



Vietnam Veterans of America | Chapter 218 | Santa Barbara

RECON REPORT

“Never again will one generation of Veterans abandon another”

APRIL 2018

**“Together then,
Together now”**



Chapter 218

P.O. Box 4862
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Officers & Board Of Directors

President: Peter Bie
Vice President: John Blankenship
Recording Secretary: Tom Elliott
Treasurer: Chris Galbraith
Greg Brown
Hap DeSimone
Fred Golin
Don Matter
Rik Peirson
Steve Penner
Mario Pintor
Pat Rumpza

CA State Council Rep: Hap Desimone
Membership Director: Chris Galbraith
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

Next Regular Chapter Meeting

April 11, 2018 | 6:00 pm
Santa Barbara Elks Lodge
150 N. Kellogg Ave., Goleta
Dinner Available: \$8.00 per person

Greetings to the Membership:

As we enter the month of April, there are two things that come to mind. One, is that our chapter meeting of April 11 is critical to the on-going life of the chapter: it's our annual election of officers and additional board members. Second, it's also the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King.

In addressing our election meeting, it's vital that as many of the membership as possible be present at the Elks Lodge at 6pm. We will again take nominations from the floor for President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer; all to serve a one-year term from April 2018 to April 2019. At our March meeting the following nominees were approved by the membership: Peter Bie for President, John Blankenship for Vice President, Tom Elliot for Secretary* and Chris Galbraith for Treasurer. Any valid member of the chapter may be nominated for any of these positions, however, the individual must be present to be nominated. (AVVA members are not eligible to hold office). All the officers serve concurrently as board members.

*The nomination for Tom Elliot as Secretary was done so with the caveat that he would only be able to serve through January 2019, at which time he is leaving on an extended vacation and will not be able to fulfill the position through April 2019. The officers and board will appoint a temporary Secretary in January 2019 to fill the position until the next formal election in April 2019.

At the March meeting, the following nominees were approved by the membership to be additional board members: Patricia Rumpza, Don Matter, Rik Peirson, Hap Desimone, Mario Pintor and Fred Golin.

It is desirable to have at least one more member serving on the board to provide an unequal number for voting on chapter business. Any valid member can be nominated to the board but must be present to be nominated. (AVVA members are not eligible to hold office).

Please make plans to join us on April 11.

As I write this, I'm doing so on the 50th anniversary of the killing of Dr. Martin Luther King (April 4). I was in Vietnam when this happened, and oddly it was a sidebar story to what was going on in-country. We were 60 or so days beyond the start of the Tet Offensive, intense fighting was still going on in certain parts of the country and we were beginning to realize that, despite the overwhelming defeat of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces, nothing was ever going to be the same again.

Exactly one year previous, King had delivered a speech in which he expressed his opposition to the war. He outlined several reasons why and when he concluded, one of his aides voiced concern that this may have cost King the national support for his civil rights movement. King soldiered on, ignored the criticism, and ended up on April 3, 1968 giving his now famous “I Have A Dream” speech in Memphis.

I was recently asked if I thought it was a coincidence or did King sense that something was about to happen to him when he gave that address? Perhaps it was a bit of both. He had lived so much of his life—and his family as well—under the constant threat of some kind of violence aimed his way.

Robert Kennedy broke the terrible news while at a rally in Indianapolis that night and with his calm and reassuring words helped to keep the town from descending into chaos while riots raged in dozens of cities across the country. Two months later he would be gunned down in a hallway of the Ambassador Hotel in L.A.

Would things have been different if both of these men had lived? Most likely. Unfortunately, as much as we wish it had all been a bad dream, the reality continues to haunt us.

The Vietnam War, which King had opposed, Kennedy had vowed to end, and for which Nixon would get elected by promising the same thing, dragged on until U.S. troops were withdrawn in March, 1973 sending the numbers of U.S. military dead past 58,000, the number of U.S. military maimed and wounded by 250,000 and leaving our country, its veterans and civilian population with a legacy we still can't get past...and never will.

50 years have come and gone as though it was just yesterday. I'm 20 years old, waiting to get on that freedom bird and fly out of 'Nam and head home in June, only to come back to the war in August of '68. Would things have been different for me if I had not extended? Most likely. It was my decision; not a bad one, not a stupid one, but a personal choice I made.

The Vietnam War remains a reality that each of us lived through—whether you served in-country or anywhere else for that matter—and we need to continue to acknowledge and accept what happened and why, and most importantly, who we are today: men and women who proudly served, did our duty to the best of our ability and will always uphold the grandest ideals of this country.

Welcome Home!

Peter

Peter Bie
President
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