

This longtime Pacifican lives by these words, 'I Will Help'

An interview-biography with Allan Hale

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

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Written by Jean Bartlett

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"When I was in the Coast Guard, I really felt like I was serving my country," said Allan Hale in a 2014 *Pacifica Tribune* interview with this writer. "And that is what my life has been about – serving this country."

←Pacifica American Legion Post 238 Commander Allan Hale addresses the 2021 Veterans Day crowd at the inaugural unveiling and dedication of the granite stone monument that memorializes the names of Pacifica's Vietnam and Iraq fallen. The Memorial is located in the parking lot of Post 238. (Jean Bartlett 2021 photo.)

Currently Commander of Pacifica American Legion Post 238, a position he's held at least 15 times, Allan has also served as Commander of Pacifica VFW Post 10245 approximately 10 times, and sometimes he has been Commander of each veterans organization, concurrently.

For 62 years, Allan has also served the Boy Scouts of America in leadership roles: Cub Master, Scout Master and Executive Officer.

"My parents did not teach me about volunteering," Allan said in answer to a question. "A long time ago I learned from what my children needed, and also from a WWII veteran who was a very good friend of mine, that it was up to me to step up and volunteer."

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Allan Duane Hale was born on July 28, 1937, to Elmer and Cecelia (Beck) Hale. He was the second of their two children. His sister Dianne arrived on the same date, different year, July 28, 1934.

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"My sister Dianne was a beautiful girl but her nature was just very quiet. But she and I got along great, always. She wanted to live to be at least 90 but she just missed it. She was a little more than a month shy."

Allan was born two months and a day after the Golden Gate Bridge opened. This Bay Area suspension-bridge wonder was completed on April 13, 1937, and opened on May 27, 1937. In late July, Allan's folks headed across the bridge to visit Allan's dad's sister and her husband in Marin County. Her husband served as San Anselmo's Postmaster.

"My parents were visiting for the day and I guess they decided they might not make it home. So, I was born in the town of Ross. But once I arrived, I headed back with my family to our home in Daly City."

While Allan's dad was named Elmer, he went by "Al," which was why Allan's folks chose "Allan" for their son's first name. But they knew from the start they were going to call him, "Duane."

"I was actually named after Duane Claude Carter. He was a racecar driver. He raced midget cars, sprint cars and IndyCars. He and my dad were friends, but I never met him – came close though! One time he came to Terra Nova High School to talk to the automotive class. As it happened, I had a really horrible cold and that was the one day I was too sick to get out of bed!

"I went by Duane until I went into the service, and the only other name I was ever called, happened in high school. And that was 'Dianne!'" Allan laughed. "I just started high school and I was sitting in English class. The teacher, Miss Tully, looked around on that first day and memorized everyone's name. She got them all right except mine. 'I've got to call you Dianne today,' she smiled and sort of pleaded. 'That's all I can remember for today!' Of course my sister had been in her class, and Miss Tully did shortly thereafter get my name right. As it was, she turned out to be my favorite teacher."

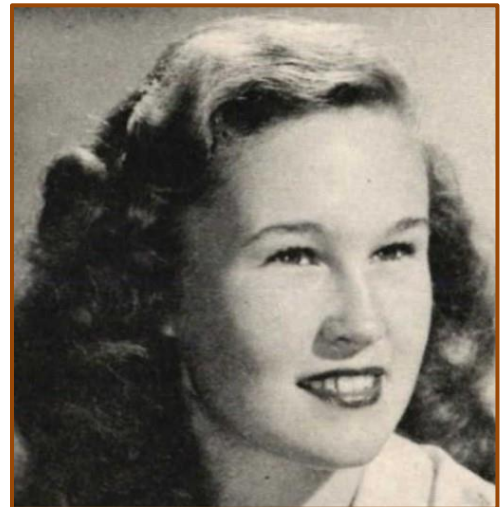
**\*\*\* Allan's family – mom, dad and sister – during their school years. \*\*\***



Allan's mom, Cecelia, Napa High School.



Allan's dad, Elmer, Napa High School.



Allan's sister Dianne, College of San Mateo, 1952.

"I've got another story regarding my name that also took place in high school. Right around graduation, Mr. Lear, who was our homeroom teacher, said, 'I tell you people right off, first name and last name for the graduation book. I don't want anything else!' So I put 'Allan' Hale. The next day he said to me, loudly, 'Look stupid, I told you, first name, last name.' He was a tough teacher. At the end of class, I pulled out my driver's license: *Allan Duane Hale*. He looked at me and said, 'Get out!' Ha! Ha!"

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"How did my parents meet? They met at Napa High School in Napa County."

Allan's dad was born Elmer George Hale on July 25, 1909, in Napa, to George and Elizabeth Hale. He was one of four siblings: Frances, Genevieve, Elmer and Vincent. Elmer's dad George was also born in Napa, and he worked for Napa State Hospital doing building maintenance. Like his son Elmer, and Elmer's son Allan, George was a natural fix-it guy.

