



DECEMBER, 2009

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George Gomez
2nd Vice Commander

Alexander Hamilton

Association

Linda Alband
President

Post Meetings

3rd Thursday each Month
1900 hrs

Room 202
Veterans' War Memorial Building
401 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco

ALEXANDER HAMILTON POST #448



More Iraq, Afghanistan Veterans Need More Help

Kevin Fagan, Chronicle Staff Writer Monday, 30 NOV 09

Pentagon bean counters see an extra \$40 billion in annual costs if President Obama sends 40,000 more troops to Afghanistan, but Michael Blecker sees mainly this:

More than 13,000 new cases of post-traumatic stress disorder. An additional 8,000 or so traumatic brain injuries. More suffering and need coming home in the form of wounded vets than the country can easily handle.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have produced more diagnosed cases of PTSD and debilitating injuries per capita than any other war in the

nation's history, health care experts say. And veterans who encounter homecoming trouble are becoming homeless more quickly than ever, street counselors say.

It's something most people don't consider when they think of sending more soldiers overseas, said Blecker, head of San Francisco's Swords to Plowshares veterans aid agency. But they should, he said - especially now, as Obama prepares to make a speech to the nation Tuesday.

In his address, the president will announce plans for Af-

ghanistan that are almost sure to involve dispatching tens of thousands of new troops there in the cause of defeating al Qaeda and its terrorist allies.

More PTSD cases

"We have this theme in this country that we will support our troops, all work as a team, but there are so many cases when they are just released from service and left on their own," Blecker said. "We treat them as second-class citizens, but they are the ones who pay the price."

There are proportionately more vets than ever suffering

(Continued on page 4)

RESOLUTION to AREA 2 SAL Committee

Whereas: the Sons of the American Legion since its inception has been constituted solely with male descendents of U.S. War Veterans, and

Whereas: the current combat situation in Iraq and Afghanistan has produced single parent female veterans with siblings who are female, and

Whereas: daughters of veterans should be entitled to the same privilege of membership into the Squadron as the sons of veterans, and

Whereas: females should no longer be excluded from membership into the Squadron of the American Legion, and

Whereas: equal opportunity for all siblings in the squadron will enhance and stimulate growth and longevity of the organization

Wherefore be it resolved that: the Alexander Hamilton Squadron 448, of the American Legion voted and passed this resolution on Thursday, 21 OCT 09, that the Squadron include daughters of war veterans as official members into the Sons of the American Legion Squadron; and that this resolution be sent to the 2 Area SAL Committee Meeting for debate.

Hitherto that, this resolution be sent to the National SAL for recommendations and the necessary bylaw be changed at that time.



The American Legion
Alexander Hamilton
Post 448
Intelligencer

The Intelligencer is published monthly by the Alexander Hamilton Post 448 of the American Legion, located at the Veterans' War Memorial Building, 401 Van Ness Ave Room 128, San Francisco CA 94102.

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POST FINANCIAL REPORT

Post 448 Balance Sheet—for 16 NOV 2009

Account	Balance
Assets	
Cash and Bank Accounts	
Wells Fargo Checking Acct—9136	\$926.43
Wells Fargo Savings Acct—4206	\$3,119.51
Wells Fargo CD—7778	\$10,321.89
Sterling Bank CD—2704	\$13,048.90
Sterling Bank CD—2712	\$10,228.76
TOTAL Bank Accounts	\$37,645.49
TOTAL ASSETS	\$37,645.49

★★★ Minutes for Monthly Meeting of 19 NOV 2009 ★★★

General Meeting of the Alexander Hamilton Post #448

Meeting called to order at 1910 hours

Presentation of colors, POW/MIA recognition, the Pledge of Allegiance.

New Member:
Bob Fry (details inaudible on digital recording).

Guest Speaker:
Cheryll Wenell, Women Veterans Program Manager at the Women Veterans Comprehensive Health Center, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, SF CA
Some highlights of her presentation:

- Women Vets are an increasing proportion of all Vets.
- New Women Vets are younger than before.
- SF has 1,812 women vets in 2008, and expects 45% increase in the next 5 years.
- Provides gynecological, men-

tal & Social Service care, Teaching & Education, Research

- Affiliated with UCSF

Introduction of Guests:
Mick Sheppard & Sal Hopkins of Leather Traditions, which was founded MAR 06.

