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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.

Veteran Talent Index Report Released

Monster.com®, one of the largest employment web sites in the world and the flagship brand of Monster Worldwide, Inc., recently released its biannual Veterans Talent Index (VTI), a snapshot of the current veteran hiring landscape. The first-ever VTI was published in November 2011 as a tool to help connect veterans and employers more effectively. This second in an on-going series of reports highlights both the requirements of today's employers and the needs of transitioning service members.

More than one million military service members will re-enter civilian life over the next five years and veterans transitioning out of the military continue to face challenging hiring conditions.

While many companies recognize the importance of hiring veterans into the civilian workforce, an increasing percentage of employers sense that veterans are not prepared for their career transition. Only 39% of employers, down significantly from



77% in the November report, agreed that veterans or those with prior military experience are prepared for a career transition out of the military.

"We hear from companies all the time who understand the business value of hiring veterans and putting their hard-earned military skills to use in a civilian workforce," said Steve Cooker, Executive Vice President, Global Government Solutions for Monster Worldwide. "But there is a definite communication gap when former military men and women attempt to convey those skills to recruiters and hiring managers. On the flipside, employers may not be asking the right questions of vets when considering them for jobs within their organizations. The intent of the Veterans Talent index is to help close this gap and facilitate the employment of American veterans."

What veterans may lack in civilian experience they more than make up for in military experience. The majority of veterans (83%) have more than five years of military experience compared to 55% who have more than five years of civilian work experience. Many of today's U.S. jobs (72%) feature requirements of less than five years of work experience;

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White House Launches New Military Credentialing Initiative

The Department of Defense, at the President's direction, has established a Military Credentialing and Licensing Task Force. The Task Force will focus its initial efforts on industries that have an identified need for more skilled workers and stand to benefit from military expertise and training, including: manufacturing, first responders, healthcare, information technology, transportation, and logistics.

Within one year, the Task Force will: (1) identify military specialties that readily transfer to high-demand jobs; (2) work with civilian credentialing and licensing associations to address gaps between military training programs and credentialing and licensing requirements; and (3) provide service members with greater access to necessary certification and licensing exams.

The Task Force will provide opportunities for up to 126,000 service members to gain industry-recognized, nationally-portable certifications for high-demand manufacturing jobs. Read more at <http://1.usa.gov/M35anS>.

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both employers and veterans will need to navigate the transference of military experience into today's workplace.

"Veterans bring a wide range of skills and expertise into the mix of professionals seeking employment, it's difficult shifting their mindset out of military culture and into civilian culture when talking to a hiring manager." said T. McCreary, President of Military.com and Vice President for Monster Worldwide. "The VTI provides actionable intelligence to assist employers in filing their talent needs and to provide veterans who want to make the transition into a civilian job, the feedback required to compete in, and acclimate to, the environment they're transitioning into."

To view or download the May 2012 Veterans Talent Index report, go to <http://bit.ly/MXGL5b>. For more information about the report, contact Kathy O'Reilly at (978) 823-2002 or kathy.orielly@monster.com.

Always on the go?

Get connected to your benefits!

CalVet mobile app now available for iPhone and Android devices.

www.calvet.ca.gov

CALVET





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

Secretary's Message

I hope the warm weather has been welcomed by most of you. I for one, enjoy eating a relaxing dinner in a shady garden spot in the home I share with my lovely wife. Make the most of these long days and warm nights.

I now want to give you an update on the work we are currently doing here at the California Department of Veterans Affairs. First of all, let me discuss the work we have been accomplishing with the Governor's Interagency Council on Veterans, which was established in August 2011.

Back in February of this year, the Council held a two-day conference that brought together more than 120 partners to discuss ways of making it easy for veterans to obtain benefits and services from government and community-based organizations. Participants were divided into 4 sub-groups: Health, Housing, Education, and Employment. Five key themes emerged during this meeting: Databases/Data Sharing, Improve the Transition Process, One-Stop Shops, and Public Relations/Outreach, and Funding. Each group identified a number of ways to improve service to veterans that could be implemented immediately. A summary of the February meeting can be found at www.icv.ca.gov.

During May of this year, the Council went on a road show throughout the state to ensure that partners not able to travel to Sacramento had a venue for sharing their efforts with the California Department of Veterans Affairs. Meetings were held in Ventura, the Inland Empire, San Diego, and Los Angeles, each addressing one of the Council's main focus points. It is envisioned that future meetings will be held in other parts of the state.

The Council has developed four goals:

1. To increase California's average payment of US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims to become the highest in the nation while besting the National average for percentage of filing for eligible veterans by 3%;
2. Within two years, decrease unemployment rates of 18-35 aged group veterans to a level equal to non-veteran populations and in six years have total veteran unemployment rates 2% lower than the non-veteran population;
3. Meet the federal goal of ending homelessness among veterans, while ensuring that we put affordable housing options in place for veterans to ensure housing stability as

a homelessness prevention method; and

4. Create a uniform intake and tracking system that allows a veteran to choose an educational or training goal upon discharge from the service. This system will then advise the veteran on how to best meet their individual goal.

