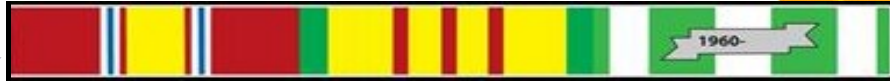




# NEWS AND VIEWS

## VVA REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER 223



Volume 17 Issue 9

October, 2015

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## 9/11 Dinner and Dance Banquet

By Charles Earthman

On September 11, VVA Chapter 223 held its annual Dinner and Dance fundraiser. This was the fourth annual event of this kind the Chapter has staged at the end of summer. This year the Chapter joined with the next generation of vets from the Santa Rosa VFW Post 1844. The infusion of younger OIF/OEF blood seems to be just what we ageing Vietnam vets needed. The date (9/11) set the theme for this year's event and first responders were on hand and honored at this veteran community fundraiser.



**Julia Sutton**

Master of Ceremonies Julia Sutton opened the evening's events. The Colors were posted by the Santa Rosa Fire Department's Color Guard and the National Anthem was tastefully sung by Andrea Ingraham. Dinner was catered by Louie's Fine Foods and was served buffet style. Music was provided by DJ Andy Martinez of A.N.D.Y Brown Produc-

tion, DJ – 173rd. Andy really knows how to set the mood for all occasions as many of these guests already knew from past experiences.

The guest speakers were Captain Don Ricci of the Santa Rosa Fire Department and Nate Boyer, a US Army Special Forces (Airborne)



*Soroptimist International*

veteran and NFL football player. Both gave inspirational talks about duty and patriotism. As the evening progressed there was a dance demonstration by ballroom dancers Isamar Rios and Rafael Candelas of Arthur Murray Dance Studio. There were two great door prizes (40" & 50" big screen TVs) for ticket holders and a silent auction with some wonderful items donated to help raise money for the event. The sale of raffle tickets was brisk and gave everyone a chance to participate in the night's fundraising activities. A great time was had by all and the money

*Continued on Page 5*

[see more photos on page 6](#)

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER 223

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Charles Earthman	Anthony Tate

**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**

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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](mailto:c.earthman173@gmail.com) To make a complaint about the newsletter, please call: Ken Holybee: 707.887.8891, or [holybee@comcast.net](mailto:holybee@comcast.net)

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

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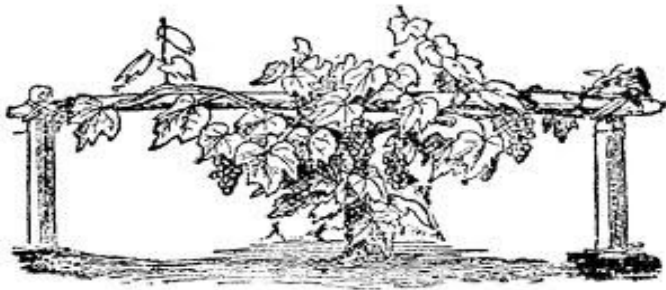
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## The Grapevine

### Talk Around the Redwood Empire Chapter

By Charles Earthman

September was an event-filled month for Chapter 223. It started August 28 with the Classic Bombshell Beauties Cabaret Show. The show was fun, but not much for fundraising. We are planning to try again next year.

On September 4 Pete Peterka was given a retirement and 90th birthday party by friends at the Vets' Building. It was a fun occasion and a nice way to say thanks to a guy who had a distinguished military career and has given so many years of service to this community. He will be missed by those of us who have worked with him on the myriad of committees he has served on. And by the way, I had about 68 parachute jumps (that's a lot); *Pete had 1800--All the Way!*

I want to acknowledge the staff at the Veterans' Memorial Building. Jeff, Brian, and all the other members of the UCCR staff are doing a great job. They have always been courteous and accommodating to me and are there when you need them. Thanks to all the sponsors of the Dinner Dance Banquet and to the volunteers who put in so many hours and worked so hard to make the event a success--and it was.

National POW/MIA Recognition Day was commemorated at Santa Rosa Memorial Park. It was hosted by our Chapter with Kate O'Hare-Palmer as Master of Ceremonies and the Chapter Color Guard posting the Colors. Attendees were serenaded by The Santa Rosa High School Chamber Singers who performed stirring a cappella renditions of "The Star Spangled Banner" and "My Country 'Tis of Thee".

That's it for now, but let's keep the conversation going. If you would like to contribute to the Grapevine, go to [www.VVA-223.org](http://www.VVA-223.org), or contact me at 707.318.2837.

