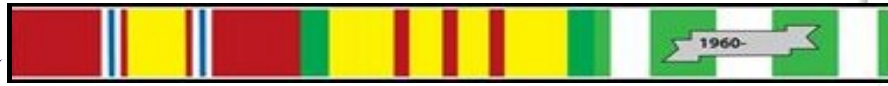




NEWS AND VIEWS

VVA REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER 223



Volume 17 Issue 8

September, 2015

HONOR LABOR

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Pacific Coast Air Museum's Tribute to Vietnam Vets

By Charles Earthman

Triple-digit temperatures greeted more than 200 people that came to the Pacific Coast Air Museum's Tribute to Vietnam Veterans. The Air Museum's open house gave onlookers a chance to see the many airplanes the museum displays, including some Vietnam-era aircraft. Some of the airplanes had open cockpits people could sit in. An F4 Phantom, which saw lots of action in the war, captured the interest of many people, some of whom were veterans of that war.

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Vietnam War and throughout the year veterans' organizations are commemorating this milestone with ceremonies and displays. The Pacific Coast Air Museum's tribute honored those who served with a look back at the aircraft that played such an important role in that war.



The event included a \$5 hot dog lunch with chips and drinks and a ceremony honoring those who served in Vietnam. The ceremony featured a Mounted Color Guard followed by the Presentation of the Colors by the VVA Chapter 223 Color Guard.



After the Pledge of Allegiance and the playing of the Nation Anthem, Christina Olds, Director of Museum Operations,

addressed the audience about the day's event. She said too often Americans blamed returning vets for an unpopular war which they had no part in starting. This event was meant to tell those who served in that war, "We welcome you and honor you and thank you." Other speakers addressed the audience, including Charles Taylor, a retired Navy commander and pilot, who talked about seeing SAM missiles being shot at B-52s over North Vietnam and not knowing whether some of the crews made it out safely from the damaged airplanes.



The August 15th event was a great tribute to Vietnam Veterans and a fine display of the aircraft of that era. Christina Olds and the volunteers at the Pacific Coast Air Museum were gracious hosts and did a wonderful job and we thank them.



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER 223

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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...

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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 To make a complaint about the newsletter, please call: Ken Holybee: 707.887.8891, or holybee@comcast.net

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2 Women Pass Army Ranger School, First Female Graduates

WASHINGTON — Aug 18, 2015, 5:11 PM ET
Associated Press

Two women have passed the Army's Ranger School, becoming the first females to complete the grueling combat training program and earn the right to wear Ranger tabs on their uniforms.

The Army's Ranger headquarters in Fort Benning, Georgia, says the women and 94 men passed the tough 62-day course that tests their ability to overcome fatigue, hunger and stress during combat operations.

While completing the leadership course lets the two women wear the coveted Ranger black-and-gold tab, it does not let them become members of the Ranger regiment. Neither woman has been identified by the military.

Allowing women to participate in the Ranger course is part of the U.S. military's push to open more combat jobs to women. But the toughest jobs remain closed to female soldiers — including infantry, armor and special operations positions. That includes the 75th Ranger Regiment, which requires additional schooling that is physically and mentally challenging before soldiers can join.

Still, former Army officers such as Sue Fulton, who in 1980 was among the first women to graduate from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, celebrated the news as another milestone toward ending gender barriers in the military.

"This answers whatever questions may still remain about whether women have the strength, the will and the physical courage to become combat leaders," said Fulton, a former Army captain who now chairs the West Point Board of Visitors, an advisory panel of presidential appointees and members of Congress.

A graduation ceremony will be held Friday at Fort Benning, the U.S. Army post near the Georgia-Alabama line.

"Each Ranger School graduate has shown the physical and

Continued on page 4

President's Letter SONOMA COUNTY VETERANS

Although most veterans in Sonoma County are doing well, there are still some who need assistance. We have a number of veterans from all eras who have returned home, or made our county their home, who carry the wounds of war. Some are visible wounds, but many are not. I do not need to explain this to you, but we need to be able to make an attempt to educate the non-veterans



Ken Holybee

who we are asking to help us work with them. One of the issues I have today is that some are saying that it is not the responsibility of the government to assist or help the wounded or displaced veterans.

Many of our veterans entered service right out of high school and are now trying to continue their education. After speaking to some of the 800 veterans in the Santa Rosa JC, I learned they have some of the same problems that many others encountered. The number one wish is for a quiet place that they can go and be able to focus on their studies. A place where they have a counselor, computer, desk, couch, and other things to help them relax and focus is needed. They have been asking for many years for a veterans' lounge and just keep getting ignored. San Francisco City College put one in and it has been the talk of the country and something that schools wishing to help veterans have focused on.