Now, I'd like to share some good news about our Homes. The recently-signed Governor's Budget provides augmented funding that will allow the Redding and Fresno Homes to hire staff in anticipation of their opening. Although not the full amount needed to open the Homes, this additional funding is a clear commitment of support by the Legislature and the Governor even in these difficult budget times. It is anticipated that hiring at the Redding and Fresno Homes will begin in the Spring of 2013 and our first veterans will be admitted sometime in the Fall of that same year.

Connecting veterans with their benefits is also a priority for CalVet. One way we are achieving this is by our partnership with the California Department of Motor Vehicles. Through this effort, the DMV now asks all applicants for Driver's Licenses to check if they have ever served in our nation's military. The

Secretary's Message

DMV then sends this information to our Veterans Services Division, where a representative can then contact the veteran and guide them to the benefits and services they require.

Through our Veterans Services Division Reintegration Program, we are also connecting veterans to their benefits and services. Registering with us is easy. Go to our website at www.calvet.ca.gov, click on the Vet Services tab, and follow the directions on the "Get Connected to the Benefits You've Earned" link. Veterans can expect to be contacted by CalVet shortly after submitting their reintegration form.

Now, for those us of into gadgets and the latest electronic equipment, CalVet now has the CalVet app available for free for both Apple and Android devices. This app will give veterans 24/7 access to information about employment, education, housing, health and other benefits.

Good news is also coming out of our CalVet Home Loan Program. We have submitted federal legislation that will improve our home loan program. HR 834 will allow veterans to use CalVet low rate loans to refinance their homes. Stay tuned!

Also, CalVet's home loan insurance program provides one of the best cost benefits in the nation. This

life and disability, fire and hazard, and disaster indemnity insurance provides a low cost/low deductible policy and the highest benefits available. This level of insurance cannot be purchased anywhere on the open market at any price.

I am also proud to report that CalVet has been an active participant in the Keep Your Home California program established by California Housing Finance Agency. As of March 31, 2012, we had sent more than 1,629 homeowners to the program to establish their participation. Also, as of March 31, 2012, there have been 524 homeowners that have moved into the set-up phase which may help the veterans stay in their homes.

And finally, I want to inform you that CalVet is co-sponsoring the 2nd Annual Female Veterans Stand Down with U.S. Vets, which will take place on July 20 at the USC – Davidson Conference Center in Los Angeles. We are very pleased to be part of such a noble and worthwhile event. Serving the brave women who have donned our country's military uniform is not just an honor, it's an obligation. Please see the calendar section of this newsletter for more information on this event.

As you can see, we at CalVet are slowly but surely meeting our three strategic goals of:

1. Increasing the accessibility and utilization of assisted living and long-term care, housing, benefits, and services to veterans and their families;
2. Providing the highest quality care and services to California's veterans and their families; and
3. Creating fiscal and operational efficiencies within CalVet.

I hope you enjoy a very patriotic and memorable Fourth of July. Stay safe and remember that alcohol and fireworks don't mix.

Sincerely,



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

Hero Miles Help Service Members, Families

If you are looking for a meaningful way to help service members and their families, consider donating your airline miles.

The “Hero Miles” program is a partnership between the nonprofit Fisher House Foundation and individual airlines whose passengers donate their frequent flyer miles to assist service members and their families. Specifically, Fisher House Foundation provides free airline tickets to wounded, injured, and ill military men and women who are undergoing treatment at a military or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical center or attending authorized events.

To learn more about the Hero Miles program, including how to donate your frequent flyer miles, go to www.fisherhouse.org.

Direct Deposits of Federal Benefits

By Joe Wright

Are you getting U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), Social Security, or other federal benefits by paper check? The Department of the Treasury recently announced a new rule that will extend the safety and convenience of electronic payments to millions of Americans and phase out paper checks for federal benefits by March 1, 2013. Officials at the USDVA urge veterans to sign up for electronic payments of their benefits.

On March 1, 2013, the Treasury will stop issuing paper checks. People who do not have electronic payments for their federal benefits by that time will receive their funds via a pre-paid debit card. Called the Direct Express card, it is issued by Comerica Bank as the financial agent of the U.S. Treasury.

Anyone already receiving federal benefit payments electronically will be unaffected by the changes. To learn more about the federal government’s switch to direct deposit—or to change USDVA benefits to direct deposit—visit www.GoDirect.org or call (800) 333-1795.

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



Scam Alert!

E-mails are being sent to individuals, including military members, military retirees, and civilian employees, which appear to be sent by Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS). Although the email appears to come from DFAS and displays a “.mil” e-mail address, it is actually from a non-government email account. These e-mails promise additional compensation, but in truth, they are looking to rip you off! These schemes can be quite costly for victims who pay upfront fees to file these claims, and the scam artists are often long gone when victims discover they’ve been scammed. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/MB3tzb>.

Veteran Caregiver Support

You may know that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) provides benefits and services for veterans, but did you know that there are also a number of services designed specifically to support you in your role as a family caregiver? Programs are available to help you care for the veteran you love and for yourself. These programs include:

Caregiver Support Line

Toll Free (855) 260-3274

MON-FRI 5:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. PST

SAT 7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. PST

With the Caregiver Support Line, assistance is just a quick phone call away. Whether you're in need of immediate assistance or have questions about what services you may be eligible for, the caring licensed professionals who answer the support line can help.

