VETERAN OF THE YEAR NARRATIVE

Pete Samaniego - District 5

For more than five decades, **Pete Samaniego** has exemplified the values of duty, leadership, and service. His lifelong commitment to supporting his fellow veterans, strengthening his community, and mentoring future generations reflects the very best qualities of military service and civic responsibility.

Pete honorably served in the **United States Marine Corps from December 1971 to December 1977**, building a distinguished record of leadership and dedication. His assignments included service with the **3rd Marine Division in Okinawa**, the **1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton**, and the **Marine Barracks at Naval Weapons Station Concord**. Throughout his military career, he served in counterintelligence, logistics, security, and leadership roles, including S-4 Chief, Section Leader, Platoon Sergeant, and Sergeant of the Guard. As an E-5, Pete was entrusted with leading a platoon of approximately 20 Marines, a testament to the confidence his commanders placed in his leadership abilities and character. His exemplary performance earned him two Meritorious Masts in recognition of his dedication and professionalism.

While Pete's military service concluded in 1977, his commitment to serving others never ended. For the past 15 years, he has devoted himself to supporting veterans and strengthening veteran organizations through extensive leadership within the **American Legion**. He has served as Post Commander for seven years, Honor Guard and Color Guard Captain for five years, District Commander and Chairman, 1st Vice Commander, and Area Leadership Chair. Through these roles, Pete has worked tirelessly to support veterans, foster community engagement, and promote the mission of the American Legion. He also remains active with the **Marine Corps League, Detachment 019 in Modesto**, continuing his dedication to veterans and community service.

A passionate advocate for veterans and their families, Pete annually travels to the **California State Capitol** to meet with legislators and advocate for policies and legislation that improve the lives of those who have served our nation. He understands that honoring veterans means more than recognizing their past sacrifices; it means actively ensuring they receive the benefits, opportunities, and support they have earned.

Pete is equally dedicated to investing in the future. Through his involvement with local schools and youth programs, he shares the values of leadership, responsibility, patriotism, and service with young people. He believes veterans have a responsibility to pass these values to the next generation and help preserve an appreciation for the sacrifices made to protect our freedoms.

What distinguishes Pete is the consistency of his service. Whether leading Marines, advocating for veterans, mentoring youth, or strengthening community organizations, he has continued to answer the call to serve long after leaving the military. His actions demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the principles of duty, honor, leadership, and selfless service.

Pete Samaniego's record reflects a lifetime dedicated to serving others. His military accomplishments, veteran advocacy, organizational leadership, and community involvement have made a lasting impact on veterans, families, and future generations. It is with great honor we recognize Pete Samaniego as Stanislaus County Veteran of the Year for District 5.