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All veterans are reminded that the fastest way to inquire and secure the benefits they have earned is by visiting their local County Veterans Service Office. A listing of these offices is available at www.cacvso.org or at www.calvet.ca.gov/resources/database.aspx.

JANUARY 2013



RECRUITMENT JOB FAIRS AT FRESNO, REDDING VET HOMES

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) will hold recruitment Job Fairs in Redding and Fresno to fill hundreds of positions at the new Veterans Homes of California in those cities.

Fresno Job Fair - January 23, 2013
Veterans Homes of California - Fresno
2811 West California Avenue
Fresno, CA 93706

Redding Job Fair - January 30, 2013
Veterans Homes of California - Redding
3400 Knighton Rd
Redding, CA 96002

The Job Fairs will begin at 8 a.m. and continue to 4 p.m. to give as many interested people as possible the

chance to participate. At the Job Fairs, CalVet will provide workshops on how to get a state job and give instruction on navigating the State of California Job site and the application and hiring processes. Computer kiosks will be available so prospective employees can complete a state application online. CalVet Human Resources staff will be available to assist job applicants.

To open the Homes, CalVet must fill positions in nursing, medicine, pharmacy, mental health, social services, speech and physical therapy, dietetics and food service, sanitation and janitorial, plant operations, grounds keeping,

JOBS, page 2 >>

CALVET AGAIN SECURES AA-BOND RATING

Fitch, a global rating agency, has again given the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) an AA- bond rating. According to Fitch, 'AA' ratings denote expectations of very low default risk, very strong capacity for payment of financial commitments, and insignificant vulnerability to foreseeable events. CalVet is one of very few State agencies that can claim this high rating.

CalVet's AA- rating is based on approximately \$758 million in State of California General Obligation Veterans Bonds and approximately

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Secretary's Message

Greetings and Happy New Year to all veterans and those who serve them! The breaking news this month is that I can confidently state that Governor Brown's recently released budget is kind to veterans in this upcoming fiscal cycle. The Governor's proposed budget includes \$27 million for the ongoing funding needed to open the Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes. These funds are in addition to the \$9.4 million that was included for the current fiscal year, to begin the hiring process for staff that will serve the veterans in the two new homes. Job examination list eligibility placement processes are currently underway, and hiring will take place this spring. The plan calls for the first residents to be admitted to the Redding and Fresno Veterans Homes in the fall

of this year. It also includes ongoing funding for the six other state veterans homes throughout the state with no cuts to their budgets.

The budget also includes \$96,000 for the Veterans Service Office Fund. This money will be used to maintain the annual licensing fees for the County Veteran Service Offices enterprise standard case management software – the statewide system that California's counties and CalVet have implemented.

And, finally, an additional \$153,000 in Federal Trust Funds have been proposed to pay for two positions and operating costs at the Northern California Veterans Cemetery and the Yountville Veterans Home Cemetery,

that will help maintain the perpetual memorials to the men and women who served honorably in the U.S. Military. The funding has been provided through a recent increase in burial allowances California receives from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

With news such as this, we at CalVet are definitely off to a great start this 2013. Until next time, "keep honoring California's veterans!"

Sincerely,



Peter J. Gravett, Major General (Ret)
Secretary, California Department of
Veterans Affairs

<< JOBS

security, accounting, human resources, medical billing, contracts, clerical, health care analysis and IT management. A list of current employment opportunities is available on the CalVet website at www.calvet.ca.gov/AboutUs/Jobs/JobAnnouncements.aspx.

"We are looking for caring, compassionate, and talented staff to help ensure that the veterans in our Homes live the highest quality of life with dignity and honor," said Robin Umberg, Undersecretary, Veterans

Homes of California. "These men and women who served our country deserve to be treated with the honor and respect they have earned in service to our country."

CalVet is currently scheduling the examinations necessary to create employment eligibility lists and is posting job announcement bulletins for open positions. To find current Veterans Homes and other CalVet job and examination announcements, go to www.calvet.ca.gov/AboutUs/Jobs/JobAnnouncements.aspx. Jobs are also available at the other Veterans

Homes which are located throughout the State.

For more information about the Job Fairs or about Homes admission, contact the Home directly. Redding, (530) 224-3300 or toll free (855) 769-5791. Fresno, (559) 493-4400 or toll free (855) 769-5792. For specific job related questions, email CalVet at join.calvet@calvet.ca.gov.



CAREER FAIR *at the* VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA - FRESNO

January 23, 2013
8 a.m to 4 p.m.

- HOW TO GET A STATE JOB" WORKSHOPS AVAILABLE!
(9:00a, 11:00a, 1:30p, 3:00p)
- COMPUTER KIOSKS FOR ONLINE APPLICATIONS!
- SELF-CERTIFYING EXAMS AVAILABLE!
- BRING YOUR RESUME AND/OR WORK HISTORY INFORMATION

Positions Available

Nursing
Medicine
Pharmacy
Mental Health
Social Services
Therapist (Speech / Occupational / Physical)
Dietitian & Food Service

Sanitation & Janitorial
Plant Operations
Grounds Keeping
Security
Accounting
Human Resources
Medical Billing

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Clerical
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Business Services

SEEKING VETERANS HOME ADMINISTRATOR

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www.calvet.ca.gov
(855) 300-1896 (Toll Free)
join.calvet@calvet.ca.gov

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VETERANS IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE'S 2013-14 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The California State Legislature met on December 3, 2012 to convene the 2013-2014 Legislative Session. The recent election brought in 39 freshmen legislators who will need to be educated on veterans issues. This turnover comprises almost half of the Assembly. The Senate has only one new member who had not previously served as an Assemblymember, retired Air Force Major General Richard Roth. In addition to new legislators, there will be some new staff members and new committee memberships. That is why it is so important for veterans organizations to have a well-attended Day at the Capitol event! We need to articulate the importance of veterans issues, the good work your organization does in helping veterans, and how the Legislature can help you to do this.