Caregiver Support Coordinator

Your local Caregiver Support Coordinator is a licensed professional who can support you by matching you with services for which you are eligible, and provide you with valuable information about resources that can help you stay smart, strong and organized as you care for the veteran you love.

Caregiver Support services also include:

- Adult Day Health Care Center
- Home-Based Primary Care
- Skilled Home Care
- Homemaker and Home Health Aide Program
- Home Telehealth
- Respite Care
- Home Hospice Care

For more information about USDVA Caregiver Support Services, go to www.caregiver.va.gov or call your local Caregiver Support Coordinator for assistance. To find your local Caregiver Support Coordinator, go to www.caregiver.va.gov/help_landing.asp and enter your zip code.

Distinguished Veteran State Parks & Recreation Pass

Summer is here, and it's great time for veterans to take advantage of their State Parks pass benefit. The Distinguished Veteran Pass entitles the holder to the use of all basic State Park System operated facilities, including camping and day use, at no further charge.

Any honorably discharged war veteran who is a resident of California with a 50% or more service-connected disability, or was held as a prisoner of war by forces hostile to the United States, or who received the Congressional Medal of Honor is eligible to receive the Distinguished Veteran Pass.

Applicants need to submit proof of their service-connected disability rated at 50% or greater or provide documentation showing they were a former Prisoner of War or Medal of Honor recipient; a copy of their California driver's license, and a completed Department of Parks and Recreation Form DPR 619 which can be found at www.parks.ca.gov/pages/737/files/dpr619.pdf.

Applicants may apply in person at:

Parks Pass Sales Office

3930 Seaport Blvd.

West Sacramento, CA 95691

or mail a completed application to:

California State Parks

Attn: Distinguished Veteran Pass Program

Sacramento, CA 94296

The pass is not valid at units operated by local government, private agencies, or concessionaires and it is not valid for special events, group campsites, and commercial use or for supplemental fees and cannot be used in conjunction with any other pass and/or discount.



Veterans in the Theater

Shakespeare's romantic comedy, "As You Like It," is coming to The Japanese Garden of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) West Los Angeles Healthcare System campus July 10 through 29. This isn't just ANY Shakespearean production, however; veterans make up more than 40% of the company and crew.

The production, directed by Royal Shakespeare Comedy artist Kenn Sabberton, is part of The Shakespeare Center of the Los Angeles Veterans Summer Employment Initiative. The Initiative gives veterans jobs and the opportunity to work alongside a cast that includes actors who have had significant roles in television, movies, Broadway and other stage productions.

Headed by Vietnam veteran Gary Wissmann, veterans will be working at all levels of the production. Wissmann is designing the scenery and working as the technical director. The master electrician, prop master, and some of the construction crew are veterans. Veterans also make up much of the front-of-the-house staff, ushering audience in and out of the theatre and providing customer service. Other veterans are helping to restore the Japanese Garden.

While supplies last, Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles is also making a number of tickets available to active-duty military, veterans, and their guests free of charge. For information about the ticket program for active-duty military and veterans, call (213) 481-2273 ext. 19. Tickets for the general public are available at www.shakespearecenter.org.

The Shakespeare Center of the Los Angeles Veterans Summer Employment Initiative, which brings these veterans to the production, is supported by USDVA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Sony Pictures Entertainment, The Capital Group, Herb Alpert Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, and the Pentagon Federal Credit Union.

National Women's Trauma Recovery Program

Ten years ago, the Department of Veterans Affairs opened the National Women's Trauma Recovery Program (WTRP) as part of the National Center for PTSD at Menlo Park, CA. The WTRP, designed to treat women veterans, active duty service members, National Guard, and Reservists with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), is the first residential program of its kind and is open to women across the country. Many of the women who are referred to the program have experienced traumas that include but are not limited to military sexual trauma (MST), combat trauma, and training accidents.

The WTRP is an intensive 60-day residential program with a strong emphasis on enhancing interpersonal functioning through psycho-education and skill building classes. Classes focus on the development of coping skills such as emotion regulation, relapse prevention, anxiety management, and effective communication. Residents practice these skills with one another and out in the community on weekend passes. They work together to problem-solve, learn effective coping strategies to better manage their symptoms, and utilize each other for

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<< RECOVERY

support. Community members have opportunities to make observations and provide each other with feedback that can assist residents in making important changes and improving their quality of life.

Many women arrive to the program carrying heavy emotional burdens and find that sharing these burdens with their peers aids in the healing and recovery process. Many leave the program more self-assured and ready to connect to society and loved ones. Their stories are real and often painful. In an effort to reach other women veterans who need help, they've shared their stories with the world. Click on the photos to read their stories and learn how the program has changed their lives.

For more information about the WTRP, including eligibility, curriculum, and application, go to www.womenvetsptsd.va.gov.



