

# *Newsletter of Hope*

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE OLDER ADULT SUICIDE PREVENTION COMMITTEE



## *September is National Suicide Prevention Month*

### *What's New*

SUICIDE PREVENTION  
AWARENESS MONTH

VETERAN'S VOICES

HEALTH INSURANCE  
COUNSELING &  
ADVOCACY PROGRAM  
(HICAP)

EVENTS CALENDAR

For over 30 years, the United States has recognized September as National Suicide Prevention Month. Together with community-based organizations and County Behavioral Health, SLO County is promoting Suicide Prevention Awareness Month with outreach at local farmer's markets, hosting the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Hero Awards night, honoring local first responders and their dedication to suicide prevention, and partnering with coffee shops across the county in providing coffee sleeves that display the suicide prevention lifeline. It takes a community to support one another, and this month, the Older Adult Suicide Prevention Committee is honoring our local veterans and highlighting ways they stay involved in the community.

# Veterans' Voices

## Interview with Clay Marsh

By Michelle Call

Executive Director of GALA

I was honored to interview Clayton (Clay) Marsh, Air Force Veteran (1957-1961), and past President of GALA (2009, 2014). Clay told me as a peace time Veteran his experience was very different than those who were sent overseas. He served between the Korean War and Vietnam War. He was supposed to be a chaplain's assistant but they were consolidating two bomber wings at an airbase in Texas and everything they had told him initially went by the wayside as they tried him our different jobs.



Clay Marsh, 2019

The personnel office was not for him - the filing was "as boring as watching paint dry". He was then assigned to be the assistant at the Welcoming Center- to welcome wives and visiting folks, but that didn't sit well with his sense of egalitarianism and didn't last longer than a few months either. Finally they made him a Chief Clerk of the squadron where he got his own room and was able to be in charge and set his own hours, and that was the winner!

While based in Texas, Clay had several temporary assignments that took him away from the base, one of which took him to England (he only got to see the runway). They flew B-47's from the base which they called "Flying Blowtorches.

Clay talked about what it was like to serve as a gay man before Stonewall. He knew about the Mattachine Society and homophiles, but wasn't involved with any organizations. He had some relationships while he was in the service and knew a lot of other servicemen. There wasn't a code yet for recognizing each other, so a lot of guesswork was involved.

(Article continues on page 3)

# Veterans' Voices

In speaking about mental health, Clay mentioned his time in the military seemed to be the time his depression began. He received good treatment and feels fortunate to have had a good partner of 54 years, (married 6 years) who supports him. This and his friendships have been a comfort to him over the years.

If you or someone you know is a Veteran struggling with mental health issues, please contact one of the resources listed in this newsletter or reach out to someone you know for help!

---

The Older Adult Suicide Prevention Committee (OASPC) is dedicated to bringing you stories of hope, community, healing, and inspiration. By highlighting our community members, we want our readers to stay connected with those around us, and encourage you to say hello and share your story with others. If you would like to interview a friend, neighbor, or acquaintance to be highlighted in our newsletter, please email Alysia Hendry at [aahendry@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:aahendry@co.slo.ca.us)

---



# Veterans' Voices

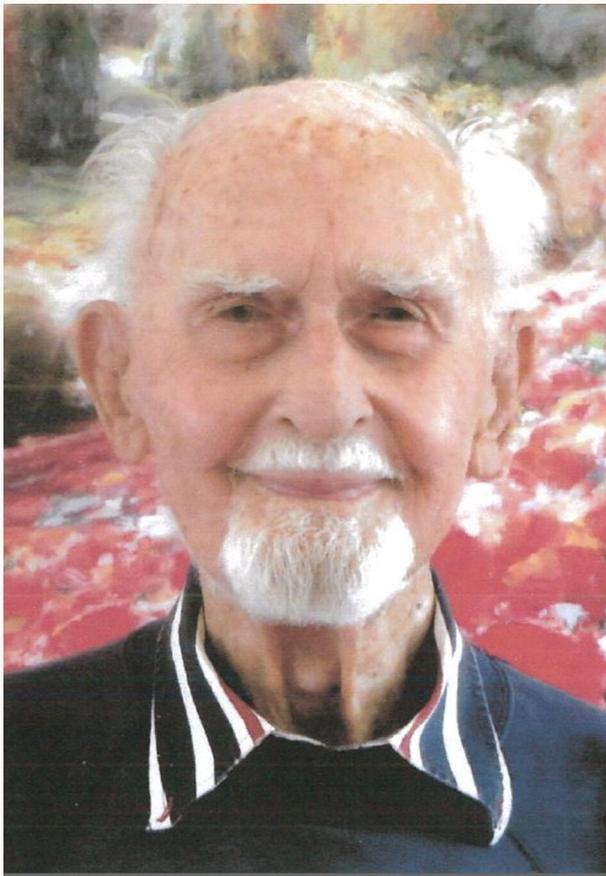
## Interview with Major Vic Freudenberger

By Joan Jenkins

Member of the Widowed Persons  
Association of the Central Coast

Meet Vic Freudenberger, a 99 year-old U.S. Marine Corp Veteran who enjoys so much of what the Central Coast has to offer and is thriving at Las Brisas.