20/21 MAR 2010 – Service Weekend Would like to rent a room here for that weekend
<http://www.leathertraditions.org/>

Motion was made to allow room rental. 2nded & carried

First Vice Commander:
Thanks to the Bingo volunteers. Last night's Bingo was successful.

Mama's Toy drive for Camp Sunshine – donations (unwrapped, new toy) should be brought to the Holiday Potluck

Motion made, 2nded & carried

2nd Vice Commander:
Nothing to Report.

3rd Vice Commander:
Nothing to Report.

Finance/Adjutant's Report:

Membership Report:
As of 16 NOV
179 members
183 as of tonight
86 more to reach 100%

Finance Report:
CHECKING: \$926.43
SAVINGS: \$3,119.51
CDs as before
Bingo revenue \$650

A Wells Fargo CD will mature on 28 NOV. Recommendation to move out of CD and into Savings until a decision is made about investment opportunities (such as bonds)

A motion was made, was seconded, and was carried. to accept the Finance Report

Judge Advocate:
Discussed CDs for "Rainy Days".

Holiday Party Volunteers are

(Continued on page 5)

SAN FRANCISCO VETERAN'S DAY PARADE 2009





Swords to Plowshares director Michael Blecker (right) talks with veteran John Hall at the agency in San Francisco.

...A study last year by Rand showed that 70 percent of homecoming vets who need help don't seek it from the military or Veterans Affairs...

(Continued from page 1)

from PTSD and disability upon coming home because military armor and rescue capabilities are better than ever, experts say. That means fewer soldiers die of serious wounds, and more survive with lost limbs, injured brains and the damaging memories of horror.

Estimates by organizations including Swords to Plowshares, Stanford University and the nonprofit research center Rand contend that about one-third of the 1.8 million men and women who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan have suffered from PTSD. About 17 percent have experienced brain injuries ranging from mild to severe.

In comparison, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reports that 11 percent of the 8.7 million veterans of the Vietnam War suffered from PTSD. Common estimates say the numbers were lower or about the same in previous conflicts. Redeployments - about four for most military personnel now, compared with an average of one deployment in previous wars - exacerbate the problem by exposing soldiers to more danger.

Irony of better care

"The equipment is better and the medical care is better, so they're surviving injuries that soldiers in other conflicts

would have never survived," said Judi Cheary, spokeswoman for the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Francisco. "And we've increased staff, created a bunch of new programs and are actively doing outreach for these young vets to come to us, but unfortunately most of them don't.

"We want them to know we're here and our doors are open."

A study last year by Rand showed that 70 percent of homecoming vets who need help don't seek it from the military or Veterans Affairs.

Boosting aid efforts

As part of that push to draw young vets in and treat them faster, Cheary said, the San Francisco VA center has added 35 mental health clinicians to the 100 already on staff. Nationally, the Veterans Affairs Department held a summit in Washington earlier this month at which organizations from around the country pledged to try to house the nation's homeless veterans - estimated to number 131,000 on any given night - within five years.

One reason young vets don't seek help is the tough-it-out stance of soldier culture, Blecker said. But most will find that acting tough won't put off the inevitable need for

assistance - or the troubles.

"In the past, it took Vietnam vets about 10 years to become homeless after they were discharged," Blecker said. "The trend is about half that now, for these new vets."

The VA runs several programs for homeless and struggling vets, including a one-stop integrated-care clinic at its medical center in San Francisco. Swords to Plowshares runs the most comprehensive residential counseling program for homeless veterans in the Bay Area, currently on Treasure Island - helping more than a thousand vets gain independence since 1988.

But as quickly as the warriors are healed, more take their place, said Amy Fairweather, policy director for Swords to Plowshares.

"The costs to individuals and society are going up all the time, and these costs will be with us for decades," she said. "These are young men and women."

E-mail Kevin Fagan at kfan@sfnchronicle.com.

<http://tinyurl.com/yzmgcqt>

This article appeared on page C-1 of the San Francisco Chronicle.

