



RECON REPORT

- Serving Veterans and the Community Since 1985 -

JANUARY 2015

Inside this issue:

President's Report	1
Chaplain's Report	2
In Memorium	2
This n' That	3
Holiday Party Photos	3
Officers & Directors	4



Chapter 218

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Next Chapter Meeting

January 14, 2015 | 6:00 pm

Santa Barbara Elks Lodge

150 N. Kellogg Ave., Goleta

Dinner Available

\$8.00 per person

*“Never again
will one generation
of veterans
abandon another...”*

President's Message

Happy New Year! As we forge into 2015 I wish you and yours a healthful, prosperous, joyful and peaceful year ahead.

Thanks to everyone who attended our Christmas dinner on December 19 held at the Carriage Museum. We had great food (provided by DJ's Catering), wine and beer (the latter donated by Phil Wright of Island Brew in Carpinteria) and time to sit and chat with many folks we hadn't seen in quite a while. We presented a beautiful plaque to Laura Pettit of Foster's Freeze in Carpinteria, for the donated food and many hours that she and her staff contributed toward the success of our Fiesta Booth this past year. She is truly deserving of our thanks and appreciation!

Our next monthly meeting is Wednesday, January 14 at 6pm at the Elks Lodge in Santa Barbara. Please plan on attending—especially if you haven't been for a few months—and let's get reacquainted. The Elks serve a spaghetti dinner (\$8) up until 7pm, so we'll take a short break about halfway through our meeting to get food and drink and return to our meeting room upstairs.

As we look forward to the year's activities, first on our list is Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day on Saturday, March 28. This is a national day of recognition and one we certainly don't want to miss. We need to determine where we would like to celebrate—whether at the Elks Lodge as we did last year—or perhaps another location that would afford us the opportunity to tie in with other organizations who want to support our on-going mission, especially the restoration of our helicopter.

Your attendance at our monthly meetings is vital as we push ahead toward 2016 and the return of the “The Moving Wall”, hopefully in late September of that year.

For the remainder of this year, we will have our usual “stepping out” events (Memorial Day, Rods and Roses Car Show, Fourth of July, Fiesta, Veterans Day Weekend, etc) on the calendar and I urge you to consider participating in as many of these as possible.

Our membership roll is at 100+ and I would like to see our roster continue to grow with new Vietnam Veterans and Associate members. For those of you who have been longtime members of the chapter (many of you joined when the chapter was formed in the mid-80's) thank you for continuing to support the organization. For the “newbees” who have joined over the past five years or so, it's great to have you with us!

Moreover, we all stand united in our service to this great country; and it matters not if you were a Veteran who served in-country or were posted elsewhere or you have joined as an Associate member. Your membership is greatly valued and so are you!

Welcome Home,

Peter

Chaplain's Corner, Pattie Murdy

The Alzheimer's Women's Initiative Luncheon Honoring Caregivers was held on November 21, 2014 at Fess Parker's Double Tree Resort. The featured guest speaker was Kimberly Williams-Paisley whose late mother was afflicted with this disease.

This luncheon honored caregivers in three categories: Employee Caregiver, Spouse Caregiver, and Daughter Caregiver. The recipients each gave a video presentation on how and why they are the caregivers. They all received large crystal carved hearts from Tiffany's. Our very own Susan Stewart received her award for being the caregiver most extraordinary for her Dad, Bill Stewart. Congratulations Susan from all your friends here at VVA Chapter 218 and hugs all around for you and Bill.

In Loving Memory

Elizabeth S. Truesdail, a resident of the Santa Ynez Valley, died Sunday November 9, 2014 after a long illness at the age of 81. Memorial Services were held on Saturday November 15, 2014. Known as an active supporter of numerous patriotic and military organizations, Elizabeth had great passion in all of the groups she was involved with from the role of chairperson to newsletter editor. She was an Associate Member of VVA Chapter 218 for over 20 years. Two daughters, Catherine Hauger and Deborah Kaatz, six grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren survive Elizabeth. She will be missed greatly.

We also received word that former Marine Sergeant John C. Muir III passed away on December 10, 2014. Our condolences to his wife, S.A. Muir; they had shared 35 years together. Rest in peace, John.