Vic was born and raised in Philadelphia and enlisted in the Marine Corp in September of 1938. At the time he enrolled, the USMC at 14,000 members.



Vic has an amazing military background, going from a Private at \$20.00/week to the rank of Major later in his career. Vic always seemed to take the difficult path. After WWII began, he was part of the invasion of Guadalcanal Solomon Islands. He was wounded and medically evacuated to Auckland, New Zealand, later returning to Camp Lejeune, N.C., to instruct at the parachute school. The 4th marine Division was then disbanded.

He then attended Ordnance School in Quantico, VA, and was eventually retained as instructor there while maintaining his title as a Base EOD Officer (Explosive Ordnance Disposal Officer).

In January 1944, he married Skippy Dietz, and later had two daughters, Sharon and Laure. Sharon lives in San Diego and Laure is a well known artist living in Paso Robles. Vic and his wife Skippy were married for 73 years.

In September 1950, Vic headed to Korea as part of the Inchon Korea landing, was EOD Officer at Chosin Reservoir until July of 1951.

# Veterans' Voices

Vic retired from the USMC after 22 years with the Bronze Star with Combat V, Purple Heart, three Presidential Unit Citations with 1st Marine Division, Gold Parachute Wings, Senior EOD Designation, Combat Action Ribbon with 2 stars, Expert rifle and pistol medals, and Navy Hard Hat 2nd Class Diver.

After retirement, Vic was employed by Oceanside Federal Savings and Loan as Appraisal Loan Officer and Branch Manager in Vista, CA, for 16 years. From 1962 until his retirement in 1982, he taught real estate appraisal at Palomar College and San Marcos. Vic refers to his home by a lake in San Marcos as "A little bit of Heaven".

Vic is sharp minded, very tall, and in great shape. To maintain both his physical and mental health, he exercises several times a week, which is a great protective factor in suicide prevention. He also enjoys all the Las Brisas has to offer. He engages in social engagements at Las Brisas, goes out on lunches, and enjoys an activity in different parts of the county every Thursday.

Social connections and exercise are important protective factors to help combat isolation and loneliness, at which Vic has done an outstanding job. Thank you for sharing your story, Vic, and for your service!

Vic will be celebrating his 100th birthday in January 2020. Cheers to Vic!



Concerned about yourself or someone you care about? Make the call. Anytime.

# Veterans' Voices

Meet Faye Toomey

By Danny Danbom

Community Relations Coordinator

The Village at Sydney Creek

Faye was born and raised in Council Bluffs, Iowa. After graduating from high school, she ran away from home after her mom remarried for the third time, Faye knew that her mother's promise to send her to school would not come true. After she left home, she joined the military, the Navy specifically. She was inspired to join the Navy when she was in high school-- a W.A.V.E.S. (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) officer came to her class and spoke about the program. In order to join the Navy in 1953, she needed a parent's signature, so she sent the letter to her father. Although she didn't really know him, she knew he would sign it. So the recruiter sent a wire with only his name and where Faye thought he lived. Turns out she was correct! A day after she received the signed letter from her dad, she left for boot camp in Bainbridge, Maryland.

Joining the military was initially scary for Faye. Not only did she have to walk two miles to have meals, but there was also a lot of flirting, even though boot camp was very well policed. In the 1950's, there were not that many women in the Navy. The men were very respectable, but they also loved to see her blush.



Danny Danbom (left) and  
Faye Toomey (right)

She quickly adjusted to her new surroundings and met more people. At that time she knew it was a smart move on her part to join.

Faye took it upon herself to make it fun for everyone. She asked if it was ok to sing, and the Navy agreed! They would sing "Navy blue is the color for you. They took a hue from the red, white, and blue. We don't envy the green of the Lady Marine."

# Veterans' Voices

They would sing this song while marching with her as the lead. After graduating from boot camp, she received the American Spirit Honor Medal because she was the true spirit of her crew.

Faye then took a series of placement exams. Her high scores landed her an opportunity to become an elite air traffic controller. She was encouraged by her friend, Flow Erwin, who did the same job for the Marines. Flow told Faye that "school is the hardest thing I have ever done, but if you can read and retain information, you can do it, too." Years later, Faye ran into Flow, who remembered her as the little W.A.V.E. that was going to be a tower flower (a name assigned to women in the air tower as they were few and far between). But Faye stuck it out and was never intimidated by the men because they respected her, and she was as good as they were at the job.