The San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus presents the 20th anniversary of a classic San Francisco tradition:

A variety of spiritual traditions are reflected in the program, which also includes the rousing "Triumphant Light" in honor of Solstice, "Not In Our Town" for Hanukkah, Mariah Carey's version of "Joy To The World" and, for devotees of all things edible, "Fruitcake" - a humorous homage to Julia Child, reincarnated live on stage.

Early shows at First Unitarian Church and Center December 15, 16 and 17. Season Finalé @ The Castro Theatre, December 24: 5, 7 and 9 pm. For tickets call 415.865.2787 or go to www.sfgmc.org



★★★ Minutes for Monthly Meeting of 19 NOV 2009 ★★★

(Continued from page 2)

needed at 1000 hours to help set up the room.

Investments: CDs are very low percentages right now. Bonds are doing better Mutual Funds spread the risk. Arch & Ralph Doore will investigate.

Sgt. @ Arms:

Nothing to Report.

Chaplain:

Consider – but don't answer: a question: Is religion in an organization being substituted for one's established religion? Are people substituting group membership for church? A short discussion followed.

Women's Commander:

Nothing to Report.

Squadron Commander:

Not Present.

Squadron Vice Commander reported on the Resolution being sent to Area 2 in reference to females in the SAL.

Commander's Report:

25th Anniversary Committee Met for 1st

time tonight, will meet again in December after the Post Meeting. Remember, it will be in 09 JUN 10.

Veteran's Day Parade – even with dwindling attendance, we received greetings and salutes from the crowd. Tom Amiano, State Assemblyman, joined us for almost the entire route.

Discussed an article that several Post members were interviewed about DADT in the Bay Guardian.

Luke Thomas, works for Fog City Journal, took pictures at Bingo.

Letter posted in print version of Advocate by the Assistant Newsletter Editor which advertises the Post.

The Post will participate as Color Guard for the Mr. Marcus Memorial, this Sat, 21 NOV 09 @ 1300 at City Lights

War Memorial Commission voted in a new Chairman (from post 333), Roger Dong, and a friend of our Post.

OLD Business:

The December Holiday Dinner will be the 3rd Thursday in December, in lieu of meeting. It will be a Potluck dinner.

The suggested menu by last name:

A – F Pasta, potatoes, vegetables, rice or cornbread

G - M Salads, fruit, Jello, coleslaw, beets

N – S Desserts or chocolates

T – Z Bread, cheese, shell fish, olives, pickles, nuts or cranberries

Bingo will be moving to Saturday afternoons after the new year. Negotiations are still underway for exact scheduling.

NEW Business:

Ralph Doore, member of the Squadron, will be participating in the AIDS Lifecycle in 2010 and is asking for our support. Please visit his website at <http://www.ToFightHIV.org/GoTo/RalphDoore> for more information and to donate online.

Motion to Adjourn, second & carried at 2114.



Mister Marcus Memorial - Saturday, 1300 hours, 21 NOV 09, 715 Harrison, San Francisco

With excerpts by Scott Brogan, the Bay Area Reporter

A Memorial was held at 1pm Saturday Afternoon, November 21st, at City Nights Night Club, 715 Harrison Street in San Francisco in honor of the late Mister Marcus Hernandez, leather columnist and Master of Ceremonies extraordinaire with the BAR-Bay Area.

The memorial began with a color guard provided by the Alexander Hamilton Post 448. Post Commander John Forrett pointed out another Marcus fact: He was one of the 25 founding members of the post – the only gay post in the American Legion – founded against all odds in 1984 by gay veterans.

Marcus' son, the Reverend Curt Her-

nandez, gave the most moving and



eloquent eulogy of the day. He told of reconnecting with Marcus and the

bond they shared, and his pride for his father's life and legacy. He also made a point to let the assemblage know that not all people of faith are anti-gay, a fact that wasn't lost on Marcus or the crowd. There wasn't a dry eye in the house. Afterwards, State Senator Mark Leno presented Rev. Hernandez with a California "In Memoriam Resolution" in honor of Marcus, bringing everyone to a standing ovation.