Photo taken by Heidi Schumann for The New York Times

Desperately Seeking Veterans

It's a great problem to have. The California Conservation Corps (CCC) is losing trainees in its Veterans Green Jobs Program to full-time jobs faster than the Corps can find new veteran trainees to replace them. Since April 2012, 48 veterans have been plugged into the Veterans Fire Program, and by the end of May, half of those veterans had begun careers with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management.

Once veterans receive their CCC training, they are qualified for entry-level positions. In addition, the USFS has 100 apprenticeship positions available to veterans who have successfully completed the CCC training program (with 500 hours of experience).

The targeted age group for the CCC training program is 18-27. The upper age limit is 29 at the San Bernardino location because it is a non-

residential program. Veterans with 5 to 10 preference points and female veterans get priority placement, although few female veterans apply.

There are lots of positions currently available:

- Energy Crew - 45 positions available working through Solar City;
- Backcountry Trail Crew - 15 positions available working through California State Parks and USFS;
- Watershed Stewards Project - 15 positions available working through California Department of Fish and Game; and
- Hundreds of other positions available working through CCC.

To watch a video about how the CCC is helping young military veterans get jobs, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sd4WcR9n78. For more information about the Veterans Green Jobs Program, contact snyderg@veteransgreenjobs.org or (419) 789-0523.



Families Deserve the Right to Mourn in Peace

By Senator Ted W. Lieu

For two years I've worked with a broad coalition of Democrats, Republicans and veterans groups on legislation to protect grieving families in California from hate-filled funeral protests.

While our goal is immensely popular, we've been forced to reckon with the delicate balance between a universal human truth – the sanctity of mourning our loved ones – and the Constitution's protections of speech, even speech that we find abhorrent.

Though Gov. Brown vetoed last year's bill for fear of the Supreme Court striking it down, his administration is working with us to draft similar legislation that will withstand legal scrutiny.

That proposal, Senate Bill 661, is currently making its way through the Legislature. Sponsored by the

American Legion, AMVETS and the Vietnam Veterans of America, it's continuing to earn broad support and all indicators tell us it will once again end up on the governor's desk where he'll have the opportunity to sign it into law and provide comfort to California's grieving families.

I'm optimistic that our revised measure addresses his concerns and will earn his signature, but until I see the stroke of his pen making it official, I'm going to keep asking you to join our coalition and let California lawmakers know the importance of this bill.

To this end, I'm inspired by recent displays of patriotism and community pride by our fellow Californians in Anderson (way up north on Interstate 5, near Redding).

Earlier this year, as the hate-spewing Phelps family and their independent Westboro, N.C., church threatened

to protest the funeral of Naval Petty Officer First Class Chad Regelin who was killed in Afghanistan, the people of Anderson, Redding and the surrounding communities lined the streets of Petty Officer Regelin's procession to drown out the protest. The heartfelt show of respect proved so overwhelming that if any protestors showed up, reporters covering the event were unable to find them.

I remain resolute that California has the ability and the responsibility to place a reasonable limitation on speech to protect grieving families. In SB 661 I have addressed Gov. Brown's concerns with last year's 1000-foot buffer zone by reducing the footage. Additional changes reflect the guidance handed down by the Supreme Court in their *Snyder v. Phelps* ruling, the case where the Supreme Court ruled 8-1 in favor of the right of Westboro and the Phelps family to protest, but did not rule buffer zones unconstitutional.

In opposition to my bill, the American Civil Liberties Union and California Attorneys for Criminal Justice have argued that current law is sufficient to thwart protestors. I disagree.

The types of protests we are seeing at funerals do not violate any current law dealing with trespassing on private property or blocking the public ways. Current law allows protesters to continue, just feet away from grieving families. SB 661 creates a reasonable limitation on speech to protect families from disruptive

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MilitaryConnection Writers' Circle

Do you have something you're passionate about? Do you want to let others know about your program or how you are making a difference? If you love to write, you are invited to participate in the MilitaryConnection Writers' Circle. The Writers' Circle features guest writers who want to share their thoughts, deeds and ideas with our audience. To be included,

your article must be 300-600 words of original content, not copy written, and non-political. Your articles will be featured in the Writers' Circle of the MilitaryConnection.com web site. Some articles will be featured in upcoming newsletters. For admission consideration, e-mail your article to info@militaryconnection.com

Dramatic Rise in Veteran Disability Claims

According to The Associated Press, Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are filing for disability benefits at an extraordinary rate. Forty-five percent of new veterans are claiming service-connected disabilities and filing for compensation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA). According to government officials, that is more than double the estimated 21 percent of Gulf War vets who filed claims in the early '90s.

Also remarkable is the fact that OIF/OEF veterans are claiming significantly more ailments—an average of eight to nine, but sometimes as many as 14. That is nearly four times the average number of ailments claimed by Vietnam veterans and seven times more than claimed by World War II and Korean War veterans.

Some wonder whether the inability of some wounded veterans to find or keep a job in a depressed economy is a factor in the sharply increased number of disability claims. Although their injury symptoms may not be worse, their financial need may be.

More widespread knowledge about and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) almost certainly plays a part in the increased number of claims. Some degree of traumatic brain injury—sometimes called the “signature” injury of the Iraq War—affected more than 233,000 veterans between 2000 and the end of 2011 according to the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center.

