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### **Note:**

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All veterans are reminded that the fastest way to learn about 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](http://www.cacvso.org).

**MAY 2014**

## CAL VET VETERANS HOMES

### **NEW APPOINTMENTS AT VETERANS HOMES OF CALIFORNIA**

Coby Petersen of Wilton, California was recently appointed by Governor Brown as Deputy Secretary, Veterans Homes of California. Petersen is a retired U.S. Army Colonel. He was the senior army advisor to the U.S. Army Adjutant General of California from 2010 to 2014, chief of future operations in the 3rd U.S. Army, Kuwait from 2009 to 2010 and brigade and battalion commander of the U.S. Army 174th Infantry Brigade from 2006 to 2009. Petersen was the deputy fire support coordinator for the 3rd Marine Division, U.S. Pacific Command from 2003 to 2006 and served in multiple positions for the 1st Infantry Division, Germany of the U.S. Army from 2000 to 2003, including battalion executive officer

and chief of plans officer in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He served as brigade personnel officer in the Theater Support Brigade from 1998 to 2000, battalion fire support officer in the 5-87th infantry battalion from 1996 to 1998, training officer in Fifth Army West from 1994 to 1996 and served in various other positions for the U.S. Army from 1987 to 1994.

"Mr. Petersen is a welcome addition to the Veterans Homes of California," said CalVet Undersecretary for Veterans Homes Diane Vanderpot. "His experience and management expertise will assist us in continuing our history of service to California's veterans."

The Governor also appointed Rachel Rogers, of Tulare as Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Administrator at the Veterans Home of California - Fresno.

"Perfect timing," stated Undersecretary of the Veterans Homes of California Diane Vanderpot. "We are on target to receive our first resident in our skilled nursing facility at the Fresno home and the new SNF Administrator will be arriving as the new program is launched. We are all looking forward to working with her and excited about being able to offer skilled nursing to our veterans in the Central Valley."

Rogers has been director of quality of life at Northpointe Health and Wellness Center since 2012. She was executive director at Golden LivingCenter Shafter from 2010 to 2012 and at Golden LivingCenter Clovis from 2007 to 2009. Rogers

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# Secretary's Message

May is a month with much meaning for the military and veteran community. On May 8, we observe V.E. (Victory in Europe) Day (Victory in Europe) which commemorates the day German troops laid down their weapons, and the defeat of the Nazis. The third Saturday of the month is Armed Forces Day when we pay honor and tribute to the members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. The last Monday of the month is Memorial Day, when we remember and pay homage to the U.S. service members who died while serving our country. While our state's residents are reminded at various times to remember the selfless contributions of the men and women who serve in our nation's military, the California Department of Veterans Affairs honors and serves veterans 365 days a year.

This month, I want to bring up an issue that has bothered me for quite some time, and that is the victimization of veterans. Recently, James Mattis, a retired four star general from the Marine Corps, delivered in a speech in San Francisco focusing on this issue.

In his speech, Mattis talked about how the public very often wants to paint veterans as victims and why doing this

is potentially damaging to the fighting spirit of our nation's military personnel. I, just like General Mattis, do not believe that our veterans are somehow damaged goods. As a matter of fact, I happen to believe that many veterans actually come back better equipped to succeed once they return to civilian life. We must not set up our military personnel in a self-fulfilling prophecy where they actually start to believe the news media and well-intentioned political leaders that insist on making them victims when they return home.

According to Mattis, "warfare often comes down to a clash of wills and, while technology and weaponry matter, ultimately, war is won and lost at the point of a bayonet." This means that the men and women currently fighting conflicts overseas need to be well prepared and mentally capable of confronting a formidable enemy that constantly tries to outmaneuver them. There is no room for military personnel and veterans to see themselves as victims, but rather as patriots answering our country's call to active duty. Active military personnel and veterans need to know that they have done the job they were trained to do. They are not victims and never will be. While many may need

medical and mental health care during and after their tours of duty, the end result is that our country is grateful for a job well done.