Allan's mom, Cecelia Griggs (Beck) Hale, was born on September 23, 1910, to Mary Ann (Griggs) Beck and Benjamin Carrick Beck. Allan's mom was the youngest of five kids: Mina Bbenee, born in 1899; Kort in 1902; Thoss in 1907; Audel in 1908; and Cecelia in 1910. Cecelia's dad Benjamin was born in Sacramento, CA, in November of 1875, and he worked as an automotive engineer. By the time Allan knew his grandfather, Benjamin owned a Chevron gas station on the Silverado Trail in Napa.

In a 1920 U.S. Consular Registration Application, Benjamin Beck reported his daughter Bbenee was born in San Francisco, and his son Kort was born in Mexico. The family lived part-time in Cajeme, Sonora, Mexico. In fact, Benjamin was living there when he filled out his WWI Draft Card. His Draft Card also lists his wife as living on Valencia Street in San Francisco. Later the family bought a home in Napa, which was where they lived when Allan's mom was attending Napa High School.

"There is some confusion here," Allan noted. "My mother was born in Mexico. She was the daughter of U.S. citizens but she never had a copy of her birth certificate. She couldn't prove when she was born. But when I was born, somehow she did something to have a birth certificate. My mom's family had property in Sonora, Mexico, and the family would go back and forth. My mom's brother Kort came to own a silver mine in Mexico, and he was pretty well-to-do. Kort was killed on February 1, 1940, trying to bring back silver from the family mine in Mexico, after Mexico began nationalizing the mines.

"I don't know all the circumstances of the various years or months my mom's family spent time in Mexico, because there was the Mexican Revolution in there. (November 20, 1910 to December 1, 1920, though the ending date, which has been established by historians, is still debated). But my mom's family continued to go back and forth to Mexico – I'm sure when they felt it was safe to do so. Not long after my mom graduated from Napa High School, her parents took her to live in Mexico with them. They weren't planning on coming back. My father went down to Mexico and abducted her. My father was very authoritative, his way or the highway. But my mom didn't want to live in Mexico, so I don't really know that this was an abduction!"

Cecelia Beck and Elmer Hale married at the home of Cecelia's sister Bbenee (Beck) Dos Reis in San Rafael, CA, on April 20, 1930, Easter Sunday. Cecilia's grandmother Elizabeth Beck attended, as did Cecelia's brother Thoss and her two sisters. Her parents were unable to attend as they were in Mexico at the time.

"My mother's brother Thoss became Col. Thoss B. Beck. During WWII, he worked for General George Patton as Patton's legal officer.

"Did my mom work? She worked off and on when my father first went into business. He was in a partnership with Till Delucchi. They were partners for a couple of years and then my father bought him out. They were in appliances. My father originally worked for Hale Brothers, no relation. They were the Hillsborough Hales. The Hale Brothers used to have two department stores in San Francisco. My father never had financial troubles during the Depression. He was always working.

"In fact, my mom used to say that my father never missed a day of work. She was very proud of him. She would say, 'For a man who never graduated from high school, he is a very smart guy.' And he really was.

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"When my mom worked for my dad and his business partner, she and Mrs. Delucchi would alternate at the shop, answering the phone. The Delucchi kids were the same age as my sister and me. Barbara was my sister's age and Philip was mine. When one of the moms worked, the other watched all the kids. It worked out great. My dad and Mr. Delucchi parted from their business amicably and our families remained friends. My sister Dianne and Barbara Delucchi kept that friendship throughout their lives."

Allan's dad opened Accurate Appliance in 1937, a business which has stayed in the Hale family but will close later this year.

"My dad started at 406-408 Hayes Street, two buildings, side by side. It was right by City Hall. When you went out the back door, City Hall was there. I can remember going there, so I was probably 5 by the time he bought the other building where it still is – 903 O'Farrell Street."

Allan's first Daly City home was at 401 Bellevue Avenue. While Allan doesn't have a memory of this event, his sister remembered the blimp that crashed right in front of their house during WWII.



**1942 U.S. Navy photo of the fallen Navy patrol blimp.**

On August 16, 1942, the unmanned blimp, Blimp-L8, later renamed the "Ghost Blimp," fell to earth in a heap on the 400 block of Bellevue Avenue. It was about 11 a.m. It hadn't started out, unmanned.

It had taken off at 5:30 that morning from Treasure Island. On board were the blimp's pilot, Lt. Ernest DeWitt Cody, 27, and Ensign Charles E. Adams, 38. Japanese submarines had been spotted prowling the Bay Area coast, and the airship was doing a routine anti-submarine patrol. While the morning was slightly overcast, the pilot reported visibility was good. At 7:38 a.m., the pilot radioed that they were four miles east of the Farallones and were heading down the coast toward Montara as planned. Just four minutes later, the lieutenant radioed in a second message. They were investigating a suspicious oil slick. "Stand by." Was that slick made by a Japanese submarine? There were no more messages.

