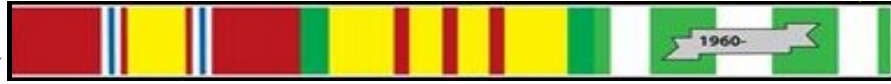
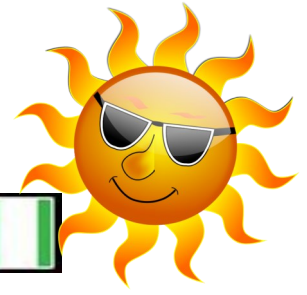




NEWS AND VIEWS

VVA REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER 223



Volume 17 Issue 5

June 2015

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Memorial Day

By Charles Earthman

A chilly morning with low clouds and fog greeted citizens as they gathered at Santa Rosa Memorial Park to honor America's fallen on Memorial Day. This Memorial Day Ceremony has always been a fitting tribute and the weather would not dissuade hundreds of people that came to honor the local heroes that gave their lives for this country.



The grounds were adorned with over a thousand burial flags flying in the cold breeze and lining the pathway to the ceremony, the Avenue of Flags. The work of putting up the flags was done by volunteers from local Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops and veterans, both young and old. Sonoma County Veteran of the Year, Steve Bosshard, was the Master of Ceremonies. The Santa Rosa Fire Department Honor Guard raised and lowered to half-staff the burial flag of Pearl Harbor survivor Herb Loudon who died last year on Veterans Day. Carlton Smirni, Chaplain, American Legion Post 21, gave the Invocation. Guest speakers were Linda Kynoch, Gold Star mother of Army Specialist Joshua J. Kynoch, who was killed in action on October 1, 2005, in Bayji, Iraq; and Stephen Gale from Congressman Mike Thompson's office who read a letter from the Congressman. Throughout the ceremony the Redwood



Chordsmen sang a number of songs including the National Anthem, America the Beautiful, and the anthems of all the branches of military services. There was the traditional laying of memorial wreaths by veteran service organizations. A rifle salute was given as taps was played and the colors were lowered and folded by the Santa Rosa Fire Department Honor Guard. The program concluded with Tim Maloney, Retired Army Sargent Major and Family Service Counselor at Santa Rosa Memorial Park.

Memorial Day in our community has always been a solemn event that shows the community's respect for its sons and daughters who gave their lives for freedom.



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA REDWOOD EMPIRE CHSPTR 223

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DONATIONS

In our ever growing efforts to serve local veterans, VVA Chapter 223 is always looking for new sources of funds to support the cause. We're still a very small entity trying to serve the veterans of Sonoma County.

You can help by making a tax deductible contribution directly to VVA Chapter 223. Send donations directly to the Chapter at the address on the back page.

Thanks...

NOTICE

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

To make a contribution to the News and Views, submit a story, or a photograph, please call or email: Charles Earthman: 707.778.6598, or c.earthman173@gmail.com To make a complaint about the newsletter, please call: Ken Holybee: 707.887.8891, or holybee@comcast.net

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

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President's Letter

June President's Report

With all of the events e have been doing the last couple of months, June seems like a walk in the park. Remember that on Wednesday evenings we have a booth at the Santa Rosa Wednesday night market. Come on down and say hi or volunteer to spend some time at the booth. It is very rewarding and we do talk to a lot of people there.



Ken Holybee

A comment was made at the legislative day in Sacramento by a good friend and veteran. He asked "How we will get the younger veterans to use the VA if all we do is talk bad about it"? I spent a lot of time thinking about this. Looking back when we started using the VA, it was not a friendly place and they were not receptive to our needs. No one fixed it for us, so we had to fight to get recognition and treatment. We are working hard at all levels to make sure that future veterans get a fair deal in everything from education to jobs. I think it should be our duty and responsibility to make sure the VA gets fixed so these battles will stop. Sometimes I think I am just a dreamer thinking that we can fix a broken system, but I keep believing that we can. I have been saying for years that we need to have a monthly meeting with the veteran leaders and the management of the clinic to discuss these issues. Everyone knows the issues; not being able to get an appointment in a timely manner, not enough doctors, not enough

mental health providers, poor communication-and the list seems to go on and on. I still feel that the key to the whole thing is communication between the veterans and the MANAGEMENT. We can talk to the social workers and patient advocates until we all turn blue, but they can only do so much and just give us the answers they are given. We have all worked a tougher job and we have been in more hostile positions. We can take what we have learned over the years and put it to use teaching the management how to work with veterans. We are not the enemy and we never know what their position is on issues because they are not talking to us but just passing on what they have been told. We can fix this if we put an effort into it. Just because we walked into a broken, non-responsive system is no reason to leave that for the next group.

