

CalVet

CONNECT

CALVET
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*Independence
Day*





Acting Secretary's Message

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) maintains strong and vital relationships with our many partners in our local communities. By working closely with our Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs), and non-profits, CalVet fulfills our mission of assisting our Veterans and their families with living productive and fruitful lives.

During the past month, I enjoyed the honor of meeting with many VSOs, CVSOs, and non-profits throughout our Golden State. I travelled extensively, spoke with you, learned about your concerns, and thanked you for your outstanding service to our Veterans, often going back many decades.

For example, VSOs donate vans, pool tables, popcorn machines, money, and so much more to our eight Veterans Homes. VSOs volunteer thousands of hours assisting our Veterans living at our Homes. Your selfless dedication significantly improves the lives of our Veterans and their families.

CVSO professionals are on the front lines every day providing education about federal, state, and local benefits, as well as assisting with paperwork and providing advocacy so our Veterans receive timely assistance. VSOs also assist Veterans with filing claims.

Non-profits also answer the call to serve. Last month, CalVet, the California Department of Housing and

Community Development, and the California Housing Finance Agency announced that nearly 700 low-income and homeless Veterans and their families will benefit from more than \$62 million in affordable housing funding through Proposition 41 and the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Program.

The announcement represents the first round of funding directed to 17 housing developments statewide. A second round of awards is expected to be available this fall, providing additional opportunities to apply for and receive funds for the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable multifamily housing for California's Veterans and their families.

With the continued teamwork of other state agencies, VSOs, CVSOs, and our non-profit partners, California is moving forward in assisting all our Veterans in a manner the public expects and our Veterans earned. On behalf of everyone at CalVet, I thank our VSOs, CVSOs, and non-profit partners for all you do for our Veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

Debbie Endsley
Secretary (A)
California Department of Veterans Affairs



CalVet, Habitat for Humanity Present New Home Keys to Veterans

On July 18, 2015, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and Habitat for Humanity, San Fernando/Santa Clarita (SF/SCV) host a Key Ceremony for 26 Veterans and their families who will receive the keys to their new homes. The event is part of CalVet's Residential Enriched Neighborhood (REN) program.

CalVet REN offers affordable home ownership to our low-income Veterans and their families through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV. The program offers manageable loan payments, tailored home design, and enrichment services meeting our Veterans' physical, wellness, and mental health needs. Many REN services offered are Veteran-to-Veteran, and a crucial part of the program trains Veterans in financial self-sufficiency to assist with homeowner success and stepping up to the middle class.

CalVet recently completed a 12-home REN community pilot project in Sylmar, and currently has three REN communities in development throughout Southern California, ranging in size from 12 to 78 homes.

This month's Key Ceremony celebrates the completion of Phase I of the Santa Clarita CalVet REN community and is the result of the Veterans' hard work, sweat equity, and self-sufficiency training. The event is free and open to the public.

CalVet, in partnership with Homes for Families, continues working with Habitat for Humanity SF/SCV on developing REN communities, including projects for 50 homes in Palmdale and 78 additional homes in Santa Clarita.



The Reyes family in front of their new CalVet-financed home.

Veteran Uses CalVet Home and Realizes Dream for Family

Xavier Reyes, a 100% service-connected disabled Veteran, was living in his mother-in-law's small home with his wife, their two children, and their family dog. Needless to say, living conditions were cramped. Married for 13 years, Xavier and Diane constantly moved from house to house with no home they could really call their own.

Wishing to buy a home for their family, the couple contacted the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and applied for a CalVet Home Loan. Because of the family's challenging credit history, they were unsure whether CalVet would approve their application. "We were on pins and needles waiting to hear if CalVet could help us," Xavier said.

After receiving the happy news that their CalVet Home Loan was pre-approved, Xavier and Diane began their house hunting adventure. They purchased a new home from a builder who offered financing. Xavier and Diane preferred to stay with the CalVet Home Loan Program, but their builder insisted they use its preferred lender. Rather than lose the builder's credit and the home, our CalVet Home Loan Specialist recommended the Reyes' apply for a loan with the builder's lender. With mixed emotions, they applied with the builder's lender, yet they were declined.

