



NEWS AND VIEWS

VVA REDWOOD EMPIRE CHAPTER 223



VOLUME 20

ISSUE 5

May 2018

PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH OTHER VETERANS

Presidents report, May 2018

Ken Holybee

With all we have been involved with we seem to be taking on more all the time. I have just returned from our national board meeting and the working group I serve on regarding the future of VVA. During our working group it was mentioned that we, as a national organization, do not reach out at the state or national level to post Vietnam veterans. This was brought to the attention of the national leadership for some action. I was appointed as chair of the national committee to attempt to fix this problem. I will be working with some people from around the country to address how to accomplish this task and use what we all do at the local levels to the state and national levels. I have also been in contact with some very active veterans from the Iraq war that have given us some very good insight. Our own Brian McKeown has told me a lot of the same things I have heard from them and I will be asking him for his assistance in this endeavor.

There will be a national leadership conference in July in Palm Springs. There are some of already attending but if you would like information on it, ask or go to VVA.org and look on the page for the leadership conference. The two working groups will be reporting out and looking for feedback for their future reports.

We had a great time at the BBQ and are looking forward to more of these events. There should be something in the newsletter about our upcoming function. I like the idea of having these at no cost to the members, families and veterans. This is a great way for us to get together and talk about whatever and get a chance to listen to the concerns of veterans. We have some real serious issues coming up and things are happening that will affect our lives and our families lives for years to come, We also had a good ribbon cutting event for the

“Wall” on our hallway wall in the veterans building. We had a small turnout and congressman Thompson was there to cut the ribbon and say a few words. I had invited all the staffers and elected representatives in our area that I had contact with to the event. None of them must have had time to attend or say they were unable to attend. In all fairness I did not talk to the Santa Rosa city council, so I cannot put them in the same noncaring category.

At the national board meeting I sit on the Agent Orange committee. we discussed the concerns we have about not getting the information to veterans and their children about the toxic exposures. If you have seen the news you will have seen stories about the toxins around our military bases in the US. This is becoming a more wide spread problem and we are hoping that the people affected are being informed about the assistance that may be available.

We have been watching and discussing the push that is going on to privatize the Veterans Administration. This is something we all need to watch even if you do not use the VA for your health care. Some of the ideas going around are to make the VA for Purple Heart recipients and then treat others for their service connected injuries only. There are also some that just want to close all the VA hospitals, and have you go to your local hospital. They would also stop the research that is done by the VA as a cost saver. I could sit here and give you more reasons to have the VA than not to have it, but it is all about money and not health care. The people pushing this want the veterans to get a Medicare type card and let you go find your own health care provides that would be paid in part by the government.

I would like to thank everyone for their vote of confidence in electing me to another term as your president. We have been making some great things happen in the last few years. If you look at my calendar you would wonder how I get anything done. That is an easy thing to answer,

Continued on Page 5

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Dinner/Dance: Lou Nuñez

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Finance: Pat Christen

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Legislation: Ken Holybee

Membership: Bill Burke

Newsletter: Ken & Sonja

Scholarship Fund: Sunny Campbell

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Veterans Building: Lou Nuñez

Website: Bill Burke

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

Contributors to the News and Views: Ken Holybee, Kate O'Hare-Palmer, Bill Burke, and Dave Richey. 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 them to Ken and he will forward them to me.

NOTICE

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VETERANS APPRECIATION EXPO

Save the Date

Dave Richey

On Saturday, **June 16**, the Rohnert Park-Cotati ROTARY CLUB is hosting a "A Day of Fun" for veterans in Sonoma County and their families. They are exploring ways to reach out to the veterans' community. This is designed to be a fun day for all, and a chance for veterans of all ages to mix socially with each other and the community at large. It's a FREE event, so come one, come all.

The event will be from **12:00 noon to 4:00 PM** at the Cotati Veterans Memorial Building, 8505 Park Avenue, Cotati. The hosts will provide a BBQ, games for adults and kids, displays and booths for veteran organizations, thematic speakers and break-out group discussions. This will be the first time this Rotary Club has hosted such an event, and they hope to make it an annual event.