Veterans Can Apply to Upgrade Discharge for PTSD

A report carried in the Army Times in December, 2014 said that a special web page has been set up to assist Veterans seeking to upgrade punitive discharges related to behavior problems caused by post-traumatic stress.

The web page provides information and applications to seek an upgrade to discharge from service. The page can be found at:

<http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/adrb-ptsd.cfm>

It follows a recent directive to the Army's Review Boards Agency to give liberal consideration to requests for discharge upgrades from veterans who say they were kicked out of service because of problems related to PTSD.

Thousands of Vietnam-era soldiers may have been given punitive discharges because they suffered from PTSD before it was recognized as a debilitating medical condition, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel acknowledged in September.

Discharge upgrades are important because they are linked to benefits available through Veterans Affairs, such as treating PTSD-related symptoms, according to information provided by the Army.

The Army could not provide an estimate of how many applications it will receive as a result of the outreach campaign. However, a class action suit brought by veterans groups, including the Vietnam Veterans of America, estimates that one third of the 250,000 other-than-honorable discharges issued to Vietnam-era veterans may have been PTSD-related.

Veterans who previously were denied an upgrade can re-apply under the new guidance and the Army Board for Correction of Military Records will consider the application a new case, according to the Army.

The new guidance only applies to veterans who received "other than honorable" discharges. It does not apply to veterans who received less than honorable or dishonorable discharges because of serious infractions.

Net Worth No Longer Part of Calculation for Veterans Health Care Benefits

The VA will no longer use Net Worth in calculating eligibility for health care benefits effective at the start of 2015. This means that many vets who were previously not eligible will now be eligible for the health care benefits from the VA.

Veterans need to come in and apply to receive the benefit; they cannot just show up at a clinic.

For more information and to apply, please make an appointment by calling the number on the following page or coming in on a "walk-in day" (Mondays and Fridays from 9am-3pm at the San Luis Obispo office (other designated facility). Be sure to bring copies of your DD214 or other

discharge papers, copies of your current insurance cards and a list of all household income, including spouse. Happy New Year!

Dana M. Cummings
Veterans Service Officer
San Luis Obispo County
(805)781-5766
801 Grand Ave.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

News from VVA National....

Many of you have probably been receiving e-mails from the national office of VVA concerning a new VVA Member's Album, a publication that will be released later this year. In case you haven't received notice either by mail or e-mail, here's what's happening:

VVA is currently in the final stages of preparing Vietnam Veterans of America Members Album, a publication that will feature listings along with photos and essays submitted by members. We need your help! A brief telephone call will ensure your listing is completely accurate and up to date. Please give us a call at your convenience this week so that we may verify your information with you. CALL TODAY TOLL FREE: 1-800-366-7167 8am to 10pm EASTERN Time (5am to 7pm Pacific)

P.S. Harris Connect, a trusted partner of Vietnam Veterans of America, has been chosen to produce our publication. Harris Connect's commitment to protecting the privacy and ensuring the integrity of the information collected for the project is reflected in their privacy policy online at www.harrisconnect.com/privacy-policy.

Time is short, so make the call to be sure your name and information is correct (if you wish to be listed in the directory).

2015 Holiday Party



The Santa Barbara Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America is a tax exempt, non-profit, community service organization. Our members are Vietnam era (you need not have served “in country”) Veterans and associates (individuals from all walks of life who may or may not have served in the military).

The Chapter meets the second Wednesday of every month at the Santa Barbara Elks Lodge, 150 N. Kellogg Ave., Goleta. The meeting starts at 6:00 pm and dinner is available immediately following (\$8.00 per person). Spouses, family members and veterans of all eras are always welcome.

Publisher/Editor: John Selfridge johnselfridge218@hotmail.com. Please let me know if you wish to receive this newsletter via e-mail in PDF form and check our website for updated information on events and the latest news.

Officers and Board Of Directors

(Elected Every April)

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Hazel Blankenship
Chris Galbraith
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Vance Memorial Fund

The Chapter’s Vance Committee distributes funds to qualified disabled American veterans.

Committee is appointed each April.

Dan Oroz Madeline Moreaux Gerry Roberson Fred Golin Mike Mauro Don Matter
Pattie Murdy (alternate)

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At the Santa Barbara Elks Lodge
PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US!