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## Poppies for Veterans Day raise much needed funds

By Sora O'Doherty

Veterans Day will be commemorated this year on Sunday, Nov. 11. On the weekend before that day, and on the day itself, veterans wearing their caps will be distributing poppies in remembrance of those who have served and those who were lost, according to Terry Murphy, senior vice commander and service officer of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8063 and commander for VFW District 10, which consists of 18 posts in three counties. Poppies will be distributed in the U.S., Canada, England, Holland, France, Australia and New Zealand as well as other countries, said Murphy, who spoke during the public forum at the Oct. 16 Orinda City Council meeting.

Donations to the VFW are restricted by their charter and bylaws to be used to help veterans in need. Murphy says that unlike many other groups that say they are helping veterans, the VFW has no overhead for this program. The local Post has been in existence as long as Orinda has been a city, and in all that time, Murphy says, no member has even asked to be reimbursed for their mileage.

Donations are used to help local veterans on fixed incomes and in need of medical equipment. Thousands of pre-paid credit cards sent to the Veterans Center in Concord are used to help returning veterans looking for jobs or going to school on the GI Bill. Large donations have also been sent to victims of hurricane Harvey and, last year, to help the victims of the North County fires, including both veterans and others in need.

According to Murphy, the list of individuals and organizations helped by the VFW goes on and on, from local scouting troops and packs to historical societies.

"When you see one of us wearing our funny little caps, be it at the Post Office or Diablo Foods, please stop by, say 'Hi' and pick up a poppy and, if you want, make a donation," Murphy said, adding, "We will put the money to good use."

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