During the June 2012 Primary, a proposition was passed that altered California's term limits. Legislators can now serve a total of 12 years in either house or a combination of both houses. Furthermore, the election brought some increased revenues (Prop 30) and a 2/3 super majority of Democrats in the Senate and Assembly. It is unclear how exactly this will play itself out,

but it is certainly a new dynamic which could bring about new ways of conducting legislative advocacy at the Capitol.

This election brought in four new legislators who are military veterans, one in the Senate and three in the Assembly.

NEWLY ELECTED LEGISLATORS WHO ARE VETERANS

**SENATOR RICHARD ROTH
(DEMOCRAT, SENATE DISTRICT 31,
RIVERSIDE)**

Major General Roth was commissioned in June 1972. He attended Emory University School of Law, graduating with a Juris Doctor degree in 1974. General Roth entered active duty in February 1975 and served with Strategic Air Command and Pacific Air Forces units in Arizona, Okinawa and California. Upon his release from active duty in April 1979, the general transferred to the Air Force Reserve and was assigned as an individual mobilization augmentee with Strategic Air Command bomb

<< RATING

\$472 Million in CalVet Home Purchase Revenue Bonds.

"I am very pleased that CalVet has been able to hold on to its AA- Fitch rating given the nation's economic difficulties," said CalVet Secretary Peter J. Gravett. "The downturn in the housing market has greatly affected the CalVet Farm and Home Loan program, but thanks to the diligence of its staff, the program continues to be viable and secure."

Although Fitch continues to project a negative outlook for the program, CalVet is confident that its Farm and Home Loan program will perform much better over the next few months given that the economy is showing signs of improving. As the housing market continues to rebound, CalVet is poised to provide qualified veterans with a much better option for purchasing a farm or home in California than in the private sector.

FOLLOW US!



<< VETERANS

and refueling wings from 1979 to 1985. He subsequently served three times as a staff judge advocate at the wing and group levels in Air Force Reserve Command, then served as the mobilization assistant to the Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. He retired in 2007.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROCKY CHAVEZ (REPUBLICAN, ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 76, OCEANSIDE)

Colonel Chavez worked his way through California State University in Chico and earned a BA degree. He then served over 28 years as a United States Marine. He was subsequently appointed Chief of Staff for the 4th Marine Division. Upon retirement from the Marine Corps, he went on to spend nearly a decade on the Oceanside City Council. In 2009, Colonel Chavez was appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger as Undersecretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs in Sacramento, later serving as Acting Secretary.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SUSAN EGGMAN (DEMOCRAT, ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 13, STOCKTON)

After graduating from high school, Susan Eggman served four years as a medic in the U.S. Army. She then attended California State University, Stanislaus, where she earned a B.A. in psychology and a master's in social work. Susan worked as a mental health provider and a medical social worker, before receiving her Ph.D.

from Portland State University. Ms. Eggman most recently served on the Stockton City Council. While there, she successfully lobbied the federal Veterans Administration to build their new facility in San Joaquin County.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MELISSA MELENDEZ (REPUBLICAN, ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 67, LAKE ELSINORE)

Melissa Melendez entered the United States Navy upon graduating high school. She attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., where she spent a year and a half in a Russian language course, becoming a fluent Russian speaker. She then became one of the first women approved by the U.S. Navy to fly aboard an Orion EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft overseas, conducting intelligence-gathering operations in partnership with our allies. She served as a Russian translator for ten years during the Cold War, as well as during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. While serving in the Navy full-time, Melissa also attended college and received her BA in History and Political Studies from Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii. After the Navy, she then formed her own successful transcription company, contracting with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy.

LEGISLATORS CONTINUING IN OFFICE WHO ARE VETERANS

SENATOR STEVE KNIGHT (REPUBLICAN, SENATE DISTRICT 21, LANCASTER)

Senator Steve Knight is the son of the late Senator Pete Knight; combat pilot, test pilot, and astronaut. Steve Knight was born at Edwards Air Force base and has lived in the Antelope Valley for most of his life. After graduating from Palmdale High School, Steve served in the U.S. Army from 1985-1987 as a track systems mechanic in Friedberg Germany and in the Army Reserve from 1987-1993. Steve also served as a police officer in the Los Angeles Police Department for 18 years. He also served on the Palmdale City Council. While in the Assembly, Knight was awarded the American Legion's Legislator of the Year in 2011.

SENATOR TED LIEU (DEMOCRAT, SENATE DISTRICT 28, TORRANCE)

Senator Lieu's family immigrated to the United States when he was three years old. Ted went on to attend Stanford for his undergraduate degrees in Computer Science and Political Science, then Georgetown University, where he received his law degree. Recognizing the great opportunities America had given to his family, he joined the United States Air Force, where he served as

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a prosecutor in the JAG Corps. After serving on active duty for four years, he wanted to continue to serve his country and joined the reserves. He continues to serve in the JAG Corps and was recently promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. Ted has received numerous medals for his outstanding military service, including the Air Force Humanitarian Service Medal and two Meritorious Service Medals. He has authored many bills dealing with veterans issues and has served on the Assembly and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees. Lieu has been awarded Legislator of the Year by the American Legion and the Vietnam Veterans of America.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAUL FONG (DEMOCRAT, ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 28, MOUNTAIN VIEW)

Assemblyman Fong enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and, because of a knee injury he was honorably discharged in 1973. Prior to being elected to the State Assembly, Assemblymember Fong served on the Foothill-De Anza Community College District Board

of Trustees and the Foothill-De Anza Foundation Board of Directors, and served on the Board of the California Community Colleges Trustees. Assemblymember Fong was also a political science professor at Evergreen Valley College. Assemblymember Fong holds two degrees from San Jose State University; a B.A. in Sociology and a M.P.A. Also, he holds a MAEd. from the University of San Francisco.