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protests while carefully balancing the constitutionally protected right of free speech.

Famed 19th century statesman and four-time British Prime Minister, Sir William Gladstone is often quoted as arguing, “Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals.”

In California, we have the opportunity to affirm those higher ideals and our respect for the laws of our land, while underscoring the sanctity of mourning. Protesters should not be able to disrupt funeral services – that is both constitutional and common sense.

Ted W. Lieu, D-Torrance, is a USAF reservist in the JAG Corps. He was named 2011 Lawmaker of the Year by the Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council. Senator Lieu represents nearly 1 million residents in State Senate District 28, which includes the cities of Carson, El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, Lomita, Manhattan Beach, Redondo Beach and Torrance, as well as portions of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

*This bill has not made it to the Governor's desk; the California Department of Veterans Affairs does not have a position on the bill and is not endorsing the legislation.

<< DISABILITY

Women served in greater numbers in Iraq and Afghanistan than they did in previous wars. Many of those women experienced some form of military sexual trauma, which may include harassment, assault, rape and other violence. According to the USDVA, when asked if they ever experienced sexual assault during their military service, 1 in 5 female patients respond "yes." Some female vets are claiming PTSD related to their military sexual trauma and are submitting claims for compensation.

In addition, more troops are surviving wounds that would have proven fatal in wars of the past. The USDVA reports that more than 95 percent of troops wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan have survived. Improved body armor and better battlefield care are credited.

More aggressive veteran outreach and education could account for

some of the increase in veteran compensation claims. CalVet believes that to be the case in California. By the end of 2010, the State saw a \$300 million increase in compensation and pension dollars than it had the year before. CalVet's wide and diverse array of outreach efforts and its community partnerships were instrumental. The tireless efforts of County Veteran Service Officers, AmeriCorps volunteers, the use of social media, its award-winning mobile app, the assistance of public libraries, chambers of commerce, government agencies statewide, and the engagement of diverse private-sector employer partners most certainly played a part.

The end result in all of this is more disability claims, which come in faster than the USDVA can process them. The average wait time to get a new claim processed is currently about eight months and is growing longer each month.



My Next Move

Are you a recently-returned veteran wondering what to do next? My Next Move for Veterans is an easy-to-use online tool created by the Department of Labor that allows veterans to enter information about their experience and skills in the field, and match it with civilian careers that put that experience to use. The site also includes information about salaries, apprenticeships, and other related education and training programs. Visit www.mynextmove.org/vets.

SAVE *the* DATE



The annual CalVet Women's Conference will be held on

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 4, 2012**

at the
Double Tree Hotel
in Sacramento

CONTACT

womenveterans@calvet.ca.gov
or (916) 653-2327

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



Partnership to House Homeless SF Vets

By Colleen Corliss, Swords to Plowshares

Swords to Plowshares, along with the City of San Francisco, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), are partnering to house 50 homeless veterans in 100 days in the midst of an over-headed housing market. “Homes for Heroes” aims to house 50 veterans over 100 days by working closely with small property owners who will accept HUD VASH vouchers, which pay a portion of rent each month directly to landlords. But, unlike Section 8, USDVA case managers stand ready to help the veterans and landlord with any issues that may arise that could impact the veterans’ ability to maintain their housing.

“We look forward to counting down from 50 homeless veterans to zero over this time and are confident that with the help of community leaders this project will be a great success story for veterans, ‘Swords’ and the City of San Francisco,” said Michael Blecker, Swords to Plowshares Executive Director. “This is another step in the right direction for reducing homelessness and poverty in San Francisco, specifically among veterans.

SF Homes for Heroes aims to target chronically homeless veterans and also provides ongoing case management through USDVA. The program has several subsidy levels, the primary subsidy being for a one-bedroom unit. The maximum that HUD can pay is \$1,612 per month. Many veterans have disability income and are responsible to pay a portion of their rent, but their contribution cannot exceed 40 percent of their income.

“It is an unfortunate fact that single-room occupancy units located in blighted areas of the city, where crime and drug use is often rampant are often the only choice available to these men and women who have worked diligently to prepare themselves for successful transition into their own apartments,” said Leon Winston, the Chief Operation Officer of Swords to Plowshares, a formerly homeless veteran. “This city-wide effort is already opening more doors for homeless veterans and paving the way for long-term success.”

The initiative will continue to operate and support those veterans already in the program after the 100 days, as well as find additional veterans who can take advantage of the 200 more vouchers allotted for 2012.

“The City and Mayor’s Office of Housing have helped us provide supportive housing to thousands of homeless veterans for the past two decades and we couldn’t be happier to have the boots-on-the-ground support and collaboration we are getting to address real-life problems for San Francisco veterans,” said Winston.

For more information about the San Francisco Homes for Heroes program, go to www.sfhomesforheroes.org.

Veteran Crime, Punishment... and Alternatives

California is currently home to 1.9 million veterans. With normal attrition and the drawdown of troops from Afghanistan, the State anticipates the return of another 40,000-plus veterans every year for the next several years. Most men and women who separate from military service adjust well to civilian life. They go back to school, take on a new job, and make up for time lost with their loved ones.

