



Military Commandery of the Western United States of America

Volume II Issue 3

SITREP

The commandery continues to evaluate suitable charities and to support charitable events. Chairs of the various committees are implementing their plans of action.

BILLETS

Our roster remains at 20 Knights and one Dame.

Acting Commander: Knight Commander Bill Buchanan

Deputy Commander: Chevalier Rhett Hart

Hospitaller Chair: Chevalier JR Hastings

Chevalier Merlin Davis

Chevalier Terry Howell

Chevalier Bill Musgrave

Chevalier Bernard Vash

Almoner Chair: Chevalier Art Hurley

Chevalier James Brown (Chair of the AT&T Subcommittee)

Chevalier Art Flegel

Dame Jaime Payne

Chevalier John Sollner

HE Conventual Bailiff Bill Peacock

Membership/Recruiting Chair: Chevalier Doug Moore

Chevalier John Fitzpatrick

Chevalier Keith Kerr

Chevalier Chris L'Orange

Chevalier Don Reid

Chevalier Dean Winslow

Treasurer: Chevalier Jim Boucher. Chevalier Jim Boucher is coordinating with the Almoner regarding financial support of the chosen charities, a reasonable basic reserve, and a reserve for contingencies.

Caring Officer: Chevalier Dr. Don Bradley

Herald/Secretary: Open

THE COMMO PROJECT

It became apparent early on that some postings and E-mail messages generated an uneven response from the commandery. Since clear and instantaneous communications are an essential precursor to any combat unit's departure on patrol, we want to adhere to the same standards during our relentless search for fund-raising opportunities and worthy charitable recipients. Twelve members of the WMC responded to the initial E-mail designed

to test our “commo status.” In order to better determine the projected attendance at signature Priory events such as Investiture, Summer Garden Party, Christmas Ball and interim commandery events such as San Francisco Commandery’s cocktail reception at the Olympic Club Lakeside, the Commandery Council is considering applying software such as Evite to capture attendance by eliciting a simple “Yea” or “Nay RSVP.” Any propeller heads with ideas along those lines please jump in.

EVENTS

Dedication of the Korea War Memorial

On Monday, 1 August, Acting Commander Bill, Deputy Commander Rhett Hart, Chevalier Don Reid, and Hospitaller JR Hastings attended the dedication of the Korea War Memorial at the Presidio of San Francisco. On a crisp summer morning at San Francisco National Cemetery, six years of selfless dedication, coordination, fund-raising, and architectural and construction planning came together in a moving ceremony that commemorated not only the valiant efforts of U.N. forces spearheaded by the First Marine Division “Fire Brigade,” but those who fell on the battlefields. Veterans of the Vietnam War no doubt regret that South Vietnam did not survive naked aggression, political treachery, breach of contract, and outright Congressional malfeasance that led the United States to abandon South Vietnam forces that were under assault by armed units of the “People’s Army of Vietnam” in 1975, thus denying an ally the opportunity to develop into the same crucible for democracy and thriving entrepreneurial activity which now define South Korea.



East Bay Stand Down

Chevalier Don Bradley, point of the spear for our support of East Bay Stand Down (<http://www.eastbaystanddown.org/>), a biannual effort held at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton from 15-18 September reports as follows:

East Bay Stand Down is an appropriate and well suited charity event for not only the WMC but the whole Order of St. John. There are many volunteer jobs for lawyers, physicians, psychologists (would you believe I was the only one out of 850 staff?). I worked with several of the campers along with the VA medical staff and talked with a suicidal vet, another with HIV and more. There are many other jobs for the young and strong (Bill B. & Art H.) as tent builders, cooks, security, barbers, dentists, etc. EBSD only happens every other year. It is the only 4-day long Stand Down event in the country: too expensive for every year. Overall, it is a fine charity event to support since our mission is to help the sick and the poor, especially homeless and veterans. Further, this year there were more military: active duty, reserve, and

National Guard; Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard. California, Iowa, Montana, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Michigan were there and the VAMC, VFW, DAV, AA, NA, and American Legion. J.R. Hastings recruited five volunteers to help the court effort which is always one of the most popular venues of the EBSD.



Project Healing Waters

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc. is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities including education and outings. This organization is dependent on tax-deductible charitable donations and the help of numerous volunteers to meet the educational, equipment, transportation, and related needs of its participants. On 29 September, Almoner Chevalier Art Hurley and Acting Commander Bill met with staff and members of Project Healing Waters Inc. at the casting ponds in Oakland. Meeting and comparing notes with veterans from the Afghanistan, Iraq, and Vietnam conflicts was an enriching experience.

