

**American Legion
Auxiliary
Unit 179**

**San Anselmo, CA
February 2013
Newsletter**



The holidays are behind us and the New Year is not quite so new any longer. But it is not too late to still wish everyone all the very best throughout all of 2013. All of you have contributed, in small and large ways, to make the past year a very successful year for our unit.

We stood in front of grocery stores at collections, spent Sundays getting care packages ready for shipping, spent hours sewing cooling scarves, held an Open House for the community to come and meet us, baked cookies, made casseroles and soups for vets at Pathway Home and at the Veteran's hospital, gave out Poppies, organized our second yard sale to benefit the care package program, sent a student to Girls State, supported Vets with needed furniture items and transit cards, delivered Girls Scout cookies to USO lounges at SFO and at Travis. All of that and so much more we accomplished together! So for 2013, we can do all of that and more. Just ask yourselves, what could be better than doing good while having fun together?

Now for a look back over the last few months:

CARE PACKAGE COLLECTION: On November 3 we held our Holiday collection day at the Safeway store in San Anselmo. A beautiful warm and sunny day provided the perfect background to the festive headgear worn by our members who all did a great job engaging the shoppers going in and out of the store. Along with our regular food and hygiene items collection, this was also the kick off to our yearly Operation Santa Claus program. For \$20 shoppers could sponsor a holiday stocking and add a personal note to it. At the end of the day, we sold 39 stockings, received an additional \$800 in donations to go towards the postal cost of shipping our care packages, and shoppers generously bought and donated enough items to help us fill 63 care packages.



VETERAN'S DAY AT MATT AND JEFF'S CAR WASH: This was our 2nd annual "car wash event" where we proudly staff a table and ask patrons of the car wash to sign holiday cards for the troops and "sell" Operation Santa Claus holiday stockings. This is a great event where we receive support from the owners and patrons, but we also have the opportunity to talk with many Vets and their families, hear their stories, and get many "thumbs up" for our efforts. We had plenty of cards available for folks to write messages on while waiting for their cars to be cleaned, and we quickly filled up several baskets with those cards that then surely let many a deployed service member know they are not forgotten. We also received \$1,024 in donations, which paid for 51 holiday stockings.



PACKING EVENTS: As a unit we set a goal to sell and ship 250 holiday stockings. To make sure they would all get to the troops in time for Christmas, Jan and Chris organized a stocking stuffing event for at the Log cabin on a weekday. Outside it was cold and dreary, but stuffing 250 stockings quickly turned into another lively and fun time. As more and more members came by to put in as much time as their busy lives allowed, they tried to outpace each other while still making certain that each stocking would still pass "quality control" while quietly, many good thoughts and wishes were tucked in along with the many goodies. Jan and Betty then made sure all these stockings were shipped in time for the holidays.



The following Sunday, friends and family again met at the Log Cabin to pack an additional 162 care packages to which we not only added the many holiday cards folks had written and given to us for the troops, but thanks to our knitters each box also contained warm scarf or hat. These beautifully hand kitted items are giving some extra warmth and comfort to many a troop. Ladies, you are wonderful and many thanks go to you all.

OPERATIONS SANTA CLAUS: As we said earlier, our goal was set for 250 holiday stockings. We are so **pleased to say that we exceeded that by a good margin.**

Thanks to our members, the community, and in no small measure to the employees at Glassdoor in Sausalito, we sold 273 stockings, which then surely brought a smile to the service members who received them far from home at Christmas time.



TOILETRY BAGS: Students at California Scholarship Foundation (CSF) at San Marin High School, under the leadership of Francine Cunnie have given a lot of their time to put together more than 600 toiletry bags that Deb Guterrez delivered to the VA Clinic in San Francisco. These are toiletry items Debbie

collects from a number of local hotels and Sophie Shehi sorts them to be packed in with our care packages, or in toiletry kits to the VA clinic.

USO TRAVIS: We gave a donation of \$250 to the Travis USO to purchase gift cards for service members at their holiday party.

HOLIDAY AND GET WELL CARDS: In December we mailed get-well cards and cards of encouragement to Monte Bernardo and Stefan LeRoy at Walter Reed hospital in Maryland.



These cards were made by local school children especially for these two wounded Vets from Sonoma.

HOLIDAY PARTY AT YOUNTVILLE HOSPITAL: As we do every year, our unit supported the Holiday party at the Veterans Hospital in Yountville by bringing home baked cookies, sandwiches, and fruit salad to the event.

We also delivered small Christmas presents for 20 of the veterans there.



THE PATHWAY HOME: We delivered home cooked and baked goods to Pathway Home in Yountville. A big thank you to all the members who spent the extra time in the kitchen so that vets at Pathway Home could enjoy some home cooking.



VA&R: Deb Guiterrez and her husband Rich were again very busy collecting furniture and household items from various hotels and other sources, then matching items up with Veterans at the Villa's in Novato, or donating them to the VA Clinic in San Francisco or Pathway Home in Yountville.

Coffee makers, hairdryer, comforter, king size bed with frame and headboard, two storage pieces, sheets, pillowcases and other linens are of the items picked up and delivered by them. It also bears telling that the toiletry items mentioned earlier in this newsletters came in 21 large boxes and weighed a combines total of 479 pounds!



UNIT HOLIDAY PARTY: In early December we all got together for our Unit's holiday party at the Log Cabin. Chris and Debbie did a wonderful setting up and decorating for the party.



The food was great and champagne and wine flowed easily. Members, spouses, family and friends spent a very enjoyable couple of hours relaxing and just having a great time.

HEARTS OF MARIN: In January our Unit was honored as a nominee in Achievement in Nonprofit Excellence for the Heart of Marin award. Sophie Shehi, Lou Shehi, Jan Darmody, Debbie Guterrez, Lauren Shields, Margaret Stafford, Beverly Panelli, Rosmarie Gordon, and Harry Gordon attended the luncheon and award ceremony held at the Marin Center Exhibit Hall. Although we didn't walk away as the winner, it was great to be publicly recognized among so many other worthy non-profit organizations.



HOT OFF THE PRESS: We do have a winner, our own Ramona Chipman! Ramona is this year's Novato Parks, Recreation and Community Services award recipient for the California Park and Recreation Society (CPRS) District Community Service Award. Congratulations, Ramona!



For more information on the award and Ramona's contribution to the community copy and paste this link to read the article: <http://bit.ly/12U0yWK>

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