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All veterans are reminded that the fastest way to inquire and secure the benefits you have earned is by visiting your 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.

First Lady Offers Congrats to CA Vet

With the help of Congresswoman Karen Bass's office, 102-year-old Bea Cohen, California's oldest living female veteran and a volunteer at the West Los Angeles Veterans Home, received a personal birthday greeting from First Lady Michelle Obama.

*Ms. Bea Cohen
 Los Angeles, California*

Dear Bea:

I am pleased to congratulate you on your 102nd birthday. I wish you all the best on the momentous occasion.

As you celebrate such a remarkable milestone, I hope you take joy and pride in all that you have accomplished. Our service members, veterans, and their families are some of the strongest and most talented individuals in our country, and each day I am inspired by stories like yours. Your contributions over the years have helped strengthen the fabric of our Nation, and your life



represents an important piece of the American story.

Again, congratulations and thank you for your service to our country.

*Sincerely,
 Michelle Obama*

In March, Ms. Cohen was honored by CalVet, the California Legislature, and Governor Jerry Brown for her long history of service and sacrifice to our country. She also received the "Local Heroes Award" from KCET Television during Women's History Month.

Bea continues to serve veterans in many ways. She recently began calling Bingo games at the West LA Veterans Home and will soon begin working with the Home's Garden Club. On June 2, 2012, Bea

will help represent the West LA Veterans Home at the Los Angeles Air Force Base Retiree Expo. Having volunteered in the Family Services Department of the Base for many years and still knowing lots of people there, Bea should draw quite an audience!

Bea is currently working to establish free upholstery classes for homeless veterans in the Los Angeles area. She already has an experienced teacher—a Vietnam veteran—and some supplies. As an upholsterer herself for over 50 years, Bea will help veterans learn the trade. All she needs for her class now is space. If your LA-area business or organization has a room or space you can offer for a very good cause, please contact Jeanne Bonfilio at the West LA Veterans Home, jeanne.bonfilio@calvet.ca.gov.

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Armed Forces Day History

On May 19, 2012, the nation will celebrate Armed Forces Day—a day citizens come together to honor and thank military members for their patriotic service and sacrifice in support of our country.

The effort to create a single-day holiday was led by President Harry S. Truman and announced on August 31, 1949, to replace separate Army, Navy and Air Force Days. The single-day celebration stemmed from the unification of the Armed Forces under one department—the Department of Defense. Each of the military leagues and orders was asked to drop sponsorship of its specific service day in order to celebrate the newly announced Armed Forces Day. The Army, Navy and Air Force leagues adopted the newly formed day. The Marine Corps League declined to drop support for Marine Corps Day but supports Armed Forces Day, too.

The theme of the first Armed Forces Day was “Teamed for Defense.” It was chosen as a means of expressing the unification of all the military forces under a single department of the government. Although this was the theme for the day, there were several other purposes for holding Armed Forces Day. It was a type of “educational program for civilians,” one in which there would be an increased awareness of the Armed Forces. It was designed to expand public understanding of

what type of job is performed and the role of the military in civilian life. It was a day for the military to show “state-of-the-art” equipment to the civilian population they were protecting. And it was a day to honor and acknowledge the people of the Armed Forces of the United States.

The first Armed Forces Day was celebrated by parades, open houses, receptions, and air shows. In Washington D.C., 10,000 troops of all branches of the military, cadets, and veterans marched past the President and his party. In Berlin, 1,000 U.S. troops paraded for the German citizens at Templehof Airfield. In New York City, an estimated 33,000 participants initiated Armed Forces Day “under an air cover of 250 military planes of all types.” In the harbors across the country were the famed mothballed “battlewagons” of World War II, the Missouri, the New Jersey, the North Carolina, and the Iowa, all open for public inspection. Precision flying teams dominated the skies as tracking radar were exhibited on the ground. All across the country, the American people joined together to honor the Armed Forces.

Support for Vet Business Owners

Veterans and Military Business Owners Association (VAMBOA) is a non-profit trade association working to ensure the development, growth and prosperity of veteran owned businesses, service disabled

Survey Volunteers Needed

If you a Service Member (active duty, National Guard, or Reserve) or veteran who deployed in support of OIF/OEF, you may be qualified to participate in an Internet study examining post-deployment behavior. If you are among the first 900 participants willing to complete an online, completely anonymous survey you will be paid \$25. All other participants will be entered into a lottery to win one of six (6) \$500 Amazon.com gift cards. Researchers from the University at Albany - State University of New York and University of South Florida are conducting the research study to understand the impact of combat deployment on a variety of behavioral health outcomes. This research is being paid for by the Department of Defense Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center. For more information, click here.