Our legislation is making a slow trek thru the process. HR 1769 has passed from the Veteran Affairs Subcommittee on Health and will be going to the full Veterans Affairs Committee on May 21st. Please remind your congress members that this is important and it is for our children. S 901 is still in committee and waiting for someone to do something. We need everyone to contact their legislators and tell them to support and vote in favor of the Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015.

For more information on June events go to:

www.vva-223.org/calendar There you will find dates and times of committee meetings and other important community events.



Vet Connect

Housing for Vets

By Duane De Witt

During the upcoming Santa Rosa budget hearings local members of VVA Chapter 223 who are also involved with the Vet Connect organization are asking for your support for an unusual request. The City of Santa Rosa owns a number of houses which it leaves vacant. One of these houses in the Roseland neighborhood of southwest Santa Rosa would be an excellent spot for Vet Connect to have a headquarters. Since late last year Vet Connect has been asking the City of Santa Rosa to allow Vet Connect to use the taxpayer-owned building at 1027 McMinn Ave. to be donated to veterans to help other veterans.

Now, as the City gets into the process of the next budget for fiscal year 2015-2016, members of Vet Connect are asking their veteran brothers and sisters in Chapter 223 to please come to the budget hearings. At the time citizens are allowed to address the elected officials during the hearings, VetConnect is asking veterans to support the request for 1027 McMinn Ave. to be dedicated to helping veterans. VetConnect has asked for the house to be donated in return for the group taking care of not just the property it occupies, but also the adjacent 11 acre parcel of land.

The house has been vacant since late 2013 after a local veteran asked for rent paid there to be used for the upkeep of the 11 acres of land. Turns out the previous renter was only paying the city \$200 a month for the house and the 11 acres while local volunteers were doing the upkeep of the land. One veteran who was helping with upkeep spoke at City budget hearings in 2013 asking for help, but the city evicted the renter instead. (Plus, the Director of Recreation and Parks and the City Manager resigned. Go figure?)

NEWS AND VIEWS

Editor's Notes

When I first joined VVA Chapter 223 in 2011, two things happened: I was elected to the Board of Directors and I was asked by Brooke McKusick to be a contributing writer for the Chapter newsletter. I was new to the veteran community and I went at these new tasks with enthusiasm. At that time, "News and Views" was an okay newsletter, published in black and white, with no online publishing. In the space of two years, Brooke took it from okay to the best VVA chapter newsletter in the country. It now has a large circulation in both print and online and is sought after by veterans all over the nation for up-to-date information. It took a lot of hard work and due diligence by a staff of smart, media-savvy volunteers and today it is second-to-none in quality.

Brooke McKusick has recently stepped down from the editor's chair and I have been asked to be the new editor of "News and Views". Having been a part of the newsletter for more than four years and having contributed many stories and articles during that time, I am familiar with its operations. But, it takes more than stories and articles to keep up the high standards of an award-winning publication. It takes leadership and dedication. The leadership was there with Brooke McKusick and I can only hope I maintain that level of excellence. I also hope I can continue to depend on the dedication of those Chapter members that have contributed so greatly to the newsletter's success over the past four years.

By the way, Brooke was the newsletter's photographer (one of the best in the business). If this publication is to maintain the high standards it has enjoyed in the past, we will need someone with photo skills to step up. If you would like to try, or know someone who enjoys taking pictures, let us know.

Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong. - James Bryce

VVA Redwood Empire Chapter 223 Awards Four Scholarships

By Sunny Campbell

At our monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 19, four scholarships were awarded by our Chapter Scholarship Committee to local students. This program is funded by the work of Chapter members throughout the year with some of the following events: the Texas Hold'em poker tournaments, the sales of military memorabilia at local functions, and the Chapter Annual Dinner Dance. Sunny Campbell, Bruce Thompson, and Steve Wiegert are the members of the Scholarship Committee.

The purpose of this program is to provide scholarships to high school and college students who are children or grandchildren of Vietnam War veterans.

This program is also open to current military veterans who have completed their military service and are now attending local colleges. The winning letters received this year were from a family member attending high school and another in junior college who are grandchildren of Vietnam-era veterans. We also had 2 Marine Corps veterans who are attending Santa Rosa Junior College. The letters describe how they were influenced by a relative who served during the Vietnam War period or by their experience when serving on active duty. We received 12 applications this year and awarded scholarships to four students for a total of \$3000. The winners were:

Ryan Boyd Turieta	Santa Rosa Junior College	\$1000
Matthew Scot Smith	Santa Rosa Junior College	\$1000
Kelsey Walthard	Sonoma Valley High School	\$500
Sierra Marie Overton	Santa Rosa Junior College	\$500

Now is the time to inform any of your children or grandchildren of this scholarship program. Applications are available to Chapter members who attend our monthly meetings and are also mailed to the high schools and colleges in Sonoma County. We can all take pride in the wonderful work our Chapter provides to our local community.