Xavier and Diane turned to CalVet for assistance. Fortunately, CalVet's expanded loan eligibility guidelines resulted in an approval, thus making homeownership a reality for the Reyes family. After their loan closed, Xavier wrote the following note of thanks to their CalVet Home Loan Specialist:

"Thank you ever so much for all your time and patience with us. We are forever grateful for your help. We don't have the greatest of credit, and still you managed to work your magic and helped make our dream come true! If you ever find yourselves in our neck of the woods, feel free to stop by. Our house is your house."

Contact CalVet today and learn more about our Home Loan Program and to see if you qualify for a CalVet home loan. Please visit www.calvet.ca.gov/calvet-programs/home-loans or call (916) 503-8318.

See You at the Fair!

California State Fair Hosts Military & Veteran Appreciation Day on July 16, CalVet Sponsors 2nd Annual MRE Cooking Challenge

There's lots of excitement for military and Veteran families at the State Fair in Sacramento this year. On July 16, Cal Expo hosts a Military & Veteran Appreciation Day with a variety of specially designed attractions and exhibits.

For July 16 only, Veterans as well as Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard service members are admitted free with valid identification. Free admission for Military & Veteran Appreciation Day does not include family members, dependents, or guests.

The same day, CalVet hosts our second annual MRE Cooking Challenge. MRE is a military acronym for "Meals, Ready to Eat," the food ration pouches our service members rely upon, usually while deployed to a war zone.

Local chefs will be given 30 minutes to create a culinary masterpiece using randomly selected MREs and other ingredients. A panel of judges will pick the winner based on taste, presentation, skill level, and competitor showmanship.

This year's competition includes defending champion, Richard Pannell, Richard Pannell Catering; Ashley Ruiz, Pour House; Allyson Harvie, LöwBrau Bierhall; Jeremy Guthrie, Rubicon Brewing Company; Brian Minzer, Hook and Ladder Manufacturing Company; and John Finnegan, Finnegan's Public House.

News10 Meteorologist Darla Givens and two members of the California National Guard return this year to judge the created dishes based on taste, presentation, skill level, use of MRE ingredients, and competitor showmanship. All competitors will receive official State Fair ribbons, bragging rights, and maybe some new customers.

State Fair >



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Come join the fun at this year's MRE Cooking Challenge, and cheer for your favorite chef!

2015 MRE Cooking Challenge Timeline

California State Fair
California Kitchen, Building B
Cal Expo, Sacramento

- **Qualifying Round 1:** 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- **Qualifying Round 2:** 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- **Final Round:** 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

CalVet staff will be at the State Fair on July 16 to educate Veterans and their families about the many state and federal benefits earned based on military service. Staff will also be available to answer questions regarding our Veterans Homes of California, CalVet Home Loans, the California College Fee Waiver for dependents of disabled Veterans, how to get a state job, and other Veterans-related topics.

Plan to take a few minutes to visit our State Fair CalVet information tables and the information tables of other Veterans Service Organizations. You'll find us inside and to the left of the Cal Expo main gate from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on July 16.

To learn more about the California State Fair, including hours of operation, ticket information, parking, and directions, please visit www.castatefair.org/home.

Chefs compete in the 2014 MRE Cooking Challenge at California State Fair



Fair Housing Protections for Veterans



Veterans should know their housing rights. The Fair Housing Act (FHA) of 1968 as amended in 1988, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, familial status (presence of children), and physical and mental disability.

In addition to the federal law, California prohibits discrimination on the basis of all of the above and on the basis of age, ancestry, source of income, marital status, sex, and arbitrary classification (e.g., vegetarians). These general provisions protect all Veterans and their families and their right to live in the housing they choose and for which they are qualified.