Our homeless veteran numbers are down from last year, but there are still too many. Many of the homeless are working full time or part time and attending school. With our housing situation as it is, people working full time at good paying jobs cannot find housing. Our county and cities talk a lot about helping, but most of it is talk. We have worked to find ways to create housing for veterans either as supporting or low income. Sometimes, if a person has a place to shower, clean up, and rest for a short time, they will see a light of hope. Many people today look down on those who have fewer resources than they do. Many today, with the competition in the workplace and the long hours they are working, just don't understand how someone

Continued on page 8



The Grapevine

Talk Around the Redwood Empire Chapter

By Charles Earthman

The Veterans and Family Advisory Council met on August 10th at the Santa Rosa VA Clinic. The Council is currently working on getting highway signs for south and north bound US 101 and Airport Boulevard directing patients to the Clinic. Also discussed was the Council's grant from the VA for a veterans' resource bulletin board to be placed at the entrance to the Clinic. By the way, the Council is looking for a few more members. If you are interested, contact Phila Cole, Patient Advocate, at the Santa Rosa VA Clinic.

At the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors' meeting on August 18th a mid-year report was made on the Veterans' Subsidized Fare Pilot Program. The pilot program started on January 1, 2015, and provides free rides to veterans on Sonoma County Transit when they show a VA ID card or a Sonoma County Veterans ID card when boarding a Sonoma County Transit bus. Ridership has increased by 34% from January to June at a cost to the county of \$12,217. A group of veterans led by John Logan has been working on ways to keep the program going past the one-year trial period and to expand it to other North Bay transit districts. They are also looking for funding sources.

Summer is almost over. The daylight is growing shorter and the kids are back in school. It was a hot and dry summer and perhaps the fall will bring some El Nino rains.

Col. Pete Peterka has served as a volunteer in our veteran community for many years and is now retiring. There will be a combined 90th birthday celebration and retirement party for Pete on Friday, September 4, at the Santa Rosa

Veterans Memorial Building. We wish him well.

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, or contact me at 707.318.2837.

Army Rangers—*Continued from page 3*

mental toughness to successfully lead organizations at any level," Army Secretary John McHugh said in a statement. "This course has proven that every soldier, regardless of gender, can achieve his or her full potential."

"We owe soldiers the opportunity to serve successfully in any position where they are qualified and capable," he added.

The 62-day Ranger school includes three phases, each in a different part of the country: wooded areas of Fort Benning, the Appalachian mountains of north Georgia, and swamps in Florida.

The first 20 days of Ranger school focus on military skills and endurance. Then, the mountain phase near Dahlonega, Georgia, includes more small-unit operations and survival techniques. The final so-called swamp phase takes place in Florida and includes airborne assault, amphibious operations and extreme mental and physical stress.

Female soldiers were held to the same physical standards as men. That included passing a fitness test of 49 push-ups, 59 sit-ups, six chin-ups and finishing a 5-mile run in 40 minutes. Graduates also had to perform a 12-mile foot march in three hours, complete three parachute jumps and four air assaults on helicopters as well as endure 27 days of mock combat patrols.



National Convention 2015

By Ken Holybee

My trip to the national convention started on Tuesday with a wreath laying at the Old State Capitol Building in Springfield. This is an event that is done when we arrive in town for a major event. It is a press day and honors the local veterans and the city. We then held our national Board meeting. The Board meeting is open to all and is a short version of the meetings in Silver Spring. There is always business that needs to be addressed by the Board. Tuesday evening was a welcome home party with hot dogs and music by The Jefferson Starship. This event was sponsored by Helping Hospitalized Vets. I was fortunate enough to get a back stage pass and had my picture taken with the band. We also had time to talk to the band and the sponsors. They put on a good show but I think they could have turned the volume down a little. The people with hearing aids were having trouble thinking they would explode.

After the opening ceremonies on Wednesday we went to committee hearings. I attended hearings for the three committees that I serve on: Agent Orange, Public Affairs and Constitution. There were no new resolutions to bring up or discuss in Agent Orange or Public Affairs. We did have thirty-one proposed amendments to the Constitution. A lot of these amendments were housekeeping, changing format, and a few word changes. A few were a little more challenging and created some discussion. Some amendments dealt with makeup and who can vote on the State Council, as well as structure of the National Board and how regional directors seat their alternates. If anyone would like to go over the changes with me, just let me know.