Tips to Manage the Stress of Living with Diabetes.

Knowing what causes you stress is the KEY. Feeling overwhelmed with the many demands in your life can cause stress. Organizing your work and other aspects of your life can help you feel in control and decrease your sense of urgency and stress.



Sometimes we stay busy to avoid situations for example a serious relationship problem. Is busyness a way to avoid something? We cannot postpone facing a situation that is unlikely to solve itself.

Learning to cope with stress makes life easier. You cannot prevent stress. Identify what you like to do and take time every day to do the things you enjoy.

These things can renew and reenergize you:

Have a cappuccino coffee, go for a walk in our many parks, listen to music while you work on your computer, meditate, get a massage. Sonoma County has many professionally trained massage therapist ask your health provider for a recommendation.

Take some quiet time to reflect on your day, have lunch with a friend, laugh at your own mistakes or go work out. To take care of others, we have to take care of ourselves.

Astrid Ortega FNP retired.



Good Ol' Boys MC 4th Annual Veterans Run

The Good Old Boys 4th Annual Veterans Memorial Motorcycle Run took place on Memorial Day Weekend at the Veterans Memorial Building in Santa Rosa. The festivities included live music by Blue Rock Country Club, vendor booths, a car show, and a raffle with some great prizes. This event has become one of the highlights of the Memorial Day Weekend in Sonoma County.



The day started with the American Legion Post 21 Pancake Breakfast. There were scrambled eggs, pancakes, sausages, fresh fruit, juice, and coffee. Labor was provided by volunteers from local veteran's organizations who cooked, served, and cleaned up to make it the beginning of a great day for all. There were all kinds of vendors including local veteran's groups. Of course, it wouldn't be a Sonoma County veterans' event without Duckies.

The highlight of this event was when more than 500 motorcycles participated in a ride from the Veterans Building to Santa Rosa Memorial Park's POW/MIA



Monument. The ride had participants from a number of north bay motorcycle clubs including Rip City Riders, Chicano Estilo, Hells Angels of Sonoma County, and the Christian Motorcycle Association. There were also many riders with no club affiliations who just love to ride. It was quite a sight to see and I'm sure they turned a few heads.



The Parade

By Charles Earthman

This year's Rose Parade was held on May 16th with pleasant weather and eager participation from groups big and small. The veteran community participated with an assortment of entries including the POW cage and tower, military vehicles, several Color Guards, and a uniquely designed Chapter 223 float that won first prize in its category.

The parade began with the Santa Rosa's Police De-



partment's Motor Patrol Unit on BMW motorcycles executing a simple but well-choreographed maneuver signaling the beginning of the parade. What followed was a cavalcade of floats, vehicles, and people of all ages walking and riding to this year's theme, "Out of a Storybook", which allowed for a wide range of creativity, interpretation, and expression.



Heading up Chapter 223's parade entry was "big Joe" Cholewa. Big Joe has chaired our parade committee for several years now and has won a few first place awards for the Chapter. Joe and a dedicated group of volunteers struggle every year to come up with something that represents Vietnam Veterans and also provides a comfortable place for those who can't walk in the parade to ride and show their pride. The Color Guard was present and looking good and some Chapter 223 members walked carrying the Chapter banner while others rode in vehicles--all displaying the pride of a generation of veterans who are active in the community serving all veterans, both young and old.

Other veterans groups participating in this year's parade were Sonoma County Vet Connect, AMVETS Post 40, Marine Corps League Detachment 686, and The Santa Rosa Chapter of The Military Officers' Association of America (MOAA).

The Santa Rosa Rose Parade marks the unofficial start of summer for the Sonoma County veteran community which is the busy season for fundraising. I hope it will be fruitful year.



CAB for past conflicts? 5 things you should know

By Kevin Lilley, Staff writer – Army times April 4, 2015

The Army created the Combat Action Badge in 2005 to honor those who'd engaged or been engaged by enemy forces during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan but weren't eligible for similar awards available to medics or infantrymen. It was made retroactive to Sept. 18, 2001, but since shortly after its founding, lawmakers and veterans groups have pushed to send it back much farther — to the outbreak of World War II.

That proposal, championed for several years by Florida Republican Rep. Richard Nugent, reached the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act but wasn't included in the final bill signed by President Obama in late 2014. However, language attached to the bill required the Defense Department to include the proposal in its comprehensive review of the military awards system, launched last year by then-Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel.

Results of that review are expected in July, Pentagon spokesman Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen said in an email, confirming a March 31 Military.com report. Here's what you need to know about the push for a CAB for older veterans:

1 Seeking recognition. Nugent picked up the legislative ball from his predecessor in Florida's 11th district, Ginny Brown-Waite, who had introduced retroactive CAB legislation as far back as 2007. The district has about 100,000 veterans, Nugent said, some of whom have told him "they were disappointed that they didn't qualify for that award."

