

News and Views

Volume 21 Issue 5 May 2019

A Publication of:

Vietnam Veterans of America Redwood  
Empire Chapter 223

PO Box 1583, Santa Rosa, CA 95402 Meets at,  
  
see below

1351 Maple Avenue, Vets Building Office Phone  
707-526-4218

WEB: [www.vva-223.org](http://www.vva-223.org)

Chapter Email: [\\_vva223vva@gmail.com](mailto:_vva223vva@gmail.com)

Non Profit Org  
Non Profit  
US Postage Paid  
Permit 679  
Santa Rosa. CA 95402

Address Service Requested



NEWS AND VIEWS



Volumne 21 Issue 5 May 2019  
PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH OTHER VETERANS

President’s Message:

Meetings, meetings and another meeting;  
I spend a lot of time in meetings all over the area. This last week I heard once again “people being talked about need to be at the table with those making decisions that affect them”. I have heard this from a few people in the past and that is why I try to attend a lot of these meetings. When I can set in a meeting and listen to someone and ask them to explain something in a term I can understand, I have had different responses. Most of the time the speaker will apologize and rephrase the comment. Very seldom, but it does happen, there are comments that are less than appropriate. When I set in these meetings if I don’t understand and I don’t ask for clarification it is my fault.

This last week I was at a meeting talking about our health care and the health care of everyone. They spoke about principles for value assessment of health care. There are programs in the works to put cost of care and assessment of the treatment with length of life and quality of care and how expensive the good drugs are and maybe if you are over 75 you should get the cheep drugs that are not quite as good as the expensive ones that will work better but cost more and are you wort having around and not

being active and I hope this makes sense to you. When they are talking about the health care of veterans and put cost of medication and how physically disabled you are above your needs, this is where we are having a problem.

The Mission Act will go into effect on June 6<sup>th</sup>. This takes the place of the Choice program. As far as I have heard there is no plan as to how this works.

We had a good town Hall meeting with the VA on Tuesday evening. Along with asking question some took the opportunity to vent some of their issues. There were some good questions and there were responses that still need some follow-up information. I would like our members to let me know if you think these meetings are helpful or a waste of time. We have members that have access to a lot of information and all you need to do is ask and we should be able to answer your questions. Remember that the Wednesday night market is going on and we are in a different place. Stop in and say hi and see if you can stump the members answering questions.

With the start of summer, or so the calendar says, we will be having a few events. Along with our normal projects we will be looking new and exciting things for us to do .

Continued on page 2

Membership Application for:  
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter # 223

Membership is open to US armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975.

NAME\_\_\_\_\_Address\_\_\_\_\_

CITY\_\_\_\_\_STATE.\_\_\_\_ZIP\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE\_\_\_\_\_E-MAIL\_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH\_\_\_\_\_ GENDER-- MALE\_\_\_FEMALE\_\_\_ Life - \_\_\$50.00

Credit card Number\_\_\_\_\_Signature:\_\_\_\_\_

Submit to: VVA Membership Chapter 223, PO Box 1583, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

JOIN VVA OR AVVA

IF YOU ARE A VIETNAM-ERA VETERAN YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN VVA OR JOIN AVVA AND SERVE YOUR VETERAN COMMUNITY



Continued from page 1

We have had our elections and have filled all board positions. Come to the meetings and let us know if we are doing something you like or let us know if there is something different that we might try. How about another BBQ? These seem to be a big success.

In mid-July our delegates will be trekking to Spokane Washington to participate in our national convention. The resolutions and amendments that we will be discussing and voting on are on the national web site or you can catch me in the office or somewhere around the area and I can give you a printed copy. We would like your input on the resolutions and amendments. The candidate statements are in the national Veteran magazine. If you would like any information on the candidates that is not written, you can ask me or Kate. We know most of the people running or have worked with a lot of them over the years. We have some real hard decisions to make at this convention that could affect the future of the organization. It will be exciting. You will be hearing a lot about the future of VVA in the coming months and maybe years. Give it a lot of thought. Remember how life was forty years ago in the veteran community and where we were in our benefits and care. What do we want to pass on? Do we want to just end and walk away? We have people with all different ideas, but they need to be addresses and accepted by the members at a national convention. We are set up so, the members present and voting at a national convention, are the highest authority in VVA. For this reason, the conventions should be well represented by every chapter. we have six delegates to the convention, and I hope to have all there. We are also allowed to have alternates in case something happens that makes a delegate unable to preform his duties, the alternate can step in and become the delegate so you, the chapter, does not lose their voice. A

VVA convention is the most democratically ran election and governing process that you can ever have the opportunity participate in. Let's have some discussions.