Lastly, on Monday, May 26, Memorial Day, please take a moment to remember our fallen brothers and sisters who died while serving in our nation's military. While I encourage you to enjoy a picnic or parade with your family and friends, please pause for a minute at 3:00 p.m. and silently remember that the freedoms we enjoy today were fought for and preserved by many who answered our country's call to military service. God Bless America!

Sincerely,



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



## CALVET LAUNCHES INTERACTIVE, INTENTIONS-BASED WEBSITE TOOL

To better serve California veterans and their families, CalVet has launched myCalVet, a secure, interactive and intentions-based feature of its newly-designed

and more intuitive website. The myCalVet feature offers veterans/servicemembers, family members, partners/service providers the opportunity to create a personal

profile that turns their user experience into a customized, intention-based encounter. When a user creates a profile and then logs onto the site, the information presented will be directly related to their profile and preferences. The site is GPS enabled, so users will get directed to the healthcare, education, housing, employment, advocacy, or claims assistance providers nearest to them.

“Our hope is that veterans from throughout the state will be able to better connect with the services and benefits that they have available from the state government, federal government and within their local community,” said Deputy Secretary Keith Boylan of the department’s Veterans Services Division.

Visit [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov) and create your profile today!

### << HOMES

was Alzheimer’s care director at the Beverly Manor Convalescent Hospital Alzheimer’s Care Unit from 2004 to 2007. She served in multiple positions at the Fresno-Madera Area Agency on Aging from 1998 to 2004, including supervising case manager and senior service counselor and was social services director of the Beverly Manor Convalescent Hospital from 1995 to 1998.

CalVet operates eight veterans homes in the state which are open to veterans who are over the age of 55 or disabled. Information regarding the application process, levels-of-care and other benefits can be found on the CalVet website at [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov).

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CALVET  
VETERANS HOMES



# CVSO'S, CALVET LAUNCH "IF YOU SERVED, YOU EARNED" CAMPAIGN

A new media and outreach effort to connect veterans and families across California to the benefits and services they've earned has been launched by the California Association of County Veteran Service Officers (CACVSO) in collaboration with CalVet.

The campaign, called "If You Served, You Earned," includes a new toll-free number, TV and radio commercials, web advertising, and a variety of online and print-ready collateral materials available for use by CVSOs and others to both educate veterans, as well as connect them with their closest County Veterans Service Office. The toll-free number—(844) SERV-VET—allows callers to enter their zip code and be directly connected to the nearest CVSO.

"There are nearly 1.9 million veterans living in California—by far the largest veteran population of any state in the nation—yet far too few of these patriots are receiving the benefits and services to which they are entitled," said Dana Cummings, Veterans Service Officer, County of San Luis Obispo, which is administrator for the campaign. "Our goal is to reach veterans of every age, gender and branch to ensure they understand the benefits out there for them and get the help they need navigating the process."

"The CACVSO has long been a critical "boots-on-the-ground" partner to CalVet," said Deputy Secretary Keith Boylan. "The effective messaging of the services they provide is another step in ensuring veterans and their families throughout the state achieve a successful transition back to civilian life."

While the CalVet funding covered the cost of producing the TV and radio commercials, funding a multi-million dollar media buy was not feasible. So as part of the campaign, CVSOs will be meeting with TV and radio stations in every media market throughout the state to promote "media partnerships"—with the goal of airing the commercials statewide.

A media partnership training will be held at CACVSO's upcoming Santa Rosa conference May 4 - 9. In addition, media partnership kits—along with other outreach materials—are available online at [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov). These kits will provide everything needed for CVSO's to approach local media outlets to request a partnership (limited to one per medium, per media market). We encourage you to begin incorporating these materials into your existing outreach efforts as soon as possible.

## VETERAN LICENSE PLATE



## RESERVE YOURS TODAY!

All proceeds from the sale of  
Veteran plates will be used to  
expand veterans services in  
your community.

[WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV](http://WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV)

## DRAMATIC RISE IN THE NUMBER OF CALVET HOME LOANS

The California veteran population has rediscovered the value of a CalVet Home Loan, one of several veterans benefits offered by the State. Over the past 6 months, the department has experienced significant increases in monthly closed loan volume, funding over \$9 million in March. In addition, CalVet is on track to fund \$60 million in fiscal year closed-loan volume by June.

