



Vietnam Veterans of America | Chapter 218 | Santa Barbara

RECON REPORT

“Never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another”

OCTOBER 2017

**“Together then,
Together now”**



Chapter 218

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

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Vance Memorial Fund

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

Next Regular Chapter Meeting

October 11, 2017 | 6:00 pm
Santa Barbara Elks Lodge
150 N. Kellogg Ave., Goleta
Dinner Available: \$8.00 per person

President's Report

It has been several weeks filled with anxiety, frustration, sadness, tears and to be perfectly frank, anger and outrage.

It began with non-stop hurricane coverage, from Houston to Florida to Puerto Rico and beyond, then 10 nights of watching The Vietnam War series followed by the horrific and beyond belief massacre in Las Vegas.

As I write this, I'm am drained. My anxiety level (PTSD biting back) hasn't been this high for quite some time. And I know I'm not the only one. It didn't take much to kick in the anxiety: seeing the scenes of devastation from the hurricanes only served to remind me of how cities and villages looked like in the days following the Tet Offensive; combat footage during the Vietnam War series--even confrontations back home, stories from both sides and the slippery slope of mission creep--kept the anxiety ramping up. But I told myself I needed to see this series, so I would steel myself each day in order to watch it. Some days were better than others.

Then, just when I thought I could catch a break, comes a retired accountant armed with automatic weapons firing on defenseless concert goers. Any military veteran or first responder instantly recognized that sound. There is no other like it. And if you've ever been on the receiving end of it, you know it makes you want to dig a deep hole and become invisible. It didn't take confirmation from the ATF to know what this deranged individual had in his arsenal.

I say all that to say this: It doesn't take much to shake the tree of PTSD. And it doesn't even need to be war related: Watching helicopters pluck people off rooftops, crowds running in panic, children being carried by first responders through flood waters, strangers shielding strangers, a plaintive plea for help while standing in waist deep water, stories from survivors about how this was the scariest day of their life.

As Veterans, we already have much in common with so many civilians who will carry these intense moments for the rest of their lives and which will be instantly recalled when they hear the bang of a firecracker, the back fire of a car, the approaching helicopter, a siren in the night, a loud noise of any kind, large crowds, a scream from someone reacting to a funny joke, the sight of blood, a friend in distress, a wind storm, an unexpected heavy downpour, a very loud motorcycle suddenly passing you on the freeway and many other, often minor natural and man-made sounds that can bring it all back.

We have a shared experience, not just as Veterans, but as Americans. It goes deep into our national psyche whether it is The Vietnam War, a natural disaster

or a heinous crime of death rained down on unsuspecting people. These events affect us all in many different ways.

I would urge anyone feeling similar anxieties, worries, anger, frustration, sadness and grief, to seek help with a therapist, or share your feelings with your wife or husband, your friends or coworkers or your fellow Vets. People do listen. And sometimes that's all we need.

We humans are resilient. We have an amazing capacity to overcome even our darkest hours.

But it is not something we should do alone, or feel that we are alone because no one else can possibly understand what we have gone through. In many ways, they'll never be able to fully comprehend what you experienced, but they are there to let you know that you are not alone.

Take a moment and hug your wife or husband, your kids, your friends, even a stranger. Let someone know you love them. Make this day the one you say hello to that homeless person who's been hanging out in the parking lot. A smile goes a long way.

Peter Bie
President

CHAPTER MEMBER VISITING THE WALL

Member Rick Carter (our wonderful staff photographer) will be heading to Washington, D.C. in the near future and is offering to place flowers or other artifacts on the graves of the fallen at Arlington. And if there is someone on The Wall you wish to honor in the same way, he will help as well. For more info, contact Rick at: rcarterphotography@yahoo.com

50th ANNIVERSARY

Speaking of travelling to D.C.: To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, the National Archives is pulling photographs, documents and other items off its shelves and putting them on display from Nov. 10, 2017 through January 6, 2019. The archives houses millions of Vietnam War records--presidential and congressional documents, military personnel records, combat reports, POW records, hundreds of thousands of photos and miles of film and thousands of artifacts. More than 80 items, including recently declassified documents and audio tapes, are featured in the new exhibit, Remembering Vietnam: Twelve Critical Episodes in the Vietnam War. Three theaters and hands-on interactive stations are part of the

3,000-square-foot exhibition. There will also be a travelling exhibit that will move around the country during the same time period. For more info go to: archivesfoundation.org/vietnam. (Vietnam Magazine)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Wednesday, October 11, 6pm: Chapter 218 monthly meeting, Elks Lodge, Santa Barbara (upstairs meeting room).

Saturday, Nov. 4, 11am-1pm: All veterans and the public are invited to attend this luncheon at the Elks Lodge to meet and hear Vietnam Veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Jack Jacobs. \$20 at the door. To RSVP go to: info@pcvf.org (See next listing).

Saturday, Nov. 4, 5pm: The annual Military Ball presented by the Pierre Claeysens Veterans Foundation (PCVF) at the Fess Parker DoubleTree Resort, Santa Barbara. Featured speaker is Vietnam Veteran and Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Jack Jacobs. To RSVP go to: info@pcvf.org.

Sunday, Nov. 5, 1:30pm: The PCVF and the Elings Park Foundation kick off a proposed renovation project for the Veterans Memorial Walk at the park. This is a free event (Wells Fargo Amphitheater) and refreshments will be served.

Wednesday, November 8, 6pm: Chapter 218 monthly meeting, Elks Lodge, Santa Barbara (upstairs meeting room).

Saturday, Nov. 11: Veterans Day. The VFW Post 1649 co-hosts a ceremony at 10am at the Santa Barbara Cemetery, 901 Channel Drive, featuring the Santa Barbara Choral Society. This event is free and open to all.

Sunday, Nov. 12, Noon: The annual Veterans Day Parade, State Street, Santa Barbara. All chapter members are invited to participate; we'll need five personnel to carry the flags and two to carry our banner. Our Huey Helicopter will be towed in the parade. Parade begins at Sola St. and proceeds down to Cabrillo Blvd, turns right and continues on to the Carriage Museum.

Sunday, Nov. 12, Noon to 5pm: The 5th Annual Salute to Veterans presented by the Santa Barbara Veterans Foundation and PCVF at the Carriage Museum. A \$5 donation requested at the door.

Thursday, Nov. 23: Thanksgiving Day