Wednesday and Thursday nights were filled with regional caucuses where candidates for the Board spoke to the members. As a candidate, I was allowed five minutes to introduce myself and either speak or answer questions in most of the caucuses. This is still an area that I need to improve in. I did not spend the evenings in our Region Nine caucus, so I do not know all of the issues that were addressed there. It is a time when delegates should be able to ask questions and get information from the regional director and the state presidents from the region. This should be a time when new delegates get important information from the delegates with more experience.

***See convention photos and
the Lincoln home on pages 6 and 7***

Thursday was exciting with the discussion and voting on the amendments. I am happy to say that this turned out as I had hoped. There was lively discussion and debate on some of the amendments and hopefully enough questions were answered before time ran out and debate ended. The elections were on Friday.

I would have liked a different outcome on my bid for office but the members do run the convention. We have a truly democratic process and no one really knows the outcome until the votes are counted. Out of over 750 delegates, I received 295 votes. That put me in thirteenth place and only the top ten vote-getters are elected.

Feel free to ask any of our delegates about the convention. They are your representatives and should be able to answer any questions.

★★★★★★★★★

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S HOME IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

By Kate O'Hare Palmer

While we were in Springfield, Illinois, for the convention, John McGivney and I took that Saturday afternoon time to go on the tour of Abraham Lincoln's home located on the corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets. The tour is free and conducted by the National Park Service. You get to walk through the home that he spent seventeen years in. It was built in 1839 and is a restored Greek revival house.

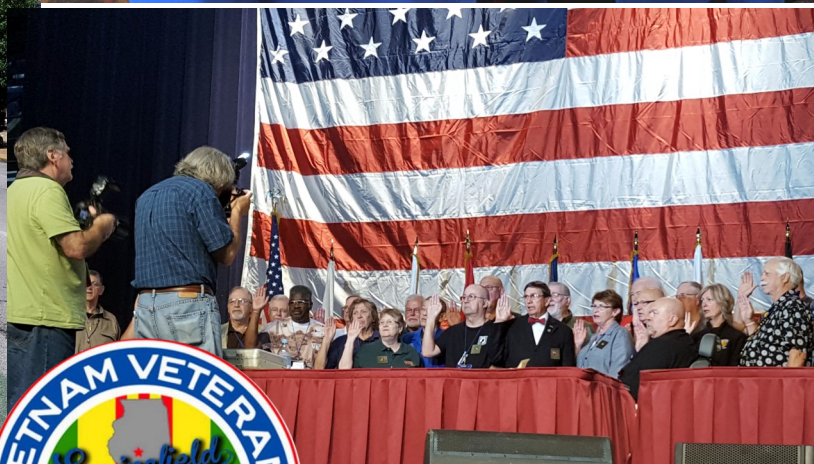


Kate O'hare-Palmer

Lincoln's rise as a successful lawyer and politician, along with his 1860 presidential campaign, are described as you go through the house. You see the parlor he was in when he received the news of his election to the Presidency. As we walked under the oaks around the four-block restored neighborhood, you couldn't help but visualize the horse drawn carriages and people walking by in the period dress of the time! A wonderful piece of history maintained.







President's Report—Continued from page 3

could end up on the street—even knowing that they could be there at any time. The homeless are not losers but are people in need of a lot of assistance—or maybe just a little assistance.

In our county one thing that we do have is food. There are ways and places that we can assist veterans with resources for food. One problem for the homeless is a place to store the food. We distribute food monthly and our county food bank has many programs that benefit people with dietary needs.

Health care is also a big issue for our veterans. We have the availability of our local clinic and a link to the San Francisco Veterans Hospital. I say a link because it is not always easy to access these facilities. Our county is more rural than most think. For the vacationers and those that enjoy our coast, vineyards, parks and many resources that we have, transportation is not an issue. If you are a veteran with limited transportation, utilizing these is very difficult. Our clinic is by the airport, about ten miles from downtown Santa Rosa. We have managed to negotiate rides on county buses for our veterans. What we need now is buses that operate when and where we need them. If you live outside of the 101 corridor, transportation is very difficult. The buses run on schedules that may not get you where you need to go when you need to be there. Sometimes, if you can get there, you may not be able to get back. Getting to San Francisco without a car you must either know the commuter bus routes or ride the VA bus. The VA bus leaves and returns to the clinic at scheduled times and they do not coincide with the county buses.

Some areas have great access to the large hospitals and

our state veteran homes. We live in an area that is actually isolated from all of these amenities. We have great weather even when it is bad. Getting into veterans' homes is more difficult than it should be. They are all a long way from here and many who wish to have the care that they provide do not want to be that far from family. Some think we are asking for too much. If you have been here for many generations, you know the answer to that. Our veterans just want to be treated fairly and to enjoy the life we guaranteed to everyone in this country.