Veterans of our current wars in and around Iraq and Afghanistan are filing for disability benefits at an historic rate (more than 50% of those eligible), in part due to multiple deployments and because body armor and faster access to improved battlefield medical care allow many of our Veterans to survive wounds that in past wars proved fatal. Disabled Veterans need to know the housing rights and protections they are entitled to receive.

It is unlawful for a housing provider to refuse to sell or rent to a person because of her/his disability. It is also unlawful for a housing provider to refuse to grant a request for a reasonable accommodation (e.g., allowing a service animal where there is a “no pet” rule or providing a closer parking space) or a request for a reasonable modification (e.g.,

physical structural change) at the tenant’s/ requestor’s expense and on a case-by-case basis.

To request a reasonable accommodation or modification, the tenant must make such request known to the housing provider. Although a written communication from the tenant is highly recommended, the request can also be made orally by others who are aware of the tenant’s disability. Prepared request forms can be obtained from your local fair housing agency, including forms for treatment doctors to complete.

If a tenant’s request for reasonable accommodation or modification is denied by the housing provider, the tenant may complain to his/her local housing authority. To prevail, typically the tenant must show:

- he or she is a person with a disability;
- accommodation or modification is reasonably necessary to make full use and enjoyment of the dwelling;
- request for modification or accommodation was made to the housing provider;
- the housing provider denied, delayed, or took no action on the request.

Available remedies may include obtaining the housing of your choice, monetary damages for lost housing opportunity, and monetary damages for emotional distress where supported by evidence.

However, most bona fide complaints of housing discrimination that involve a disability can be resolved through a conciliation process that can be advanced by a fair housing organization.

In the words of President Obama, “No Veteran should have fought for his/her nation and then return home to have to fight for a roof over his/her head.”

If you believe you or someone close to you has been the victim of housing discrimination, please visit www.dfeh.ca.gov/Advocacy.htm, email contactcenter@dfeh.ca.gov, or call (800) 884-1684, TDD (800) 700-2320, or videophone (916) 226-5285.

You may also contact your local legal aid organization to inquire about free legal services. To find the office nearest you, please visit www.usattorneylegalservices.com/free-legal-aid-california.html.



Steven Leahy, a Marine Corps corporal who served in Iraq, spent a summer doing computer modeling at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's National Security Engineering Division's Pulsed Power Lab. Photo by Julie Russell/LLNL

Employers Train Service Members, Veterans for Advanced Manufacturing Jobs

California employers created a pipeline to train and educate service members and Veterans for careers in advance manufacturing to fill a workforce shortage for a burgeoning industry.

Lawrence Livermore and Lawrence Berkeley national laboratories, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Ames Research Center, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and other employers are seeking service members and Veterans for a plethora of high-paying advanced manufacturing positions. They are collaborating with academia, government agencies, and nonprofits to develop an educational and technical training program that prepares men and women for an industry that pays an average of \$77,500 a year.

Known as the Troops to Technology Workforce Development Initiative or T3WDI,

this unique program creates a pipeline to help service members and Veterans develop highly specialized skills. T3WDI intends to use higher education to provide relevant curriculum to service members, companies to identify and hire them, and government agencies and nonprofits to provide existing resources to help with the transition from military to civilian workforce.

T3WDI's concept is based on existing programs such as the one developed by Lawrence Livermore, Alameda County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), Las Positas College (LPC), the nonprofit Growth Sector, and a group of California community colleges and national labs. The consortium developed a core curriculum for service members focusing on the needs of California employers for careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

During T3WDI, a service member would first connect with a college and company prior to his/her transition into the civilian workforce. Companies and colleges collaborate to identify the technical skills gap service members need to overcome, coursework needed to attain those skills, and potential pathways to join a company as an intern or apprentice while coursework is being completed. Nonprofits serve as a hub to connect service members with companies and colleges, while government agencies provide resources such as Workforce Investment Boards and the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Approximately 20,000 service members transition every month from across the active, National Guard, and Reserve components, according to Department of Defense statistics. While there are many employment opportunities in various industries for them, not many jobs offer the high salaries of advance manufacturing, which includes 3D printing. Right now, this industry has roughly 90,000 unfilled jobs, with a projected growth to more than 800,000 jobs by 2020, according to BMNT Partners.