Courtesy Department of Defense

veteran owned businesses, and military businesses of all sizes. VAMBOA works to serve the needs of the veteran and military business communities by uniting veteran and military business owners for collaboration, connections and contracts with both private corporations and government agencies. For more information visit www.vambo.org.

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE...

Freedom Barber Shop

In a parking lot on the West Los Angeles campus of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), sits a 28-foot, 1956 trailer with a large American flag painted on its side. For many years, the trailer was used as a movie (*The Way We Were* & *Planet of the Apes*) and television (*Bonanza*) make-up and hair studio. Years later, it was donated by veteran Tony Bravo who offers free haircuts to veterans at the USDVA in what is now known as "Freedom Barber Shop."

The Freedom Barber Shop is similar to one you'd find in a small town—where people often drop by just to chat. It's has been called the invisible center of the USDVA. The clients of Freedom Barber Shop are a far cry from the rich and famous Tony served decades ago in his succession of salons on LA's San Vicente Boulevard. Back in the '70s, Tony could charge \$100 for a cut and style. Now, he might get paid with a couple pieces of fruit or a ball made from rubber bands.

That's OK with Tony—even though he provides far more than haircuts. His shop offers a safe place where hurting veterans can vent, commiserate, grieve, feel understood, enjoy companionship, laugh, and start to heal the invisible wounds of war that often include depression, post-traumatic stress, and substance use disorder.

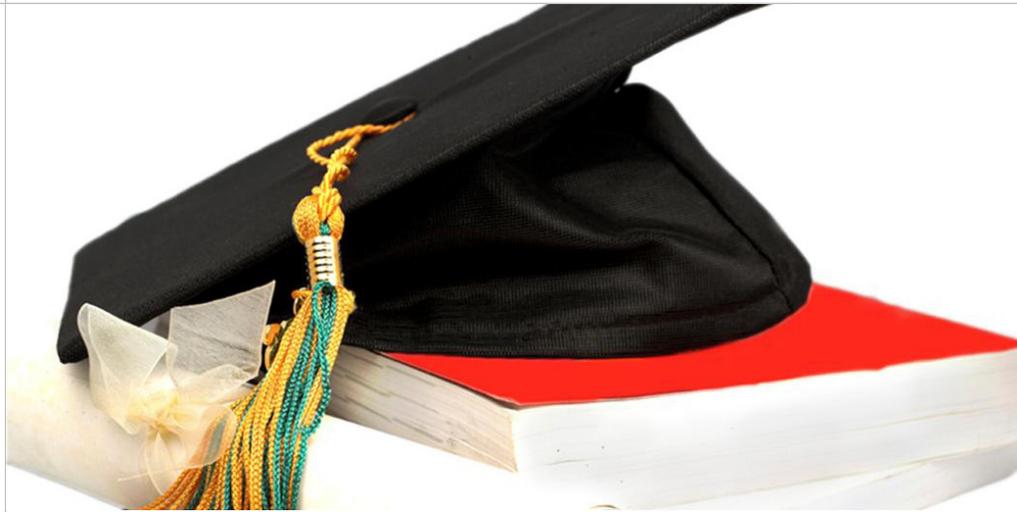
First of all, I wish to thank everyone who attended the CalVet Secretary's Conference in Sacramento on April 27, 2012. Lots of good information was exchanged between the CalVet management team and veteran community leaders from around the state. Planning for our next CalVet Secretary's Conference to be held in Southern California in late October has already begun. Expect to hear more about that event in coming months.

This month, we celebrate a couple of very meaningful events. May 19 is Armed Forces Day, a day when Americans pay tribute to the many members of our active military. The brave men and women who serve in our country's five military branches—Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard, along with those who serve in the National Guard and Reserve—exemplify duty, patriotism, and selflessness.

On Monday, May 28, we will observe Memorial Day and pay tribute to the many men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Many of you will spend the day enjoying the outdoors with friends and family. Others will attend parades. Still others will visit cemeteries and veterans memorials. Regardless of how you spend Memorial Day and regardless of whether you are alone or with family and friends, I ask that you participate in the National Moment of Remembrance at 3:00 p.m. As a nation united, we stop briefly to remember and honor those who died in service to the United States.

For a partial list of Memorial Day ceremonies and events in California, visit the CalVet website at www.calvet.ca.gov.





Veterans Need to Carefully Research For-Profit Schools

Over the next year or two, 40,000 men and women are expected to separate from the military and return to California. Many veterans, eager to begin using their post-9/11GI Bill education benefits, find themselves deluged by pitches from for-profit schools hoping to take advantage of those government benefits.