ASSEMBLYMAN JEFF GORELL (REPUBLICAN, ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 44, CAMARILLO)

A third generation Navy man, Jeff Gorell currently serves as a Lieutenant Commander (intelligence officer) in the United States Navy Reserve. He has completed two one-year tours to the Middle East and Afghanistan and was decorated for his leadership in a combat zone. In 2002, Jeff led a combat camera team in Bagram, Afghanistan, and from 2011-2012, he commanded a targeting cell embedded with the U.S. Marines in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Jeff is the grandson of a Navy Seabee who fought in the

Pacific during World War II, and the son of a career naval officer and Vietnam veteran. From 1999-2006, Jeff was a Ventura County Deputy District Attorney where he served as a trial prosecutor in the major narcotics and violent felony units.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SHANNON GROVE (REPUBLICAN, ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 34, BAKERSFIELD)

Shannon Grove was raised in Arvin California, where she graduated from Arvin High School. Shortly after high school, Shannon joined the United States Army serving at 5th Corps in Frankfurt, Germany. After her service in the military, Shannon returned to Bakersfield and worked for several employment agencies. In 1993, she and her sister-in-law formed Continental Labor and Staffing Resources and today Shannon presides as Chief Executive Officer.



VETERANS!

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Pharmacy
Mental Health
Social Services
Therapist (Speech / Occupational / Physical)
Dietitian & Food Service

Sanitation & Janitorial
Plant Operations
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CALVET HELPING VETERANS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

By Lee Gutierrez

Deputy Secretary for Veterans Services, CalVet

Helping veterans achieve their goals when they return to civilian life has always been CalVet's mission, and 2013 promises to be even better for achieving our goals than years past. As is the nature of all business, either you evolve with the times or you are left behind the curve. For CalVet, this involves thinking outside the box and reaching out to veterans through community based organizations and others.

For example, we are providing briefings to all returning Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen to inform them about the benefits and services available to them and about the importance of informing CalVet that they will now live in California. We encourage them to fill out a reintegration form, because, we cannot help them if we do not know they are here.

Also, we are working with the UCLA Schools of Law and Business to provide free legal advice to veterans who wish to start their own businesses. Some of these new businesses will be Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises or DVBEs, and the UCLA School of Law will help them fill out the appropriate paperwork to become limited liability companies or corporations. Also, the UCLA School of Business will assist veterans by providing market research and assistance in creating solid business plans.

In addition, we have signed a memorandum of understanding with Los Angeles City College through which veterans wishing to pursue a higher education will receive priority admittance. We are also working with the college to provide veterans with academic assistance in an effort to diminish

the possibility of veterans failing to maintain acceptable grades. We are working on a similar project with UC Irvine.

We are also working with Veterans Courts in the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Clara, Tulare, and Ventura. As many of you already know, veterans are known to have a warrior's mentality and often do not address their treatment needs for physical and psychological health care. Many find themselves homeless, helpless, dealing with alcohol or drug addiction, and potentially suffering from a serious mental illness. Veterans Courts allow the opportunity for these veterans to regain stability in their lives. The combination of constant judicial monitoring, supplemented with chemical dependency and mental health treatments, impart a comprehensive plan to ensure our veterans are addressing whatever issues they are facing.

Additionally, CalVet continues to offer the best possible care to veterans in our Veterans Homes of California, as well as providing them with the best option for purchasing a home through our CalVet Farm and Home Loan Program.

Helping veterans as they return to civilian life is CalVet's mission, but ultimately, we all have a stake in making sure veterans are cared for and respected for their sacrifices.

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES VETERAN SUMMIT II

By Pamela Rasada

High numbers of service members are returning home and the number of veterans returning to school is rising. Over half of California veterans receiving GI Bill educational benefits attend one of the California Community Colleges. To ensure faculty, staff, counselors, administrators, and Veteran Service Coordinators are well prepared to assist them, on December 6 & 7, 2012, the California Community Colleges – Veterans Summit II was convened in Redwood City. To assist in raising awareness and as a means of supporting the event, CalVet Secretary Peter Gravett and representatives from the Employment and Education Work Groups of the Governor's Interagency Council on Veterans participated in the two day summit.

In his remarks, Secretary Gravett gave his support for the summit, detailed the structure of the Governor's Interagency Council on Veterans (ICV), and discussed the opportunity the ICV provides to organizations and individuals who are interested in enhancing service provision to veterans.

The purpose of the annual California Community Colleges Veteran Summit was to educate participants about veterans' issues and needs

through on-site training and the open sharing of ideas and "best practices." Participants at the Summit were given the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of outreach practices and advocacy for student veterans. Summit presenters also highlighted opportunities and provided information and training on programs effectively serving veterans.

Topics presented this year included: Academic Counseling for Military and Veteran Students, Potential Veteran Mental Health Issues (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries), Understanding Military Culture, Best Practices in Veterans Resource Centers, Discipline and Teaching Strategies, Women Veterans Issues, VA Benefits and Education Plans, Student Perspectives, and information regarding the resources available at the Federal, State, and County levels.

For more information on the California Community Colleges Veteran Summit II, visit <http://www.facc.org/veteranssummit12.html>.

For more information on the ICV, to review the meeting minutes of the work groups, or to send an email requesting to be a participant, please visit the ICV website at www.icv.ca.gov.



LANCASTER VETERANS ENJOY BALLOON RIDE

Veterans at the Lancaster Veterans Home had beautiful weather and great visibility for their annual Christmas Balloon Rides with Details Above All. Several WWII vets braved the 26 degree weather, including 99 year old Saul "Monty" Montrose, Marine Val Darling, and back for his third year "Uncle" Art Lee, who enjoyed the first and last to ride with his best friend John Foreman.