In addition to California, T3WDI programs are being developed in Kansas and Mississippi. The three pilot programs serve as the foundation for dozens of programs throughout the country seeking to provide economically critical and lucrative career opportunities for tens of thousands of service members and Veterans over the next decade.

Program participants also include: LPC, Ohlone College, Palomar College, San Francisco State University, Foundation for California Community Colleges, BMNT Partners, Visionary Center for Sustainable Communities, Institutes for Manufacturing

Jobs >

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Innovation, California National Guard Office of the Adjutant General, California National Guard Work for Warriors Program, Army Reserve Career Division, U.S. Special Operations Command, Growth Sector, WIB, U.S. Department of Labor VETS Program, and California Department of Employment Development.

Source: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Web Site

<https://www.llnl.gov/news/california-employers-train-service-members-advanced-manufacturing-jobs>.

Veterans Stand Downs Planned

Stand Downs are typically one- to three-day events providing supplies and services to homeless Veterans and Veterans in need, such as food, shelter, clothing, health screenings and state and federal benefits counseling. Veterans can also receive referrals to other assistance such as health care facilities, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment and mental health counseling.

Stand Downs are collaborative events, coordinated between local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, other government agencies, and community-based homeless service providers.

To find a list of stand downs scheduled for California during 2015, please visit www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp. The list is updated often, so check back regularly. For volunteer opportunities or to participate in an upcoming Stand Down in your area, please phone or e-mail the event's Point of Contact (POC).

How Veterans Strengthen Our Communities

On April 30, 2015, the non-profit organization Got Your 6 unveiled the findings of the first-ever Veterans Civic Health Index with a special guest, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert A. McDonald, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

When analyzing individuals' civic engagement profiles, Got Your 6 discovered military service positively alters one's civic health trajectory. The report indicates that Veterans strengthen communities by volunteering, voting, engaging in government, helping neighbors, and participating in community organizations – all at higher rates than their civilian counterparts.

- **Service:** Veteran volunteers serve an average of 160 hours annually – the equivalent of four full workweeks. Civilian volunteers serve about 25% fewer hours annually.
- **Civic Involvement:** 18% of veterans are involved in civic groups (versus 5.8% of civilians).
- **Voting:** 60% of veterans under 50 voted in local elections, versus 49% of civilians under 50.
- **Community Engagement:** Veterans are more likely to fill leadership roles in community organizations, attend community meetings, and fix problems in their neighborhoods.

The Veterans Civic Health Index is a first of its kind, and it's an extension of Got Your 6's work to integrate the idea that Veterans are leaders and civic assets and to foster a better

understanding of their potential. According to Got Your 6, this report can help facilitate a new dialogue in America, one that explores the unique experiences of America's Veterans, in an effort to foster understanding between Veterans and civilians and build stronger communities.

The Got Your 6 non-profit's goal is to "bridge the civilian-military" divide in the U.S. as more and more of our servicemen and servicewomen return from Iraq and Afghanistan. As they do so, the question of reintegration into civilian life looms large, and the campaign assures veterans that the U.S. has their back after their service is through – having one's back being the civilian translation of the military slang, "I've got your six."

To read the full report, please visit <http://bit.ly/1Aq1WSz>. To read more about the study, please read *The Washington Post* article found at <http://wapo.st/1FCH9RM>.

Source: Got Your 6

At Pathway Home, Combat Vets Seek to Tame Memories of War

By Martin Kuz
Stars and Stripes

Fred Gusman has been around Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) so long that he began treating the condition before it officially existed.

In 1978, as a social worker with a Veterans Affairs hospital near San Francisco, he created the nation's first residential therapy program for troops who fought in Vietnam. He listened as the men described the torment of living with a disorder that the American Psychiatric Association failed to recognize as a formal diagnosis until 1980.