"These guys, particularly from Vietnam, there's a number of them who weren't in the infantry, but were involved in combat, so they wouldn't get the Combat Infantry Badge," Nugent said. "They want to be recognized."

Bill calls for Army to retroactively award CAB

2 Long-time support. The American Legion issued resolution in October 2006 backing the proposal, saying that veterans who saw combat but

didn't earn the CIB or the Combat Medical Badge "have served without due recognition and are deserving of a badge signifying their courage and valor under fire while serving in the armed forces of the United States." The Veterans of Foreign Wars issued a similar resolution in 2009.

3 Eligibility issues. Who would merit a retroactive CAB, and how would they prove it? Army Human Resources Command wouldn't comment on the proposal, but current CAB awards rely on witness statements and paperwork that may prove difficult for long-separated service members to obtain.

The 60-year eligibility period could result in applications from tens of thousands of former soldiers. Ted Stroup, a retired Army lieutenant general and former Army G1, told Army Times in 2008 that the award confirmation process would be a "horrendous undertaking."

4 Cost vs. benefit. The proposal is "revenue-neutral" in the eyes of Congress — those who would earn a CAB would have to buy it themselves, but the man-hours involved in confirming eligibility requests could prove costly. Nugent believes the process is worth it to honor past generations of combat vets.

"There is a vetting process for the Army to sign off, and I get that, but that amount of work is something that we owe back to these guys," he said.

5 Other awards. The CAB issue is one of several being considered by the DoD review, which was prompted by fierce debate over the Distinguished Warfare Medal, an honor designed primarily for drone operators and others who effect the combat zone from a distance. It was initially placed ahead of the Bronze Star Medal in the order of preference; Hagel, a former infantryman who was wounded in Vietnam, scrapped the award early in his SECDEF tenure.



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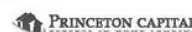
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Sonoma County Vet Connect

Veterans Drop In Center
for FREE Resources & Services
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 707-755-1417

These services are also available at the Veterans Memorial Buildings in Guerneville on the 2nd Thursday and in 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

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North Bay Veterans Resource Center

200 Montgomery Drive, Suite "C"
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
Phone 707-578-8387

NBVR 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.

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

SONOMA COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE (707) 565.5960

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Santa Rosa CA 95409

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Please call to schedule an appointment.
Walk-ins seen Mon. thru Thur. 8 to 10am

FREE BUS RIDES FOR VETERANS

For 2015, veterans and college students in Sonoma County will be able to ride Sonoma County Transit buses free of charge. The program went into effect Jan. 1. Students and veterans just need to show a valid identification card to ride.



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**CHAPTER 223
GENERAL MEETING
June 16, 2015
Raffle Prize
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HOMELESS OUTREACH PROGRAM

Every Monday evening @ 5:30 pm. 101 6th Street, Santa Rosa.

SONOMA COUNTY VET CONNECT -Every Tuesday morning, 9am to noon at the

VETS building. Vets helping vets solve problems.
VVA 223 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
- Second Tuesday of the month, 1pm @ the VETS building. Look for the guys looking for the room...

VVA-223 GENERAL MEETING

Third Tuesday of the month. POTLUCK @ 6pm & Meeting starts at 7pm. Next meeting , June 16

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 6pm. Check-in and pizza 5pm to 5:55 pm. Usually the first Saturday of the month. June 6, 2015

COMICS CORNER

MILITARY HUMOR

The reason the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines bicker amongst themselves is that they don't speak the same language. For instance, take the simple phrase "secure the building". The Army will post guards around the place. The Navy will turn out the lights and lock the doors. The Marines will kill everybody inside and set up a headquarters, and the Air Force will take out a 5 year lease with an option to buy.

There are three kinds of people: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened.

A basic airman at Lackland AFB received his first two hour pass to go to the BX. While he was playing a pin ball machine, a Second Lieutenant came up to him and asked if he had change for a quarter. Not yet militarized, the airman no class said sure, how do you want it, all nickels, two dimes and a nickel? The butter bar said, I am an officer, you should call me sir, now let's try it again. airman, do you have change for a quarter? The airman replied No sir, I don't

Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else

A soldier serving overseas far from home was annoyed and upset when his girl wrote to break off their engagement and ask for her photograph back. He went out and collected from his friends all the unwanted photographs of women that he could find, bundled them all together, and sent them back with a note saying, "I regret that I cannot remember which one you are. Please keep your photo and return the others."

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a broken fan belt and a flat tire

A drill sergeant had just chewed out one of his cadets, and as he was walking away, he turned to the cadet and said, "I guess when I die you'll come and dance on my grave." The cadet replied, "Not me, Sarge...no sir! I promised myself that when I got out of the Army I'd never stand in another line!"





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News and Views

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