Since I have touched on some of our issues, you may ask what I propose we do. Sometimes all you need is the information regarding veteran issues. You never know when you will be around someone that is elected or holds a high level position in the city, county or state. You may even be able to have a couple of minutes with a member of congress or the senate. Informed people have a lot of clout when speaking to people. Learn about our positions on these issues and, if possible, have something in writing-- like our brochures on our issues and programs--so you can hand them out. Our Chapter does a lot of outreach and in doing this we speak to a lot of people. Get people interested in our major fundraisers so we can assist more veterans. Everyone knows someone that would like to help but they don't know how. It is our job to let them know that their help is appreciated and they are appreciated for just knowing they care.





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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

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North Bay Veterans Resource Center

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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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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.

Need a hat?

See Earl Walters

Tuesday & Friday

**at the Santa Rosa VA Clinic
Coffee Cart**



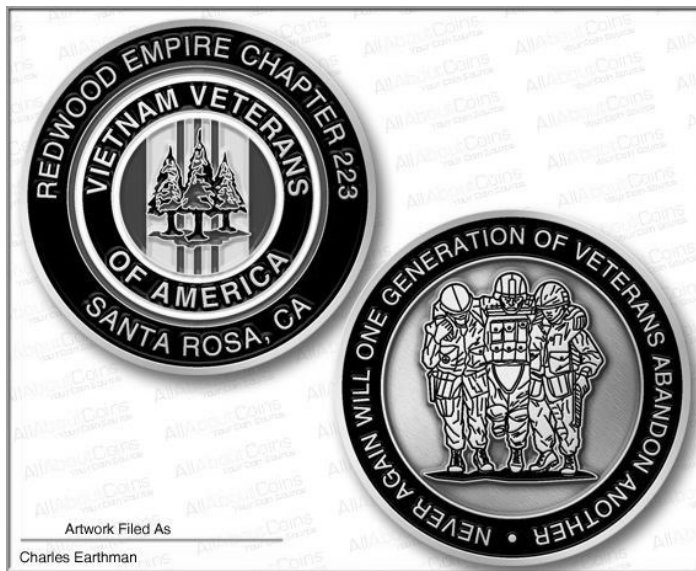
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SONOMA COUNTY VET CONNECT -

Every Tuesday morning, 9am to noon at the
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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, Sept. 15

FOOD-GIVE-AWAY PROGRAM

Fourth Tuesday of the month. Volunteers will
please check in with John McGivney @ 575.5261
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POKER SCHEDULE

Cards in the air at 6pm. Check-in and pizza 5pm
to 5:55 pm. Usually the first Saturday of the
month..

COMICS CORNER

A guy and his wife are sitting and watching a boxing
match on television. The husband sighs and complains,
"This is disappointing. It only lasted for 30 seconds!"
"Good," replied his wife. "Now you know how I always
feel."

* * *

An army major visiting sick soldiers, goes up to one
private and asks: "What's your problem, Soldier?"
"Chronic syphilis, Sir" What treatment are you
getting?" "Five minutes with the wire brush each day."
"What's your ambition?" "To get back to the front, Sir."
"Good man." says the Major.

He goes to the next bed. "What's your problem, Sol-
dier?" "Chronic piles, Sir" "What treatment are you get-
ting?" "Five minutes with the wire brush each day."
"What's your ambition?" "To get back to the front, Sir."
"Good man." says the Major.

He goes to the next bed. "What's your problem,
Soldier?" "Chronic gum disease, Sir" "What treatment
are you getting?" "Five minutes with the wire brush
each day." "What's your ambition?" "To get the wire
brush before the other two, Sir"

* * *

A child asked his father, "How were people born?" So
his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their
babies became adults and made babies, and so on."

The child then went to his mother, asked her the same
question and she told him, "We were monkeys then we
evolved to become like we are now."

The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to
me!" His father replied, "No, your mom was talking
about her side of the family."

* * *

A judge asks a defendant to please stand. "You are
charged with murdering a garbage man with a chain
saw." From the back of the courtroom a man shouts,
"You lying bastard!" "Silence in the court!" The judge
turns to the defendant again and says, "You are also
charged with killing a paperboy with a shovel."
"You tightwad!" blurts the spectator. "Quiet!" yelled the
judge. "You are also charged with killing a mailman
with an electric drill." "You cheap son of a..." the spec-
tator starts to shout. The judge thunders back, "I will
hold you in contempt! What is the reason for your out-
bursts?" "I've lived next to that lying bastard for 10
years now, but do you think he ever had a tool when I
needed to borrow one?"

* * *



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