In order to work in the control tower, Faye had to go to an A-list school that was in Lathrop, Kansas. She was only 18 at the time and was going to school to learn how to communicate with pilots and planes. She learned things like how to land and take off, how fast each plane could go, how much room they needed to land they all needed, etc. Her crew in the tower would joke with her about the names of planes. It was hard to get through school, but she still came out at the top of her class. After graduating, she got to choose where she wanted to go, and she chose Coronado, California. She wanted to be where it is warm and where the people are friendly (who doesn't?).

Faye gained experience in a Seaplane Tower before she was able to advance to the A Stand Tower. She didn't think she was going to get to the A Stand Tower, but she finally did. She thought that the Seaplane Tower was harder than the A School. She ended up falling madly in love with a Navy pilot and left the Navy when they married. They settled down in Lemoore, CA, where Faye raised a family and became a real estate agent.

Her husband left some years later; it broke her heart. However, she was a strong and determined woman and moved out of the area to make a new name for herself.

# Veterans' Voices

So she moved to Visalia, CA, where she met her second husband, Dave. Dave was a farmer in the Central Valley. After marrying, they built a house and moved to a home in Cambria, which they later sold and moved to San Luis Obispo. Sadly, Dave died December of last year.

Faye lives in Las Brisas in a 2-bedroom, 2-bath apartment. She likes to participate in activities like bridge and bingo once in a while. She also reads a lot. There's a really great library at Las Brisas, perfect for her desire to read! Faye also keeps in touch with her friends and has a large support network. It's not hard for her to have conversations with strangers, either. Faye makes it fun and says you have to make it fun and be yourself.

When she can't make decisions, she draws a line down the middle of a piece of paper. On one side, she writes reasons for, and the other side, she writes reasons against.

Faye has always been a people person, she loved being in the Navy because the people were so different. She was in the Navy for two years and achieved third class. Thank you for your service, Faye, and for being you!



# Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP)

Article by Joyce Ellen Lippman  
Area Agency on Aging Director

Can it be that time again to review our Medicare drug plan and make adjustments for 2020? Will this booklet I received in the mail tell me if my drug plan will continue to provide my drugs next year? How can I get reliable information without any bias or sales?

HICAP (Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program) is a local program to help Medicare beneficiaries with reliable information to understand their options. The annual Medicare Open Enrollment period will be here shortly--October 15 through December 7th.

And, of course, there are always changes. We expect nearly 30 drug plan options for Medicare beneficiaries to select from in California. Which one includes all my drugs? Which one will cost the least by year's end? Which one will require step therapy or prior authorization? So many questions to consider.

Naturally, there are several ways to access this information. You can go on the Medicare.gov website and complete their questionnaire to find the 'best' drug plans to consider. Or, you can do nothing, and your current Part D Prescription drug plan will automatically continue into 2020. But, does it include the lowest cost?

And the final option is to have HICAP use the Medicare website and complete the search for you. HICAP will then provide you with the top three choices that include your drugs for the least annual cost. HICAP's service is free of charge and without any bias or preference for a specific plan/company. And, if this is all a bit confusing, you can meet with a HICAP counselor in your community and review the choices. These one-on-one meetings are so valuable- ask all your questions and get the facts. Only the facts!

For more information about HICAP services, call 805-928-5663 pr 1-800-434-0222, or email seniors@KCBX.net. HICAP is a program of the Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens, Area Agency on Aging with local, state, and federal funding.

# Events Calendar

September 14:

Walk for Recovery at Laguna Lake Park  
10:00am-3:00pm  
\_\_\_\_\_

September 26:

Flu Shot Clinic at Paso Robles Senior Center  
9:00am-12:00pm  
\_\_\_\_\_

October 2:

Suicide Prevention Forum at Park Cinemas  
5:30pm-8:00pm  
\_\_\_\_\_

October 11:

National Coming Out Day Celebration at GALA Central Coast  
4:00pm-6:00pm  
\_\_\_\_\_

October 12:

Pancake Breakfast at the Vet's Hall for the Disabled Vet's of CA  
9:00am  
\_\_\_\_\_

October 19:

Veterans Stand Down at Santa Maria Fairpark  
9:00am-1:00pm  
\_\_\_\_\_

October 26:

2019 Walk to End Alzheimer's at Mission Plaza SLO  
Ceremony begins at 9:30am  
\_\_\_\_\_

November 23:

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day  
Hospice SLO, call 805-544-2266 for more information  
\_\_\_\_\_