

June 2016

Volume 1, Issue 1

OCEANO/5 CITIES ELKS #2504

SCUTTLEBUTT

FROM THE VETERAN'S COMMITTEE



**So long as there are Veterans,
The Benevolent and Protective
Order of the Elks
WILL NEVER FORGET THEM**

Welcome to the first edition of what we plan to make a quarterly publication. The *Veteran's Committee* has grown by leaps and bounds under the direction of the Chairman, Ken Coxon and there simply wasn't enough room in the Clam Tide to adequately describe all of our activities. Along with articles on current activities we will also try to lay out our plans for the future. Numerous activities involving grants and fundraisers are being considered and we want to solicit any comments or criticisms from the general membership. If you have a military experience that you think would be entertaining or informative for the members or a particular expertise in an area we encourage you to write an article for this publication. If anyone has a problem or remedy in dealing with the VA that would be particularly helpful. So here we go with the first edition and we'll see what happens.

And you needn't bother writing that piece on what an idiot the editor is. Everybody already knows that.

Gary Hanes, Editor

Veterans Committee Report to Associate Vice President, Phil Daighton



Do you know a Veteran that could use this chair?
Applications are available on our website
www.elkslodge2504.com
Committee's tab

The Veterans Committee continues to be very active in the lodge and is adding new members that want to get involved with old projects and help develop new.

This past year events included meals both as fundraisers and service, new electric wheelchair for a veteran in Salinas, California, helped a vet and his wife get off the street, Airport Day, Amp Surf helped cook and serve brunch, Operation Surf cooked and served lunch at Avila Beach, bake, hot dog and t-shirt sales, two parades, an ENF project at Vandenberg AFB.

The coming activities include a new quarterly newsletter to better inform the lodge what the committee is doing and why. The first edition will be In July. We will continue helping the homeless veterans get off the street by supplying necessary kitchen items and bedding via the Five Cities Homeless Coalition. We enter four parades, Santa Maria Rodeo on June 4th, Cayucos 4th of July Parade, Pioneer Days in Paso Robles and the Grover Beach Christmas

Parade. In October we will cook lunch for Operation Surf. The lodge plans to continue sending monthly care packages to our troops overseas. The committee is currently reviewing a non-profit group in San Luis Obispo that trains service dogs that are given to local veterans. Last but not least the Track Chair; the committee is currently in search for a worthy recipient who is a veteran that lost a leg (s) serving the country (the committee has raised over \$13,000 in order to make this donation). The Veterans Committee can only do these projects because the entire lodge helps and supports these efforts.

Fraternally,

Ken Coxon
National Veterans Service
Chairman

Oceano/Five Cities #2504 B.P.O.E. Participates in Local Parades

Volume 1, Issue 1

Most members are probably not aware that your lodge participates in several local parades every year. Members of the Lodge who own vintage military vehicles join with other owners in the community to field a very impressive entry representing WWII, Korea and Viet Nam. Each vehicle carries a Lodge member veteran of one of those wars. We are usually led by the Color Guard from the Sea Cadet program at Camp San Luis Obispo; an impressive youth group that always make us look good. Currently, our annual schedule includes: Santa Maria ELKS Rodeo Parade in June; Cayucos 4th of July Parade; Paso Robles Pioneer Days in October and the Grover Beach Christmas Parade. We are still looking for a good Veteran's Day Parade closer than Por-



terville. We are somewhat restricted on travel because most of these vehicles are driven to the events. Even in brand new condition it makes a long trip when you can only do 45 mph. We always welcome any suggestions on anything including future venues, decorations, etc. Your participation in the parade itself is encouraged providing there is available seating. Sean Schuur is selling his 2.5 ton truck and

that was one of our overflow vehicles but we always seem to manage. There is a 28 foot flatbed trailer available if anyone has the ambition to decorate it. The Lodge would provide all the signage and decorations. At this time we are working with other veteran's organizations to create a joint float of smaller groups. Our scarcest item are Vets from Korea and the Gulf War (s). Frosty, Don Gullickson and Ted Greene have us well covered for WWII, but Ted and Martin McGuire are the only Korean War Vets to surface. Rarest of all items? Guys that can still get into their uniforms. Notice I didn't mention gals.