## President's Letter

It has been a very busy month since my last article. We have veterans and friends in fire areas not just to our east but also in the gold country. Both fires have been very large and have taken lives as well as destroyed over 500 homes each. I have been in contact with Dean Gotham and others that are assisting in



Ken Holybee

the Lake County fire area. A lot of the people there do not have fire insurance and other coverages that most people take for granted. Our local Assembly Members and State Senator have been working tirelessly to assist everyone they can, and I have been in contact with them and asked that they contact CalVet to see how they can assist the veterans in the area. I also spoke with the CHP about making sure they know that there are veterans that may be having issues because of the evacuation and to make sure they know where they can refer these veterans and also advise them that the Lake County VA Outpatient Clinic is there to assist them. The real work in assisting the fire victims will come after all of the fires are out and the helpers go home. We will be here to do what we can.

We have had events every Friday; our poker game, a few meetings, and a few more meetings. On October 4th I will be attending an Agent Orange town hall meeting in Redding. We will also hold our monthly poker game that evening. We are getting into the season of remembering, giving, and reflection. Our chapter will be holding our Christmas party on December 4th at the Santa Rosa Veterans Building. Please plan on attending, and if you can, assist us in our preparation and decorating.

I would like to add a special thank you to the members that spend every morning at the Clinic assisting veterans with coffee and whatever treats they may have on those days. This is something that the veterans really appreciate. I don't know how often the Clinic staff mentions it, but they also

# Vet Connect in Guerneville

## By Charles Earthman

For more than eight years Sonoma County Vet Connect has held weekly cost-free veteran's assistance clinics in Santa Rosa and monthly clinics at five other locations around the county. One of those locations is the sparsely-served West County, which includes the town of Guerneville. This area, because it is under-populated compared to other parts of Sonoma County, has always struggled for its piece of the pie when it comes to county dollars and services. This has created a real burden for those less-privileged folks at the bottom of the economic ladder.

Vet Connect has started a new program in West County to help those at the very bottom of that ladder. On July 2 Vet Connect held their first homeless outreach clinic at the Veterans Building in Guerneville. Vet Connect had been working for a month to get showers and services for the homeless at the Veterans Building there in Guerneville. They met with resistance from the local community, including the Sheriff's Office in Guerneville, who were not really enthusiastic about providing services to the homeless population, but Vet Connect went forward with their plan. They were reaching out to all in need, whether they were veterans or not. Vet Connect President Richard Jones says "I can't in good conscience say you can't come in because you are not a veteran. We have the stuff right now to do this and I'm going to use it."

When the Clinic first opened they had about 27 homeless participants, but since then it has grown in popularity; it has become a big success. Every Thursday from 10am to 2pm the Clinic provides a full range of services to the



homeless population of West County. There are showers and haircuts for those who want them and there is fresh food donated and served onsite. They also give out snack bars and canned goods, complete with a P-38 (can opener). They are also given toiletries. Laundry services are provided at a local laundromat, with quarters provided by Vet Connect. "They come out of there smelling good and feeling good about themselves," says Jones.

The Clinic is staffed with help from SAY (Social Advocates for Youth) who make sandwiches and hot coffee for the participants. Other assistance is also provided by Russian River Empowerment and West County Health. St. Joseph's Health Care visits the Clinic twice a month with needed health care services. This is truly a full service outreach for the homeless in Guerneville. The locals, including the Sheriff's Office, are starting to see the benefits of this program.

Like so many of the projects that Vet Connect has been involved in, this project is benefiting those in need in our community. In this case it is not only vets helping vets, but it's vets serving the community

---

## Editor's Notes

Many thanks to the people who contributed to this month's "News and Views". The Chapter had lots of events to cover in September and, with their help, we were able to cover most of them. We're still in need of a photographer; at times like this we really miss Brooke McKusick. Anthony Tate has stepped up admirably but we could use more..



# PATHWAY HOME GRADUATION, SEPTEMBER 18, 2015

## Kate O'Hare-Palmer



**Kate O'Hare-Palmer**

The tranquil town of Yountville hosted another graduation ceremony for the men that graduated from the Pathway Home Program. Director Fred Gusman was a little nostalgic during this ceremony because it was his last group that he would be working with. The program will go

on, but Fred is going to take a break and then move on to another phase of his many careers. He talked about the history of the first PTSD program and how the group from Santa Rosa, Flowers of the Dragons, was instrumental in helping the Vietnam veterans start the movement for programs for combat veterans. Fred started the first 120-bed PTSD men veterans' program in the Palo Alto VA. The Vietnam veterans in Cleveland, Ohio, were the first to voice concern over the VA's lack of care, and a volunteer called Fred to come and help with the "dissent." The result was the creation of the National Center for PTSD and Stress Center.