When Queen Cougar brought the proceedings to a close, we all were in awe of what we had just witnessed, and how one life could have such an impact. It was truly a beautiful, loving and moving memorial.



Don't ask, don't tell.

...it is a very poignant thing to put a gay person on the stand because that is shining a spotlight on the lie that structures the whole policy...

Witness immunity sought for gay service members

By LISA LEFF (AP) - 3 DEC 09

Gay service members who reveal their sexual orientations during congressional testimony would be immune from forced discharges under a bill introduced Wednesday, as lawmakers prepare to consider repealing the ban on gays serving openly in the U.S. military.

The legislation's author, U.S. Rep. Alcee Hastings, D-Fla., said the bill is needed to ensure that Congress has reliable and relevant witnesses at its disposal if the House holds hearings next year on the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

The bill also would protect from retaliatory personnel actions any members of the military who testify for or against lifting the 16-year ban.

"How can there be anything more important than a gay member of the service having the right to testify before the Armed Services Committee of the Congress that he is under the aegis of," Hastings told The Associated Press. "But if they come and testify, that testimony could be used against them under 'don't ask, don't tell.' In my judgment, it's just a question of fairness."

Hastings so far has secured 27

Democratic co-sponsors for his "Honest and Open Testimony Act." But the measure also has met surprising opposition from leading gay veterans groups and other Democrats who have been at the forefront of the movement to repeal the policy.

Alexander Nichols, executive director of Servicemembers United, an advocacy group for gay Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans, said the legislation is good in theory but on a practical level would not protect gay service members who out themselves to Congress from becoming pariahs within their units.

"This proposal is, of course, well-intentioned and the idea behind it is certainly noble, but I believe it is a bit naive in its conceit and doesn't reflect a thoughtfulness on what this would mean for gay and lesbian service members," Nichols said. He thinks it is better for gay veterans to share their experiences than to put active duty service members at risk.

Aaron Belkin, director of the Palm Center, a think tank devoted to gays in the military at the University of California, Santa Barbara, said that if the

bill passes, it would be the first dent in "don't ask, don't tell" since the policy prohibiting service members from acknowledging they are gay was adopted in 1993. As such, it represents an important step toward full repeal, Belkin said.

"I don't think there is any down side," he said. "Politically, it is a very poignant thing to put a gay person on the stand because that is shining a spotlight on the lie that structures the whole policy. The move, in and of itself, before they even say anything, is powerful ammunition."

Since "don't ask, don't tell" took effect, nearly 13,000 troops have been dismissed because it became known they were gay. President Barack Obama said he favors lifting the ban but has asked for more time to persuade opponents in the Pentagon.

U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy, D-Pa., the first Iraq war veteran elected to Congress, has been shepherding a "don't ask, don't tell" repeal bill toward hearings in the House, but he was not among the lawmakers who signed onto Hastings' measure.

NOTICE

Do you have comments about articles or news reported in the Intelligencer? Do you have an idea for an article or would like to submit an article you want considered for publication in the Post 448 Newsletter?

Send your **PDF or Word** docs to:

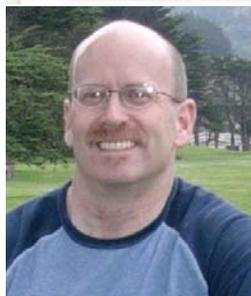
postnews@post448.org

Deadline for publication in the next newsletter is the 25th of each month.

The Post has the right to refuse publication of any article without explanation.

Unless otherwise copyrighted or agreed upon, all contributions become the property of American Legion Post 448.

Due to limited space, obituaries and memorial notices will be printed on a space available basis for members in good standing only.



Ralph Doore
Post 448 Member and
1st-time Rider

From June 6-12, 2010, I'm bicycling in AIDS/LifeCycle. It's a 7-day, 545-mile bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles to make a world of difference in the lives of people living with HIV and AIDS.

Help me support the San Francisco AIDS Foundation by giving what you can. We'll keep riding until AIDS and HIV are a thing of the past.

