



# RECON REPORT

- Serving Veterans and the Community Since 1985 -

## JANUARY 2014

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## Chapter 218

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### Next Chapter Meeting

January 14, 2014 | 6:00 pm  
 Veterans Memorial Building  
 112 W. Cabrillo Boulevard  
 Light Dinner Available  
 \$10 per person

*"Never again  
 will one generation  
 of veterans  
 abandon another..."*

### President | Peter Bie

My best wishes to you for a New Year filled with good health, happiness and a time of reconnecting to family, friends and reaching out to fellow Vietnam Veterans.

2013 was a successful year for our chapter, now having grown to over 100 members. We participated in a number of events that put us at the center of public attention and I can't thank enough all of you who participated in so many different ways to help fly the colors.

Our helicopter continues to draw gawking and curious crowds who want to take pictures and ask, "What was it like to fly in this thing?" or "What was it like in 'Nam?" Moreover, they are truly interested in the first hand stories told by our members, irrespective of whether they served in-country, on the sea or in the air or were "ground pounders", pilots, door gunners, chaplain's assistants, cooks, weapons specialists, artillery spotters, clerks, tank drivers, medics, etc.

Our designation as Veterans of a "certain era" means that as our lives progress, we are becoming the Veterans of a war and a time that, to the casual observer, seems like ancient history. Yet, as I mentioned at our December dinner, for all of us it feels as though it was only yesterday. The memories—good or bad—remain as vivid today as they were 40 or more years ago. Perhaps we can't remember all the little details, but the overall experience has not diminished over the decades.

With that in mind, it is my hope and vision that over the next two years we will—as a chapter—bring to the forefront what Vietnam meant then and how it has remained as a touchstone for our lives and for our country as a whole. Our sights are set on bringing The Moving Wall back to Santa Barbara in the latter part of 2015 as a highlight of the national VVA rollout of marking the 50th and 40th year anniversaries of the war. (1965: the year our intensive combat operations began; 1975: the fall of Saigon and the official end to the war).

Thank you for your support of the chapter, and to all who helped make our events—from Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day (another one coming up at the end of March) to Fiesta, from Memorial Day Ceremonies to Rods and Roses, from July 4th to Veterans Day, from the Big Read program in conjunction with the Santa Barbara Library System to the Military Ball with Karl Marlantes—and everything else in between—so successful!

My grateful thanks also to the many who gave of their time—especially our officers and board members—and to those who provided financial support to the chapter; without which we would not be the organization we are today.

I look forward to this year as being one of continued growth in membership and fellowship as our bond of a shared experience of a time long ago and a place far away brings us even closer together.

Welcome Home!  
 Peter Bie

## Chaplain's Corner | Pattie Murdy

Well here it is that time in the year where we ring out the old 2013 and welcome the new one 2014. By the time you will be reading this, all of the holidays and their celebrations will have come and gone.

The New Year brings many changes for us at Chapter 218 and the VMB. President Peter Bie will elaborate on these in his article.

While the remnants of the old year are still hanging around, the tree, the lights, the ornaments, the egg nog etc. I'd like to recognize those Chapter members and friends, who have contributed to our Homeless Veterans Clothing Project during these past few months,

November Donors were: John Kerr, Bob Brennan, John Selfridge, Susan Stewart, Fred Golin and Pattie Murdy. Our December Donors were: Elsa Beder (to the VMB), Richard Glenn (monetary donation used to purchase new clothing) & David S. Boyd for making it happen.



Without your help and those of other Chapter members we would not have reached our goal of approximately 900 lbs. of donated new and gently used clothing, sleeping bags, food, hygiene supplies etc. as many boxes and bags of these items came to me every month

during the past year.

Please continue to donate any of the above items and bring them to our monthly Chapter meetings. If you have clothing items and are unable to attend, please drop off to Charlie "Crash" Huff, Executive Director of the VMB during business hours. He will contact me and I'll take it from there. Just make sure my name is on the box or bag of the items you are donating.

In the New Year, we will be implementing an improved donation system through Officer Craig Burleigh of the SBPD. He has been taking care of 35 HOMELESS VETERANS who are currently living on the streets of Santa Barbara. Our future donations will be directed to them through Officer Burleigh.