SOS Boxes Arrived in Afghanistan



**ANDY'S DONUTS**  
707 541-0877  
THE BEST DONUTS IN TOWN

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK  
MON-SAT 5:00AM - 4:00PM  
SUNDAY 6:00AM - 2:00PM

1784 PINER ROAD SANTA ROSA, CA 95403  
TEL: (707) 541-0877

(866)934-cvbf—(2823) **CALIFORNIA** only Calls on this number [http: CAVBF.org](http://CAVBF.org)

**FOR COUNTRY FOR DUTY FOR FAMILY**

**CALIFORNIA VETERANS BENEFITS FUND**

9/2019

**DAN MCCASKELL, Ph.D.**  
C.R.C., C.V.E.  
SOCIAL SECURITY CLAIMANT REPRESENTATIVE

529 Davis Street  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

**Vietnam**  
12/6-2/69

dangmcaskell@yahoo.com  
www.dannccaskell.com

6/19

fax 707-528-4045

**Mike Thompson**  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS FIFTH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

231 CANNON BUILDING (707) 1040 MAIN ST., SUITE 101  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515 NAPA, CA 94559  
202-255-3311 707-226-9898

9/19

**MILITARY ANTIQUES & MUSEUM**  
Buy-Sell-Trade  
Civil War to Present  
10am to 5:30pm  
Thursday to Sunday or by appointment

**Jason Yarnall** **Kevin Braafladt**

300 Petaluma Blvd North, Petaluma, CA 94952  
Phone: (707) 763-2220 Email: [warguys@sonic.net](mailto:warguys@sonic.net)  
[www.militaryantiquesmuseum.com](http://www.militaryantiquesmuseum.com)

**DANIELS**  
CHAPEL OF THE ROSES  
Funeral Home & Crematory

(707) 525-3730  
(707) 525-3735 fax  
1225 Sonoma Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

[mail@danielschapeloftheroses.com](mailto:mail@danielschapeloftheroses.com)  
[www.danielschapeloftheroses.com](http://www.danielschapeloftheroses.com)  
FD. LIC. 209 CR. LIC. 92

10/2019

**Town & Country**  
PROPERTIES

Residential • Land • Vineyards • Investment Properties

**Robert J. Moreiko, Jr.**  
Broker

5212 Old Redwood Highway • Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Cell: 707-477-9020 • Office: 707-566-3980  
E-mail: [bmoreiko@comcast.net](mailto:bmoreiko@comcast.net) • Lic. #01022418

6/19

**.. What The F..?**  
KWTF.net "Roots of Rock"  
Saturdays @ 0800 am  
Requests & Dedications  
[Rock it Man@ mcn .org](mailto:Rock it Man@ mcn .org)  
...Be There

1/2019



Vietnam Veterans of America Redwood Empire Chapter 223

Santa Rosa, California

Office (707) 526-4218

Email: VVA223@gmail.com

Officers:

President: Ken Holybee – holybee@comcast.net - 707-887-8891

Vice President: Lou Nuñez — scso610ret@gmail.com — 707-291-5314

Secretary: Kate O’Hare-Palmer — koharepalmer@gmail.com — 707-775-4123

Treasurer: Pat Christen-707-539-3500 —PEC@sonic.net

Board of Directors:

Gabe Arevalo—garoar@gmail.com—707-303-5859

Joe Cholewa—skosh@sonic.net— 707-486-0699

Whit Patterson — dwpat2@yahoo.com — 707-292-9561

Tony Rambonga Jr.—Rambongas1.Ajr@gmail.com — 415-678-8812

Bob George —tmfc104ra@gmail.com —707-838-3382

AVVA Representative—Brian McKeown—miltman32a@yahoo.com—707- 508-9969

The Chapters new EMAIL ADDRESS IS:  
vva223vva@gmail.com

Committees

Chaplain:

Clinic Coffee Cart: Lou Nuñez

Color Guard:

Dinner/Dance: Lou Nuñez

Education:

Finance: Pat Christen

Food Distribution: Joe Cholewa

Legislation: Ken Holybee

Membership: Whitt Patterson

Newsletter: Barbara Burke

Scholarship Fund: Sunny Campbell


UVC: Ken Holybee

Veterans Building: Lou Nuñez

Website: Elizabeth O’Gara

TL Tillet's Automotive

Independent Subaru Service & Sales



Joann & Tom Tillet

707-527-7615

tillet@sonic.net

ttilletts.com

1426 PETALUMA HILL RD. SANTA ROSA, CA 95404

Contributors to the News and Views: Ken Holybee, Kate O’Hare-Palmer. Thanks to all. Would like to see more articles next month. Support the chapter. I don’t write articles, I just put it together. There are a lot of interesting stories out there, send

Notice

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of VVA,INC., National, State or Chapter 223 or the newsletter staff, but those of the corresponding party. All articles by the Chapter have permission for reprint in all Vietnam Veterans of America newsletters. Anything else permission must come from the original source.