If your organization would like to have a booth at the event, contact the committee chair, Bob Stewart, at stubobchev@gmail.com. There is limited space for booths, so contact him as soon as possible.

VVA WOMEN VETERAN COMMITTEE REPORT. APRIL 13, 2018. SILVER SPRINGS, MD.

Kate O'Hare-Palmer

The meeting was called to order at 2:08pm. There were 17 members and guests in attendance. The January meeting minutes were approved with minor name spelling corrections. The agenda for today's meeting had two additions.

Topics:

- 1) Michael Keating, Veteran Magazine Editor, came and spoke about idea of highlighting women important to the history of VVA in the Fall issue of the magazine. There will be an excerpt from 'Home Before Morning', Lynda Van DeVenter's book. He wants to emphasize the history, women veteran issues, and the bridge between our era and today's women veterans. There was some great discussion on some of the early days and the first and second conventions and some of the women's involvement. Marsha has some past articles that were copied and given to Michael...stories are encouraged to be emailed to Kate and Michael by June 2018.
- 2) Report of the Chair. Working in California on veteran issues. I have been elected as Sonoma County Veteran of the Year and will attend two local parades, speak for Memorial Day at our Memorial Park, and speak at the City Hall Chambers. We are still working with fire victims from last October. It will be a long process.
- 3) Budget reviewed. Last cycle showed a 12% overage. Due to increased travel expenses.
- 4) SWAN report on Sexual Harassment and Assault was reviewed. Encouraged members to take this home to share with chapters and state councils. It was an online survey plus results of focus groups. Over 50% of those surveyed do use the VA for health care. The top three personal challenges included (a) job and assignment opportunities (b) gender bias (c) family policies and practices. The top three community challenges included (a) gender bias (b) family policies and practices (c) Sexual Harassment & Assault. The most important factors for staying in the service included being part of a team; job security; financial considerations; commitment to mission. The most important factor for leaving the Service included family considerations; lack of promotion and job opportunities; lack of community/inclusion. Top priorities for women veterans include Mental health, financial stability, and connecting to a community of fellow women veterans. Their other concerns include: access to women-specific health care and navigating the VA claims and health care system.
- 5) Webpage: the committee chairs had Jeff Gulich, VVA webmaster, present some new ways to improve access to the committee reports on the web and additional information that we want to share with the membership.
- 6) Leadership conference. A seminar topic was submitted on, "New rules of engagement: Sexual Harassment Prevention Training." Discussion held on ways to include various teaching models. The seminars will be announced tomorrow.
- 7) VVA Women Veteran Reception 11.09.2018 @ 5pm in O'Bryne Gallery at the DAR building in DC for the 25th Anniversary of Vietnam Women's Memorial. Much discussion and details coming.
- 8) Maureen presented topic on mature women veterans prosthetics for gynecological/urology issues in conjunction with the VA.

BBQ ANYONE?

Dave Richey

On Saturday, March 31, AMVETS Post 40 and VVA Chapter 223 teamed up to host the First Annual Barbecue for veterans and their families. Even though the planners – mostly men – didn't think about the fact that it was the day before Easter, the event turned out to be a great success. Lou Nunez, Amvets Post Commander and Chapter Vice President, along with Brian McKeown went out to Howarth Park very early in the morning and secured the area just east of the boat-house. They erected the AMVETS and VVA canopies to mark our territory.

Between 1130 and 1230 hours, team members started to arrive to set up the cooking and serving areas. Timing was good, because our "guests" began to arrive shortly after that. Altogether, there were between 90 and 100 people attending. There were just enough hot dogs and hamburgers to go around, with a small pan full left over.

There were veterans from all over Sonoma County in attendance. We had Legion Riders, Patriot Guard Riders, members of Military Order of Purple Heart vets, AMVETS, Vietnam Veterans of America, American Legion Posts 111 & 21, Pearl Harbor, WWII vets, Korean War vets, and vets from OEF and OIF. We believe that part of the reason for the good turnout is that our good friend at the Press Democrat, Chris Smith, noted our event in his column and notified the local radio community. THANK YOU, CHRIS! We were very pleased to see the fellowship among all these groups united in a fun social event.