Increased utilization of the benefit can be attributed the



return of California veterans into the workforce, coupled with focused program marketing and process improvements by the department. "Veterans and real estate professionals are getting the message about our valuable benefit through our new website and other marketing efforts," said Gary Bonin, Senior Operations Manager for CalVet Home Loans. "When they contact us, they are finding the value

is real, the process works, and the loan closes on time. Our satisfied veterans and their real estate professionals are telling others, so the applications keep pouring in."

To learn more about the benefits of a CalVet Home Loan, call (866) 653-2510 or visit the website at [www.calvet.ca.gov/homeloans](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/homeloans).

## CALVET WRITING HONORED IN STATEWIDE COMPETITION

The California Association of Public Information Officials (CAPIO), a statewide professional association of city, county, and state government communications professionals, recently honored CalVet at its Excellence in Communications awards ceremony, part of the organization's 2014 conference. "A Father's Love," written by Veteran Services Division Communications Director Carolyn Ballou, received an Award of Merit, one of just three

awards given in the writing category. The article, which appeared in the June 2013 CalVet Newsletter, featured Gold Star Father and CalVet LINC Kevin Graves and his son Joey, who was killed during his military service in Iraq. The story told how Joey's life—and his tragic and untimely death—in Kevin's words, made him "a better person." Graves now honors Joey's life and legacy in everything he does. The story also helped promote the California Gold

Star Family License Plate Program. Ballou's writing garnered an Award of Excellence at the 2013 CAPIO event.





## LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, START . . . YOUR . . . OVENS!

The California State Fair in Sacramento will honor patriots during Armed Forces Day on July 17, 2014. Veterans and active duty military personnel will be admitted for free on that day with appropriate identification. Those who hold a Distinguished Veteran Pass will be admitted for free during the entire run of the Fair, July 11-27, 2014.

As part of the tribute and part of the fun, veteran and military amateur chefs will compete in the MRE (meals ready to eat) Cooking Challenge. Each competitor will have access to an electric range/oven, microwave, mini-fridge, small kitchen tools, a variety of ingredients commonly used for cooking and baking, MREs, and a food prep area.

When the contest begins, contestants will have 5 minutes to “shop” from food carts provided, 10 minutes to set up their kitchen and get organized, and 30 minutes to create a culinary masterpiece for the judges using two MREs that have been randomly assigned. Each dish created will be judged on taste, presentation, skill level, use of MRE ingredients, and the competitor showmanship. The competition will involve two qualifying rounds and one final round. Winners will receive official State Fair ribbons.

To request an MRE Cooking Challenge application, send an email to [pao@calvet.ca.gov](mailto:pao@calvet.ca.gov). Application submission deadline is June 16, 2014.

To find out if you qualify for a Distinguished Veteran Pass and to apply, go to [www.parks.ca.gov/pages/737/files/dpr619.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/737/files/dpr619.pdf).

## CALL FOR ART FOR WOMEN VETERANS

Swords to Plowshares is currently accepting submissions for its 6th Annual SHOUT! for Women Veterans art show. All artists are invited to join in honoring and celebrating the service of women veterans. This year, SHOUT! will feature pieces by artists whose works give voice to women veterans, service members, and families, friends and loved ones of women who served in the military. The theme of this year’s art show is “Celebrating Women in Service, Honoring Their Sacrifice.”

The following mediums will be considered: paintings, photographs, sculptures, multimedia, clips from documentaries/short films, essays, poems and prose. All submissions must be completed online by May 9, 2014. The art show will be held Thursday, June 12, 2014, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the Fort Mason Conference Center, 2 Marina Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94123.

For more information, including eligibility requirements and entry submission guidelines, go to [www.swords-to-plowshares.org/shout/call-for-art/#.Uz20FErn8dV](http://www.swords-to-plowshares.org/shout/call-for-art/#.Uz20FErn8dV).