Prior to the start our group was awarded an "HONORARY GRAND MARSHAL" ribbon

Santa Maria Elks Parade Rousing Success

June 4th was the date for the 73rd Annual Santa Maria Elk's Rodeo Parade. This being the first parade of the season we were well organized and eager to get to the fun. *What could go wrong?* We would find out in the last 10 days. Our entry consisted of seven vehicles, maybe eight, and nine or ten vets. Just when we thought it was okay to relax it started to come apart. Illness, mechanical failures and unforeseen circumstances crept in and we ended up with only four vehicles. We were

at three until Jim Storton came through with his beautifully restored M151 from Vietnam. Keep in mind the average age of these vehicles is about 70 years and the personnel are even older. Breakdowns of both are not unexpected. The lead vehicle was Vic Hetrick's big 2.5 ton truck with Mel Baker (Vietnam) aboard. Next up was the '42 Dodge WC52 weapons carrier of Greg Welch from Santa Maria doing the heavy hauling with Ted Green (WWII & Korea), Larry Hock, Barry

Shortz, Ken Coxon and Rich Richards (all Vietnam) in the cheap seats in the rear. Gary Hanes was next with a '41 Dodge WC4 weapons carrier and Gene Keeton (Vietnam) followed by Jim Storton (Vietnam) and his family. Prior to the start our group was awarded an "HONORARY GRAND MARSHAL" ribbon and during the parade we received extra attention from the announcers and television cameras. Most of these vehicles make it very hard to hear anything that's going on, but the crew in the back of Greg's truck said that they heard a lot of positive reaction from the spectators. So this one goes in the books a huge success! Next up will be the 4th of July Parade in Cayucos. If you want to join us just ask any member of the Veteran's Committee or come to one of our meetings. We meet every first and third Thursday at 5:30 in the card



New Life K9s

As the United States continues fighting wars over in the Middle East, 1 in 3 combat veterans are diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). More than 22 veterans per day commit suicide, and 1 in 3 of our country's homeless are veterans. PTSD symptoms are generally grouped into four types: intrusive memories, avoidance, negative changes in thinking and mood, or changes in emotional reactions. These symptoms cause significant problems in social or work situations and in relationships.

So what can be done to help these veterans with PTSD? One organization that is helping is right here in San Luis Obispo, New Life K9s. Their mission is saving lives through the healing power of human-canine relationships. New Life K9s prevent suicides, enrich relationships, reduce homelessness, save community resources, and decrease the need for medica-

tions.

On average, it takes 6 months to train a well selected dog for public access and to complete approximately 100 tasks on cue. The tasks that service dogs can perform to meet the needs of a veteran with PTSD can include waking them up from a nightmare and even turning on the lights, reminding them to take medications on time (even bringing medication to the veteran), bark on command to warn off a potentially threatening stranger, and to help decrease levels of anxiety. When a dog is fully trained and ready to be placed, placement is determined by personality match, assertiveness level of the dog and veteran, and activities enjoyed by both.

Some organizations quote the cost of training a service dog as high as \$70,000 per graduated dog. Without sacrificing quality,

New Life K9s cost per graduated dog is only \$15,000, and they provide service dogs to veterans with PTSD, at **no cost to the veteran**. To be able to provide these dogs to the veterans at no cost, New Life K9s relies on grants and financial donations. New Life K9s is a 501(c) 3 non-profit, so financial donations are tax deductible and a huge help. It is nice to know a local organization like New Life K9s is here helping veterans that have given *so* much.

Barry Shortz

VETERANS COMMITTEE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

VANDENBERG AFB Administer and distribute funds from a special grant to assistant dependent families of active duty personnel.

HOME TO HOME Collect funds and assist needy veterans through the assistance of the Homeless Coalition.

LOCAL PARADES AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES The Committee enters 8-10 local parades during the year with a collection of historic military vehicles.

Numerous local veterans, both lodge members and non-members participate, strengthening the bond between the Lodge and community. In just one year this has become an extremely popular activity.

SSVF COLLECTION With the assistance of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families, the Committee collects small appliances, kitchenware and bedding for distribution to homeless Vets and their families who have found housing but have none of the essentials. This is a highly successful program.

OPERATION SURF Once a year Brook Army Medical Center in Texas sends a group of recovering service members to our area for rehabilitation services. These consist mainly of amputees and spinal cord injuries. They spend a week in our community and their goal is to learn to surf. Each participant is provided with a professional surf instructor and 2 handlers and they travel to different beaches during that week. The Veteran's Committee cooks lunch for the group when they are at Avila Beach and is currently exploring other ways to help this fine group.