While for-profit institutions are often more accessible and may offer more flexible course study, it's important for veterans to understand that not all course credits transfer from one institution to another, and not all college degrees are created equal. Prospective students need to carefully research for-profit institutions and realize: if it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

CalVet oversees the California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (CSAAVE), the state agency designated to approve and monitor for-profit institutions for the administration of the GI Bill. To assist veterans in their decision-making process, CSAAVE has developed the following Student Bill of Rights and Considerations Prior to Enrollment. CSAAVE requires schools to provide this document to students when they are considering enrollment.

Student Bill of Rights and Considerations Prior to Enrollment

- This document must be issued to veterans and eligible persons when using GI Bill benefits at a private postsecondary institution approved for the training of veterans by the California State Approving Agency. The following rights and information must be provided to veteran students:
- You have the right to investigate training alternatives. Be aware that tuition charged by institutions offering similar training programs can vary greatly. You may also seek payment of GI Bill benefits for other types of

training or career objectives, including Apprenticeship/OJT and Entrepreneurships.

- You have the right to fully explore a program prior to enrolling. You may check out the school's facilities and equipment, inquire about instructors' qualifications and class sizes, observe a class, and talk to current students. You may also ask to contact recent graduates to learn about their experiences with the school.
- You have the right to check with the Better Business Bureau, or other consumer protection agency, to find out if complaints have been filed against the school. You also have the right to verify the school's standing with any accrediting association and/or licensing agency.
- You have to right to clear information about the value of the training. Are the credits transferable to other institutions you may attend in the future? Will the training satisfy requirements for employment, or is it necessary for the position you are seeking?
- You are entitled to clear data about the program's success rate. The institution will provide you with the completion and placement rates for the most recent years for which data is available. You will be given the definition of a "placement," including the length of time in the position. You will also be

Mentoring Military Women

AcademyWomen is a global leadership and professional development organization that provides award-winning eMentor Program Services, world-class events, and extensive networking and development opportunities. Membership is open to women from all commissioning sources and all individuals committed to the success of empowering aspiring, current and past women military officers through mentoring, training, and growth opportunities to achieve their highest potential and work/life balance. For more information visit www.ementorprogram.org.

This article is provided for information only. CalVet endorsement is not intended.

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<< SCHOOL

provided with the average starting salary.

- You are entitled to a clear statement of the total cost for completion of the program, including tuition, equipment and fees.
- You are entitled to a clear explanation, without coercion, of all financial aid options, before you sign up for any student loans.
- You are responsible for paying off a loan whether or not you complete the program. Failure to pay off a loan can lead to financial problems, including inability to get a future loan or grant for another training program, inability to get credit to buy a car or home, or garnishment of wages through the employer. You must begin repayment of the loan in accordance with the terms detailed within the financial aid documents.
- You have the right to read and understand the contract, and all other materials, before signing up.
- You are entitled to a clear explanation of the school's cancellation/ withdrawal policy and procedures, to understand how to withdraw or cancel, and be informed of any financial obligations you will incur.
- You are entitled to a clear explanation of the school's refund policy, which can vary greatly. If you withdraw from a course after the first day of class, an overpayment of [USD]VA benefits can result. It is not uncommon for schools to charge the entire tuition cost at the point when you have completed just 60 percent of the program. If an overpayment is assessed, the [USD]VA will send you a debt letter for the cost of the training you did not receive. For example, you may drop at the 60 percent point, and be asked by the [USD]VA to repay 40 percent of the cost of the tuition. A debt related to payment of the housing allowance may also be assessed. Ensure that you review the school's refund policy to understand the consequences of withdrawing before the end of the term.
- You have the right to contact the California State Approving Agency at www.csaave.ca.gov or the state consumer protection agency if you are unable to resolve a complaint with the school.

For more information about your post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits, contact your County Veteran Service Office (CVSO). To find the CVSO nearest you, visit www.cacvso.org. Click on "Contact Us," and then click on your county of residence.

You may also call the USDVA at 888-GI BILL1 ((888) 442-4551). To find approved education and training programs, visit gibill.va.gov/resources/education_resources/choosing_a_school.html.

Marine Serves Veterans, Families at Riverside National Cemetery

By Jerry Rice

Every veteran deserves an honorable and dignified burial. That's part of what motivates Richard Burns to volunteer three days a week at Riverside National Cemetery, where he assists families who are there to say goodbye to loved ones.