## SOUTHERN CA VETERAN FAMILY GETS KEYS TO THEIR NEW HOME

The Hernandez family got the opportunity to move out of their two bedroom apartment and into their very first home. Efrain, an Army veteran; Valerie, an Army National Guard veteran; and their three young daughters, Cecelia, Carmen and Cristine are members of one of the 12 very-low income families to move into a first-of-its-kind Habitat Enriched Neighborhood™ for veterans in Sylmar, California.

The Habitat Enriched Neighborhood™, named “Sylmar Habitat for Heroes,” was built by Habitat for Humanity San Fernando/Santa Clarita Valleys (SF/SCV) in collaboration with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). It is the first community in the nation to provide homeownership to very-low income veteran families in a neighborhood context that also provides wrap-around social services free of charge to the families. These services, provided through partnerships with other local non-profits and businesses, include financial and health education, health screenings, and self-sufficiency training.



Also unique are the services provided that meets the specific needs of the veteran community. These include art workshops for trauma victims, PTS counseling, FOCUS training, and ensuring connections to all entitled military benefits.

On April 12, 2014, Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV and CalVet hosted a Home Dedication/Key Ceremony at the Sylmar Habitat for Heroes site during which the families got the keys to their homes. CalVet Secretary Peter Gravett and Los Angeles City Councilmember Felipe Fuentes spoke at the event.

The program was made possible by an unprecedented move by CalVet to set aside more than \$21 million for Habitat SF/SCV to build homes for California veterans and their families living in the Santa Clarita and Sylmar areas of Los Angeles County.

A program of this nature meets a dire need in Los Angeles County and Sylmar specifically. Los Angeles County has the highest number of

veteran residents in the State and the LA Times reported that Sylmar has one of the country's highest percentages of veterans who have served in conflicts.

Many of these veterans are returning home to unemployment or the inability to work due to a service related disability. Still others are working but not making enough to move their family out of their substandard housing. Many have suffered severe credit debt issues as a result of service-related medical needs in the face of two-year delays in obtaining federal veterans benefits, fiduciary abuse, or other factors while overseas. As a result of these struggles, many veterans are finding themselves in an endless cycle of poverty and struggle, living “hand-to-mouth”, getting deeper into debt.

Homeownership has been shown to have a positive outcome not only on the families moving into the homes but the community as a whole.

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## << HOME

When people move from renting to owning a home, they're more likely to vote, get involved in community groups, and care about their home's appearance. The children of homeowners do 23% better in school, according to a 2001 study by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies.

In addition, research has found that having achieved the important life goal of buying a home and having greater control over one's living environment seems to improve self-reported quality of life as a whole. Affordable home buyers who are able to make their home payments have increased levels of self-esteem as compared to renters. Especially important for veterans, they tend to expand their social support networks, which in turn have a strong connection to psychological and physical benefits.

As a response to this need, the "Sylmar Habitat for Heroes" program was created to provide affordable

homes for very-low income veterans and their families and also offer them the services and training needed to get out of poverty and move up into the middle class. Through this collaboration, low-income veterans qualify for four-bedroom homes, which they purchase using a CalVet Home Loan, a Habitat SF/SCV second loan, and a deferred silent third loan from California Department of Housing and Community.

The Habitat for Humanity second loan is the key to making these homes affordable to low income veterans. On pay-back, funds will be reinvested into Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV's efforts to build more homes for low-income veteran families and those in dire need of housing.

This is the first veteran-specific Habitat Enriched Neighborhood™ in the country, but Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV has been tracking the results of this neighborhood wrap-around service program in their non-veteran-specific Enriched Neighborhoods™ and results are outstanding.

Of the over 200 people currently in the program, Habitat SF/SCV found 99.9% high school graduation rates, with 91% of kids going on to college or trade school, and 46% of those at a four-year universities, 0% teen pregnancy rates after moving into the Habitat homes, 13.9% of parents have returned to school to advance employment, and there have been no foreclosures.

To learn more about Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV visit [www.HumanityCa.org](http://www.HumanityCa.org). For information about CalVet home loans and about other state and federal veterans benefits, go to [www.calvet.ca.gov](http://www.calvet.ca.gov).



## CALIFORNIA PRIMARY ELECTION LOOMS

The June 3 statewide Primary Election is just around the corner. In coordination with the California Secretary of State, CalVet encourages

you, your family and your friends to vote!