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Two smoke flares were then dropped from the L-8. Startled crew on a nearby fishing trawler saw that. There wasn't another sighting of the L-8 until three hours later, when a Pan American Clipper pilot reported seeing it over the Golden Gate Bridge. Another search plane spotted it near Mile Rock. The search plane pilot didn't notice anything amiss and presumed the airship was heading to Treasure Island. But just a bit shy of 11 a.m., onlookers observed the blimp heading directly for San Bruno Mountain. It then began its slow descent, until it crashed on Bellevue Avenue. There were no injuries on the street, but there was also no one on board the blimp.

What happened to its crew is still speculation. The safety of the door latch has been questioned. Perhaps it caused Ensign Adams to fall out of the cabin and Lt. Cody to dive in after him, and then both men were swept away by the current. Or, maybe they fired on a Japanese submarine, the door opened, they ended up in the water and were subsequently captured by the Japanese and shot. Or, maybe they were murdered by a stowaway. There are no answers, just an end to the 150-foot airship on a street in Daly City.

\* \* \*

For a guy who has spent so much time offering his leadership skills to adult softball players in Pacifica and as a six-decades-long leader of Boy Scouts, Allan didn't play Little League Baseball as a kid, nor did he continue on with the Boy Scouts of America after three years as a Cub Scout.

"There was no Little League when I was a kid. But we played corner baseball and rode bicycles in the street. I used to ride my bike both at and up from Crocker School, and if you follow Crocker Avenue all the way to the top today, that's where the radio/TV broadcast towers are. But when I used to ride up Crocker, there was an Army camp at the top and vegetable gardens, way up in the hills. We also roller skated in the street. We did plenty of kid activities. The Daly City Theater, which is no longer there, was right below us when we moved to Crocker Avenue. (599 Crocker Avenue.)

"As to the Scouts, I didn't stay with them because after you finished up with Cub Scouts, your dad had to come to the meetings and that didn't work for my dad. My sister was a Girl Scout, but my mom wasn't involved. Neither of my parents were volunteers. I think they came to our graduations, but when I got sports awards, they didn't participate. They didn't come to basketball games. I would say it was a household where you towed the line.

"My dad showed how he felt about his family in what he did. In 1948, we built hydroplanes together. We ran them on Lake Merced. They were five-foot long and made for racing. My father never worked from plans. He just looked at something and built it. So, I knew boats from when I was a kid. We could only use the hydroplanes three or four times a year. But we loved it. Late in the afternoon, you would have to stop because the wind came up and these things are airborne as is. I still have one of those boats.

"I first learned boating on the Stanislaus River. We had a country place in Oakdale, which was always 100 degrees! That's where we went on vacations. In fact, I was never out of California until I was in the service. Our place was on the river. During the day, when we were on the river, there were no mosquitos, which is the only time I was on the river. Whereas my father loved to fish and he would sit out there in the evening and the mosquitos would eat you alive, but it didn't seem to bother him at all. I couldn't stand fishing. I couldn't stand the torture of being eaten by mosquitos!

"My dad didn't really have any hobbies, but he had fantastic skills. He could do anything electrical, and he knew how to build. We built a racing car together. It was a 1942 Buick Convertible which my dad and I custom converted. It was maroon. Somebody had started to do the work, but my dad and I did most of it. It was a wreck when we started. We probably started working on it when I was 13. I supposedly didn't officially drive it until I was 15!

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"My mom was a very learned person and she would do crossword puzzles every morning. There wasn't one day she could be stumped. She played canasta and bingo with the neighborhood women. My mom didn't volunteer or do school or community activities, but she did do a good job raising my sister and me."

Allan went to General Pershing Elementary School in Daly City through fourth grade, then on to Crocker Middle School and was in the first graduating class of Colma Junior High.

"Crocker was only a block away from my house but we had so many kids at the time. We were on double sessions in the seventh and eighth grades. Finally, they got Colma Junior High built so we could go all day to class. I finished out my eighth grade year at Colma Junior High, and when I graduated, the school was only two buildings. It became huge."

Allan said he's only had three jobs to date: delivering newspapers, working at Accurate Appliance, and his service in the U.S. Coast Guard. As a kid, he delivered the Daly City Shopping News on Wednesdays and Saturdays. He also started working summers in his dad's appliance shop when he was 10. He was able to get his driver's license when he was 15, because the CA Department of Motor Vehicles recognized that Allan worked at his dad's shop in San Francisco, and he had to drive himself there.

"Any vacation time I had, I worked at my dad's shop. I loved it. The work was interesting, the customers were nice and I had a little money. I thought for sure I was going to go to Commerce High School in San Francisco. It was right by our shop. But they closed the high school the year before I would have entered. In fact, it was condemned for children, so naturally it is still being used, but by adults as the administrative building for the San Francisco School District. It's right by the Opera House."

Allan went to Jefferson High School in Daly City. He was the year behind the late football coach and sports commentator John Madden.

"I played frosh/soph football. I stopped playing after the second year because it wasn't fun anymore. John was 75/80 pounds more than me and that was true with most of his teammates. I weighed 130 in high school and they weighed, at least, 210."