Other veterans struggle to reintegrate. Many suffer from the invisible wounds of war, like post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), military sexual trauma (MST), or chronic depression that makes return to civilian life quite difficult. A veteran with a brain injury or mental health condition may go for months, even years, without problems. Something could then happen that aggravates their dormant condition sending them into an uncontrolled rage that sometimes includes spousal abuse. Some struggling veterans feel the need to self-medicate—often excessively—with drugs or alcohol to ease their pain. Not surprisingly, these veterans can end up on the wrong side of the law, and the consequences are many.

Veterans who are convicted of a felony and imprisoned in a federal, state, or local penal institution for more than 60 days lose U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

(USDVA) benefits. Disability or death pension paid to an incarcerated beneficiary is discontinued. Disability compensation paid to an incarcerated veteran rated 20 percent or more disabled is limited to the 10 percent rate. For a veteran whose disability rating is 10 percent, the payment is reduced to half of the rate payable to a veteran evaluated as 10 percent disabled.

Any amounts not paid may be apportioned to eligible dependents. Payments are not reduced for participants in work-release programs, residing in halfway houses or under community control.

Failure to notify USDVA of a veteran's incarceration can result in overpayment of benefits and the subsequent loss of all USDVA financial benefits until the overpayment is recovered. USDVA benefits will not be provided to any veteran or dependent wanted for an outstanding felony warrant.

On the brighter side, the USDVA has programs to help incarcerated veterans. For example, the Healthcare for Reentry Veterans Program (www.va.gov/HOMELESS/Reentry.asp) offers outreach to veterans incarcerated in state and federal prisons, and referrals and short-term case management assistance upon release from prison. The Veterans Justice Outreach Program (www.va.gov/HOMELESS/VJO.asp) offers outreach and case management to veterans involved in law enforcement encounters, overseen by treatment courts, and incarcerated in local jails.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) is working to prevent recidivism of incarcerated veterans. CalVet has partnered with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to assist veterans that are incarcerated, paroled, and on probation in getting access to or restoring benefits earned through their military service. This partnership will also include a plan to ensure the USDVA reimburses CDCR for

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Social Security Benefits & Military Retirement

Did you know you can get both Social Security benefits AND military retirement? Generally, there is no reduction of Social Security benefits because of your military retirement benefits. You'll get your full Social Security benefit based on your earnings.

Social Security survivors' benefits may affect benefits payable under the optional Department of Defense Survivors Benefit Plan. Check with the Department of Defense (www.militarypay.defense.gov/survivor/sbp/index.html) or your military retirement advisor for more information.

If you have health care protection from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) or under the TRICARE (formerly CHAMPUS) or CHAMPVA program, your health benefits may change or end when you become eligible for Medicare. Check with the USDVA, the Department of Defense or a military health benefits advisor for more information.

Credit for Military Service After 1956

Since 1957, if you had military service earnings for active duty (including

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prescription drug costs incurred by treating veteran inmates whose prescriptions are to treat service-connected conditions.

For veterans whose crimes are not felony and who are lucky enough to live in a county that has already established a veteran court, there may alternatives to incarceration.

Veteran courts are designed to focus on the specialized needs of veterans who may be suffering from service-related disabilities or illnesses. They promote sobriety, recovery and stability through a coordinated response that involves cooperation and collaboration with the judges, prosecutors, public defenders and

local lawyer volunteers, the USDVA and CalVet.

Veteran courts handle veterans-only caseloads and take into consideration the PTSD, substance abuse, head injuries, and mental illness that underlie some veteran crimes. In many cases, counseling is required and incorporated into the treatment programs that are designed to treat the underlying psychological disorders. Participating veterans are ordered to complete the recommended treatment plan and comply with any other terms and conditions of probation imposed by the court.

The best argument for veteran courts, advocates say, is that

they seem to work: 70 percent of defendants finish the programs and 75 percent are not rearrested for at least two years after, according to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. California currently has 17 veteran courts. Formal veteran courts are operational in San Diego, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Ventura, Santa Clara, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Placer, Tulare, San Mateo, and El Dorado Counties. Informal veteran courts are operational in Solano, Kern, Sonoma and Nevada Counties.

For more information about veterans' courts, contact CollaborativeJustice@jud.ca.gov.

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active duty for training), you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special earnings for periods of active duty from 1957 to 2001 can also be credited to your Social Security earnings record for benefit purposes.

- If you were in the active military service from 1957 through 1967, special extra earnings are added to your earnings record when you apply for Social Security benefits.
- If your active duty was after 1967, the extra earnings are already on your record.

There are no extra earnings credits for military service after 2001.

Credit for Military Service In 1940 Through 1956

If you were in the military from 1940 through 1956, including attendance at a service academy, you did not pay Social Security taxes. However, your records are credited with special earnings that may help you qualify for Social Security and Medicare or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit. These special earnings credits are added to your earnings record when you apply for your Social Security benefit.