LANCASTER HOME RESIDENTS GET ROBOTICS DEMONSTRATION

Lancaster High School's robotics team visited the Lancaster Veterans Home during their winter break and gave residents and staff a demonstration of their basketball shooter project. The students built



the amazing machine in just six weeks! The students have begun a new project list and, hopefully,

will return to the Home in May to demonstrate their latest and greatest robotic machine.

SPECIAL TAX CONSIDERATIONS FOR VETERANS

Disabled Veterans may be eligible to claim a prior year federal tax refund. This eligibility is based on:

- an increase in the veteran's percentage of disability from the Veteran's Administration (which may include a retroactive determination); or
- the combat-disabled veteran applying for, and being granted, Combat-Related Special Compensation, after an award for Concurrent Retirement and Disability.

To claim this eligibility, the disabled veteran must file the amended return, Form 1040X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, to correct a previously filed Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ. An amended return cannot be e-filed; it must be filed as a paper return. Disabled veterans should include all documents from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and any information received from Defense Finance and Accounting Services explaining proper tax treatment for the current year.

"I encourage any veteran who qualifies for an amendment to their tax returns to take advantage of this opportunity to claim any refund they may be owed," said Peter J. Gravett, CalVet Secretary.

Please note: It is only in the year of the USDVA reassessment of

disability percentage (including any impacted retroactive year) or the year that the Combat-Related Special Compensation is initially granted or adjusted that the veteran may need to file amended returns.

Under normal circumstances, the Form 1099-R issued to the veteran by Defense Finance and Accounting Services correctly reflects the taxable portion of compensation received. No amended returns would be required, since it has already been adjusted for any non-taxable awards.

If needed, veterans should seek assistance from a competent tax professional before filing amended returns based on a disability determination. Refund claims based on an incorrect interpretation of the tax law could subject the veteran to interest and/or penalty charges.



WREATH LAYING CEREMONY AT YOUNTVILLE VETERANS HOME

By Lou Zauner

At 9 a.m. on Saturday, December 15, the area leading to the entrance gates of the Yountville Veterans Home Cemetery was filled with a gathering of patriots, there to express their remembrances for the sacrifices our veterans and their families have made--and continue to make--for the nation.

Belgian-born American Architect Pierre Claeysens, once stated, "To be killed in a war is not the worst that can happen. To be lost is not the worst. To be forgotten is the worst." In 2008, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution making the second Saturday in December "Wreaths Across America Day" to ensure that "the worst" does not happen.

With the invaluable sponsorship and delivery of the wreaths by

Rough Riders Motorcycle Club, Gateway Chapter, the Seventh Annual Memorial Wreath Program at the California Veterans Home and Cemetery in Yountville was a red, white and blue patriotic event: The Posting of the Colors performed by the Travis Air Force Base Honor Guard; the National Anthem sung by Hillary Lee, the Pledge of Allegiance recited by Doug Southerland, the Invocation given by Mike Wikander, and the Opening Ceremony presented by Colleen Fay. The History of Memorial Grove Cemetery was presented by Home Administrator Marcella McCormack. "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" was sung by Robert Staib.

Kraig Taylor assisted with the placement of the Ceremonial Wreaths on the Cemetery gate: Medal of Honor Recipients and the Unknown Soldier were presented

wreaths for their graves by a member of each branch of service and for Merchant Marines and POW/MIA. The Closing Ceremony by Colleen Fay was followed up with the Benediction by Mike Wikander and playing of Taps by Robert Staib. After the withdrawal of the Colors, all attendees were invited to participate in the Laying of the Wreaths.

In 1992, in Harrington Maine, a retired Marine, Merrill Worcester, of the Worcester Wreath Co., delivered 5,000 of his Christmas wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery. This year, he presented the program's one-millionth wreath to a Gold Star Mother.

Sincere appreciation and many thanks go to the Rough Riders Motorcycle Club, the many sponsors, numerous volunteers and all who participated in this emotional Veterans Home ceremonial event.

NON-VA CARE PROGRAM

By Joe Wright

The Non-VA Care Program (sometimes called the Fee-Basis Program) uses healthcare providers in the private sector to care for veterans who are unable to receive the treatments they need from VA facilities. Perhaps a veteran's location is simply too inaccessible, or a non-VA provider's services are more appropriate for the medical condition being treated.

Non-VA Care is used when VA medical facilities are not "feasibly available." The local VA medical facility has criteria to determine

whether Non-VA Care may be used. All VA medical centers can use this program when needed. The use of the Non-VA Care program is governed by federal laws containing eligibility criteria and other policies specifying when and why it can be used. A pre-authorization for treatment in the community is required for Non-VA Care, unless the medical event is an emergency.

If a Veteran is eligible for certain medical care, the VA hospital or clinic should provide it as the first option. If they can't, due to a lack of available specialists, long wait times, or extraordinary distances from the Veteran's home, the VA may consider Non-VA Care in the Veteran's community. Non-VA Care is not an entitlement program or a permanent treatment option.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County

HONORING NATIVE VETERANS THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SERVICE

By Pamela Rasada

Administrative Officer, Governors' Interagency Council on Veterans

More than 20 Service Providers gathered just outside of Davis, California, in support of Native Veterans at the DQ University

Big Time Pow-wow and Veteran Resource Fair on Veterans Day. The event was the first gathering on tribal lands in California that was planned and facilitated through a partnership of representatives from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Tribal Government Relations (VA OTGR), First Nations Veteran Service Organization (FNVSO), and the Inter-Tribal Council of California (ITCC).