"A lot of people really don't know what to expect at a national cemetery," said Burns, who still looks sharp in his dress blues uniform - 50 years after serving overseas with the Marine Corps as an amphibious assault vehicle crew chief. "I tell them a little about the cemetery, what's going to happen, the procedures during the service and what a military funeral is all about."

Birth Defects in Vietnam Veterans' Children

If you served in Vietnam and have children with birth defects or other problems—including learning and/or attention disorders, childhood cancers, autistic spectrum disorders, immune and/or endocrine problems—this study may interest you.

Riverside National Cemetery - one of 131 national cemeteries around the country - averages 35 services a day, and more than 212,000 veterans and their spouses are interred in Riverside.

Besides assisting families, Burns also is a member of a Memorial Honor Detail, specifically the Semper Fi No. 1 team. It's one of nearly 50 units, staffed by some 470 volunteers, who provide military honors for about 10 RNC services daily. Active duty, Reserve and Guard units cover all of the remaining services.

"Seeing a squad of uniformed veterans welcoming and honoring one of their own gives the families, I believe, a sense of well-being that their loved one is where they are supposed to be and that they will be cared for," said Dean Moline, Riverside National Cemetery director.

For Burns, his duties as the family assistance volunteer are mentally and emotionally draining, but the work, he adds, is important.

"It's a very sad time for the families," he said. "When they're crying and upset, sometimes you want to break down and cry with them. But you have to be strong so you can help them with their grief."



Burns recalled one service when a young girl asked if the cemetery would take good care of her grandfather.

"I bent down and said, 'Yes, we specialize in taking care of grandfathers because a lot of us are grandfathers.' I explained a couple more things to her, and she felt a lot more at ease. When I straightened up and looked around at the family, most of them were wiping the tears out of their eyes.

"It's always a very sad occasion, but I'm glad that I can - in some small way - make the family feel a little more comfortable with the fact that they're leaving a loved one at a place where there are a lot of veterans and that we're going to take excellent care of them."

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www.myfoothillsmagazine.com/issues/may_12/about_us.php



Veteran's Resource Center Now Reality at SDSU

By Stuart Hughes, SDSU

After years of lobbying at both the state and university level, SDSU veterans will finally have a place on campus to call their own.

Director of TRIO and Multicultural Affairs C.D. Douglas said there will be a space located in the Multicultural office to serve the roughly 300 veteran students at SDSU. There, veterans can access information and resources ranging from tutoring to benefits and build a sense of community. Douglas said the Veteran's Resource Center is part of a University effort to increase veteran outreach.

"We want to make sure veterans get the service they need," he said. "We're trying to create a space where veterans feel comfortable and know they can always go for help."

Reaching veterans has proved to be a challenge on campus because veterans are self-identified and have not had a dedicated space. Previously, veterans had an office to process GI Bill paperwork and used the disability services office when they needed help with disability-related issues. Douglas said the new resource center would be better equipped to serve the veteran community on campus.

The SDSU Armed Forces Association estimates there may be as many as 500 to 700 veterans and others on campus that qualify for veteran benefits under the GI bill. This would make people receiving veteran's benefits one of the largest student groups on campus.

Danny McLaughlin, who serves as the president of the AFA, said having a dedicated space for such a large

community is vital. McLaughlin said having no real space for veterans on campus hurts efforts to build community. "A lot of service members come to school and feel alone," he said. "We want veterans to know that we're here for them and that they have a space they can go to be with people like them who they have a shared background with."

Douglas said the veteran's resource position has already been advertised; he hopes to have it filled by June. The position will be shared with disability services and dedicate 75 percent of its time to veterans affairs. One of the position's major responsibilities is planning a special orientation session for veterans either returning to school or just beginning.

"Not having a veteran's orientation has been one of our main complaints from the veteran community in the past few years. They have a different set of needs than the average freshman, and this is something we need to do to help ease their transition into college life," Douglas said.

The veteran's resource center is a start, but in the future, Douglas hopes to provide more services for veterans, including a counselor trained to deal specifically with post-traumatic stress disorder and a full-time financial aid administrator specializing in the GI bill.

Give an Hour Founder Honored



In April, TIME Magazine announced its 2012 list of the 100 Most Influential People in the World. According to the magazine, TIME recognizes activism, innovation and achievement by people “whose influence is both lasting and ... laudable.”

Included on this year’s list is Barbara Van Dahlen, founder and president of Give an Hour (GAH)—a nonprofit organization founded in 2005 to develop national networks of volunteers capable of responding to both acute and chronic conditions that arise in our society.