More than three decades later, Gusman remains devoted to the cause, seeking to save a new generation of Veterans from the mental anguish of combat. He runs The Pathway Home, a residential treatment program for Iraq and Afghanistan war Veterans that he founded in 2008, soon after leaving his position as a senior director with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) National Center for PTSD.

His nonprofit program occupies a building on the verdant grounds of the Veterans Home of California – Yountville in Napa Valley, the heart of the state's wine region. The serene backdrop contrasts with the inner chaos of those who arrive to confront the feral memories of war.

"When I started talking with Vietnam Veterans, there was resistance to the idea that vets coming back could suffer psychological problems," said Gusman, who joined the USDVA in the late 1970s after serving six years in the military. "Now we know they do. But society still has a long way to go in understanding the complexities of what people experience when we ask them to go to war for us."

Gusman and his staff work with three classes of 15 Veterans each year. Most show up with their lives in ruin. Nearly three-fourths have attempted suicide and close to two-thirds have been homeless at least once in the previous year. Almost half are divorced.

The Veterans live for free in Pathway's relaxed, dorm-like setting during the four-month program. They gain familiarity with each other in the first few weeks as they take part in art, writing, meditation, and yoga classes intended to steady the mind. Gusman then begins a daily trauma therapy session that forces each member of the group to unearth their worst moments from a battlefield they have yet to leave behind.

"Fred is so direct that you get to the point where you're upset with him," said Zach Skiles, a former Marine who enrolled in the program in 2010. "But he does that because he knows you have to take your PTSD on or you'll never learn to deal with it."

Skiles deployed to Iraq in 2003, and lost four friends in the span of two weeks. He mustered out of the Marines a year later, and beset by flashbacks of his friends dying, bouts of paranoia and insomnia, he slowly descended into the void of his mind.

By 2009, he found himself estranged from loved ones, unemployed, and homeless. As he languished on a USDVA waiting list to receive counseling, his caseworker pointed him toward Pathway.

"Going there fundamentally changed my life," said Skiles, 32, who lives in San Francisco. He recently earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and leads equine therapy and meditation classes for Veterans. "The biggest thing I took away is that you have to be an active participant in your recovery. Fred's going to say, 'You know what has to be done. Now do it.'"

Gusman's approach has yielded encouraging results. In a survey last year of 100 graduates of the program, 93 reported that the quality of their life had improved since attending The Pathway Home. Contributing factors included making stronger ties with family and friends, avoiding legal problems, and continuing to receive treatment from USDVA or private clinicians.

Gusman ascribes the success in part to an emphasis on social reintegration that counters the self-isolation associated with

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PTSD. His staff coordinates fly-fishing, hiking, and other activities with community groups to reacquaint Veterans with the civilian world. Pathway also holds a twice monthly support group for their families and friends to smooth the reacclimation process.

“We didn’t provide Vietnam Veterans any guidance for how to go back home,” he said. “That’s why so many of them didn’t or wound up leaving again. We want to make sure with these Veterans that they and the people around them know what to expect.”

The counseling regimen that Gusman started at the USDVA in 1978 was replicated in dozens of its hospitals and clinics across the country. Likewise, Pathway has inspired other programs. The National Intrepid Center of Excellence, opened in 2010, in Bethesda, MD, drew on his model in shaping its treatment for PTSD. Last year, the USDVA created its first residential treatment center exclusively for Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, a program that mirrors Pathway’s methods of care.

Gusman regards the efforts as crucial to helping Veterans set down war’s internal burdens. “We want to empower them so they’re not slaves to a condition they did not choose,” he said. “We want them to have their lives back.”

Skiles credits Pathway with giving him that chance. “I don’t know what my life would be like if I hadn’t wound up there,” he said. “I would be nothing. I’m not sure I would be alive.”

Published: April 6, 2015.