Pathway Home Graduates, L-R: Devon Stout, Army; Andrew Guptill, Army; Andy Payne, Army; Director Fred Gusman; Alexander Duncan, Army; and Patrick Rocca, Marines.

The men graduating now come from backgrounds in the Army and Marines. Their personalities are as different as their reactions to the moral, physical, and psychological traumas of war. They call them-

***Continued on Page 8***



**Fred Gusman**

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

### **9/11 Banquet, Continued From Front Page**

raised was going to a great cause.

Donations from the Dinner Dance go to support many services in the veteran community such as transportation for disabled veterans, benefit counseling, legal representation to help veterans with their benefit claims, personal assistance programs, peer support counseling, advocating for veterans in need, and eliminating homelessness. Without events like this it would be difficult to provide support for these services.

A big note of gratitude goes out to the sponsors of this event, especially Soroptimist International and West Coast Diesels who made large charitable donations. There were many other businesses and individual sponsors who contributed to making this event possible. We thank them all. Special thanks must also go out to the volunteers who helped make this whole thing go. Countless hours of dedicated work helped bring this whole thing together. After the success of this event, I think we will be doing it again next year; September 10, 2016. See you there.









# National POW/MIA Recognition Day

By Carlton Smirni

It was hot at 10:00am, but we didn't melt. After all, we're no ice cream puffs. About 60 veterans organizations' representatives, including Ex-Prisoners of War, as well as family and community supporters, gathered around the POW/MIA Memorial in Santa Rosa Memorial Park. We were strong; standing or seated with our postures erect and our backs as straight as we could make them.

VVA Chapter 223's President Ken Holybee welcomed the assembly, and the Chapter Color Guard posted the Colors and did us proud. Master of Ceremonies Kate O'Hare-Palmer, VVA National Women Veterans Committee Chair and a former Army Nurse



in Vietnam, led us in The Pledge of Allegiance. Kate recognized honorees in attendance, including the family of WWII POW Walter Haas, USAAC WWII POW Darrel Shumard, and the widow of WWII POW Norris.

The Santa Rosa High School Chamber Singers, an integral part of ArtQuest Vocal Specialty Director Kira Bombace's Choral Music Program, sang a very melodious and respectful a cappella rendition of our National Anthem. The Singers were led by Arie Markowitz and included Sam Joslyn, Kajsa Johnsrud, D J Johnson, Ariana LaMar, Griffin Becker, Whitney Fay, Brennie Dale, Kendra Gregorsen, Storey Schmit, Emily Chu, Tucker Lang, Cori Jones, Jacob Nightingale, and Sean Rollins. I was not the only one who teared up a little while they were singing. It could have been allergies.

Steve Wiegert, Marine Corps League Detachment 686, and Acting Chaplain of Military Order of The Purple Heart Chapter 78, delivered the Opening Prayer. The Keynote Speaker was Marty Wise, 41st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, liberators of Mauthausen Concentration Camp. During his speech, MC Kate acted as the interviewer-facilitator with Marty so that

we would not miss any of the high points of his presentation. Marty, born and raised in Marin County during the Depression, was drafted on September 18, 1944--71 years to this day!

At the conclusion of Marty Wise's keynote speech, I saw a bunch of folks rubbing their eyes. I thought maybe, "Mass Allergy Syndrome?"

Dave Richey, AMVETS Post 40, then took us through the POW/MIA Missing Man Table features.

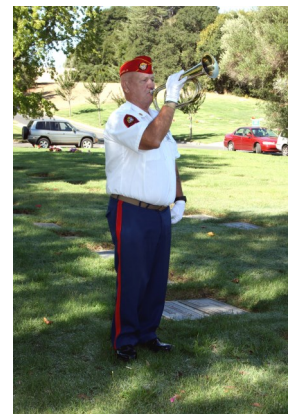
TAPS was played by the ever-sharp Roy



Brown, MCL 686, followed by the reading of the Presidential Proclamation for POW/MIA Recognition Day by Larry Williams, current Commandant of MCL 686, and Junior Vice Commander of MOPH 78. Ken Holybee rendered parting remarks, including the history of POW/MIA Day, from the early days to our current annual Recognition on the third Friday in September. The SRHS Chamber Singers then gave us a stirring rendition of "My Country 'Tis of Thee," followed by the Benediction by Steve Wiegert.

We were done with the Program before 11:00am, and there was hardly a dry eye or an erect posture on the grounds. Some say it was the morning sun. Others mentioned the allergies spectrum. Now I kind of think we were bent over and teary-eyed because we want the rest of our POWs and MIAs home—Now! God Bless The U.S.A.