Currently, GAH is dedicated to meeting the mental health needs of the troops and families affected by the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The organization provides counseling to individuals, couples and families, the children and adolescents. GAH offers treatment for anxiety, depression, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, sexual health and intimacy concerns, and loss and grieving.

In addition, GAH service providers are working to reduce the stigma associated with mental health by participating in and leading education, training, and outreach efforts in schools and communities and around military bases.

Since 2005, Barbara’s work has brought together over 6,100 providers, who have donated nearly \$5 million worth of services. GAH was also chosen by The White House as a Joining Forces Community Challenge winner.

<< DEFECTS

Birth Defect Research for Children is collecting data to examine the effects of service in Vietnam and potential exposure to Agent Orange on the children of Vietnam veterans.

Participation in this project involves completing an online questionnaire which can be found at www.birthdefects.org/registry. The questionnaire will ask about your child or children’s disabilities; health and family history of both parents; exposures during pregnancy; occupational exposures; and your service in Vietnam.

Collected data will be used for a study of the pattern of birth defects and disabilities that have been most frequently reported in the children of Vietnam veterans. All data are confidential and your permission would be requested before any researcher would attempt to contact you.

For more information about the study or questionnaire, contact, (407) 895-0802.

Disabled Sports Program

If you’re a disabled veteran, check this out! Disabled Sports USA Far West offers a great adaptive sports and recreation summer program. Enjoy a variety of water sports, including whitewater rafting, water skiing, sailing, jet skiing, kayaking, canoeing, and tubing. Four-wheel drive camping adventures are also available. Activities are guided by

experienced Disabled Sports staff and customized to each participant’s skill level.

Membership is not required, but a low annual fee allows you to participate in the programs at deeply discounted prices. For more info, visit www.disabledsports.net or call (530) 581-4161.





The Yountville Veterans Home has immediate availability for Applicants to Domiciliary and the Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (Assisted Living)

The Veterans Home of California – Yountville is a 1021 bed facility located in the heart of the beautiful Napa Valley in Yountville, California. It is the largest Veterans Home in the United States.

Although four levels of care are offered, immediate space is available in the Domiciliary Care Units and Residential Care Facility for the Elderly.

If admitted the Yountville Home, provides four levels of care to residents; providing continuity in care to the lives of residents in a homelike atmosphere of dignity and respect.

Domiciliary Care: Residents at this level of care do not require assistance and supervision in their daily living and receive room, board, and outpatient medical care.

Residential Care Facility for the Elderly: Receive everything found in Domiciliary Care plus residents at this level of care require minimal assistance and supervision with some activities of daily living.

2 levels of Skilled Nursing (ICF and SNF): Residents at this level of care are provided 24-hour services of licensed nurses and certified nursing assistants.

Skilled nursing residents have greater access to rehabilitation therapies, nursing care, pharmacy management, structured activities and clinical dietary services. Included is a memory care program within this level of care providing a supervised environment for residents with symptoms of confusion, memory loss, difficulty making decision, solving problems or participating in conversations.

Amenities Include:

- Room and Board – three meals and snacks
- Medical care and medications
- Optical care, dental care and podiatry services
- Limited banking services
- Beauty/Barber shop
- Opportunities for worship for all denominations
- State of the art fitness center
- Bowling Alley
- Coffee Shop
- Community Center
- Base Exchange Store
- Library
- Swimming pool and therapy pool
- 9-hole golf course
- 1200 seat Theater, Symphony, Plays and Concerts
- Picnic Grounds
- Baseball Stadium
- Creative Arts Center
- Music Program
- Napa Valley Museum
- Cable Television

The Veterans Home of California–Yountville enjoys the strong support from the Napa/Solano Healthcare System. The local community as well as camaraderie from the neighboring Travis Air Force Base and many local Veterans organizations. Veterans Home of California are also located in Chula Vista, Lancaster, Ventura, Barstow and West Los Angeles.

For more information, please contact:

**Veterans Home of California–Yountville
Admissions Office
260 California Drive
Yountville, CA 94599
(800) 404-8387
(707) 944-4601**



Primary Election

- The June 5, 2012, Presidential Primary Election is just around the corner. In coordination with the Secretary of State's office, CalVet is encouraging you, your family and friends to register to vote! The last day to register to vote in the June 5, 2012, Presidential Primary Election is May 21. Polls are open on Election Day from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. For more information, call the Secretary of State at 800-345-VOTE or visit www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter_ed.htm.
- Did you know that any registered California voter can vote by mail? The last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot for the June 5, 2012, Presidential Primary Election is May 29. Find out more through the Secretary of State's office at (800) 345-VOTE or www.sos.ca.gov/elections_m.htm.
- Earn money and make a difference on Election Day by working at a polling place. For more information about being a poll worker, call the Secretary of State at (800) 345-VOTE or go to www.sos.ca.gov/elections/pollworker.htm.
- Wondering where to vote on June 5, 2012? Find your polling place by calling the Secretary of State at (800) 345-VOTE or visiting www.sos.ca.gov.