Several people asked if this would happen again. We will definitely do an encore next year – if not sooner. There will be a longer period of planning, as well as building on the experience of this first event.

President's Message Concluded from Pg 1

I have the best board of directors and the best members in the country. We are involved in many things because we want to help veterans and the number one way is outreach. The number one way to outreach is being in the public doing things that matter. Our members care. and this shows in everything we do. I am now chairing a new national committee that is to look at and develop a national method to outreach to post Vietnam veterans. This is something we all try at the local levels but there is no national or state avenue to accomplish this.

A Nurse at Letterman 1965-1967

Lt. Patricia Lapera Hendricks

In 1965, I was recruited with three classmates to the Army. We were all very eager to have our tuition for nursing school paid! In my senior year at Saint Josephs College of Nursing in San Francisco, I made a three-year commitment to pay back, as a lieutenant, my service to the Army. All of this happened when the Vietnam War was escalating and most of us have a little idea what path this commitment had put us on!

As a young nurse at Letterman General Army Hospital at the Presidio in San Francisco, I still recall the challenges we had treating our new patients with serious injuries. Our patients were such brave men!! Letterman, the World War II era facility where I worked, had long hallways and each ward accommodated over 20 patients. I worked on the orthopedic and thoracic units.

The two pictures are taken on the orthopedic unit at Letterman Army Hospital, Presidio, San Francisco 1967.



Ken Holybee, Vice Chair and Leslie DeLong, Chair of the National Constitution Committee taken at the National Board meeting



The reading of the names



This Brick is from the Hanoi Hilton and the inscription is in the lid.



Ken, Duane Dewitt and Jerry Shimmel at the reading of the names on March 29. Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home

Brian, Ken and Congressman Mike Thompson, a member of our Chapter



Jerry Shimmel and Brian McKeown and Congressman Thompson. Jerry is talking about his donation of the Wall to the chapter. This was purchased quite a while ago.



Congressman Thompson, Brian and Ken behind him as he cuts the ribbon.

John Rowan: Attending the dedication of the VN helicopter pilots and crew memorial in Arlington with Rick Wiedman



This replica of the Wall with all the names on it is outside the wall of our office in the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building. It was dedicated on March 28, 2018

All photos on this page were taken by Kate O'Hare-Palmer except the one of John Rowan and she sent it to me.

May 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Wednesday night Market for the next 16 weeks	3	4	5 Poker Game set up at 4 PM—1955-occupation
6	7	8 Board Meeting at 1 PM	9 Wednesday night Market	10	11 1969—Battle of Dong Ap Bia (Hamburger Hill) begins	12
13 Mothers Day	14 1967—Operation Junction City Ends	15 General Meeting eat at 6 PM	16 Wednesday night	17	18	19 Rose Parade, (I think) ewsletter articles DUE
20 1969—Hamburger Hill Ends	21	22 Food Distribution at 7 AM	23 Wednesday night	24 Fold Newsletter 10	25	26
27 Motor Cycle Run Clampers All Day	28 Memorial Day Flags up at 6 AM Flags down	29 Cal Vet Leadership Conference	30 Wednesday night Market	31		

June 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Wed Night Market	7	8	9
10 1953—Battle of Outpost Harry Begins 1999—Kosovo air cam-	11 1999—Kosovo Defense Campaign ENDS	12 Board Meeting 1 PM	13 Wed Night Market	14	15	16
17 FATHERS DAY	18	19 General Meeting 6 PM Potluck 7 PM meeting	20 Wed Night Market	21 CSC CONVENTION in Fresno	22	23 Articles Due for Newsletter
24 RETURN FROM CONVENTION	25 Copy Newsletter 1950—Korean War Begins	26 Food Distribution 7 am	27 UVC 7 PM Wed Night Market	28 Fold Newsletter 10 AM	29	30


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News and Views

Volume 20 Issue 5 May 2018

A Publication of:

Vietnam Veterans of America

Redwood Empire Chapter 223

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Membership Application for:
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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.

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