How Special Earnings Credits Work

Your Social Security record may be credited with \$160 a month in earnings for military service from September 16, 1940 through December 31, 1956, under the following circumstances:

- You were honorably discharged after 90 or more days of service, or you were released because of a disability or injury received in the line of duty; or
- You are still on active duty; or
- You are applying for survivors benefits and the veteran died while on active duty.

You cannot receive credit for these special earnings if you are already

receiving a federal benefit based on the same years of service. There is one exception: If you were on active duty after 1956, you can still get the special earnings for 1951 through 1956, even if you're receiving a military retirement based on service during that period.

For more information, contact the Social Security Administration (<http://www.ssa.gov/pgm/reach.htm>) or military retirement advisor.

Veterans' Housing Planned at Former Military Camp

By Alicia Robinson, Staff Writer,
[The Press Enterprise](#)

Riverside officials hope to honor the military heritage of Camp Anza, a troop staging area during World War II, by turning it into a development that provides services and housing for disabled veterans.

They're still working out funding for the \$1.8 million project, but they've gotten four proposals from companies eager to build the project and may choose one in July, development Director Emilio Ramirez said Monday, June 11.

The existing officers' club building, near the Arlanza Library, would be renovated to become a center for outpatient services. The project would include up to 38 affordable townhome-style units where disabled veterans could live with their families as they get care.

That would be in keeping with how the property was used years ago, said Mark Earley, legislative assistant to Councilman William "Rusty" Bailey, who has worked on the Camp Anza plans. Earley is an Army veteran with



Calling All Nurses

Nursing isn't just a job, it's a profession. As any of the nurses at the Veterans Homes of California can tell you, nursing our nation's heroes isn't just a profession, it's a calling.

Nancy Nuno gets that. She works at the Yountville Veterans Home—the oldest and largest state veterans home in the Nation, which lies nestled in the heart of the beautiful Napa Valley. She began working at

the Home as a Food Service Worker almost 11 years ago. After working in the main dining room for 3 years, Nancy realized she wanted to become a nurse.

In 2004, after a grueling schedule of full time work and full time school, Nancy was graduated, got her license, and began working at the Home as a licensed vocational nurse (LVN). Nancy worked as an LVN for six years and enjoyed the experience so much she went back to school and became a registered nurse. Nancy continues working at the Yountville Home where she cares for brave men and women veterans who served our country, including many who served as long ago as World War II.

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more than 30 years of service.

The camp was built in 1942 as a place where soldiers were sent after basic training to await their orders. Earley said some of the military housing from that era remains but was sold and is privately occupied, and part of the land was sold to an aerospace firm. The officers' club has not been used for years.

Ramirez said he got the idea after reading an article about a disabled veteran who moved across the country to a place where he could live with his family while receiving medical care to avoid going into a veterans' hospital.

"I know that more and more of

the returning 30,000 (veterans) are needing some type of medical care," Earley said. "To you and me, some of it is very visible — burn patients, single and double amputees ... but I think there's also a lot of (post traumatic stress disorder) that needs to be addressed."

California has the largest share of the nation's veterans, about 10 percent or just under 2 million people, said J.P. Tremblay, Deputy Secretary Communications & Legislation, for the California Department of Veterans Affairs. His agency focuses on helping veterans get mortgages, and other programs reach out to homeless veterans, but more help is needed for veterans who are at transitional points, Tremblay said.

They're not on the street, but they're not ready to buy a home, Tremblay said.

"Any kind of a project that is going to be there to help veterans and their families with transition and getting settled back into civilian life ... anything like that is a help," he said. "California does have a need."

Ramirez said officials hope to fund the project with money from previously issued redevelopment bonds, but they're waiting for a final determination from the state Department of Finance before signing contracts with a developer. If things go as planned, construction could start by spring 2014.

This article was reprinted courtesy of The Press Enterprise.

<< NURSE

"My experience first as an LVN and now as an RN has been very challenging but at the same time very rewarding. I love what I do and it feels good to know that one can make a difference in someone's life. I really enjoy taking care of our veterans," Nancy said.

The Yountville Home is one of eight state-owned facilities operated by the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). The Home offers disabled and elderly veterans quality, individualized and affordable rehabilitative, residential and medical care and services regardless of income. Many of the Homes' employers are veterans themselves, which helps them more clearly understand the needs of residents.

The Homes are certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and licensed by the California Department of Public Health, the California Department of Social Services, and the California Department of HealthCare Services.

CalVet Homes are also located in Barstow, Chula Vista, Fresno, Lancaster, Redding, Ventura, and West Los Angeles. The Homes' continuum of long-term care gives residents support during the changes that occur with aging, illness or memory decline. The Homes offer a range of health care services provided by on-site licensed medical providers in a homelike environment. For more complex treatment or diagnosis, referrals are made to medical specialists within the local

community or to hospitals operated by the USDVA.

The Homes range in size from 60 residents on a 20-acre site to more than 1,000 residents on a 500-acre site. When all eight homes are open (Fresno and Redding are scheduled to open in 2013), they will house and care for approximately 3,000 veterans. For more information about individual Veterans Homes of California, go to www.calvet.ca.gov/VetHomes/Default.aspx.