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For more information contact CalVet at www.calvet.ca.gov/calvetloans or call (866) 653-2510

USDVA BRIEFS

USDVA GULF WAR TASK FORCE REPORT RELEASED

USDVA has released the second in a series of annual reports from its Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force, outlining how the department will address the concerns of Veterans deployed during the Gulf War of 1990-1991. The report focuses on efforts to improve the delivery of health care for Gulf War Veterans, including the launch of a prototype clinical care model specifically for Gulf War Veterans. <http://1.usa.gov/GR4wdK>

USDVA TO INCREASE MENTAL HEALTH STAFF BY 1,900

USDVA announced that the department would add approximately 1,600 mental health clinicians – to include nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers as well as nearly 300 support staff to its existing workforce of 20,590 mental health staff as part of an ongoing review of mental health operations. <http://1.usa.gov/I4OWcZ>

USDVA BEGINS TRIBAL CONSULTATION SESSIONS

USDVA hosted its first tribal consultation focused on providing services to American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans in Washington, D.C., on April 5. <http://1.usa.gov/I401u1>

USDVA PUBLISHES DRAFT ON SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

At the direction of the President, USDVA and other federal agencies have drafted policies to foster a culture

Review of Discharge from Military Service

By Joe Wright, Kings County Veterans Service Officer

Each of the military services maintains a discharge review board with authority to change, correct or modify discharges or dismissals not issued by a sentence of a general court-martial. The board has no authority to address medical discharges.

The veteran or, if the veteran is deceased or incompetent, the surviving spouse, next of kin or legal representative, may apply for a review of discharge by writing to the military department concerned, using DD Form 293, "Application for the Review of Discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States." This form may be obtained from the Internet.

However, if the discharge was more than 15 years ago, a veteran must petition the appropriate Service's Board for Correction of

Military Records using DD Form 149, "Application for Correction of Military Records Under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552." A discharge review is conducted by a review of an applicant's record and, if requested, by a hearing before the board.

Discharges awarded as a result of a continuous period of unauthorized absence in excess of 180 days make persons ineligible for United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) benefits regardless of action taken by discharge review boards, unless the USDVA determines there were compelling circumstances for the absence. Boards for the Correction of Military Records also may consider such cases.

Veterans with disabilities incurred or aggravated during active duty may qualify for medical or related benefits regardless of separation and characterization of service. Veterans separated administratively under other than honorable conditions may request that their discharge be reviewed for possible recharacterization, provided they file their appeal within 15 years of the date of separation.

Your local county veterans service office (CVSO) can provide forms and directions on how request a review. Questions regarding the review of a discharge should be addressed to the appropriate discharge review board at the address listed on DD Form 293.

Contact your local CVSO 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 your local CVSO. You can find your local CVSO by going to www.cacvso.org and clicking on the "Contact us" button.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call (559) 582-3211, ext. 2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

USDVA BRIEFS

of transparency, integrity, and ethical behavior and to protect researchers from inappropriate influence in the development and application of scientific and technological findings.

VA PUBLISHES ITS 2011 HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE CITIZEN

On November 15th, USDVA published its 2011 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR). The PAR enables the President, Congress, Veterans Service Organizations, and the public to assess USDVA's performance on behalf of America's

Veterans. The 2011 Highlights for the Citizen, which presents the most important information from the PAR in a condensed, user-friendly format, is now available.

<http://www.va.gov/budget/report/>

LEGISLATION

AB 1739 (ALLEN)

This bill would allow the Administrator of the Veterans Homes of California (VHC) to enter into an agreement with an Allied Council that authorizes that the Council may operate facilities and activities at the home. This bill would require that the agreement be in the form and manner as specified by the Administrator.

AB 1931 (GORELL)

This bill would establish the California Veterans Services and Workforce Development Division within the Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) for the purpose of coordinating and administering

veterans assistance programs in the state, and would require the division to perform various functions and duties relating to the coordination and administration of veterans assistance programs.

AB 2490 (BUTLER)

This bill requires a parole agent to be appointed as a veterans service officer at any facility that is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and provides that the veterans service officer would be responsible for assisting veterans who are inmates in pursuing claims for veterans' benefits.