[See more Photos  
at vva-223.org](http://vva-223.org)



selves the Dirty Half Dozen--they formed a unit as they went through this program. Each one had a turn at thanking those in their lives that helped them get to this point. The staff at Pathways, the community of Yountville, the folks of Napa, the Rotary Club, and the many other businesses and service organizations in the area have kept this program alive.

I have to tell you that there were moments of tears because of what they shared. One said that Pathway House is a place where they do "Loud, mistakes, pain, suffering, anger, apologies, love, gratitude, food therapy, art, not feeling so alone, and trying to adjust to civilian life." So many KEY PHRASES were shared by these men. They expressed how wonderful it was to have the opportunity to be able to go through this program...when some had failed in others.

I want to list some of the KEY QUOTES here...and let them sink in...they touch us all:

Native American quote: "Healing doesn't mean the damage never existed... it just doesn't control our lives all the time."

"I want our country to love us as much as we love our country...some of us died for it."

"I learned that I can't smile all the time: I can't fake it: I have learned to face the pain."

"Guys get angry, it eats them away, and it kills them."

"Veterans should be honored and cared for. They need help in finding their way."

"Only he who has seen better days and lives to see better days again... knows how valuable these days

are."

In the typical humor that this group seemed to have, they voiced a need to have an anniversary dinner next year. They want to bring the group (including Fred) back together at the French Laundry, that famous restaurant they all have heard about ...but couldn't afford to get there.....!



**President's Report, Continued From Page 3**

appreciate the assistance given to the veterans arriving at the clinic. Veterans standing around talking and enjoying coffee can really have a calming effect on the veterans arriving or leaving the Clinic. Sometimes just being there and saying good morning is the best medicine they will receive for the day.

Friday the 18th was POW/MIA Recognition Day and we were the hosts for this year's ceremony. The Color Guard looked sharp and Kate O'Hare Palmer did a great job as MC. We had members from other organizations in the program since this is not a single group's issue. Maybe next year we can include more groups and have the full attendance of the United Veterans Council to show the unity of our veterans.

Sunday, September 27, was Gold Star Mother's Day. Please take time and remember their sacrifice and loss. There has been more focus over the years on Gold Star Fathers and Families--remember them also. I read once, "The first bullet fired in anger strikes the heart of a mother."



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for FREE Resources & Services  
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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**

**No charge service**

## North Bay Veterans Resource Center

200 Montgomery Drive, Suite "C"  
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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.

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October 20, 2015  
Raffle Prize  
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**SONOMA COUNTY VET CONNECT -**

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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, Oct. 20

**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  
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month..



# COMIC'S CORNER

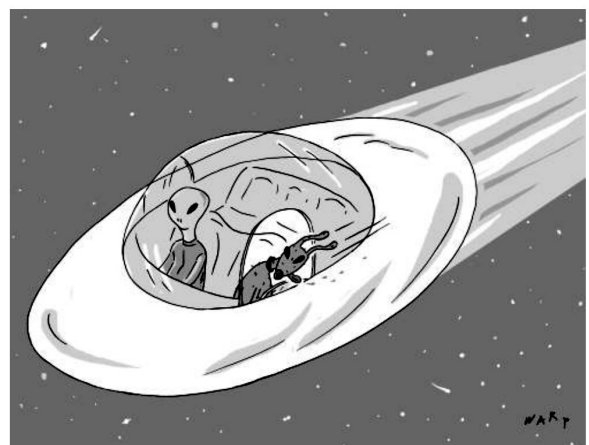
A panda walks into a bar and gobbles some beer  
nuts. Then he pulls out a gun, fires it in the air, and  
heads for the door.

"Hey!" shouts the bartender, but the panda yells  
back, "I'm a panda. Google me!"

Sure enough, panda: "A tree-climbing mammal  
with distinct black-and-white coloring. Eats shoots  
and leaves."



I spotted several pairs of men's Levi's at a garage  
sale. They were sizes 30, 31, and 32, but I was  
looking for size 33. So I asked the owner if he had a  
pair. He shook his head, "I'm still wearing the 33s,"  
he said. "Come back next year."



Husband takes the wife to a disco. There's a guy  
on the dance floor giving it large – break dancing,  
moonwalking, back flips, the works. The wife turns  
to her husband and says: "See that guy? 25 years  
ago he proposed to me and I turned him down."

Husband says: "Looks like he's still celebrating!!"



What do you call cheese that doesn't belong to  
you?

Nacho cheese.





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