VETERAN'S DAY Each November 11th the Committee puts on the biggest dinner of the year to show appreciation to the Veteran members of the Lodge. The program varies slightly from year to year but usually consists of a home cooked turkey dinner with all the trimmings and maybe a guest speaker and maybe live music. There is always a time of special recognition for members of the different military branches and the different wars. Veteran members of 2504 eat for free and there is always a waiting list for tickets.

FLAG DAY The Veterans Committee stepped in to administer the annual Flag Day ceremony and dinner which was a huge success.

PUBLICATIONS The Committee submits a monthly column to the Clam Tide and also publishes a quarterly newsletter, *SCUTTLEBUTT*, to provide more detailed information to the membership.

OPERATION MOBILITY FREEDOM A major fundraiser to purchase an all-terrain tracked chair to enhance the life of a wounded veteran. Applications are being taken and reviewed to determine the most eligible recipient. The \$14,000 purchase price was raised in less than half the expected time thanks to the generosity of our members.

Local Services Offered

DIRECTORY OF SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VETERANS

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES

SSVF

1052 E. Grand Ave. suite B Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
805 202 3056

HOMELESS COALITION

1052 E. Grand Ave. Suite A Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
805 574 1638

SALVATION ARMY of SOUTH COUNTY

1550 W. Branch St. Arroyo Grande, CA
805 481 0278

SAN LUIS OBISPO VETERAN'S CENTER

1070 Southwood Ave. San Luis Obispo, CA
805 782 9101

SLO COUNTY DEPT. OF VETERAN SERVICES

801 Grand Ave. San Luis Obispo, CA
805 781 5766

VANDENBERG AFB Lompoc, CA

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION CLINIC

1288 Morris San Luis Obispo, CA
805 7815766

OCEANO/5 CITIES ELKS LODGE #2504 VETERAN'S COMMITTEE

Oceano/Five Cities Elks Lodge #2504

410 Air Park Dr., Oceano, CA 93445
PO Box 476 Oceano, CA 93475

Phone: 805-489-2504
Fax: 805-489-2501
Email: elks2504@gmail.com

Elkslodge2504.com



troopcarepacks.org is a project with a mission: Sending care packages to our armed forces serving in Afghanistan



My name is Si Tenenberg. Since November 2006, I have been running an organization that buys, packs and delivers care packages to our men and women serving in the armed forces in Afghanistan. We have come a long way in the last seven plus years, delivering almost 12,000 care packages, mostly to troops located at forward and combat outposts embedded with the local military.

I continue to get many emails direct from individual troops in Afghanistan, both those that have received help from us in the past, and first-timers that have heard of our work. I go through as many of these as I can every night and select the most needy, compiling a list of 50 recipients to pack and mail boxes out to every week. Accordingly, each of my shipments go directly to one soldier, sailor, airman, or marine and they in turn pass out the goods to other troops in their direct command. Their return [emails](#) and letters tell me how much they appreciate the care packages. While some troops are

adequately provided for, most of those at the forward operating bases and combat outposts are still in desperate need. This is where the bulk of my packages are sent to.

Not only are we supporting the combat troops and bomb sniffing K9 teams, but have significantly increased humanitarian packages for the children living in the local villages. School supplies, clothes, and other badly needed items are included, and emails from our men and women in arms describe how this approach to winning the hearts and minds of the local villagers helps get our troops home quicker. In these kinds of conflicts, needed supplies for the locals that come from American citizens are an incredible counterbalance to the terrible things that happen to non-combatants in this kind of warfare.

Although time hasn't changed our mission of supporting American armed forces overseas, it has changed the details. We are now concentrating on adjusting to the drawdown in our forces in Afghanistan. Instead of less need for our service, the reduced number of troops means that the companies that have contracted with the U.S. for food, laundry and commissary services are packing up their operations because the big money has been made. This will leave the prospective 12,000 troops that will stay behind to help train the Afghan Army and coordinate counter-terrorist campaigns in even more need than ever. These troops will be mostly in the more rugged and remote areas in Afghanistan, with less non-combat support than ever.

We are always looking for friends of the American Military that are interested in helping these brave men and women as they serve their country under difficult circumstances. Time and willing hands as well as money are all commodities in short supply.

CARE PACKAGES FOR OUR TROOPS

***Available to our members the
3rd Tuesday of each Month***

The cost to air mail one box is
\$16.75, a special rate.

For more information visit
Si Tenenberg's website at

TroopCarePacks.org .