AB 2611 (BUTLER)

This bill would allow superior courts to develop and implement veterans

courts programs in California to allow eligible veterans of the United States Military to have the opportunity to go through alternative treatment programs and rehabilitate in a non-prison setting.

SB 1505 (DESAULNIER)

This bill makes changes in the Corporations Tax Law and revises the provisions that determine whether sales other than tangible personal property occur in this state, including cable systems or networks then it requires the funds raised by this change to be deposited into the Keep Our Promises fund appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans' services.

Veterans Retraining Assistance Program

In an effort to reduce veteran unemployment, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 was passed and signed into law last November. Included in this new law is the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) for unemployed 35- to 60- year-old veterans, which will begin on July 1, 2012. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) will begin accepting applications on May 15, 2012.

VRAP offers 12 months of training assistance to 99,000 unemployed veterans who are at least 35 years old but no older than 60. Eligible participants will receive up to 12 months of training assistance at the full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty program (currently \$1,473 per month). The U.S. Department of Labor will offer employment assistance to every veteran who participates or applies to the VRAP program. You can learn more about VRAP at <http://benefits.va.gov/vow/education.htm>.

Visit http://gibill.va.gov/benefits/other_programs/vrap_email_signup.html.

You will be prompted to provide your first name, last name, and e-mail address. Once submitted, you can expect to receive six to seven e-mails about VRAP, including notification on when applications open.

If you have any technical problems with the link or the image please e-mail USDVA at 225d.vbaco@va.gov for support. Detailed information on VOW and VRAP is also available at www.benefits.va.gov/vow.

Personal Plea on Behalf of The Pathway Home

On April 21, more than 2,100 riders participated in the Wine Valley Cycle for Sight/Rotary Ride for Veterans in Napa. Proceeds from the ride will benefit Enchanted Hills Camp for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

The ride also benefits The Pathway Home, a residential recovery program specifically created for, and dedicated to serve, “New Warriors”—those of any age who have served our Nation’s Global War on Terror. The Pathway Home provides a comprehensive program of treatment and support so that its residents can continue to recover from the stressors of war or combat or other traumatic military-related stressors.

The day before the ride, a very moving personal plea on behalf of The Pathway Home was e-mailed to participants from Steve Orndorf, Past President of the Napa Noon Rotary Club. Excerpts from that e-mail follow.

As you participate in our event tomorrow, we hope you will all reflect on a crisis of epic proportions that we now face, and we ask that you strongly consider making an additional donation or pledge to help us keep the doors open at The Pathway Home....

We can guarantee that if it hasn’t already, PTSD and TBI will touch your life in some way.... No one who has known a veteran or

visited Pathway is surprised by the April 15th New York Times article concerning the frequency with which our young veterans are taking their own lives....

For every serviceman and woman killed in combat, 25 will take their own lives via suicide. An American soldier dies in combat every day and a half, yet suicides by service men and women take place every 80 minutes. There are 6,500 such suicide deaths per year, more than all the American lives lost in Iraq and Afghanistan since the wars began.

One in five service men and women suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. The Veterans Administration programs are inadequate and ineffective, and while their heart is in the right place, they lack the true commitment to addressing the many problems stemming from PTSD and TBI.

Pathway receives no governmental support, despite being considered by many as the best post-traumatic stress disorder program in the country, and it is run far more cost-effectively than government-run programs. Three quarters of the men who have come through this program have either tried to commit suicide or have contemplated doing so.



If you agree that this situation needs immediate attention, there are many ways you can help. Write to your state and federal representatives. Encourage them to not only support this program but demand that they establish others like it around the country. Locally, you can help by attending the Rotary Club of Napa’s Cycle 4 Sight event this Saturday, April 21st. Most of the proceeds will go to the Pathway Home program....

If you do not bicycle, just come to the festival. You will be able to meet some of the Pathway Home vets while you’re there. Bring your friends and family!

If you missed the ride and festival, you can still respond to Mr. Orndorf’s heartfelt plea. Visit www.thepathwayhome.org to find the many other ways you can support The Pathway Home.

The West Los Angeles Veterans Home is Currently Accepting Applications for Residency in the Assisted Living Level of Care



The Veterans Home of California—West Los Angeles is a 396-bed, long-term care facility located adjacent to the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System in West Los Angeles.

Although two levels of care are offered, immediate space is primarily available in the Assisted Living Unit.

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.

The Veterans Home of California—West Los Angeles offers two levels of care that provide continuity in the lives of residents in a homelike atmosphere of dignity and respect.