"I think the Veterans Pow-wow went off well for two days, and the service provided to the Veterans was exciting," says DQ University Board of Trustee Joseph Saulque, of the

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<< POW-WOW

Benton Paiute and Army Airborne Veteran. "What I've heard, is that some people were able to save their houses. Some people signed up for benefits. And it was great that a representative from a Congressman was there on the DQU campus."

The 2012 DQ University Veterans Big Time Pow-wow Committee was chaired by Ira Hoaglen, who has significant experience coordinating Pow-wow events in the Sacramento Valley and throughout California. The Master of Ceremonies was Tom Phillips, Kiowa, a highly sought after MC, considered by some to be the best in the business. Gourd Dancers from several clans opened the ceremony with dance and songs from the Southern Drum. Over six drums participated in the Pow-wow, with several dozen traditional dancers. A California Style dance group, as well as an Aztec dance group, offered songs and dance.

"DQ University has traditionally held an annual Veterans Pow-wow," says Sky Road Webb, Vice Chairman FNVSO and ITCC employee. "In addition to honoring our Veterans, this year we wanted to 'step it up a notch,' by offering essential services, benefits, transition assistance, counseling and more. The outpouring of support for the Veteran's Fair was remarkable. At some point we simply had to turn service agencies away, for lack of space. But the best part is that

Veterans from the community had claims filled out at the Fair, and are now in the process of acquiring benefits they earned serving in our Nation's Military."

To accommodate the Veteran's Fair, the 40th Infantry Division Operations Company of the Army National Guard provided a modern field command tent, complete with heat, electricity and track lighting. Several of the soldiers remained with the tent overnight to help set-up for the Pow-wow and also participated in the Grand Entry Ceremony.

"When CalVet entered into an MOU with First Nations Veterans Service Organization earlier this year, I asked about hosting a Veterans Resource Fair at a traditional California Tribal gathering.", notes Deputy Secretary Lee Gutierrez. "A few weeks later, FNVSO Chairman Louis Bickford called to let me know FNVSO had secured a location for the Native Veteran Resource Fair."

The Veteran Resource Fair operated on day one of the two-day D-Q University Veterans Day Pow-wow. Though service hours were publicized as being from 1000 until 1600, many Service Providers stayed later into the night. Throughout the day, Veterans met with representatives from FNVSO, VA OTGR, CalVet, VFW, American Indian Veterans Association, Chato Tribe Native American Veterans Dept., JFK University, Military & Veteran Relations NorCal, U.S. Army Transition

Assistance, Office of Congressman Garamendi, San Joaquin National Cemetery, Sacramento Vet Center, Salvation Army Harbor House, Social Security Administration - Wounded Warrior Program, the Yolo County Veterans Services Office, Palo Alto Health Care System, VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System, Women's Health VA & OIF/OEF Returning Veterans, and Volunteers of America. Veterans Center Palo Alto provided 'goodie bags,' containing resource information and giveaway items from various service providers for each of the veterans in attendance. MilitaryConnection.com promoted the event on its website.

"It is widely recognized historically that Native Americans have the highest record of Military Service per capita, serving more often than any other ethnic demographics," says Webb, Coast Miwok and former Naval Officer. "One of the challenges that have been identified is the actual connecting of Veteran Service providers with Tribal Veterans. Many live in remote locations or, for one reason or another, are not inclined to seek benefits from the county extension offices. Holding a Veterans Fair at a recognized regional Big Time Pow-wow was an attempt to bring Native Veterans and Service Agencies together."



NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

President Obama declared November Native American Heritage month. As a means of honoring the heritage of Native Veterans, CalVet created a series of four posters to display at the fair. The posters have colorful backgrounds depicting culturally significant images and include the names of Native Americans prior to 1945*, who had been awarded medals for their military service. Because the Department of Defense does not monitor ethnicity, to complete the project, a CalVet graphic artist consulted with staff from the ITCC on graphics and imagery, then worked with two divisions of the California State Library (the California Research Bureau (CRB) and the Preservations Unit) to compose, and foam-core mount the printed posters.

The four posters, listing the name, rank, and if known, the circumstances under which the medals were awarded, were displayed prominently at the event. As a means of acknowledging additional Native Veterans, a table set with 3x5 cards and colorful pens for archiving stories, as well as a bulletin board for posting the completed cards, were included as a part of the display.

The posters were well received by the community and many in attendance asked for information on how to have their relatives' names added to them. Service Providers in attendance expressed their desire to assist in expanding the lists and asked for PDF copies they could print. What started out as a set of posters intended for display has grown into an outreach project of significance to the Native community.

CalVet has committed to building a website in support of the outreach project and is in the process of updating the posters to include information on how to add the names of more award winners. The original posters are now on display in the office of CalVet Secretary Peter Gravett, who has asked

that we make the PDF documents of the revised posters available for download from the CalVet website once they are finished. Interested parties are encouraged to watch for updates on the Native Veteran Poster Project and notification of future Native Veteran Resource Fairs in upcoming CalVet newsletters.

For more information on DQ University, visit www.dquniversity.org.

**Prior to shutting down in 1945, a Native newspaper had printed the name of native medal recipients as they were awarded. The list is available on the Naval History and Heritage Command website, (<http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm>).*

For an additional briefing on American Indian and Alaska Native Culture, review the CultureCard compiled and distributed by SAMHSA, available here: http://www.samhsa.gov/samhsanewsletter/volume_17_number_2/americanindianculture.aspx



The Veterans Home of California—Barstow is a 400-bed, long-term care facility located on 22 acres with a panoramic view of the Mojave River Valley. The high desert atmosphere offers a climate that is healthful, quiet and safe with very low air pollution. The Veterans Home provides California veterans with a living environment that protects their dignity and contributes to their feeling of self-reliance and self-worth. It offers three levels of care that provide continuity in the lives of residents in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

1. Domiciliary Care (Independent living) for veterans who are self-sufficient and do not require assistance with activities of daily living. Non-nursing staff provides minimal supervision. Residents at this level of care have access to other levels of care and medical services.
2. Intermediate Nursing Care for veterans requiring some nursing assistance to perform activities of daily living. Licensed nursing staff assist veterans with medications and treatments.
3. Skilled Nursing Care for veterans who require a higher level of nursing care and require assistance with many activities of daily living.