Allan played basketball and became the school's record holder for the lightweight 330 yard dash. It was also at Jefferson that Allan met a young woman named Sharon Hume. (Sharon went by her mom's second husband's last name, Erickson, but the name change was unofficial and her actual last name was "Hume.")

**Allan Hale and Sharon Hume, each in their respective freshman year, at Jefferson High School.**



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"I met Sharon when I was a sophomore. She was a year younger. Before I knew Sharon, my first girlfriend was Sandy Moretti. Then I went out with Jo-Ann Kahn when we were sophomores. I really liked Jo-Ann, but her dad didn't particularly like me. He was very strict Jewish and I am not Jewish. Pacificans may remember Jo-Ann. She was a great person and she and her husband Dick Racine, a police officer in San Francisco, lived in Vallemar.

"Sharon and I met at a party that Linda McCardle threw one night. Linda was in Sharon's class and Linda's brother was in my class. Linda is still going and all these years later, we still have a great friendship.

"Jo-Ann and Sandy were also at that party when I met Sharon. Ha! Ha! Two former girlfriends, well one nearly former, that was Jo-Ann, and then I meet Sharon. But, that's high school, and it was all amicable. I went to that party with my friend Bob Pool. He's the only one of my male friends from back then that is still going. He had a convertible with a hard top, so we took the hard top off at his house and headed to the party. Of course it started to rain shortly after we got there and Sharon said to me, 'What kind of nut would drive a car without a top?' But, she did love my souped-up Buick.

"Sharon was from Mendocino originally. Her family moved to Pacifica, before it became Pacifica (that happened in 1957). When I met Sharon, her family lived in the small town of Pacific Manor. She was in the first graduating class of Sharp Park Elementary School."



Their first date was to the Seavue Theater, where Walgreens is now, in Pacific Manor. Sharon's stepdad did not like Allan, though that reversed later. But back then he would say to Sharon, "Whose 'pink' car is that in front of my house?" Allan's mom did not like Sharon, though that too reversed. Apparently a busybody neighbor told Allan's mom, Sharon was no good for her son. "I didn't pay any attention," Allan laughed. Three or four weeks into their dating, Allan drove to Sharon's home in Pacific Manor.

"I had my school ring, and I gave it to Sharon and I said, 'Would you like to go steady?' She grabbed my ring and ran into the house and closed the door. I thought, that must be a yes! That was the beginning."

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In the summer of 1952, right after Allan turned 15, he signed up for the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve.

"I thought I was going to make some more money so it would be easier to buy gas for my car," Allan laughed. "I thought in the Reserve, I would just have some extra days each month working along the Coast, here in the Bay Area. I was only working for my dad in the summer and it didn't pay that much. I thought, I know boats, the Coast Guard is perfect. I didn't know the Korean War would be a part of things."

Allan's Coast Guard training was in Alameda and the training lasted just two weeks before he was put on a cargo ship. Historically, during wartime, training was often basics only. In fact, Allan didn't actually graduate from training. As stated on his DD214 (military service record), he was ordered to active duty.

"I didn't know an officer from a gentleman. When they told us at a meeting we were getting shipped to Korea, I said, 'By the way, I'm only 15.' And they said, 'You go where we tell you to go or you can go to Fort Leavenworth which is the military prison.' And that wasn't the only weird thing that happened. When we were assigned to a ship, we had to get a physical in Alameda, which included a visit to the dentist. The dentist said to me, 'I think you have an abscess tooth.' And I said, 'I don't think so.' And he pulled the tooth out. And then he said, 'Oh, I'm sorry, I pulled the wrong tooth.' So he pulled a second tooth out. I said, 'What about getting a bridge for my teeth?' And he said, 'No, you'll be dead in six months.' I still have two missing teeth. I think he was just learning how to be a dentist. About three or four years ago, this dentist I have now said, 'I don't know how you have survived without those two teeth.' Now, I do have my wisdom teeth further back. But 70 years later, there haven't been any problems. Who cares?"

Allan said while he did have a baby face, he was the same height at 15 as he is now, though 60 pounds lighter. But, he noted, the people in the military that he dealt with, only wanted to see what was needed, someone who could go to Korea.

"Three months into duty, I am on this cargo ship, in Korea, and there was a rescue mission. There was a downed North Korean pilot in the water. He wasn't on any kind of raft. He was just in the water. We took a small boat out to where he was just floating around but he didn't want to be saved."

The downed pilot stabbed Allan badly, slicing the underage-age seaman all the way up his arm and ripping his dog tags off in the scuffle.

"I think they tried to run him over a few times after that and as far as I know, he's still floating around in the water."

Back on board the ship, the crewmates of the wounded Seaman Apprentice checked his locker for identification information and found his driver's license. And the truth was revealed. Allan was 15.

"After they fixed me up, the people in charge were not happy with me. When I was going home, they said, 'You will not relate any of this. If you do we will put you in prison.' They also made it clear that I still owed them 18 months of service and they would come back for me.