Assisted Living: Residents at this level of care require minimal assistance and supervision with some activities of daily living. Services may include care by licensed nurses.

Skilled Nursing Care: Residents at this level of care are provided 24-hour services of licensed nurses and certified nursing assistants. Skilled nursing residents have greater access to rehabilitation therapies, nursing care, pharmacy management, structured activities and clinical dietary services. A memory care program within this level of care provides a supervised environment for veterans with symptoms of confusion, memory loss, difficulty making decisions, solving problems or participating in conversations. These levels of care will be available in 2012.

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 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 room and exercise classes
- Library and cable television
- Restorative Therapy Center
- Housekeeping and laundry services
- Caring and compassionate staff, and
- Variety of community outings and an enhanced activity program

The Veterans Home of California—West Los Angeles enjoys the strong support from the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, the local community as well as camaraderie from the neighboring Los Angeles Air Force Base and many local Veterans organizations. Veterans Homes of California are also located in Chula Vista, Lancaster, Ventura, Barstow and Yountville.

For admission information, contact:

Veterans Home of California—West Los Angeles
11500 Nimitz Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90049
(424) 832-8202
(424) 832-8203
Toll Free: (877) 605-1332
www.calvet.ca.gov



CA Mexican American Veterans Memorial Moves Forward

By John Ochoa

History is on the move at Historic State Capitol Park in Sacramento. In 2012, California will celebrate an historic groundbreaking of a state memorial honoring Latino Veterans. In 2013, the memorial will be officially rededicated. It is believed that the memorial is the first permanent commemoration honoring Latino veterans at any of our nation's 50 state capitols.

Public funds cannot be used to support the project. The memorial can only be funded through private contributions. As of March 2012, nearly \$400,000 had been raised in support of the memorial. In the months ahead, Californians will continue coming together to raise those additional funds needed to keep our promise to honor the men and women who served in

our Armed Forces to secure and guarantee our freedom.

On December 21, 2010, then CalVet Secretary Roger Brautigan officially informed the Department of Finance and the Memorial's state partners that a final design had been approved, following a rigorous process of selecting an architect and scheduling meetings and forums to receive public input on design concepts. Secretary Peter J. Gravett strongly supports the memorial and urges all Californians to continue their support for the memorial.

The successful processing of the environmental impact review through the Department of General Services marks another project milestone. The Committee is pleased to report that the architectural and engineering services and

environmental impact review costs have been paid for.

Secretary Gravett and Memorial Committee Chairman Robert Ruiz are coordinating efforts to assist the Committee in moving forward with the selection of a contractor to beautify, enhance and restore the Memorial.

For more information about the Mexican American Veterans Memorial, including design renderings, a video and how you can make a donation, please visit www.mavm.ca.gov.

CalVet Invites Newsletter Submissions

CalVet invites County Veteran Services Officers and representatives from government and nonprofit organizations that serve California veterans to submit articles for possible inclusion in the CalVet Newsletter.

View submission guidelines at www.calvet.ca.gov/Files/News/Newsletters/NewsletterGuidelines.pdf.

FOLLOW US!



UPCOMING EVENTS



MAY 10

Veterans Service Fair

Central Valley Veterans
American Legion Post 509
3509 N. First Street, Fresno
Contact: John Schuler (559) 977-3697

MAY 12

Mud Run

Veterans Home of California, Barstow
100 East Veterans Parkway, Barstow
www.barstowmudrun.com/sign-up

MAY 14-15

Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE)

Keeping Our Promise Expo
LAX Marriott Hotel
5855 West Century Blvd., Los Angeles
www.ktpexpo.org

MAY 15-17

National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators Training Conference

Double Tree Hotel
2001 Point West Way, Sacramento
Contact: Lindsey Wathen (916) 653-2327

MAY 19

Veteran Stand Down

Sierra Pines Church
40855 Covey Street, Oakhurst
9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Contact: Terry Cole (559) 658-8939

MAY 28

Memorial Day Health Fair

Sacramento Community Veterans Alliance
California State Military Museum
1119 Second Street, 2nd Floor
Old Sacramento
9:00 am – 4:00 pm

CalVet News

1227 O Street, Room 300
Sacramento, CA 95814
P (916) 653-2192
F (916) 653-2611
pao@calvet.ca.gov

Note: To view more events, visit www.calvet.ca.gov/news/newsletters.aspx

JP Tremblay
Deputy Secretary, Communications

Carolyn Ballou
Public Information Officer

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The Barstow Veterans Home is Currently Accepting Applications for Residency in the Independent Living (Domiciliary), and Intermediate Nursing Levels of Care

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