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Veterans History Project Highlights the Lost Art of Letter Writing

The Library of Congress Veterans History Project (VHP) recently launched “Please Write Often: Wartime Correspondence,” the latest installment of the Experiencing War website series. The presentation examines 18 digitized, correspondence-based collections found in the VHP archive. The veterans in this installment represent a wide variety of branches, service locations and military roles, and span the entirety of VHP’s collecting scope from World War One to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

“Please Write Often: Wartime Correspondence” takes a close look at the practice of sending and receiving letters during wartime, easing the pain and loneliness of military members and their loved ones separated for long periods of time. Writing letters is often their only way to share intimate feelings, exciting news and the sometimes drab details of daily living.

The highlighted collections contain letters exchanged between sweethearts, spouses and parents, and children. Many unique stories of war are found in these personal documents, including that of Robert Barber, who wrote to his mother with graphic descriptions of what he experienced during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War, and James Sorenson, a 45-year-old father of four who requested a discharge due to his age and rank – and was instead sent to the Philippines during World War II.

“Before letter-writing became an art form lost to technology that now allows for two-way communication at warp speed without the need for pen, paper or postage, service members and those back home relied upon letters delivered during wartime to keep in touch,” said Veterans History Project Director Robert Patrick. “These letters are priceless. They provide

Writing >

Disability Compensation – Maranda’s Story

Looking back, Maranda, a U.S. Army Veteran injured during her military service, sees her application for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) disability compensation benefits as the first step toward achieving the fullest life possible after service.

“Without USDVA, I wouldn’t have been able to start my journey,” she said.

It was a life not foreseen when Maranda entered officer training in 2008. But when a broken leg and subsequent staph infection put her in the hospital with a serious illness, her health deteriorated. The situation forced Maranda to medically retire from service in 2010, and she now lives with an array of medical conditions, including seizures.

As a 100 percent service-disabled Veteran, Maranda is entitled to full USDVA disability payments, which compensate Veterans for the loss of earning capacity due to disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. USDVA benefit amounts vary depending on the degree of a Veteran’s disability.

“I do get funding each month for the rest of my life,” Maranda said. The tax-free income helps her care for her family. She’s also using USDVA vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits to train for a career in cybersecurity that will accommodate her disabilities.

“My ultimate goal in about five years,” she said, “is to be as independent as possible.”

Learn more at www.explore.va.gov. For local assistance learning about and filing a USDVA disability claim, contact a County Veterans Service Officer or visit <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/County-Veteran-Service-Organization.aspx>.

USDVA Opens New Facilities

Last month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) held an opening ceremony for two new facilities on the campus of USDVA’s Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System – West Los Angeles’ Medical Center. The Ribbon Cutting ceremony opened a Welcome Center and a Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residency.

The new Welcome Center is the first of its kind on USDVA’s West Los Angeles campus. It is a one-stop shop for Veterans who are seeking assistance and services. The new Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residency is a beautifully transformed building, which will become home to 65 transitioning Veterans, at least 20 of which will be women.

“We are transforming this VA campus and are solely focused on care for our Veterans. We are Veteran centric,” said USDVA Secretary Robert McDonald. “There is no higher calling than to take care of those Veterans who have taken care of us.”

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vivid descriptions of the foreign places in which military members found themselves and reveal their most personal thoughts and emotions under the stress of separation and war.”

Congress created the Veterans History Project in 2000 to collect, preserve and make accessible the firsthand remembrances of

America’s war veterans from WWI through the more recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war. For more information, visit www.loc.gov/vets or call the toll-free message line at (888) 371-5848.

Founded in 1800, the Library of Congress is the nation’s oldest federal cultural institution. The Library seeks to advance the

knowledge and creativity of the American people through its collections, programs, and services. Many of the Library’s rich resources can be accessed through its website at www.loc.gov.

Source: Posted March 19, 2015, Library of Congress website



USDVA Offers Services, Support for Military Sexual Trauma Survivors

Military sexual trauma (MST) is the term the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) uses to refer to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred while the Veteran was in the military. It includes any sexual activity where someone is involved against his or her will—he or she may have been pressured into sexual activities, may have been unable to consent to sexual activities, or may have been physically forced into sexual activities. Both men and women can experience MST during their military service.