Although this Veterans Home offers three levels of care, space is primarily available in the Independent Living (Domiciliary), and Intermediate Nursing levels of care. Amenities include:

- Room and board – three meals plus snacks
- Medical care and medications
- Optical care, dental care and podiatry services
- Transportation services to all medical appointments and off-campus activities

- Additional professional services include a beauty/barber shop, multi-purpose room and limited banking services
- Opportunities for worship for all denominations through the Chaplaincy Program
- A modern fitness center and exercise classes
- Library, cable television, and wireless Internet
- Housekeeping and laundry services
- Caring and compassionate staff, and
- Variety of community outings and an enhanced activity program

The Veterans Home of California—Barstow enjoys the strong support from the local community as well as camaraderie from the neighboring Marine Corps Logistics Base and the National Training Center at Fort Irwin.

Veterans Homes of California are also located in Chula Vista, Lancaster, Ventura, West Los Angeles, and Yountville. Veterans Homes are currently under construction in Fresno and Redding. Veterans considering assisted living are encouraged to apply to any of the Veterans Homes of California. Spouses are also eligible to apply with the veteran.

For admission information, contact:

**Veterans Home of California—Barstow
100 E. Veterans Parkway
Barstow, CA 92311
(800) 746-0606, ext. 1**

www.calvet.ca.gov

COMPLEMENTARY & ALTERNATIVE MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENTS FOR VETERANS

The importance of mental health is now common knowledge. Millions of Americans not only suffer ailments such as depression and anxiety disorders (including generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] and social phobia), but often more than one condition may be present. For example, it is estimated that nearly half of all those diagnosed with depression also suffer from an anxiety disorder.

Recognizing the severity of this problem and the limitations of traditional medicine, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) is currently researching complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) modalities for treating mental health issues in veterans. Two forms of CAM that have been made available to San Bernardino County veterans are the Trauma and Community Resiliency Models, biologically-based mental health interventions pioneered by the Trauma Resource Institute; and equine-assisted therapy through the Equus Medendi program.



TRAUMA AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCY MODELS

"We believe it doesn't need to be an ordeal to heal." When Trauma Resource Institute (TRI) Director Elaine Miller-Karas spoke these words at a presentation to the San Bernardino County Department of Veteran Affairs, County USDVA Director Bill Moseley took note. Since then, TRI and the County USDVA have partnered to bring the Trauma Resiliency Model and the Community Resiliency Model (TRM and CRM) to individuals working with veterans, active duty service members, and their families in San Bernardino County. TRM and CRM are biological interventions that help regulate the nervous system. TRM involves trauma reprocessing and is geared towards professionals. CRM is a set of wellness skills for community members.

Funded through California's Mental Health Services Act and launched in December 2010, CRM is an innovative skills-based, peer-to-peer intervention that anyone can use for their own benefit and for the benefit of their community. This simple wellness practice can be taught to anyone regardless of culture or faith, and, once the skills are learned, they can be passed on to family, friends and community members. Viewing symptoms through a biological perspective, CRM employs a skill set to return the body's nervous system to its natural balance. CRM helps individuals understand their nervous systems and track sensations related to resiliency. The nervous system begins

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to return to its normal balance or rhythm (referred to as the "Resilient Zone") as the individual practices CRM skills.

TRI provides community-oriented educational materials about human biology and how it responds to traumatic events. The goal is to make these skills a part of healing in daily life, to increase the sense of one's ability to help himself or herself by bringing the body, mind and spirit into greater balance through improved resilience. Veterans, active duty service members, and their families are encouraged to pass the skills along to friends and loved ones, thus building a more resilient community.

Working in conjunction with San Bernardino County Behavioral Health Departments and the Department of Veterans Affairs of San Bernardino County, TRI has taught CRM skills to more than 50 veterans, active duty

military and their family members since February 2012.

At a community conference in June 2012, veterans and family members enthusiastically discussed their new roles as CRM trainers and ambassadors. The stories of hope and resiliency were overwhelmingly touching; at times you could hear a pin drop as veteran after veteran recounted how learning to stabilize their nervous systems had brought about pronounced positive changes in their activities of daily living.

...this is the first time in 40 years that I understand my symptoms and I learned this in two days. -Vietnam Vet

...learning about the freeze response is the first time that I have been able to understand the feeling of time slowing down. -Gulf War Vet

I'm kind of a hothead, and these skills helped me when I was disappointed about not having dinner with my grandson. I was able

to have a good conversation with my son and daughter...my former pattern was to just "blow up."
-Vietnam Vet

TRM and CRM skills have been taught and used in China, Rwanda, Kenya, Haiti and Japan. TRM has also been taught and used here at home in the aftermaths of hurricanes Katrina and Rita and Southern California firestorms. In addition to support from the World Health Organization, San Bernardino County, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Bethesda Naval Center, Sierra Tucson Treatment Center, and Canyon Rehab, the U.S. Department of Defense named TRM a "promising practice" in a white paper to Congress in March, 2011.

After years of working with veterans, many of whom seem to be re-traumatized by the very treatments intended to help them recover, it has been a privilege to introduce people to TRI's CRM training, which can be used by almost anyone to alleviate their PTSD symptoms.

