



# Vietnam Veterans of America | Chapter 218 | Santa Barbara

# RECON REPORT

*“Never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another”*

**JULY 2020**

***“Together then,  
Together now”***



**Chapter 218**

P.O. Box 4862  
Santa Barbara, CA 93140  
www.vvachapter218.org  
Email: info@vvachapter218.org

**Officers & Board Of Directors**

President: Peter Bie  
Vice President: John Blankenship  
Recording Secretary: Tom Elliott  
Treasurer: Wilson Hubbell

Rick Carter  
Fred Cota  
Hap DeSimone  
Ed Foster  
Chris Galbraith  
Fred Golin  
Don Matter  
Rik Peirson  
Pat Rumpza

Membership Director: Peter Bie  
Chaplain: Pattie Murdy

**Vance Memorial Fund**

The Chapter's Vance Committee distributes assistance funds to qualified American veterans of all eras.  
Fred Golin (Chair)  
Chris Galbraith  
Don Matter

**Chapter Teleconference**

July 15 | 6:00 pm

Greetings to the Membership:

We have lost another Chapter member...

Word reached me last evening (June 29) that one of the co-founders of our chapter and our first president, Douglas Craig Taylor, has passed away. In an email from member Joe Narkevitz, he remembered Craig as someone “who always spoke straight out and still had compassion for others at the same time; not a pair of talents we see often in our group.” (Craig held VVA member number 000301).

I recall Craig attending one of our annual Christmas dinners—he had driven from Northern CA to be here—in which he expressed his deep affection for the chapter and urged us to overcome our internal differences in order to benefit **all** Vietnam Veterans. No word yet on a memorial.

*Memorial for Charlie Franco has been cancelled...*

Cathy Franco was informed today (June 30) by the Creekside Inn, Santa Barbara that they were cancelling the event set for July 11. Most likely this was a pre-emptive move on their part in anticipation that since bars in SB have been ordered closed, that restaurants with inside service (and a bar) are probably not far behind. Cathy will let us know when there is a new date for the memorial.

*Teleconference meeting of the chapter...*

I had hoped to get us all together sometime soon, but since it is very unlikely that we'll be able to meet in person (especially observing COVID-19 protocols), I have set us up for a **phone** teleconference call on **Wednesday, July 15** at 6pm. (I know some of you don't do Zoom or even the internet, so I thought this would be the best way to handle the meeting).

It is vital that we “meet” because we have to formally elect our officers and board members for the 2020-2021 year that runs from April to April. We will also need to approve a change in our by-laws to consolidate the positions of Secretary and Treasurer into a single entity.

Our Treasurer, Wilson Hubbell, had earlier this year declined to serve another term. Tom Elliot, our current Secretary, has offered to become our Treasurer as well. At our last meeting in March, we did have formal nominations for all officers and board members, which we will go over on July 15.

Please calendar the day and time and I'll be sending details on how to join the call (it's really easy) within the next several days via e-mail and snail mail. You'll be able to use your cell and/or landline for the call.

*(Cont'd. on next page)*

Welcoming a new member!

I'm pleased to announce that our newest Life Member is a transfer from an Idaho chapter! Larry Hlavaty—now living in Soda Springs, Idaho—was a 1964 grad of San Marcos High and a friend of Jerry Georges. Larry got in touch with me few weeks ago and expressed interest in affiliating with our chapter as he has strong and fond memories of living here...and he and his wife visit often. (He also noted that he has to drive 60 miles one way just to make a meeting!) Welcome Home!

President of CA State Council Resigns...

Longtime serving president of the VVA, CA State Council, Steve Mackey, resigned on June 22, saying he can no longer support the officers or the board of directors at the national level. "If I can't support them, then I can't be head of the CSC", said Mackey in his prepared statement. Mackey was upset by two different issues that surfaced earlier: one was the acknowledgement by the VVA National office that a new, nonprofit organization, called Veterans Voices of America, was being started by an employee of the VVA along with a lawyer for the VVA. It appears to have been an outgrowth of the resolution introduced at the national convention in Spokane last year that required the VVA leadership to investigate changing the VVA's name and opening up membership to include veterans after the Vietnam-era.

According to Mackey's statement, "this resolution was [supposed] to be presented to the delegates at the 2021 convention, not [meant] to start a new organization called Veterans Voices of America." Mackey says his theory is "that [national president] John Rowan did this so that at the next convention he can say look, we already have another organization set up so let us just pass the constitutional amendment and move on."

Mackey also took exception to a letter put out by VVA national titled "VVA: Silence is Not an Option" in reference to the current racial unrest, protests and accusations of police brutality. Mackey, a 30-year law enforcement officer (now retired), was "extremely offended" by some of the language, especially comments directed toward police officers. Dean Gotham will succeed Mackey as president of the State Council.

Here is a response from national president John Rowan about the new nonprofit:

*I just want to clarify one issue that I apparently did not make clear. Veterans Voices of America is being created as a separate 501(c) (3) corporation without any VVA members. The founders are younger veterans and/or family members, although two of them are VVA employees. We are mentoring them with the hope that over time they will eventually take over some of our activities, such as the claims and appeals process, the Veterans Health Council, and Government Affairs.*

*The recent effects of the pandemic have highlighted our limitations on conducting our operations. But even before the pandemic we saw some cutbacks on the Service Representative program at the state level for example. We can keep VVA going as an organization for many years but our ability to continue our operations is getting more difficult.*

*Hopefully, by partnering with a new, younger organization we can continue our ground-breaking work on behalf of all veterans. The feasibility of this concept should become clearer by next year's Convention.*

*Thanks, John Rowan, Pres. & CEO, Vietnam Veterans of America*

REMINDER...

There are **no** July 4th activities planned in Santa Barbara and all fireworks shows have been cancelled in our area. However, the Pierre Claeysens Veterans Foundation has put together a "virtual" celebration that will be seen locally on KEY-TV 3 starting at 6pm, Saturday. Let's hope that by this same time next year we'll be preparing to march in the parade!

Stay safe, be well...and I'll look forward to "meeting" with you on July 15.

Welcome Home!



Peter Bie  
President