My personal page can be found at:

<http://tinyurl.com/y9jmdzg>



SQUADRON NOTES

Greetings all! After much debate with another steering committee member, our old logo will be replaced. Expectations were high at the last SAL meeting. A resolution to change SAL admissions policy was written and passed. The food was fine, and a realization that a quarterly "Meet & Eat" with the SAL would be enough. Next "Meet & Eat" will be at 1800 hours, Room 202, 21 JAN 10 (1 hour before the Post 448 Monthly Meeting). All are welcome! A surprise menu is planned. The 2010 membership renewal time is now - you are needed to help this organization! Please send in those dues now! Post 448 is involved in many activities: This past Veterans Day Parade went off fine... I had a good time, we made the cover photo of that fabulous newspaper The Bay Area Reporter (the BAR), and had a fabu-

lous decorated vehicle owned by the Star of Moffet Field himself. This Commander has relaxed all dress policies and is very glad for you to "come as your are" - very California casual here. In December, Post 448 will once again put on the Holiday Pot Luck, the 3rd Thursday, 17 DEC 09, replacing the General Meeting. Bingo with the sisters may have different days, Always check the schedule! As of yet no date set for the planning meeting to celebrate year 25 for 448, The talk is that it will be a special Event in a nice room. Stay Healthy & Happy for this 2009 Holiday Season. 2010 is gonna be a good, good year.



POST 448 2009



DATE	EVENT & LOCATION
05 DEC	Officers' Meeting 1200 hrs Room 104, Veterans' War Memorial Building
12 DEC	Hanukkah
16 DEC	BINGO with the Sisters, 1700 hrs
17 DEC	Post 448 Holiday Potluck Dinner, Room 202, Veterans' War Memorial Bldg. @ 1900 hrs.
17 DEC	25th Anniversary Party Committee Meeting After Post Holiday Dinner in Post 448 's Office
18 DEC	Islamic New Year (1431 A.H.)
21 DEC	Pagan Winter Solstice
25 DEC	Christmas
9 JAN	Officers' Meeting 1200 hrs Room 104, Veterans' War Memorial Building
20 JAN	BINGO with the Sisters, 1700 hrs
21 JAN	SAL Meet & Eat, 1800 hrs, Room 202, Veterans' War Memorial Bldg
21 JAN	Post Meeting 1900 hrs Room 202, Veterans' War Memorial Bldg
6 FEB	Officers' Meeting 1200 hrs Room 104, Veterans' War Memorial Building
18 FEB	Post Meeting 1900 hrs Room 202, Veterans' War Memorial Bldg
6 MAR	Officers' Meeting 1200 hrs Room 104, Veterans' War Memorial Building
18 MAR	Post Meeting 1900 hrs Room 202, Veterans' War Memorial Bldg

Women's Drumming Circle



Come and join us at the College Community Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

5550 N. Fresno Street, Fresno CA
Tuesday evenings, Dec 1st, 8th, and 15th
from 6:00pm through 7:30 pm

Rev. Dr. Diane Christopherson will lead us in the rhythms of the Women's Drumming Circle Bring a drum, percussion instrument, or anything that will make noise. Come join us for the drumming and the women's fellowship! Any questions please call Robin Carlson @ 435-2690

For a more accurate, up-to-the-minute calendar, event information and special announcements, please check our website.

SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS AT COLE HARDWARE!

Shop at any Cole Hardware store and mention that you heard about them from Alexander Hamilton Post 448 or mention account number 411. At the end of the year, the Post will receive a donation for all of the referrals. So tell all of your friends and family. Also, beginning in September, 2009, Cole Hardware is extending a 20% discount to all active military members and veterans on the last Thursday of each month. They call them **Recession Buster days – 20% off almost everything (sale items, Muni, gift cards & special orders excluded).**

Thanks for your support!!!

Cole Hardware

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



Join us for our annual Holiday Dinner – Potluck!



17 DEC 09 - 1800 hours

Room 202–Veterans’ War Memorial Building



The suggested menu by last name:

- A – F Pasta, potatoes, vegetables, rice or cornbread
- G - M Salads, fruit, Jello, coleslaw, beets
- N – S Desserts or chocolates
- T – Z Bread, cheese, shell fish, olives, pickles, nuts or cranberries

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