"So I said nothing when I came home. I went back to school and I did very well in sports. I was only gone for four months. And one of those months was in the summer, so I only missed three months of school in my junior year and made that up pretty easily. I don't remember the teachers saying anything. I left in the summer between sophomore and junior year and there I was again. When you're a kid, you don't really think about these things. I don't think Sharon thought too much about it.



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"My parents were the only ones allowed to know I was in Korea. But at the same time I was in the Coast Guard, my sister had tuberculosis. So they had enough on their plate. Dianne was staying in Redwood City in a sanitarium. She was there about two years when, finally, they said she was cured."

What became the Cordilleras Mental Health Center in Redwood City was originally built in 1952 as a tuberculosis hospital. That was where Dianne convalesced. It was converted to a psychiatric facility in 1968.

"Dianne was crazy as a bed bug when she was being treated," Allan recalled, shaking his head. "I don't know what that was about. They were giving her a lot of medication and she kept saying about her illness, 'Oh, I don't have anything.' But Dianne would come home and she would make food, and she would say, 'Oh, we are going to have green this and green that.' And I thought, 'What the hell is this?' But my parents said, 'Whatever she wants, just go with it.'"

Aside from his sister's illness, things resumed for Allan as if he had never left. He and Sharon went to all the high school dances together. She wore his ring. There was never anyone else for either one of them.



**Now a senior at Jefferson High School, Allan escorts Sharon to her Junior Prom.**

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On May 27, 1955, before Allan graduated from high school, Allan and Sharon married. Because they were so young, they had to get special permission to marry.

"My cousin Evelyn actually owned a house in Vallemar and she couldn't make the payments, so it was a chance for us to buy it, which we did. Again, this was in 1955. We lived there and our house payment was something like \$39 a month."

As promised, the moment after Allan graduated, the U.S. Coast Guard came knocking.

"That's when Sharon found out I had been in the Coast Guard," Allan chuckled. "She said, 'Is there anything else you wanted to tell me?' This was like a couple of days after I graduated. I owed them 18 months. I went north and south on icebreakers and that was interesting work." (These icebreakers supplied Long Range Aid to Navigation Stations around the DEW, District Early Warning Line.)

"I went to Hawaii. I was in Alaska and we went by Siberia. I was in visual communications. I liked it. We only used visual communications on the ship. They didn't want us to send messages. I remember thinking, 'Here we are on the Bering Sea, and you don't think Siberia is watching us?' This was during the Cold War and we were bringing supplies to Point Barrow, Alaska. We took our guns off the ship so we could say, if questioned, we are not here for aggressive reasons. But we were supplying the people that were there with weapons. We went up towards the Aleutians and all the way up to Greenland. There is nothing there in Greenland!"



**Seaman Hale on an icebreaker in the North Pole.**

Allan's Coast Guard service also included helicopter and ship rescues. He helped save passengers from downed planes and boats, and fishermen from sinking vessels.

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Because Allan was stationed out of Oahu, Sharon moved to Hawaii and the couple rented out their home in Vallemar. To pay for Sharon's transportation to Hawaii, they had to sell Allan's beloved 1942 Buick Convertible.

"I remember my dad saying, 'Do you really want to sell this car?' And I said, 'Yes.' And he repeated the question because while he wasn't a man to tell you he loved you, building that car with me was the way he did say that. But I needed my wife in Hawaii and that was the only way to do it."

Allan was promoted five times when he returned to active duty. He began as a Seaman Recruit and completed his active duty as a Chief Quartermaster.

After Allan's eighteen months were up, he and Sharon moved back to their home in Vallemar and Allan went back to work in his father's shop. But the simple fact was, he wasn't making enough money for his growing family. So he signed up for the Coast Guard Reserves and stayed with them for eight years.

"I did the Reserves once a month. I worked at night at Hunter's Point. We trained people. Every few years I would have to go to Alameda and work as a drill instructor. It was interesting work."

Allan and Sharon eventually became parents to five: John, Jeanne, Janice, Nancy and Rich, and there are 14 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. They also raised 11 foster children. They did move from Vallemar. Most of their Pacifica years took place in their home in the Back of the Valley, where Allan still lives. This year marks Allan's 69th year as a Pacifica resident.

"I didn't become a member of the American Legion or the VFW until a few years after I returned from my Coast Guard service. Ed Joyner talked to me about it. He was a fantastic guy. He lived up the street from where I live now and he was a 100 percent participant in the American Legion and VFW, and I could see what a difference he made. He had served with Jimmy Doolittle in WWII." (Commander Doolittle is famous for leading a retaliatory air raid on the Japanese mainland in April of 1942.) "After Ed joined Commander Doolittle on that mission, he went to Europe and he flew the B-24s over Germany – 18 missions over Germany. He was 20 years older than me and we had the same birthday. He did so much for the American Legion and VFW, and every job I have done since, they were all the jobs he did. I took them over when he couldn't do them."

Allan became a Webelos Leader when his son John joined the Boy Scouts in fourth grade. Future Boy Scouts begin in kindergarten as Lion Cubs and then they become Bobcats, next is Tigers, followed by Wolves, then Bears, and then, if they've done all that, they become Webelos ("**WE'll BE LOyal** Scouts.") Webelos Scouts are Cub Scouts preparing to be Boy Scouts. The highest rank of the Boy Scouts of America is an Eagle Scout. This rank must be achieved before the Scout turns 18.

