



Vietnam Veterans of America | Chapter 218 | Santa Barbara

RECON REPORT

“Never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another”

APRIL 2016

***“Together then,
Together now”***



Chapter 218

P.O. Box 4862
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Officers & Board Of Directors

President: Peter Bie
1st Vice President: John Blankenship
2nd Vice President: Hap DeSimone
Recording Secretary: Tom Elliott
Treasurer: Mike Mauro
Chris Galbraith
Don Matter
Steve Penner
Pat Rumpza

CA State Council Rep: Hap DeSimone
Membership Director: Chris Galbraith
Chaplain: Pattie Murdy
Memorabilia: Cathy Matter

Vance Memorial Fund

The Chapter's Vance Committee distributes funds to qualified disabled American veterans.
Fred Golin (Chair) Madeline Moreaux
Mike Mauro Pattie Murdy

Next Chapter Meeting

April 13, 2016 | 6:00 pm
Santa Barbara Elks Lodge
150 N. Kellogg Ave., Goleta
Dinner Available
\$8.00 per person

Message from the President...

Our Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day event on March 30 was quite a success! Over 100 people, Veterans and civilians, turned out at the beautiful Carriage Museum in Santa Barbara for a wonderful meal (prepared by DJ's Catering) and the opportunity to better know the members of our chapter. Once again, our Huey Helicopter was a big draw.

We were honored to have Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider and City Council member Frank Hotchkiss (a Vietnam Vet) on hand as well.

All of our officers and board members--with the exception of 2nd Vice President Hap Desimone--were present and joined me at the podium to be introduced and recognized for their past military service and their on going contributions to the chapter.

Our highest ranking member, retired Brig. Gen. Fred Lopez, spoke for a few moments, reminding everyone of what it means to be a Vietnam Veteran. In my remarks to the crowd I emphasized the need for all of us to continue to reach out to the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans who have served this country so well in two wars over the past 15 years. We share much in common with these younger Vets; not only the experience of military service itself, but war and its consequences remain the same no matter the era.

We were all surprised the next morning when we were greeted by a front page story of the gathering in the Santa Barbara News Press!

I look forward to another gathering next year to mark the day in 1973 when the last of the U.S. combat troops were being withdrawn from South Vietnam and to honor the service and sacrifice of the millions who served from 1959 to 1975. Most of all to say: Welcome Home!

Peter
Peter Bie
President

APRIL ELECTION

Our meeting on April 13 requires your presence in order to nominate and vote in the annual election of officers and board members of the chapter. At our March meeting the following were nominated: President: Peter Bie, 2nd Vice President: Hap Desimone, Treasurer: Mike Mauro, Secretary: Tom Elliott. There were no nominations for 1st Vice President, currently held by John Blankenship, who was not present. For the Board: Chris Galbraith, Fred Golin, Don Matter and Pat Rumpza.

At the meeting further nominations will be taken from the floor and voting will follow. It is vital that you attend as nominations and voting must be done in person.

OUR FIESTA BOOTH... AND ITS FUTURE!

The 218 Fiesta Booth—a long time presence at the annual Old Spanish Days celebration every summer in Santa Barbara—may be nearing the end of its life.

Don Matter, who has chaired the booth almost from its inception, has decided that 2016 will be his last year to oversee the project. Another longtime member, Tom Palmeri—who drives down from Boise, Idaho each year to help!—is also stepping away once this year's Fiesta is over.

This leaves us with quite a void and the possibility that unless someone—or a small group of our members—step up and agree to take over the day-to-day operations of the booth, we most likely will have to pass it along to another well deserving non-profit or perhaps shut it down.

Don has already met with a few members of the chapter who expressed interest in continuing the tradition. But it turns out that the requirements of overseeing the daily operations of the booth is far more time and work than most of us are willing to take on.

Among the many duties are attending the evening meetings of Fiesta vendors April thru June at the Carriage House, making sure the equipment and the booth are properly loaded at Hillside House on July 29 for transport to De La Guerra Plaza, recruiting volunteers and overseeing the construction of the booth starting at 7am the next day, then showing up around 8am (until “closing”) on July 31/ Aug 2 to clean and prep the booth for opening on Aug. 3.

Booth hours are 11 to 11, but someone must be there

each morning before 8am to receive food orders, clean equipment, prep the food and meet with city health inspectors if need be. By the way, this person is also in charge of calling members and scheduling their volunteer hours in the booth. And you're on call 24/7 for any emergencies or problems that arise.

Then there's the takedown of the booth on Sunday, Aug. 7, getting it reloaded into the truck and returned to the container at Hillside House. On Monday, you take any returns back to the vendors. Whew!

So if you're interested in taking on these responsibilities—or if you're aware of an organization wanting to take over the booth next year—you, or they, will need to shadow Don and Tom this year to learn the ins and outs of what it takes to make the booth a success.

Please contact Don immediately via e-mail: donmatter51@yahoo.com or phone: (805) 455-7478.

At our meeting on April 13 we'll discuss the issue, but we must reach a decision soon on continuing with the booth, selling it to another organization, or simply closing it and disposing of the equipment.

SCHOLARSHIP TIME....

Our annual contribution of two \$1,000 scholarships to the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara is due by May 1. Help us meet our goal by sending your contribution in care of the chapter, or bring your contribution to the next meeting. These scholarships to eligible college age students are given each year in the name of one of the 98 Vietnam Veterans from Santa Barbara County who were killed in the war. Thank you for your support.

MEMBERS GONE MISSING.....

Chris Galbraith, our membership director, has been doing a great job of making sure that we have correct addresses, phone numbers and e-mails of our members. But he has turned up a number of individuals who appear to have dropped from sight. If you know how to reach the following “missing” members, please send an e-mail to: info@vvachapter218.org or see Chris at the next meeting: Jim Britton, Rick Bruce, Mark Hienz, Butch Omstead, Leonard Paredes, John Parsons, James Perez, Leon Reginatto, William Shallenberger, Robert Sorrenson, Gary Tomczik, Forrest Wilde, Scott Wilson and Alan Wynn. Thanks for your help.