I wholeheartedly agree with Elaine Miller-Karas' comment that "it doesn't need to be an ordeal to heal." Upon hearing this, I knew she was on to something very powerful that could make a great difference in the lives of our veterans and their families.

*-Bill Moseley,
Director of Veterans Affairs*



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EQUUS MEDENDI

"There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man." These famous words by Winston Churchill are the premise for Equus Medendi (Latin for "healing horse"), Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy. Anyone who has had the opportunity to get to know these incredible animals would most certainly concur.

Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy is an alternative and short-term treatment approach that addresses a variety of mental health and human growth challenges including PTSD, depression, anxiety and relationship issues.

The unique nature of horses, their powerful size combined with their inability to judge or deceive, is what makes the therapy so successful. Working alongside a horse (in spite of fears related to their intimidating size and power) helps participants develop greater self-confidence and provides great insight when dealing with other intimidating and challenging situations in life.

Horses are dynamic, powerful, curious, social and highly sensitive living beings. These characteristics help build a compelling connection between horse and veteran as they build trust with one another through various ground exercises (horseback riding is not involved). This quite often provides participants with a feeling of comfort, breaking



down barriers and allowing them to address the psychological challenges they face.

As we know, many veterans deal with a variety of social, physical, and mental health issues and providing a therapeutic experience at a ranch, as opposed to the traditional in-office setting, has proven very effective at helping them come to terms with their individual situations. With the support of the San Bernardino County Department of Veterans Affairs, Equus Medendi has been able to provide this program to over 100 veterans and their families.

"This is the only place where I feel calm and collected. I'm actually at peace with myself and the world."

- Marty T., Vietnam Vet

"For me, the program was almost beyond description. I was skeptical when I first read about it. I've learned that you have to have trust, you have to have patience. My problems nowadays,

I can't throw a grenade at them. In the six weeks of the program, I feel like a completely different person. This has been absolutely the best thing I've experienced with regards to my PTSD."

-Steven S., OIF/OEF Vet

"Every veteran should have access to this program- it's that good!"

-Loree K. Sutton, MD, Brigadier General, US Army (Ret.). Army Psychiatrist and founding Director of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health.

"Veterans shared with me that the relationship that developed with the horses has been life-changing and for many, the only intervention that has reduced their PTSD Symptoms."

-Elaine Miller-Karas

Trauma Resource Institute Co-Founder

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MOVING FORWARD

Unfortunately, war and war wounds have been around as long as humans have had irreconcilable differences, and they will most likely be with us for quite some time to come.

Having found traditional medical practices insufficient to heal non-physical wounds has spurred the development and analysis of many different innovative and

helpful treatment options for those suffering mental illness; among them biologically-based mental health and equine-assisted therapies.

By being open-minded and willing to promote complementary and alternative treatments, we will further advance our ability to help heal those who have suffered as a result of serving our country.

For more information about these programs, contact:

Elaine Miller-Karas, Director
Trauma Resource Institute
P.O. Box 1891
Claremont, CA 91711
(909) 626-4070
ekaras@traumaresourceinstitute.com

Angie Sheer
Equus Medendi
(951) 941-0056
info@equusmedendi.com

USDVA BRIEFS

VETERANS CRISIS LINE WORKS TO KEEP VETS AND TROOPS ALIVE

The Veterans Crisis Line offers free, confidential support for Veterans and family members in crisis. Learn how the call center works day and night to connect Vets with support and resources by visiting
<http://n.pr/TKqR3c>

LAUNCHES CHALLENGE.GOV CONTEST FOR SCHEDULING APPOINTMENTS

The Department of Veterans Affairs is challenging software developers to create new systems that schedule appointments in VA's nationwide health system.

<http://1.usa.gov/Slymx0>

VA WORKING TOGETHER TO DETERMINE GRADUATION RATES

VA teamed up with Student Veterans of America and the National Student Clearinghouse to better track how student Veterans are performing.
<http://1.usa.gov/10iRYFu>

VA AND ANCESTRY.COM PARTNER TO INDEX HISTORIC BURIAL RECORDS

The Department of Veterans Affairs has partnered with the internet-based genealogy research firm Ancestry.com to bring burial records from historic national cemetery ledgers into the digital age. The effort will make the collection—predominantly of Civil War interments—accessible to researchers and Ancestry.com subscribers undertaking historical and genealogical research.
<http://1.usa.gov/W0DPrYVA>

VA ANNOUNCES NEW ONLINE RESOURCES FOR FUNERAL DIRECTORS

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today the availability of the new online funeral directors resource kit. Funeral directors nationwide may use the kit when helping Veterans and their families make burial arrangements in VA national cemeteries.
<http://1.usa.gov/XEcPz>

* Veterans! *

Getting the benefits you've earned?

Aware of benefit changes? Know where to find services?



INAUGURAL CREATING COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITIES SUMMIT

By Pamela Rasada

Administrative Officer, Governors' Interagency Council on Veterans

One person truly can make a difference. In mid-2007, Mary Ellen Salzano, a military mom and veteran advocate, saw a need for more communication within the veterans' services community. She had seen first-hand the challenges veterans sometimes face in applying for and receiving benefits. In an effort to provide a conduit of communication for providers, Mary Ellen founded, what she boldly named, the California Statewide Collaborative for our Military and Families (CSCMF) and started her first group, the Moffet Field Collaborative. Today her roster includes representatives from all levels of Government (Federal, Tribal, State, and Local), non-profit veteran service providers, veterans, private sector businesses, and individuals. Through her efforts and example, additional military and veteran collaborative groups began to organize throughout the state, many of which sought assistance from her in how to be effective in motivating and inspiring change. On December 18, 2012, through the generous sponsorship of VITAS Innovative Hospice and the Wounded Warrior Project, and with a strong showing of support from CalVet, CSCMF's monthly collaborative meeting was transformed into the Inaugural Creating Collaborative Communities Summit (CCC Summit) in Fremont California.