PHW Walnut Creek Program Lead David Lipscomb, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy said: *Just wanted to say thanks for visiting us yesterday and for your organization's very generous donation to our program. It will mean a lot and will give us the ability to take our vets on another great trip—it's on the trips that the most rehabilitation gets done. This was confirmed by one of our vets when he commented on our recent trip to Wyoming:*



'For the first time in years I was able to live in the moment and share it with the finest people alive. These memories of brotherhood and this great country will be a source of happiness that I'll return to for the rest of my life.' This particular soldier used to be a closet case.

Summer Garden Party



A balmy evening on 10 September found a vanguard of Knights from the Western Military Commandery at the Winchester Mystery House in San Jose enjoying the superlative cuisine, comradery, a Great Gatsby Casino (note Chevalier Art Hurley's chapeau), the Magnolia Jazz Band, and the opportunity to bid on four eclectic silent auction items, including a plane ride with Chevalier Dean Winslow. Besides Chevalier Hurley and his wife Sue, Acting Commander Bill and his wife Claire attended along with HE Conventual Bailiff Grand Marshal William E. Peacock and his wife Nancy and Chevalier

Chris L'Orange and his wife Kathryn.

Table conversation revealed few if any of the guests, even long-time residents, ever had visited Winchester House, a nineteenth century Victorian built (and continuously rebuilt) by the eccentric widow of the inventor of the famous repeating rifle. It is estimated during her residence there she built 500 rooms to 600 rooms, but because so many were redone, only 160 remain.

Veterans Administration Hospital Palo Alto and Associated Events



It is difficult to overstate the energy, compassion, and dedication Chevalier James Brown and his wife Carolina apply to military veteran causes. How they find time to organize and participate in barbecues, picnics, fund-raising events, accommodating needy veteran families, and soliciting corporate sponsors while running West Coast Security Inc. is hard to fathom. Most likely the answer is a deep and abiding commitment to less fortunate veterans based on Sgt. Brown's own experiences while on active duty with Marine Forces in Operation Desert Storm.

Sgt. Brown reports on a recent example of camaraderie during Fleet Week:

I had the pleasure of leading an annual tour at the VA of Sailors and Marines in for Fleet Week at the VA Palo Alto. It was as usual, a very inspiring event. In particular, one young Marine is suffering from TBA (Traumatic Brain Amnesia). He lost the most recent five to seven years of memory. He was stationed at Cherry Point as an aviation mechanic. When three Blue Angels walked into his room, the uniforms triggered something in him. He started smiling and pointing at their uniforms. Then the conversation started. The first question one of the Angels had was, "How old are you?" His response was, "eighteen." His mother said, "No honey, today is your birthday, you just turned twenty-five." Then the conversation turned to photos of airplanes and job specifics. Within minutes, the young man was telling them what his unit designation was, what his MOS was, and he started remembering and talking

about things he had forgotten. The public affairs person from the VA, near tears, simply stated "This is why I choose to work here."

Sgt. Brown has been instrumental in arranging for wounded veterans to attend football and baseball games. On October 6, he coordinated the appearance of the United State Marine Corps Silent Drill Team at the San Francisco Forty Niners half time celebration

CARING OFFICER

Dr. Don Bradley reports no significant health problems or other unfortunate developments this quarter.

DAME PROFILE:

Dame of Honour: Jaime Payne



At the 2015 Investiture, the Western Military Commandery was proud to welcome into our ranks our first Dame, Jaime Payne of Los Gatos, California. Originally from San Jose, Jaime obtained a degree from Post University after enlisting in the United States Marine Corps. Her timing for entry on duty at Marine Corp Recruit Depot Parris Island was auspicious—September 11, 2001, following in the footsteps of her sister, who joined the Corps two years earlier, and her father, a Navy veteran and her grandfather a Navy Captain, thereby satisfying her desire to “travel the world,” and avoid just “sitting around” after graduating high school. Jaime’s distinguished career included assignments in Camp Lejeune, N.C., Okinawa, South Korea, and Thailand. August 2004 found her in Al Asad, Iraq as a supply and logistics NCO. She also is a veteran of the Code Pink assault on Marine Recruiting Station San Francisco in

2005. She was promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant in May 2008 and left the Corps three years later to pursue a career as a financial analyst for the Department of the Navy supporting the Fleet Ballistic Missile Program at Lockheed Martin. SSgt. Payne resides in Gilroy with her two daughters Briley, 9 years old, and Lauren Olivia 16 months. Her husband Steve served with the 82nd Airborne Division (Death from above) and is a ten-year veteran of the San Jose Police Department.

Yours in St. John

Bill

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