

# NEWS

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Sept. 14, 2022

**For Immediate Release**

## **San Mateo County Veterans Commission announces Honorees for Veteran Recognition Event**

### ***Congresswoman Jackie Speier to receive Lifetime Achievement Award***

**Redwood City** – Public service is the thick chain that links George Smith’s life’s work: U.S. Marine, firefighter, volunteer.

Recognizing his dedication, the San Mateo County Veterans Commission has announced that Smith is the 2022 Veteran of the Year, an award for a local veteran who goes “above and beyond” to serve the community.

Smith will be honored at a Nov. 10, 2022, luncheon alongside others dedicated to assisting veterans or organizations that promote veteran causes: Wendy Weller and Andrew Trapani, selected as Patriots of the Year, and Veterans Surf Alliance, the Enterprise of the Year.

Congresswoman Jackie Speier will also be honored with a lifetime achievement award. U.S. Navy Rear Admiral [Thomas A. Cropper](#) (Ret.), president of California State University Maritime Academy, will deliver the keynote address.

The veterans award luncheon has developed into an annual tradition. Now in its seventh year, the recipients have their accomplishments read and they receive a show of public gratitude.

“These moments are incredibly powerful,” said Warren Slocum, a member of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and an Army veteran. “It’s important that we all recognize the work and sacrifice of these veterans and their advocates. I would say equally important is how that spirit of service is so inspiring to all of the rest of us.”

**What:** Veterans Recognition Luncheon

**When:** Thursday, Nov. 10, 2022: 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Westin San Francisco Airport – Millbrae  
To purchase tickets: <https://bit.ly/3pXp3Gj>

## **The 2022 honorees are:**

**VETERAN OF THE YEAR, George Smith:** Smith is the embodiment of duty and service – first as veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps where he served honorably in Vietnam in 1966. After his Marine Corps service, Smith became a San Mateo firefighter and a volunteer working on behalf of veterans and veteran causes. He has been active in the American Legion Post 105 in Redwood City, where he serves as post commander, and the American Legion Riders and Marine Corps League. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Smith worked to ensure final honors for veterans were given at the funerals of all Marines in San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin and Sacramento counties when requested. He also served on the San Mateo County Veterans Commission.

**PATRIOTS OF THE YEAR, Wendy Weller and Andrew Trapani:** Weller and Trapani embody the patriot spirit as volunteers for veterans and their families. They have participated in over 148 Final Honors funerals for veterans and their families, helping them during their time of grief. As members of the Patriot Guard Riders, Warrior Watch Riders and the American Legion Riders, they have provided escort to veterans to their final resting place, honoring them with a flag line at the end. Weller and Trapani volunteer about 1,200 hours a year for this service to veterans.

**ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR, Veterans Surf Alliance:** With a chapter that meets at Linda Mar Beach in Pacifica, this volunteer-run Santa Cruz-based nonprofit creates fellowship and community among veterans through surfing, easing the transition between military service and civilian living. They teach, coach and mentor veterans to surf and be respected members of their communities, providing access to surfboards, vital equipment, routine surf meetups and annual events. In short, they help veterans to find the same type of camaraderie they had while serving in the military with members of their community.

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT, Congresswoman Jackie Speier:** Speier is in the last year of a storied career representing San Mateo County. In Congress, she is the chair of the Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee, advancing numerous initiatives to ensure the military finds and keeps the most qualified individuals, provides their families with needed assistance, and adequately compensates those harmed in the line of duty. Speier has been a tireless champion for military service members, veterans, and their families. Our county and our country have been well served by her dedication and tenacity.

**BACKGROUND:** The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors established the [Veterans Commission](#) in June 2015 with a mission to promote programs and policies that address the unmet needs of veterans in the county. Established in 1946, the San Mateo County [Veterans Services Office](#) (CVSO) assists veterans in accessing state and federal benefits that help veterans, their spouses and family members. The CVSO also provides information and referrals to a wide range of services and connects veterans to programs such as the California Veteran College Fee Waiver for veterans and dependents.

# COUNTY OF SAN MATEO



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**COUNTY** OF **SAN MATEO**