The Summit, attended by 140 veteran stakeholders, was opened at 10:00 a.m. by Reverend Charlotte Bear with an invocation and an acknowledgement of service members, veterans, and their families. Mary Ellen Salzano then welcomed the Collaborative family and introduced the morning's speakers beginning with CalVet Secretary Peter Gravett, who spoke on the benefit of the collaborative group input to policymakers and closed his remarks by awarding certificates of appreciation to the Summit Sponsors: VITAS Innovative Hospice Care, The Wounded Warrior Project, and Project Hired.

"The Creating Collaborative Communities Summit was a great success," reports Secretary Gravett, "The energy in the room was inspiring. There were close to 150 people in attendance, some of them from across the country, all of them devoted to enhancing their ability to serve veterans. These groups are important change agents within the veteran community, who provide direct

access to information regarding the immediate needs of veterans. It was important to me that the California Department of Veterans Affairs meaningfully participated in the Summit."

In the morning presentations, attendees heard from Gwen Ford of Project Hired and Mary Cortani from Operation Freedom PAWS, who each shared their individual organizations' experiences. CalVet Deputy Secretary for Women Veterans Affairs, Lindsey Sin, then delivered a Call to Action on behalf of women veterans by outlining her vision for California's women veterans and her division's efforts over the last year to achieve that vision.

Sid Gardner with Children and Family Futures, then delivered remarks focused on reaching beyond collaboration to results and giving specific details on his experience in working with collaborative efforts at the Federal level.

Prior to breaking for lunch, Mary Ellen called the roster of known California Collaborative groups, inviting coordinators in attendance to rise and be recognized. Once the coordinator had been acknowledged, Mary Ellen invited attendees of the various groups to also rise in support of their collaborative. Each person in the room stood at least once, with many, including CalVet Local Interagency Network Coordinator (CalVet LINC) Kevin Graves, standing multiple times, as the roster was

<< SUMMIT

called. To further facilitate networking, each attendee was provided with a roster of participants that included seating locations by table number.

The afternoon Summit Session opened with remarks by Pamela Rasada, Administrative Officer for the Governors' Interagency Council on Veterans (ICV). Pamela briefly reviewed the background, structure, and goals of the ICV before discussing the value of collaborative groups as community-based participants. After inviting motivated individuals to become involved, she offered multiple means to connect with her stating "My goal is to populate the Work Groups of the Interagency Council with motivated, passionate organizations and individuals who can bring a broad breadth of experience and knowledge to the group. I have a shiny new box of business cards with me today that I hope to have empty by the time I leave." She invited attendees to come get a business card and phone or email her directly. She also invited them to contact her through the ICV website or connect with her through their regions CalVet LINC.

Pamela closed by taking a few moments to acknowledge CCC Summit attendee, First Nation Veteran Service Organization, for leading the team that implemented a Veteran Service Fair in concert with a Big Time PowWow in honor of Native American Heritage Month and Veterans Day. The effort, a partnership between USDVA Office of Tribal Government Relations, CalVet Deputy Secretary Lee Gutierrez, the Intertribal Council of California, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the California Research Bureau was a great success and resulted in the creation of a unique outreach project targeted at identifying and honoring Native Veterans who have been awarded medals for their service (see related story also in this issue).

Next the group heard from a variety of speakers regarding their experience as collaborative facilitators. Invited to address the group were: Mary Ellen Salzano, CSCMF; Dr. Anthony Hassan, Los Angeles Collaborative (administered by the Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families at the University of Southern California); Debbie Nichols, Military Children's Collaborative; Eddie Ramirez, San Francisco Veteran Town Hall Collaborative; Ken Misa, the Wounded Warrior Project; Chaplain Dave Walker, Cops and Vets; Duncan MacVicar, Veteran Treatment Courts. After a short break, using questions that had been collected from participants on 3x5 cards, Charlotte Bear led a rousing discussion on collaborative group creation, facilitation, and function, as well as strategies for finding focus and being effective change agents.

To close out the day, attendees were invited to share their experience in the open forum and then Mary Ellen led us back to center and ended the meeting by announcing to all that Reverend Charlotte Bear, our facilitator for

the day, would be stepping in to lead the Moffet Field Collaborative. Mary Ellen spoke of her need for more space and time to focus in 2013 on realizing goals of CSCMF. Her first areas of focus include identifying currently existing collaborative groups, and fostering the creation of a collaborative in every California County and on every California Higher Education Campus. She spoke of her desire to build a collective through CSCMF and the ICV, to work with Federal, State, Local and Community partners to submit a proposal to the Obama-Biden Joining Forces team to implement a statewide program with California as the pilot program. Individuals and groups interested can email Mary Ellen at: maryellen_salzano@yahoo.com.

ONE PERSON TRULY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 23

Recruitment Job Fair

Fresno Veterans Home
2811 West California Avenue, Fresno
8:00 a.m.-4:00p.m.,
Contact: (559) 493-4400 or
toll free (855) 769-5792

JANUARY 24

**Inland Empire Resource and
Career Fair**
Doubletree Hotel
222 North Vineyard Avenue
Ontario, CA 91764

JANUARY 26

Veteran Expo

Beaumont Civic Center
550 E. 6th Street
Beaumont, CA
Contact: (951) 769-9858

JANUARY 30

Recruitment Job Fair

Redding Veterans Home
8:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
3400 Knighton Road, Redding
Contact: (530) 224-3300 or
toll free (855) 769-5791

JANUARY 31

Orange County Resource and Career Fair

Embassy Suites Hotel
1325 East Dyer Road, Santa Ana

NOTE: TO VIEW FULL CALENDAR, VISIT WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV/FILES/EVENTS_CALENDAR.PDF

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