In addition to being a member of the SBPD for 15 years, Officer Burleigh is the Restorative Policing Officer, Tactical Patrol Force, Hostage Team Leader, and Veterans Treatment Court Representative.

## County Opts to Manage the Veterans Memorial Building

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 on December 3, 2013 to have the County take over management of the Veterans Memorial Building effective at the end of April, 2014.

This means that the Veterans Coordinating Council, which had oversight of the building for many years, will no longer manage the day-to-day affairs of the VMB and no longer be responsible for its fiscal needs and upkeep.



However, nothing changes as far as the relationship with Veterans groups who use the building (whether free or otherwise); nor any other organizations or private parties who wish to rent the building's offices, kitchen or auditorium.

And the VCC will continue as a body of Veterans groups whose desire to work more closely with Veterans of all eras and address the needs of those vets.

Chapter 218 member John Selfridge has replaced Dennis Hartman as our representative to the VCC and will be attending the monthly meetings on the last Wednesday of each month at 12noon, which are always open to the public. (Next meeting: Jan 29).

## Here's to a Job Well Done!

At our annual dinner and awards banquet on December 10, we recognized and honored several members of the chapter for their involvement and accomplishments over the past year:



The “Hoo-Rah” Award was presented to George Ogle (USMC) and Mario Pintor (USMC) for their readiness and willingness to pitch in and help out with public displays of our helicopter at anytime and anyplace.



Steven Penner (Navy) was presented with a “**Steady as She Goes, Mr. Penner**” plaque for his tireless efforts—and infinite patience—while serving as Chair of the Veterans Coordinating Council which has overseen the management of the Veterans Memorial Building in Santa Barbara (See article on the VMB elsewhere in this issue).

John W. Kerr II (Army) was named our **Member of**

**the Year** for his strong commitment to Veterans of all eras, his energetic work on behalf of the Santa Barbara County stand down and his passionate efforts to ensure that our helicopter is always looking her best when she goes on display.



## Meeting Dates for 218

January 14, 2014 6pm  
Veterans Memorial Building  
Santa Barbara  
Ocean View Room (Upstaris)  
Dinner Served (\$10 contribution)

February 11, 2014 6pm (Note change of location)  
California Pizza Kitchen  
Paseo Nuevo Mall  
Santa Barbara, CA

This is a fund raiser for the Chapter, hosted by CPK, which is donating a portion of its proceeds to the 218. Our thanks to member Susan Stewart (AVVA) for making this happen. Everyone is invited to attend. Good food. Good company!

## In Memorium

Gilbert Ruiz, an employee of the Veterans Memorial Building, passed away on December 22 from what appear to be natural causes. His family in Northern California has not released any information concerning funeral or memorial arrangements. Gilbert was always an amiable and supportive soul and his smile and good nature will be missed.

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 Tuesday of every month at the Veterans Memorial Building, 112 West Cabrillo Boulevard, Santa Barbara. A light dinner is served at 6pm (\$10 contribution per person) and the meeting starts at 6:20pm. 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.

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**Officers and Board Of Directors**

*(Elected Every April)*

President: Peter Bie  
1st Vice President: John Blankenship  
2nd Vice President: Hap DeSimone  
Recording Secretary: Don Matter  
Treasurer: Pat Rumpza  
Public Affairs Officer: TBD

*(All officers serve as members of the Board of Directors)*

California State Council Representative: TBD  
SBVeterans Coordinating Council Representative:  
John Selfridge  
Membership Director: John Selfridge  
Chaplain: Pattie Murdy  
Memorabilia: Cathy Matter  
Program Director: Melinda Bie  
Recon Report Editor and Publisher: John Selfridge  
(johnselfridge218@hotmail.com)  
Recon Report layout and design: Melinda Bie

**Also in service to the Board:**

Gerry Roberson  
Pattie Murdy  
John Selfridge  
Hazel Blankenship  
Mike Mauro  
Cathy Matter

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**Vance Memorial Fund**

The Chapter’s Vance Committee distributes funds to qualified disabled American veterans.  
Committee is appointed each April.

John Kerr (Chairman) (Cambodianred@gmail.com)

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

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**Tuesday, January 14 - Chapter Meeting - 6 pm**  
**PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US!**