*"Those who stay away from the election think that one vote will do no good: 'Tis but one step more to think one vote will do no harm."*

*-Ralph Waldo Emerson*

The last day to register to vote in this election is May 19. Registration is easy at [www.registertovote.ca.gov](http://www.registertovote.ca.gov).

Polls are open on Election Day from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Registered California voters can also vote by mail. Just complete and print an application at [www.sos.ca.gov/elections\\_m.htm](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections_m.htm), then mail it in time to arrive at your county's elections office by May 27.

For more information, call the Secretary of State's voter hotline at (800) 345-VOTE or visit [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-in-california](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-in-california).

## USDVA RESTORES AID TO HOMELESS VETERANS

Late last year, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) cut financial support nationwide for transitional supportive housing services for veterans who received Other than Honorable discharges and those who served less than 24 months of active duty. The action was taken after the USDVA office of general counsel determined that it may have been misinterpreting congressionally-approved program eligibility for those veterans. Since generally ineligible for USDVA health care, the agency's legal team determined they were likewise ineligible for homeless programs.

In mid-March, the USDVA advised community service organizations that provide aid to the veterans in question that all new enrollments were halted until the issue could be

sorted out legally. Veteran advocates and service providers were stunned by the notification—especially given President Obama's goal to end veteran homelessness by 2015. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, nearly 58,000 California veterans were homeless in 2013.

Swords to Plowshares, a community-based, not-for-profit veteran service organization that provides wrap-around care to veterans in the San Francisco Bay Area, believes veterans affected by the moratorium make up 10-15% of the chronically homeless veterans nationwide as well as in its own grant per diem programs.

Other than Honorable discharges are often directly related to combat stress. Troops who suffer from PTSD and self-medicate with drugs and alcohol often leave military with Other than Honorable discharges. Some of those veterans become homeless.

Following complaints from community groups, a USA Today

query, and legislation introduced in late March by Senator Patty Murphy, the USDVA decided to reverse its moratorium, restoring support for all homeless veterans who previously had it. USDVA's undersecretary for health, Robert Petzel stated the decision would remain in effect until a final legal opinion on eligibility has been rendered.

In a blog posted last month, Swords to Plowshares Policy Director Amy Fairweather stated, "We will continue to work to ensure that this is not just a temporary stay for homeless veterans until a legal opinion is rendered. Instead, we hope that quick congressional action will make it clear that our nation intends that homeless disabled veterans with Other than Honorable discharges be eligible for grant per diem housing and supportive services so that we can fulfill our obligation to end veteran homelessness."

The "jury" is still out. Stay tuned.

*Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*

# CRIMINALIZATION IS NOT A SOLUTION TO HOMELESSNESS

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) is dedicated to supporting states and communities to implement a human rights approach to ending homelessness that connects people to stable housing and eliminates the criminalization of homelessness.

Working with communities and using *Searching Out Solutions: Constructive Alternatives to the Criminalization of Homelessness* as a guide, (and most recently informed by a ride-along with the San Diego Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team), USICH identified several important strategies communities can implement to ensure that they are providing meaningful alternatives to criminalization.

1. Consistent, comprehensive, and skilled outreach and engagement. This engagement should include law enforcement, service providers, and other city and county staff in order to engage people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and build trusting relationships, which are the basis for identifying and providing the best and most appropriate housing and services



- options to each individual and family.
2. Immediately-available interim housing opportunities with clear paths to permanent housing. When an individual or family asks for assistance to come inside, we should be able to provide that opportunity as quickly as it is available.
3. A systems-orientation across all agencies and programs. Outreach workers and people seeking help should not have to navigate a confusing and complicated array of program criteria, eligibility requirements, and screening processes to figure out what housing opportunities are available. We need systems that respond to requests for help with consistent, solutions-focused actions, regardless of where that request is made.
4. Coordinate approaches for assessing needs and prioritizing access to housing and resources. People who are most

vulnerable and most in need of intensive housing and services interventions (such as permanent supportive housing) should get the quickest possible access to those interventions. They should not be left waiting in line behind people who could be better served by less intensive and expensive housing opportunities.