Allan started the first Boy Scout Troop out of Ortega Elementary.

"Ortega was just built. Charlie Campello was the Scout Master and Jerry Swanson was the Assistant Scout Master. One died, and the other moved. My son John was about to become an Eagle Scout, so I took over as Scout Master of his troop so he could make Eagle. I waited 10 more years for Richard, my youngest son, to come up. Then I thought, I might as well just stay in it! So now I've been in it for 62 years. I'm the Executive Officer for three troops."

Allan was the Scout Master for Troop 264 for 45 years.

"My daughters were all Girl Scouts. Sharon was a Troop Leader at one time. She and Mrs. Schembri were leaders and then Marge Charlton became the Troop Leader.

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"Sharon and I really believed in the Scouts because there weren't many activities for kids, here in Pacifica. At that time, there was no Little League and no Swim Team – though the kids all eventually got involved with the Swim Team. All my children went to elementary school in Pacifica and then to Terra Nova High School. My grandchildren that grew up in Pacifica went to either Oceana High School or Terra Nova High School, and my grandchildren have all been involved with the Scout programs. My daughter Janice still serves the Girl Scouts as the Pacifica/Daly City Service Unit Treasurer."



**Allan and Sharon remained committed to each other, every day they were together. Here they are, in 1985, celebrating their 30th anniversary.**

In August of 2014, I interviewed Allan's granddaughter Sabrina Hale, John's daughter, for the *Pacifica Tribune*. She was on her journey to complete her Girl Scouts Gold Award project. The Gold Award, open to Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts in high school, is the highest achievement within the Girl Scouts and it is only earned by 5 percent of eligible Girl Scouts. At the time of the interview, 16-year-old Sabrina had been with Girl Scout Troop 31858 since she first signed on as a Girl Scout Daisy in kindergarten. Her grandmother Sharon started the troop with 20 members. Following Sharon's passing in 2008, the troop was then taught by Sabrina's cousin. At the time of Sabrina's 2014 interview, the troop leaders were Carol Allen and Lynn Mullen.

"My Grandma Sharon taught me that life is short but you have to make the most of it," Sabrina said in that 2014 interview. "Girl Scouts is not just about the cookies or going on camping trips, you have to give back. When my grandmother passed away from cancer a few years ago, I made this goal that I wasn't going to quit. A lot of times sports and clubs in high school can make it difficult to stay with your Girl

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Scout troop. But I am not a quitter and I will be the last Hale in my Grandma's troop and I am going to achieve the Gold Award."

She did achieve it.

Earlier in 1984, long before Sabrina was born, her Grandfather Allan received the Boy Scouts of America Silver Beaver Award. The Silver Beaver Award is the highest award that a Boy Scout Council can present to a volunteer. Allan has helped at least 50 Boy Scouts achieve the Eagle Scout rank. His son John was his first Eagle Scout.

Besides his work with the Boy Scouts, his work with the American Legion and VFW – and let's not forget Allan was also working full-time with his business, Accurate Appliance – Allan was additionally heavily involved, as a volunteer of course, with the Pacifica Adult Softball League. Those years of softball volunteer achievements placed him in the 2011 Class of Pacifica Sports Hall of Fame honorees, and those achievements were highlighted in a *Pacifica Tribune* article by the *Tribune's* longtime sports editor Horace Hinshaw.

*"Allan Hale has been an active community leader in Pacifica for over 50 years,"* Horace wrote in 2011. *"He was one of the pioneer adult softball players when the Pacifica Parks and Recreation Department formed the adult softball recreation leagues in the early 1960s. He played and coached softball teams over the ages, recording 18 league championships. Until the softball program dissolved some seven years ago, he was a sponsor for multi-men's and co-ed softball teams."*



**In 2004, Sharon, top row, 2nd from left, and Allan, top row, 4th from left, pose with their children, their children's spouses and their grandchildren.**

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Commander Hale's work with the Pacifica American Legion (Post 238) and Pacifica VFW (Post 10245) is a lifelong and proud commitment. The following paragraphs are just a short list of how our local veterans groups reach out.

Post 238 and its Auxiliary participate in Legion youth mentoring programs: Boys State, Girls State, the Oratorical Contest and the Americanism Essay Contest. Over the years they have also participated in baseball and marksmanship programs. The American Legion has supported three scout troops and sponsors local Eagle Scout projects. As requested, the Legion's Color Guard will present at a veteran's memorial service. While Pacifica's Legion has always participated in the "Buddy Check" program, during the pandemic their outreach to veterans was a constant.

"We call members to see how they are doing," Allan said. "Do they need anything? If they don't answer the phone, we knock on their door."

In their hometown, members of Posts 238 and 10245 are counted on for their support of Pacifica fundraisers, assistance to local nonprofits and for help with hospitalized and homebound veterans. They never disappoint.