If you would like to purchase a Business Card sized **sponsorship** to put in our NEWSLETTER, Please call the chapter office. Phone number is: 707-526- 4218

Mental Health Matters

By Ken Holybee

On Wednesday May 22 Brian McKeown and I attend- ed Mental Health Matters Day in Sacramento. The event is held annually on the east side of the Capitol. Brian and I attended as members of the California Veterans Benefit Fund (CAVBF) a 501 c 3 not for profit that helps provide for attendees to be there. The event is a place for non-profits, government agencies, and other providers to gather in a nice outdoor setting to promote their programs and see how other pro- grams are doing in the mental health field. May is Mental Health Awareness Month so it is a time to put out their information. Some of the programs are just local and some are state-wide. All are working to as- sist people with mental health issues, and some have extensive programs to help with the care givers and the family members of people that struggle.

My biggest fault with myself is I did not pick up enough information and I did not get enough contact information. I did pick up some that I thought would be useful to the chapter, but my purpose was to pro- mote my organization and find was to help to promote programs. Next year I will put more information out regarding the event. I do know that I told people about it, but I don’t think I have impressed enough on the need for people to attend.

They also have an outdoor stage with speakers. They have seating for a couple of hundred and most of the chairs were full. I did not hear the speakers. Someone wanted a program, so I gave out all they gave us and did not keep one for myself. I guess I need to start taking along someone that can oversee what I do and pick up the information. I always thought I could just remember what and who was happening.

Having spent a long day, I was not able to attend the Wednesday night market with the chapter members. I thank them for standing in. There was a time when twenty -hour days were easy. Now at ten or twelve hours I seem to start running down.

VA Dental Submitted by Kate

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has se- lected Delta Dental of California and MetLife to once again offer private insurance coverage for the VA Dental Insurance Program (VADIP).

The Department of Veterans Affairs Dental Insur- ance Reauthorization Act of 2016 extends VADIP until December 31, 2021. Veterans who are en- rolled in the VA health care system and beneficiar- ies and their dependents of the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the VA (CHAMPVA) can en- roll in the program.

VADIP offers eligible individuals the opportunity to purchase discounted dental insurance coverage that includes diagnostic services, preventive ser- vices, endodontic and other restorative services, surgical services and emergency services.

Each individual covered by the dental insurance plan will pay the entire premium for coverage un- der the dental insurance plan, in addition to the full cost of any copays. Enrollment is voluntary and does not affect eligible individuals’ entitlement to existing VHA outpatient dental services and treat- ment.

Coverage for VADIP dental services is provided in the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Sa- moa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mari- ana Islands.

Delta Dental and MetLife administered the three- year VADIP pilot program. Coverage under the VADIP pilot program began January 1, 2013, and more than 115,000 Veterans and CHAMPVA ben- eficiaries enrolled in the program before it expired January 31, 2017. Individuals who enrolled in the pilot program must re-enroll to participate in the new version of the program. While the insurance providers will remain the same, plan options, fees and other factors may have changed from those of- fered under the pilot program.

Multiple plan options allow individuals to select a plan that provides benefits and premiums that meet their dental needs and budget.