5. Focus on housing first strategies and practices. Removing unnecessary obstacles, requirements, and expectations to housing and emphasizing strategies that can help people to access an appropriate and stable housing opportunity as quickly as possible is critical. The effectiveness of housing first strategies has been proven again and again. People with the lived experience of homelessness know that housing is the answer to their challenges.
6. Sustaining the leadership and will it takes to create lasting

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**CALVET**  
HOME LOANS

**VETERANS IN  
CALIFORNIA  
PURCHASING HOMES**

**RATES AS LOW AS**

**3.90%\***

**NO MONEY DOWN\*\***

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\*4.25% - Estimated total monthly payment/APR based on a \$200K sales price, no down payment & financing of the VA funding fee under the CalVet/VA program, \$200K assessed value, mandatory hazard, and disaster indemnity insurance. Your actual payment can vary due to replacement costs for your home, location, local taxes, fees, and assessments and subsequent use of VA benefit, etc.

\*\* Not all buyers will qualify.

## INCREASED SUPPORT FOR COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

CalVet receives state funding from the Mental Health Services Act. This act, also known as Prop. 63 enables the California Department of Mental Health to provide increased funding to support county mental health programs.

For the FY 13/14, CalVet awarded 11 County Veterans Service Offices (CVSO) a total of \$270,000 to enhance and promote mental health services for veterans and their families. Each of the eleven CVSOs researched the best available options to improve and support mental health services and programs in their community. With the research conducted by the CVSOs and the funds provided by CalVet, veterans and their families will be able to receive efficient mental health services, including:

- Ensuring that newly discharged servicemembers and veterans of all eras are educated about the various United States Department of Veterans Affairs mental health services available to them, including services dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Military Sexual Trauma and Traumatic Brain Injury.
  - Support of special initiatives such as an Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy program as 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.
- These local assistance grants will allow the CVSOs to better serve veterans and their families living with mental health challenges and educate the community by providing education, services, and programs.

### << ALTERNATIVE

solutions. Above all else, we've learned that person-centered community engagement must be a centerpiece in any effort. Whether engaged as people who have experienced homelessness, outreach workers, law enforcement, volunteers, funders, service providers, business leaders, or members of

a faith group, when the larger community is informed and working together and has clear leadership people get connected to safe, stable housing and end their homelessness.

Read About the USICH Ride Along with the San Diego Police Department Homelessness Outreach Team at <http://goo.gl/Xwqnm4>



## ***CALVET TO RECOGNIZE RECENT CALIFORNIA RECIPIENTS OF MEDAL OF HONOR WITH SPECIAL CEREMONY***

Our nation's highest military award, the Medal of Honor, was recently presented by President Barack Obama to the families of five California Hispanic soldiers who were denied this honor when they bravely earned this distinction. To commemorate the recognition of Specialist Fourth Class Leonard L. Alvarado; Sergeant Jesus S. Duran; Sergeant First Class Eduardo C. Gomez; Private Joe Gandara and Private First Class Salvador J. Lara, on being awarded the Medal of Honor, CalVet will host a special ceremony on Tuesday, May 27, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. on the West Steps of the Capitol in Sacramento.

"These Medals of Honor have been a long time coming and I am most pleased that such a regrettable oversight is finally being addressed," said CalVet Secretary Peter J. Gravett. "These men fought for our country and their fellow soldiers with bravery, commitment and patriotism and now their families can receive comfort in knowing they descend from authentic American heroes."

Although these five men served our country valiantly during WWII, the Korean War and War in Vietnam, they only received the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest military award. But a review of Jewish American and Hispanic American Veterans through the Defense Authorization Act of 2002 found that these men's brave actions warranted the Medal of Honor.