USDVA offers Veterans who experienced MST access to a wide range of services and care with providers knowledgeable about treatment for the MST aftereffects. In addition, every USDVA healthcare system has an MST coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues at the facility and can help Veterans access important USDVA services and programs.

All USDVA treatment for physical and mental health conditions related to experiences of MST is provided free-of-charge and is unlimited in duration. Veterans may be eligible for free MST-related care even if they are not eligible for other USDVA services, and USDVA service connection (USDVA disability compensation) is not required. No documentation of MST experiences is required. USDVA also engages in a range of outreach activities, ongoing staff education, and monitoring of MST-related screening and treatment, in order to ensure that adequate services are available.

Veterans can speak with a USDVA healthcare provider by contacting the MST coordinator at their nearest USDVA medical center, or by contacting their local Vet Center. A list of USDVA and Vet Center facilities can be found at www.va.gov/directory and www.vetcenter.va.gov.

To watch video testimonials from Veterans who found ways to address the effects of MST, and to learn more about Veterans' experiences finding treatment and recovery, please visit <http://maketheconnection.net/conditions/military-sexual-trauma>.

Our Women Veterans Affairs Division at the California Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with Swords to Plowshares, and the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, hosted an MST webinar for service providers on April 30, 2015. The webinar addressed challenges, provided statistics and resources, and offered cultural competency training and significant insight about MST. To obtain a recording of the webinar, please e-mail womenveterans@calvet.ca.gov or call (916) 653-1402.

Sources: USDVA, CalVet

Pre-Register for Interment at the California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery

Veterans wishing to be interred at the California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery (CCCVC) in Monterey County can begin pre-registering in advance of the facilities opening. On July 6, 2015, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) began accepting pre-opening registration forms and documents for interment.

“The community and the state are actively collaborating to make this long-awaited dream a reality,” said Keith Boylan, CalVet’s Deputy Secretary, Veterans Services. “The community’s rich military history and tradition will soon be forever memorialized through the construction of the California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery.”

Veterans and their dependents interested in interment at CCCVC after the expected opening in July 2016, should contact the Monterey County Military & Veterans Affairs Office at (831) 647-7613 for pre-opening registration forms.

In March 2015, CalVet, the Fort Ord Reuse Authority, the County of Monterey, and the City of Seaside broke ground for the CCCVC in Seaside, California. The cemetery site covers more than 78 acres on the former Fort Ord Army post and will provide a final resting place and lasting tribute for Veterans and spouses who served to preserve our freedoms. The widely anticipated

groundbreaking event was attended by federal, state, and local elected officials, Veterans, their families and friends, and more than 500 members from the community. Attendees were treated to a heartfelt and patriotic event that memorialized the Monterey Bay area’s rich military history.

The Phase I construction plan includes the construction of the main entrance, roads, an assembly area, a committal shelter, columbaria, 5,000 columbarium niches, landscaping, a memorial walkway, and supporting infrastructure for 17 acres. The CCCVC is expected to serve more than 100,000 Veterans and their families living within Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito, Santa Clara, and San Luis Obispo counties. CalVet currently operates cemeteries in Yountville and Igo.

For additional information about all of CalVet’s cemeteries, please visit www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/State-Veterans-Cemeteries.aspx.



CalVet Strike Team Update

CalVet Strike Team claims review efforts in San Diego, Los Angeles, and Oakland as of July 2, 2015.

Number of Claims Reviewed **60,020**

Lump Sum Payments Total **\$73,975,407***

Monthly Award Payments Total **\$9,814,982**

Annualized Monthly Awards Payment Total **\$117,779,790****

*Retroactive payments based on the time the claim has been sitting at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

