

# Viet Nam vets to host annual crab feed

By David Krumboltz  
TIMES CORRESPONDENT

**W**HERE CAN A person go to a daylong party, see the Super Bowl game, snack on appetizers, then stuff yourself full of crab meat, meet the Oakland Raiderettes, participate in silent auctions, win valuable door prizes and contribute to one of the most selfless and generous charities, all for \$40?

The positive answer is the Viet Nam Veterans of Diablo Valley's Fourth Annual Crab Feed to be held at the Veterans Building, 400 Hartz Avenue in Danville on Feb. 3 (Super Bowl Sunday) starting at 1 p.m.

There will be TVs aplenty so you won't miss any exciting plays or the sometimes entertaining \$3 million, 30-second commercials.

There will be a large projection TV as well as multiple large screen televisions going all day.

The Oakland Raiderettes will be there to sign photos and calendars for the Blue Star Moms to send to servicemen as well as for other guests. Also available is a beverage bar with all your favorite drinks.

This group has one and only one fundraising event a year and this is it.

"This one event supports everything," said Vietnam Veteran President John Estes. Each year has been more successful than the year before, and it appears that the trend will continue.

The menu includes crab, appetizers, pasta and dessert.

The Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley is not part of a national organization, but a local, grassroots group that started in 1991.

The VNVDV is made up of approximately 100 combat Vietnam veterans and the group relies exclusively on local support and donations to carry out its programs.

Merchants are encouraged to donate goods or services for this event.

"All of our money, 100 percent of our money goes back into the community to support veterans and others," said John Reese, director of information for the group.

"One of the original programs we got involved with



DAVID KRUMBOLTZ

**THE BOARD** of the Viet Nam Veterans of the Diablo Valley are from left, Del Loewe, past president; Cliff DeCuir, director at large; John Estes, president; Gary Estrella, vice president; John Reese, director of information; and Skip George, public relations.

was the concept of building the All Wars Memorial at Oakhill Park."

Other programs supported include involvement in the annual Memorial Day remembrance at Oakhill Park, the practice of passing out 12,000 American Flags at Danville's Fourth of July parade each year, and providing speakers to thousands of high school and college students on the history of the Vietnam war, as well as other community projects.

"Our community service projects in the Diablo Valley all depends upon the amount of revenue we generate at this one event," said Reese.

"We are the originators of the East Bay Stand Down as well as being an original sponsor of the Sentinels of Freedom program for the wounded warriors.

"Right now we have five Sentinel of Freedom recipients that have moved back to the Mt. Diablo area," said Reese.

"These Sentinel candidates are young men who are in Walter Reed Hospital recuperating,

## IF YOU GO:

- **WHAT:** Fourth annual VNVDV Crab Feed
- **WHERE:** Veterans Building, 400 Hartz Ave., Danville
- **WHEN:** Feb. 3, 1 p.m.
- **COST:** \$40 each or a table for 10 for \$375. Tickets must be purchased in advance; no tickets sold at the door. Seating is limited to 150 people.
- **FOR MORE:** 925-355-8051
- **TO HELP:** For merchant donations, call 925-935-4859

**"This is not a handout. It's more of a helping hand."**

— John Reese, director of information for the Viet Nam Veterans of Diablo Valley

sometimes from one to three years before they are released to a community.

"All five will be attending the Crab Feed on Feb. 3 as well as active duty military personnel.

"We (the Vietnam veterans) were not welcomed home," said Reese, "and we want to make sure that doesn't happen to the brave men and women

serving today."

In 1999, the Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley began the first East Bay Stand Down at Camp Parks Reserve Forces Training Area in Dublin. The group provides this service every other year and this year it will be in August at the Alameda County Fairgrounds.

This is a four-day encampment program for certified vet-

erans who are homeless.

The vets receive medical service, clothing, food, shelter, legal assistance, job assistance, and help with Social Security and drivers' licenses.

Between 400 and 500 veterans are assisted through this program. Different shelters are represented at the encampment which offer help after the encampment. "This is not a handout," said Reese, "it's more of a helping hand."

"We all enjoy volunteering, being involved in community service, and improving the image of the Vietnam veterans," said Estes, a Concord resident who served in the Marine Corps in Vietnam in 1965.

What better way to support this "can do, will do, have done" organization than by attending the fourth annual Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley Crab Feed?

Longtime Danville resident David Krumboltz is a freelance and children fiction writer. He can be reached at [Mystery4Kids@yahoo.com](mailto:Mystery4Kids@yahoo.com)