# July 2019

## Butte County

### VVA Chapter 582 BBQ

Submitted by Tony Rambonga Jr

Board members Tony Rambonga and Joseph Cholewa ventured up to Chico on Friday, May 17th to help out Butte County, VVA Chapter #582 with their Tri Tip BBQ Drive thru Fund Raiser for Veteran Victims of the #CampFire! #Paradise Fire. We got there about noon and unloaded some donated food stuffs and got right to work prepping for the 4pm-7pm Tri Tip BBQ Dinner! You got BBQ, beans, potato salad, dinner roll, generous portions of tri tip and chocolate chip cookie for \$10 or 2 for \$20. We had a great time helping Butch Frederickson and VVA #582 with their fund raiser. They had a great turnout and the BBQ was killer!!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Wed Night Market Setup 3:30	4	5	6
7	8 Veteran & Family Advisory Comm. 2:30pm	9 Board Mtg. 1pm	10 Wed. Night Market Set-up 3:30	11 Food Distribution: 9-10:30	12	13
14	15	16 General Mtg. 6pm—potluck 7pm -meeting	17 National Convention Wed. Night Market Set-up 3:30	18 National Convention	19 National Convention	20 National Convention
21	22	23	24 Wed. Night Market Set-up 3:30	25 Food Distribution: 9-10	26	27 Newsletter Articles Due
28	29 Newsletter Printing	30	31 Wed. Night Market-Set-up 3:30	August 1 Newsletter Folding		



# June 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Poker Night  Region 8 & 9 Reno NV
2	3	4	5 Wednesday Night Market Set up 3:30	6 D-Day Continuum of Care 12:30	7	8
9	10 Veterans & Family Advi- sory Comm. 2:30	11 Board Mtg. 1pm	12 Wednesday Night Market Set u[ 3:30	13 Food Distri- bution 9-10:30	14	15 In 1979, VVA changes name from Council of Vietnam Vets to Vietnam Veterans of
16	17	18 General Mtg. 6 Potluck 7 Meeting	19 Wed. Night Market Set up 3:30	20	21	22 Newsletter Articles Due
23/30	24	25	26 Wed. Night Market Set up 3:30	27 Food Distri- bution 9-10  Newsletter folding 10	28	29

## I JUST WANTED TO SAY "THANK YOU!"

### I AM A CHILD OF THE VIETNAM WAR

My name is Larry McGhee. My father 'served in the Vietnam war where he met my mother, a native Southern Vietnamese woman. I'm a product of the Vietnam War-a war child. My mother's father was a Colonel in the Army Of The Republic Of South Vietnam.. My mother was one of seventeen children born to her parents. She was the only one to make it out of Vietnam in March 1973 through the efforts of my father and others stateside. I was born two months later in May. My mother was very anxious to get out knowing what would befall her if I was born in Vietnam and if the South fell to the North.

When Vietnam fell, my grandfather buried his uniform and ran from his home town of Cantho with his whole family and attempted to pass off as a civilian. They were never able to escape Vietnam. Three years later he was arrested by a local communist official/former Vietcong in the district they lived in. The official wanted to kill my grandfather and/or put him in a hard labor prison camp with the family. But my mother had an attractive younger sister that caught the eye of this official. He offered to send my grandfather up north in a reeducation camp and better living conditions compared to other former South Vietnamese Army members if he gave his daughter to him in marriage. So my grandfather said, "Marry the guy". And she did.

My mother didn't get a hold of any family members until around eight years later. For eight years she had no idea if her family was dead or alive. Any children in our family or born after the fall of the south were denied education and lived in abstract poverty. After re-establishing contact with her family, my father began to send money back to my mother’s family including my Vietcong uncle. At the age of 18 in the summer of 1991, I went to Vietnam for the first time with my mother and it was a reality check. You see my parents were very upset with me that I made some very poor and unsavory choices and friends during my teen years. I was a street thug/gang member. My parents always spoke about the freedoms I have, benefits of being a US citizen, like free education, free speech and rights to vote. I took all that for granted until that

trip. My mom's side of the family was dirt poor. I had toddler cousins running around naked. Their toys were shoes. The electricity was on six hours a day. I was in a third world country that was much worse than what the media showed. This could've been my reality. Unfortunately, it was for my mother’s whole family.

I grew up watching Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, and Chuck Norris movies. I fantasized about being in the army and saving my mothers family. My father said it wasn't that easy. While in Vietnam in the summer trip of 1991, I had an uncle who was very gracious and caring for us. He made us food, took us out and was very humble to us. When I found out that he was the Vietcong uncle. I was extremely upset. I told my mother that piece of garbage is the reason some mother, father, sister or child is in grief. I hated him. But my mother took me to the side and explained something to me. She said, he fought for the Communists and gave his best years to them. Then they took everything from him. Your father,, a man he never met, for the last eight years has been sending him money to support his family. Because of your father he was able to send your cousins to school and many other blessings for starters. He thought, here is an American, my brother in law I never met, supporting me. My former opponent, my enemy.. He is loving on me. My country, my communist's comrades have done nothing for me. It was a revelation to him. He ended up renouncing his communist's allegiance and dropped out of the party. He couldn't believe this was what Americans were really like. But it was true.