Since 2003, Post 238 has hosted the Pacifica Resource Center's monthly Family Harvest Program at the Legion Hall. This particular program provides community members in need with fresh vegetables and fruits, as well as staples such as milk, eggs, chicken, beans and rice. Along with the use of their Hall for the event, Post 238 volunteers distribute, bag and carry groceries for their fellow Pacificans.

For Pacifica's annual American Cancer Society Relay for Life event, Pacifica's Legion and VFW provide a free lunch for all participants.

Several years back the American Legion, Legion Auxiliary and VFW asked local law enforcement, "What do you need?" As a result, the three groups coordinated the fundraising efforts to provide two trained police dogs for the Pacifica Police Department. That was \$20,000 of fundraising, per canine.

Annually, with the VFW, the Legion has provided an "April Pier Day" for hospitalized veterans. Participants and their health technicians are brought to the Pacifica Pier in a mobile medical van, supplied by the local VA hospital. Before the fishing begins, the veterans are greeted and supplied with coffee and donuts. Next step, fishing poles are handed out. After some dedicated angling, and quite frankly a lot of camaraderie, the participants head over to the Legion Hall where the Legion's Auxiliary serves up the perfect spring cuisine – hamburgers and hot dogs.

Should a veteran need a ride to the hospital or to a doctor's appointment, members of Posts 238 and 10245 are behind the wheel. Pre-pandemic, Pacifica's Legion and VFW held an annual Christmas Day Dinner, "with all the trimmings," for any local veteran who needed a place to go.

Members of both Pacifica posts make it a habit to visit fellow veterans at local VA hospitals. Then there's Bingo at the Menlo Park Veterans Hospital. Post 238 does that bi-monthly, alternating with American Legion Post 105 out of Redwood City. They bring prizes and call numbers.

Additionally, when four members of Terra Nova High School's Class of 1969 came to Post 238 seeking financial help to build a monument for Pacificans who lost their lives in Vietnam and Iraq, help which included a space to place the memorial, there was no hesitation from our local veterans groups – whatever was needed. Money raised for the monument, concrete work and miscellaneous landscaping came to \$20,000. And every year, cheered on by a grateful community, members of Pacifica's American Legion and VFW lead the annual, Pacific Coast Fog Fest "Discover Pacifica Parade."

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In 2014, Pacifica's American Legion Post 238 celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Prior to 1964, local veterans met at Coastside American Post 571 or Linda Mar American Legion Post 615. This is due to Pacifica's incorporation history. In November of 1957, nine small coastal communities, now Pacifica neighborhoods, voted to incorporate and become the City of Pacifica. Those neighborhoods/former coastal towns are: Fairmont, Westview, Pacific Manor, Sharp Park, Fairway Park, Vallemar, Rockaway Beach, Linda Mar and Pedro Point. (Linda Mar was previously Pedro Valley.) Seven years after Pacifica's incorporation, local veterans merged the two posts to become Post 238. In 2014, Post 238's 50th anniversary was a *Pacifica Tribune* headline.



**In 2014, five of the officers of Post 238, posed for the *Pacifica Tribune*. Back row, left to right: Adjutant Allan Hale, Finance Officer and Judge Advocate Dennis Burke and First Vice Commander Greg Stepanenko. Front row, left to right: Junior Past Commander Vern Alonzo and Commander Charles Sorenson. (Jean Bartlett photo.)**

Allan's awards over the decades, for his community service, are numerous, too numerous to highlight all, but along with those already mentioned they include: a 2004 Pacifica Chamber of Commerce Good Citizen Award; a 2017 Veteran of the Year Recognition from the City of Pacifica; and a 2008 Recognition by The California American Legion and Department Commander Alan C. Lennox, in appreciation of "Allan D. Hale, Vice Commander Area 2, for his enduring efforts which exemplify the highest traditions of The American Legion."

In his spare time, Allan is also a decades-long member of the Pacifica Lions Club and he is an Elder of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church. In regards to the latter, he takes care of their gardens, mows the lawn, and sees to plumbing and electricity issues. He is additionally a longtime member of the Native Sons of the Golden West. He also has one hobby – model trains – that occupies an entire room in his home. "I used to restore and repair train sets. My grandkids love to watch all these trains I have built and connected, run the tracks." (Also a hit with this writer.)

"Sharon used to say, she didn't like to join things like I do, but she did so much. She was a Girl Scout Troop Leader, she was a quilter and she was so good at that and well known, and she gave so many of her quilts to local fundraisers. She was a member of Mizpah."

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Mizpah is the oldest charitable women's organization in Pacifica. It was founded in 1948 at the Little Brown Church, and it is a nonreligious organization dedicated to reaching out to the community. There are so many good things they do, but they include: awarding scholarships to Pacifica students, honoring locals who serve their Pacifica community; and bringing the Mobile Blood Unit to Pacifica and feeding all the blood donors.