The five Californians being recognized during this special ceremony for their bravery and gallantry are:

- Specialist Fourth Class Leonard L. Alvarado will receive the Medal of Honor posthumously for his courageous actions while serving as a Rifleman with Company D, 2d Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during combat operations against an armed enemy in Phuoc Long Province, Republic of Vietnam, on Aug. 12, 1969.
- Sergeant Jesus S. Duran will receive the Medal of Honor posthumously for his courageous actions while serving as an acting M-60 machine gunner in Company E, 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during combat operations against an armed enemy in the Republic of Vietnam, on April 10, 1969.
- Sergeant First Class Eduardo C. Gomez will receive the Medal of Honor posthumously for his courageous actions while serving with Company I, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division during combat operations against an armed enemy in Tabudong, Korea, on Sept. 3, 1950.
- Private Joe Gandara will receive the Medal of Honor posthumously for his courageous actions while serving with Company D, 2d Battalion, 507th

MAY

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## &lt;&lt; HONOR

Parachute Infantry Regiment, 17th Airborne Division during combat operations against an armed enemy in Amfreville, France, on June 9, 1944, and

- Private First Class Salvador J. Lara will receive the Medal of Honor posthumously for his courageous actions while serving as the Squad Leader of a rifle squad with 2d Platoon, Company L, 180th Infantry, 45th Infantry Division during combat operations against an armed enemy in Aprilia, Italy, on May 27 and 28, 1944.

In 2002, Congress, through the Defense Authorization Act, called for a review of Jewish American and Hispanic American veteran war records from WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, to ensure those deserving the Medal of Honor were not denied because of prejudice. During the review, records of several Soldiers of neither Jewish nor Hispanic descent were also found to display criteria worthy of the Medal of Honor. The 2002 Act was amended to allow these Soldiers to be honored with the upgrade - in addition to the Jewish and Hispanic American Soldiers.

For more information regarding the May 27, 2014 special recognition ceremony contact at Jaime.Arteaga@calvet.ca.gov or (916) 657-9329.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 9

**Veteran Community Resource Fair**

Citrus College, Glendora  
Contact: (626) 960-4457

MAY 13

**Keeping the Promise Event**

Disabled Veterans Business Alliance  
Hyatt Regency, Orange County  
Register: [www.ktpexpo.org/hotel.html](http://www.ktpexpo.org/hotel.html)  
Contact: (916) 657-9354

MAY 17

**Military Appreciation Day  
Job & Resource Fair**

Clovis Veterans Memorial District, Clovis  
RSVP: <http://bit.ly/1oJSbef>

**Chula Vista Veterans Home  
Founders Day Celebration**

Contact: (619) 482-6021

MAY 18

**Freedom's Heroes Outdoor Memorial  
Opening Ceremony**

Colusa Highway, Yuba City  
Contact: (530) 673-6035

**Barstow Veterans Home  
Founders Day Celebration**

Contact: (760) 252-6288

MAY 26

**Memorial Day Event**

All Wars Memorial, Danville  
Contact: (925) 935-4859

**Memorial Day Event**

Los Angeles National Cemetery,  
Los Angeles  
Contact: (310) 268-4675

**Memorial Day Event**

Sacramento Valley National Cemetery,  
Dixon  
Contact: (925) 938-9137

**9/11 Flight 93 Memorial Event**

Flight 93 Memorial, Union City  
Contact: (510) 247-0777

**VFW Memorial Day Ceremony**

Veterans Memorial, Castro Valley  
Contact: (510) 247-0777

Note: To view full calendar, visit [www.calvet.ca.gov/Files/Events\\_Calendar.pdf](http://www.calvet.ca.gov/Files/Events_Calendar.pdf)

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REQUESTS THE HONOR OF YOUR PRESENCE  
AT A SPECIAL MEDAL OF HONOR RECOGNITION CEREMONY HONORING

**SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS LEONARD L. ALVARADO – VIETNAM WAR**  
**SERGEANT JESUS S. DURAN – VIETNAM WAR**  
**SERGEANT FIRST CLASS EDUARDO C. GOMEZ – KOREAN WAR**  
**PRIVATE JOE GANDARA – WORLD WAR II**  
**PRIVATE FIRST CLASS SALVADOR J. LARA – WORLD WAR II**

TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2014  
10 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

STATE CAPITOL WEST STEPS  
10TH STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

JOIN CALVET IN RECOGNIZING THE GALLANTRY AND BRAVERY OF THESE FIVE CALIFORNIANS  
AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR POSTHUMOUSLY BY PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA.