>

Some of this is because of old fashioned ideas and not having the will to change, and some is because some think that will mean forgetting the past generations.

We held a suicide risk and prevention program on November 20th that was attended by people from the public as well as other groups. I see a lot of positive in the people that attended and look forward to attracting more people from the community to hear what the issues are that affect not just veterans but their families and the communities.

I hope everyone has a great Christmas and a prosperous new year. We still have a lot of work to do, but I think we are on the right trail.

###



**The Chapter 223 Christmas Party on Friday, December 5, 2014 is at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium. The doors will open at 5:00 PM and dinner service will start up around 6:00 PM.**

This year the party will be in the main ballroom again, and there will be lots to do, both setting up and taking down. Decorating gets started around noon. Kate O'Hare-Palmer leads the decorating crew. Please call Kate at 775-4123 to sign up or you can just drop by and help.

Jil McGivney will be in charge of gathering gifts for the children. She did a great job last year with her North Pole Connections. You can volunteer to help Jil, give her a call at 575-5261.

# The 2014 Petaluma Veterans Day Parade



Excerpts from Lori A. Carter  
The Press Democrat

More than 120 parade entrants included two riderless horses, a mounted “missing man formation” to honor Ernie Lichau, who died in August at age 89, and Herb Loudon, who died at his Petaluma home just hours before the parade began. Loudon, who turned 97 on Friday, was set to ride in the parade as a Pearl Harbor survivor.

Grand marshals of this year’s parade were WWII vets Clint Grove, Charles Matteri, Louis Raffi and Emil Zanoni. Other special entrants included a set of Clydesdales pulling Gold Star families, people whose family members have been killed in wars.

A Huey helicopter roared overhead several times as the parade snaked through downtown, and a pair of F-18 fighter jets whizzed past as the procession reached its end at Walnut Park, wowing crowds.

Sonoma County Supervisor David Rabbitt, in remarks at the park’s gazebo after the parade, said he is often proud of his hometown for the way it honors its veterans.

While much of the day was light-hearted and patriotic, there were moments of seriousness, like when Rep. Mike Thompson spoke of the need for better health care for veterans, particularly for those who come home with brain injuries or post-traumatic stress difficulties.

A small contingent of marchers tried to raise awareness for the need for housing for veterans.

Holding a sign reading “Rent to a vet: 569-2390,” Navy veteran Jamie Fox marched with a group of other workers from the Veterans Administration clinic in Santa Rosa in support of the HUD/VASH housing program. The program provides housing assistance through a voucher program that allows homeless veterans to rent privately owned housing.

“There’s just not enough housing for veterans,” said social worker Kim Valadez. “We help veterans find housing.”

## VIETNAM WOMENS ERA STUDY

*By Kate O’Hare-Palmer*

Last October, at the Women Veterans Committee at the national VVA meeting, I invited Dr. Kathy Magruder to speak about this third study that has ever been done on Vietnam era women veterans. She is one of the clinical researchers on the study. It is not complete. The study was done with a written questionnaire followed up by a phone interview. There were almost 15,000 women in the study. The goal was to compare women who had served in the military in- country, around Southeast Asia, and in parts of the US. There are two parts to the study. One is to determine the lifetime and current condition of PTSD in female veterans and, secondly, to determine the status of women’s health related to cardiac disease, hypertension, diabetes, ALS, MS, Parkinson’s Disease, and cancers related to brain, breast, and ob-gyn areas, and General Health. The study is not complete.

The mortality figures have been completed. They have shown that compared to the US women, those who served in VN, and those who served near VN have shown higher mortality rates related to motor vehicle accidents, cancers of the soft tissues (sarcomas) PTSD, and mental disorders. The nurses who served in VN also show a higher incidence of Cancers of the Pancreas and Brain, and of motor vehicle accidents. For those of us who have kept in touch with our friends and coworkers from Nam, these statistics are no surprise.

There was also a section of questions related to sexual harassment and trauma. Across the board, all women surveyed came out answering at around the 50% level. It didn’t matter where they served.

The level of PTSD related to this statistic of military sexual trauma/harassment is still being worked on. The level of PTSD being reported in this study is higher than the original study done in the 80’s on both men and women. There are some interesting findings in this. The higher prevalence of PTSD in VN women veterans is NOT due to pre-service trauma. It was also found that that IF the age of enlistment was older, the incidence was lower. Another variable was the length of service. Those that immediately came home from Vietnam and discharged from the military had a higher incidence of PTSD than those that stayed in the military.

We are looking forward to the health findings related to those of us still on the planet. These statistics would be helpful for our health providers in reviewing all of our medical status. If we look at these findings compared to the men, I think that we don’t find that much difference. Our organ cancers, reproductive systems, and our mental health are all involved. We came away with more wounds than we realized. But the knowledge of this will help us and those that are currently in the military to recognize and plan the medical health care needed.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

## An Open Letter to America's Veterans

At the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), we have one of the most noble and inspiring missions in Government. I accepted this job and joined this mission to better serve you—our Veterans—and improve the delivery of the care and benefits you have earned. It is our privilege to serve you, and I have made clear that as we move forward as a Department, we will judge the success of all our efforts against a single metric—the outcomes we provide for Veterans.



**Robert A. McDonald**

The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA), enacted less than 3-months ago, goes a long way toward enabling VA to meet the demand for Veterans health care in the short-term. VA has put considerable focus and attention on ensuring the law is implemented seamlessly, without confusion, and without creating hardships for Veterans. This legislation provides authorities, funding, and other tools to better serve Veterans in the short-term. We are appreciative of this temporary measure to improve access while we build capacity within the VA system to better serve those who rely on us for health care.

From June 1 to September 30, 2014, VA completed more than 19 million Veteran appointments in our facilities and made nearly 1.1 million authorizations for Veterans to receive care in the private sector and other non-VA health facilities—a 46.6-percent increase over the same period in 2013. This was all done under existing programs prior to the passage of VACAA, and sets the stage for strengthening existing partnerships between VA and the private sector. We have much we can share with one another to the benefit of Veterans.

VA has signed contracts with two private health care companies to help VA administer the Veterans Choice Program (Choice Program) under VACAA. The Choice Program is a new, temporary benefit allowing some Veterans to receive health care in their communities rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility. It does not impact your existing VA health care or any other VA benefit you may be receiving. We will begin implementing this benefit on November 5, as required by law. A call center is now operational to answer your questions and verify your eligibility for this

As part of this new program, we are issuing a Veterans *Choice Card* to every Veteran who is potentially eligible for the new, temporary health benefit. The *Choice Card* allows Veterans to elect to receive care outside of VA when they qualify for the new program based on the distance of their residence from a VA care facility, or when wait times for VA health care exceed the standards established in law. The *Choice Card* does not replace the identification card you already use to access other VA benefits; please do not throw away that identification card.

The *Choice Card* will be issued in three phases. The first group of *Choice Cards* along with a letter explaining eligibility for this program is currently being sent to Veterans who may live more than 40 miles from a VA facility. The next group of *Choice Cards* and letters will be sent shortly thereafter to those Veterans who are currently waiting for an appointment longer than 30-days from their preferred date or the date determined to be medically necessary by their physician.

The final group of *Choice Cards* and letters will be sent between December 2014 and January 2015 to the remainder of all Veterans enrolled for VA health care who may be eligible for the Choice Program in the future.

We are continuing to work with our partners—Congress, Veterans Service Organizations, and others—to get the information about this health program out to Veterans in as many ways as possible. Please visit our Web site at [www.va.gov/opa/choiceact](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact) where we have provided helpful information on Choice Program eligibility. We will work with our partners to keep you informed as we improve our delivery of high-quality, timely care.

Thank you for your service and sacrifice.

Sincerely,

Robert A. McDonald



**VVA 23 COLOR GUARD  
2013 ROSE PARADE  
Santa Rosa, Ca**

# GLOBAL WALL ON TERROR WALL OF REMEMBRANCE

SACRAMENTO STATE CAPITOL CEREMONY

NOVEMBER 9, 2014

By Kate O'Hare-Palmer

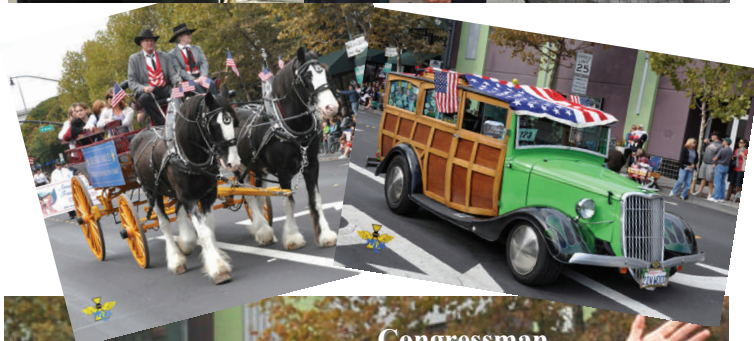
This was the first time that I had been to see this memorial wall. It was set up not too far from the California Vietnam Memorial in Capitol Park. It was inspired by a wish by active duty military for a memorial, for the cowardly attack by terrorists on the U.S. on 9/11/2001, and Vietnam Veterans wanting to connect with our current generation of warriors. It was designed and built by US Marine David Brown and his friend Richard (JR) Nichols in 2011 for the 10th anniversary remembrance of 9/11. It was built to be displayed one time in Orange County, but because of the positive reaction to this wall, it is now being taken all over the US.



Kate O'Hare-Palmer and Dave Richey

A hush surrounds the wall. I walked through the falling orange and red leaves as I read the history of terrorist actions from 1983 to the present. As I walked on the opposite side of the Wall, I felt the same sense of sacredness felt at reading these names of over 11,000 and counting for those who have died due to terrorist attacks and in the current wars. People leave mementos here just as they do at the Vietnam Wall. They are being collected to someday display in a permanent location.

A special flag folding ceremony and presentation to Gold Star Mothers, Dept. of Northern California was held. Karen Meredith accepted for the group. She explained a little of the history of Gold Star Mothers. It started in 1929 after WWI. The Gold Star Wives began in 1945. Both are chartered by Congress. There are two gold star pins issued. One is issued for family members of service members killed in combat, including those who commit suicide in a combat zone. It is a gold star set on a background of purple. The other gold star pin is the Next of Kin Pin - it signifies service related death or suicide during active duty other than combat. It is gold on gold. There are Survivors outreach Services available for these families and much has been done to aid the gold star families in their readjustment to this new reality.



Congressman  
JAROD HUFFMAN





# JIM PETERSON

By Mike Hart

Friends who know Jim Peterson, a VVA 223 member, attest to his reputation as an all time jokester. He loves to get into one-ups-man-ship with especially his Marine buddies, who he harasses constantly. Jim feels he has a long-standing duty to make fun of the 'gung-ho' brigade because he was (and still is) an Army paratrooper.



**Jim Peterson**

Jim is a former jumper belonging to the 101st Airborne Division ('63-66) and still serves as the Northern California Chapter President of the 'Screaming Eagles'. He was born in San Francisco in 1943, went to school at Santa Rosa JC and Cal Berkeley and is a lifetime member of Chapter 223. He is married to Mia, and he has two grown kids.

Jim visited Ft. Ord, Ca. for basic training and Hunter-Liggett, Ca. for advanced infantry training; and of course jump school at Ft. Benning, Ga. He had some very interesting jumps along the way to Vietnam, including in Iran, where the Shah was on his way out, and the 101st was coming to extract him.

His longest venture included Okinawa, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and... 'We were all over 'Nam' including the Central Highlands, Corps I, II, III. We were at Dac Tho and constantly under attack by the North Vietnamese 24th Regiment,' he reflected. 'That was the unit that drove the French out at Dien Ben Phu. They inflicted our biggest number of casualties.'

Jim owned a Stone & Tile store for many years in Santa Rosa and is using his experience to counsel young adults (Life Choices) in local schools. He also works with other VVA volunteers putting on job expos that benefit not only Veterans, but the overall community.

The 101st has a scholarship program for outstanding participants in ROTC curricula at institutions of higher learning, and Jim gives out these awards at Santa Clara University and the University of Nevada at Reno.

'I love doing this for these kids,' Jim explained. 'I get to meet the families of individuals who have attained a degree in engineering or a 4.0 in Military Science. Yet sometimes I want to tell these great young people that next year they'll be living in a third world country trying not to get their asses shot off.'

# COMIC'S CORNER

"Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example." -- Mark Twain

"Mr. T reported for jury duty in Chicago last week, but ultimately was not picked for the trial. I guess prosecutors thought he'd show too much pity." -- Jimmy Fallon

"This week a giant tortoise was on the loose here in Southern California. Drivers on the freeway were shocked to see something moving so quickly." -- Conan O'Brien

"Los Angeles is considering a new plan to boost the city's minimum wage to \$13.25 an hour. It's getting huge support across the entire country... of Mexico." -- Jimmy Fallon

"The federal government is starting to plan for climate change by making extended forecasts that can help people plan for extreme weather - because what can go wrong when you combine the efficiency of government with the accuracy of weathermen?" -- Jimmy Fallon

"Colorado police are worried that children on Halloween might mistakenly eat edible marijuana candies or baked goods. Does your kid ride a bike around and around in circles? Does he take naps in the middle of the day or think there's something or someone hiding under the bed? Does he sit in front of the TV all day? If your child exhibits any of that behavior, call the police immediately. You probably have a little stoner on your hands." -- Jimmy Kimmel

Autumn is a beautiful time of year. At the White House, squirrels are rounding up nuts on the lawn, which is more than the Secret Service is doing.

Today police in Israel seized dozens of weapons that had been disguised as Christmas decorations. Israeli police became suspicious when they saw CHRISTMAS decorations. -- Seth Meyers

After signing a contract for \$325 million this week, Marlins player Giancarlo Stanton celebrated with a \$20,000 bottle of Champagne. So let the road to inexplicable bankruptcy begin! When asked what made the Champagne so expensive, the bartender said, "I heard this guy just made \$325 million."

-- Jimmy Fallon

President Obama gave a speech on immigration tonight, and none of the big four TV networks aired it. Even television wants to distance itself from President Obama now. -- Jimmy Kimmel

Bono broke his arm in six places, and fractured his hand and shoulder blade in a bike accident in Central Park this week. But that's what can happen when you live your life too close to The Edge. -- Seth Meyers



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### **CALVET MEMO**

This is a notification that the CalVet Mobile App will be retired on 11/30/2014. If you are currently using this CalVet app, CalVet will no longer support this app after this date. But you can still access the information that you need! CalVet has redesigned their website so that it functions as elegantly on a desktop as it does on a tablet or smart phone!

Visit [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov) to create a profile in myCalVet to receive veteran benefits, resources, and services recommended just for you! You can also use the Find a Service Provider tab to locate resources near you.



### **DUCKY BRIGADE AT XMAS TREE LOT**

*The Ducky Brigade is setting up shop at Mark's Christmas Tree Lot on the corner of West 3rd Street at Dutton Avenue in Santa Rosa. They will be there week-ends noon to 6pm from Thanksgiving to Christmas. You can support The Bernardo Recovery Fund, and plus get a great Christmas tree from very Veteran friendly folks. "Come On Down"*

## **THERE IS NO CHAPTER 223 GENERAL MEETING IN DECEMBER**

### **REDWOOD GOSPEL MISSION -**

**HOMELESS OUTREACH PROGRAM** - Every Monday evening @ 5:30 pm. 101 6th Street, Santa Rosa.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** - Second Tuesday of the month, 1:00 pm @ the VETS building. Look for the guys looking for the room...

**FOOD-GIVE-AWAY PROGRAM** - Fourth Tuesday of the month. Volunteers will please check in with **John McGivney** @ 575.5261 for time and station.

**POKER SCHEDULE** - Cards in the air at 6:00 pm. Check-in and pizza 5:00 to 5:55 pm... Usually the first Saturday of the month... **December 6th.**

## **SONOMA COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE (707) 565.5960**

**3725 Westwind Blvd, Suite 101  
Santa Rosa CA 95409**

Westwind Boulevard is located near the Charles M. Schulz (Sonoma County) Airport. From Highway 101: Exit Airport Boulevard, turn left on Westwind Blvd. and right into the building's parking lot. Check Sonoma County Transit Airport route 62 & 64 for bus schedule.

P. O. Box 4059, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

*Please call to schedule an appointment.*

### **NORTH BAY VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER**

200 Montgomery Drive, Suite "C"

Santa Rosa, CA 95402

**Phone 707-578-8387**

NBVRC provides supportive services to very low-income veteran families living in, or transitioning into, permanent housing. The employment workshop is free. Veterans can obtain career training.

NBVRC operates Hearn House, a behavioral health treatment program that provides comprehensive treatment and housing for male veterans.

You do not need a parachute to sky-dive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

## **SONOMA COUNTY VET CONNECT**

**Veterans Drop In Center  
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Every Tuesday - 9 am to noon  
Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building  
1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa  
(Across from the Fair Grounds)**

Information, Assistance and Referrals  
VA Health Care, Veterans Benefits - Counseling for  
Veterans and their Families, Housing  
And Employment Counseling

**Phone 707-387-5623**

These services are, also, available at the Veterans Memorial Buildings in **Guerneville** on the 2nd Thursday, and **Sonoma** on the 3rd Thursday of every month. Please note the time schedule for these resource and service meetings is: Noon to 3 pm

**ALL VETERANS ARE WELCOME**



## VFW Reinforcing its ranks with Modern-day Warriors

*By Brian McKeown*



**Brian McKeown**

In 2003 I found myself right in the middle of a full scale invasion. As many know, mail is a godsend while deployed overseas. The excitement and pure happiness that could come from a piece of mail is something that only a select few know of. While opening letters in the sand, the last I expected to see was one from the VFW. The local VFW had given me a paid

membership and an address of which I could write if I chose to. Throughout the rest of my deployments the VFW continued to send care packages and letters. For a warrior overseas this simple act can aid tremendously.

A few years later when I had returned home from the military, I felt as though there had been something missing. As veterans, nobody understands us better than our fellow veterans. The bonds of camaraderie we built overseas are stronger than words. Besides that though, there was something else. Selfless service. It took me some time to see the reward in what had been our driving force. Giving back can heal wounds, especially next to our brothers and sisters we served and serve with. Now we must lean on each other to continue our battles as veterans. We must not be afraid to change as it will energize us and make us stronger. America has an unparalleled military force because of its veterans.

The Santa Rosa VFW Post 1844 has given local warriors a chance to make that difference. With a majority of young veterans at the helm the post has begun to redefine the purpose of the VFW. With community partnerships, veterans, their families and volunteers ready to make their mark on Santa Rosa. Fund raising, advocacy, therapy, and helping today's modern-day warrior re-integrate into a very difficult modern-day society are only a few of the services we as veterans can offer each other.

While attending my first veterans meeting in 2005 I was approached by a short elderly woman. She introduced herself and

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quickly stated "you know young man, just because you exit the military doesn't mean you stop serving". Many are very familiar with the late, iconic Sonoma County veteran, Hattie Stone. "yes ma'am" was the only reply needed. Hattie showed us what it meant to be veterans. No matter what, we are all brothers and sisters who have built our bonds on the blood, sweat and tears of each other. She believed in this above all. I quickly realized that bar had been set high by veterans such as Hattie Stone.

If we as veterans organizations join forces, Sonoma county can be the example of the veterans voice in action. The amount we can accomplish together will always outweigh the individual accomplishment. If not for ourselves then certainly for the modern-day warrior transitioning out of the military right now. We as veterans cannot complete this mission alone.

I leave you with a proverb that has stuck with me my whole life. "I am not afraid of tomorrow, for I have seen yesterday, and love today."

If you have interest in getting involved with the VFW and your community please feel free to contact myself by e-mail: [miltman32a@yahoo.com](mailto:miltman32a@yahoo.com)

A very special thank you to VVA Chapter 223 for their unrivaled support.

## VFW POST 1844

**VFW Post 1844 meets the first Thursday of every month at 6pm at the Sonoma County Veterans Memorial Auditorium, er, the vets building.**

**Joel White, Post Commander**

**For more information please call or email: Brian McKeown, Sr Vice Commander, at 508-9969 or [miltman32a@yahoo.com](mailto:miltman32a@yahoo.com)**

**Matt Jensen, Jr Vice Commander, at 570-7726 or [matthewlarsjensen@gmail.com](mailto:matthewlarsjensen@gmail.com)**

**The basic aims of the VFW are: to ensure the national security through maximum military strength, to speed the rehabilitation of the nation's disabled and needy veterans, to assist veterans' widows and orphans and the dependents of needy or disabled veterans, and to promote Americanism by means of education in patriotism and by constructive service to communities.**

**To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.**



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## News and Views

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Wide awake at 4 AM, soaking wet from the nightmare, shaking a bit, having just finished the firefight, I sit alone in the dark, tears falling from both eyes - we couldn't cry in Vietnam - not in front of the guys, no matter how much it hurt. Another day ruined by 4 AM. What happened 45 years ago is as fresh as last night and the pain hasn't let up one bit. It's always there, like the Viet Cong waiting for the slightest crack in my defenses so it can explode anew. Like it hasn't done enough damage already - like I haven't paid over and over - like it's May 31, 1969 again.

The bleeding stopped, shrapnel wounds starting to heal, the ringing in my ears and foggiess in my mind gradually slipping away - I sat alone in the dark outside the ward of the evacuation hospital in Cam Rahn Bay not realizing this was how I would feel for the rest of my life. Call sign, "Sucker Bill - Delta 2-5." Submitted by Bruce Thomson