A large number of employees at the CalVet Homes are veterans themselves, which helps them more clearly understand the needs of residents. However, all qualified individuals are welcome to apply for Homes employment opportunities.

CalVet is presently offering exams for a number of nursing classifications and has openings at several of its beautiful Homes locations (including those in Fresno and Redding) for those already on State eligibility lists.

If you are a medical professional interested in a rewarding career caring for extraordinary men and women who selflessly served and sacrificed for our country, visit www.calvet.ca.gov/aboutus/Jobs/Default.aspx.

USDVA BRIEFS

USDVA/DOD PTSD COACH APP WINS INNOVATION AWARD FOR TELEMEDICINE ADVANCEMENT

The joint USDVA/Department of Defense (DoD) Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) coach mobile application marked its first anniversary with receipt of an award for innovation in the advancement of telemedicine from the American Telemedicine Association. <http://1.usa.gov/JZZj0s>

USDVA ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP TO HOUSE 10,000 HOMELESS VETERANS IN 2012

USDVA announced that it will collaborate with the "100,000 Homes" Campaign and its 117 participating communities to help find permanent housing for 10,000 vulnerable and chronically homeless Veterans this year. <http://1.usa.gov/Jx8cgw>

USDVA MEDICAL ARTICLE DISCUSSES SPECIALIZED IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETERAN HEALTH CARE NEEDS

USDVA clinicians offer a comprehensive review of the health concerns of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans and practical management guidelines for primary care providers in an article entitled Post Deployment Care for Returning Combat Veterans, and published in Journal of General Internal Medicine (JGIM). <http://1.usa.gov/L4dLZm>

PROCESSING OF RETROACTIVE AGENT ORANGE CLAIMS NEARLY COMPLETE

USDVA announced that nearly 230,000 claims have already been processed for the three newest Agent-Orange related conditions through June 2012, including over 150,000 claims required to be adjudicated under the order of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in *Nehmer v. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*. <http://1.usa.gov/KRkxhu>

LEGISLATION

The following bills passed out of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs on June 26, 2012.

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. The purpose of this bill is move the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) from the Employment Development Department (EDD) to CalVet under the new Work Force Development Division in order to have CalVet oversee veterans employment programs. The bill passed on a 7-0 vote and has been referred to Senate Committee on Appropriations.

AB 2490 (BUTLER)

This bill would require all adult prisons under California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to appoint correctional counselors to assist incarcerated veterans in applying for veterans benefits. This bill would require the correctional

counselors to coordinate with CalVet, the County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) or Veterans Service Organizations, as specified. The bill passed on a 7-0 vote and has been referred to Senate Committee on Public Safety.

The following bills passed out of the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs on June 26, 2012.

SB 663 (CORREA)

This bill would require CalVet to include specified information relating to homelessness among veterans in the department's strategic plan, produced on an annual basis, and would require the department to transmit a copy of the strategic plan to the Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee's in both houses annually. The bill passed on a 9-0 vote and has been re-referred to Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

SB 1198 (CALDERON)

This bill requires the CalVet to publicize information relating to the federal and state benefits that are available to homeless veterans. This bill requires CalVet to use printed material, its Internet web site, and other forms of media to distribute information about available programs. The bill passed

on a 9-0 vote and has been re-referred to Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

SB 1258 (WOLK)

This bill requires the CalVet to establish a system for monitoring outcomes for veterans including employment and employment-related earnings, incidence of suicide, higher education, and involvement with the child welfare system and with the criminal justice system. The bill passed on a 9-0 vote and has been re-referred to Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

SB 1563 (CANNELLA)

This bill requires that a veteran who has completed acceptable training in the United States Armed Forces as a peace officer shall receive 15 preference points in an examination for an open peace officer position in state employment. The bill passed on a 9-0 vote and has been re-referred to Assembly Committee on Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security.

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UPCOMING EVENTS



JULY 7 - 8

Empowering Women Veterans Conference

The Farmer Veteran Coalition
UC Davis
Contact: wvac@farmvetco.org
(530) 756-1395

JULY 13 - 15

25th National Stand Down

Veterans Village of San Diego
San Diego High School
1405 Park Blvd., San Diego
Contact: (619) 497-0142

JULY 20

2nd Annual Female Veteran Stand Down

US VETS (Long Beach)
USC Davidson Conference Center
3415 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Contact: LaTrice McBride (562) 388-8120

AUGUST 1 - 2

Healing & Hiring Fair

National Women Veterans
Association of America
Jacob Center
404 Euclid Ave, San Diego
7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Contact: (866) 716-9996

AUGUST 2

Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet Job & Resource Fair

Employment Development Dept.
Elks Lodge
212 South Elk Lane, Santa Ana
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Contact: Sanders Martin (714) 518-2356

AUGUST 17 - 19

2nd Annual Orange County Stand Down

Army Reserve Center
2651 Newport Beach, Costa Mesa
Contact: (714) 547-0615

AUGUST 22

San Francisco Veterans Town Hall/ Collaborative

War Memorial Building
401 Van Ness, Room 207, San Francisco
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Contact:
Maryellen_salzano@yahoo.com

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

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