My mother still goes to Vietnam every two years. Why do I write all this to you? Well, it's easier to write rather than say it over and over. But I said all that to say this, “ Life is filled with If's?" What if my mother didn't make it out? I could've been one of the 40,000 kids fathered from American GI's living as second class citizens in Vietnam today. My life would not be what it is today. Also, I just wanted to thank you for your sacrifice and service. Because of you and many like you,, I am here today, a recipient of your sacrifice. Thank you for fighting for the freedom my mother, sister and I enjoy. An eternal thank you and thank God for you. I have no idea if anyone of Vietnamese decent has ever thanked you? But from the deepest parts of my heart. THANK YOU!

WASHINGTON — A group of lawmakers introduced legislation that would add nine more diseases to a list of conditions presumed to be caused by the chemical herbicide Agent Orange, giving veterans who suffer from them a fast-track to Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation and health care. The Keeping Our Promises Act, introduced last week, adds prostate cancer, bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension, stroke, early-onset peripheral neuropathy, AL amyloidosis, ischemic heart disease and Parkinson-like syndromes to a list of diseases presumed to be caused by Agent Orange exposure during the Vietnam War.

Researchers with the National Academy of Medicine released findings in November that there was “suggestive” evidence that eight of the diseases could be caused by Agent Orange. For hypertension, researchers found that “sufficient” evidence exists. “American heroes affected by Agent Orange deserve the peace of mind knowing that the federal government recognizes the existing link between their exposure and illness,” said Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Penn., one of eight lawmakers who banded together to introduce the legislation.

VA experts have begun a “formal, deliberative review” of the National Academy of Medicine’s latest report, VA Press Secretary Curt Cashour said Tuesday. The review is expected to be complete in the summer, at which time the agency will make recommendations about presumptive conditions, he said. During a Senate hearing March 26, Richard Stone, the executive in charge of the Veterans Health Administration, guessed the review would be complete within 90 days.

“We’re working our way through that right now,” Stone said of the national academy report. Recommendations would be sent to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, who would choose when – and whether – to act on them.

The VA previously recommended that some of the conditions be added. After the last National Academy of Medicine report in 2016, the VA took 20 months before it sent recommendations to the White House that bladder cancer, hypertension, hyperthyroidism and Parkinson’s-like tremors be added to the list. The recommendation hasn’t made it past the White House’s Office of Management and Budget. Last year, VA officials told the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs that the Office of Management and Budget is waiting for results of ongoing mortality and morbidity studies, which could provide more evidence of a con-

nection between the diseases and Agent Orange. On Tuesday, Cashour said some of those results will be published as early as mid-2019. But some lawmakers don’t want to wait on the executive process.

Fitzpatrick, along with Reps. Annie Kuster, D-N.H., Bruce Westerman, R-Ark., Scott Tipton, R-Colo., Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., Joe Cunningham, D-S.C., Brendan Boyle, D-Penn., and Mike Thompson, D-Calif., are trying to use a legislative route. Boyle estimated it would help tens of thousands of Vietnam War veterans.

“This bipartisan legislation makes good on that promise by ensuring all servicemembers exposed to these herbicides and chemicals as a part of their military service get the health care they need,” Boyle said in a statement. “Not one more servicemember should be forced to suffer in this way without the best care our federal government has to offer.”

The bill is likely to face an uphill battle in Congress, where veterans and advocates have fought for years to prove toxic exposures and secure VA benefits. Attempts failed in Congress last year to approve benefits for “blue water” Navy veterans – sailors who served on ships off the coast of Vietnam and argue they were exposed to Agent Orange. The veterans could be close to getting VA benefits, but the victory was won in court, not Congress. The VA opposed the legislative effort to approve benefits for blue water Navy veterans, citing high costs and insufficient scientific evidence. The agency has not yet issued an opinion on the Keeping Our Promises Act.

[wentling.nikki@stripes.com](mailto:wentling.nikki@stripes.com)  
Twitter: [@nikkiwentling](https://twitter.com/nikkiwentling)

Submitted by Kate

Saturday, September 14th  
4-10pm

## 2019 Benefit Dinner Dance

Tickets: \$40/person

### Looking for Sponsors:

Platinum Sponsor: \$1,000 or more  
Includes 8 tickets

Gold Sponsor: \$500 or more  
Includes 4 tickets

Silver Sponsor:  
\$250 or more  
Includes 2 tickets

Call 707-526-4218 for more info