"And as a teacher, Sharon gave and gave. Sharon went back to school after our kids grew up and she graduated from San Francisco State at the top of her class, *summa cum laude*. She was an excellent student and an excellent teacher. She was a special education teacher. She would go to her school, El Camino High School in South San Francisco, early in the morning so if any of her students needed help, she would be there. She would also stay late after school for the same reason, often working on one of her quilts, and sometimes she would take one or more of her students out to dinner. She was a high school teacher for 25 years. At her memorial, 11 of her El Camino High School students showed up. I was always so very proud of her.

"Something that was true about Sharon from the day I met her was she had a mind of her own. She was much more educated than I am and I depended on her to do some things. She didn't like that. She would tell me I could do it and I would say, 'But you are more qualified to do this than I am!' She was a great lady and I'm always with her. I wear her ring around my neck.

"I lost her to cancer on February 1, 2008. She was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer in 2006. My son Richard was the featured speaker at Pacifica's 2023 Relay for Life and he was honored for walking a cumulative 5,000 miles for Relay since his mom's death. Sharon was a walker. She would walk for hours around Pacifica or anywhere else. She was diagnosed with cancer a few months before the Relay for Life walk in Pacifica in 2006, and while she was too weak to walk, she went with her family on a scooter. In 2007, we walked for her."



Allan, with his kids, circa 2008, left to right: Janice, Jeanne, Nancy, John, Allan and Richard.



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"I think my father would be rolling over in his grave if he knew just how many grandchildren and great grandchildren I have," Allan laughed. "My dad was truly from another century as far as his thoughts on being an all-out family participant. But he really missed out. My wife and I always had a great time with our kids and our grandchildren, and I love each and every one of them and that goes for the great grandchildren too! And we tell each other we love each other. That is so important. If I had a word of advice to pass down to my descendants through the ages, it would be, love one another.

"And always, Sharon and I, and all the kids went on these cruises, and we still do that and we book all this stuff to do along the way when the ship comes to shore. We like to zip-line. We've done jet skiing and ridden in helicopters. We do all the things that are offered. One group said to me, 'You are too old for some of this stuff.' The hell I am! We've done motorcycle rides. We've been to Italy and Greece, and the Mediterranean and all through the Caribbean. One of Jeanne's best friends lives in Italy and we always look her up. We went to Mexico this year and we went to Hawaii, and we did a coastal trip. We are going to go to Alaska."



**Past the age of 80, and on one of the many adventures with his children, Allan looks pretty relaxed as he enjoys the thrill of zip-lining, upside down as planned.**

Allan's other words of advice also include, keep giving, keep doing, and keep showing up for each other even after hard things happen in life.

"You live long enough and you lose so many people you have known and loved – but you don't forget them."

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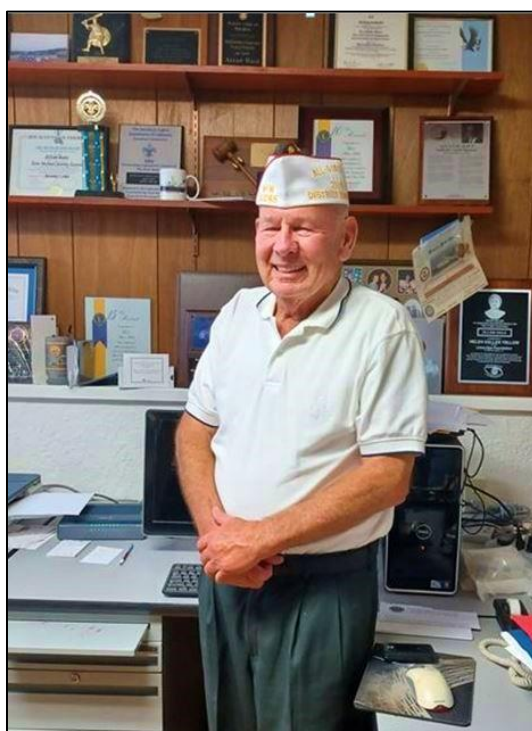
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Probably the most unexpected heartache to date was the loss of Allan's daughter Jeanne. Jeanne died on May 27, 2023, following a motor vehicle accident. Jeanne was, like her dad, so well-known locally. She volunteered in her daughters' classrooms, she was President of the PTO, and she was an eight-year member of the Jefferson Union High School District Board of Trustees. Like her mom, she was an award-winning quilter, always donating her quilts to help local nonprofits. She was a longtime volunteer with Mizpah and the Girl Scouts. She was also a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

"She's still with me," Allan smiled. "I don't dare let those dishes pile up or the bills go unpaid!"

"The thing about all of my kids, and my grandkids is they don't say, 'Do you need help?' They say, 'What time?' I have raised a family of volunteers. They are there for whoever needs them."



**Allan at home surrounded by some his awards.**

(Jean Bartlett photo, 2021.)



Jean Bartlett is a longtime Bay Area features writer: Pacifica Tribune, Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury, San Mateo Times, Portraits & Roots, Marin Independent Journal, Twin City Times, Ross Valley Reporter, Peninsula Progress, Coastal Connections, Bay Area Business Woman and Catholic San Francisco. She is also a former Hallmark Card writer, a produced playwright and a published author.

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