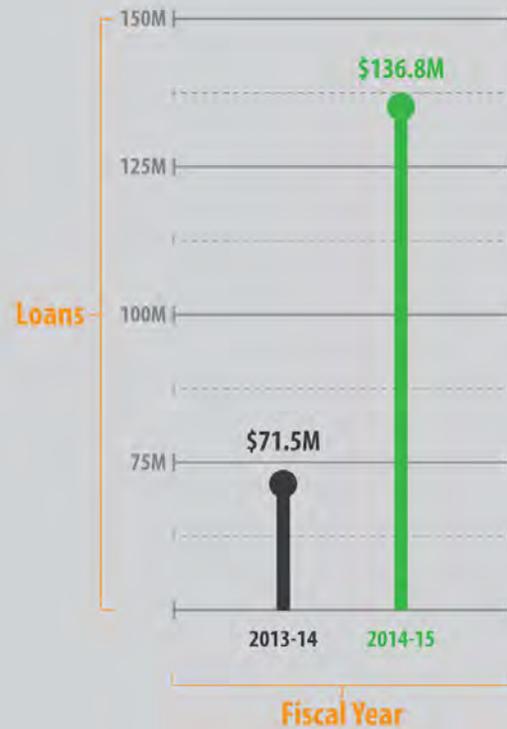
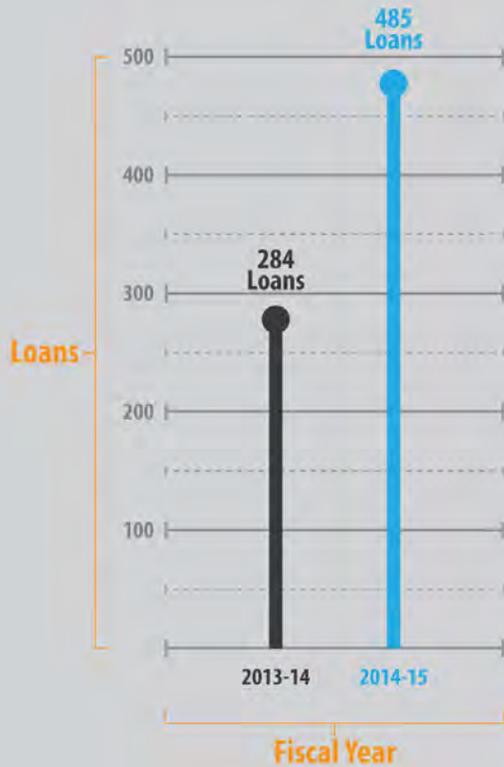
**Payments going to California veterans every year for the rest of their lives.

CalVet Small Business/ DVBE Update

CalVet's April Small Business (SB) / Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Monthly Report for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 reflected the following estimates:

- Agency Total: **SB increase to 33.32% from 32.26%**
- Agency Total: **DVBE increase to 10.53% from 9.97%**

Farm and Home Loans Update



Updated July 2015



El Soldado

Help Make the Dream a Reality.

El Soldado stands on the Capitol grounds, memorializing the contributions of Latino's to the State of California and to this nation.

Restoring El Soldado pays tribute to Latino Veterans and Service members—past, present, and future.

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CALENDAR

July 22

San Francisco Town Hall Collaborative July

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Philip Burton Federal Building
450 Golden Gate Ave., 2nd Floor, AZ Room
San Francisco, CA
Contact: Eduardo Ramirez (415) 244-7100

July 23

2015 Support Our Troops Resource & Career Fair

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Scottish Rite Center
1895 Camino Del Rio South
San Diego, CA 92108
Contact: (619) 277-9099
www.vetready.org

Women Veterans Networking Event

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
American Legion Post 106
814 West Colton Avenue
Redlands, CA 92374
Contact: Ann Duson at (323) 517-1145

July 30

Veteran Job Fair

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Modesto EDD Office
629 12th Street
Modesto, CA 95353
Contact: EDD Veteran Representative
(209) 576-6118

August 1

Summer Celebration & Picnic - West LA VA

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Los Angeles VA Healthcare Center, "Grand Lawn"
11301 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90073
Contact: Dick Southern (209) 768-9841; or
Bob Rosebrock (310) 490-6495

August 6

Stanford Veterans Career Resource Fair

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Stanford University
3160 Porter Drive
Palo Alto, CA
To learn more and/or register:
<http://tinyurl.com/nmyr867>

August 7

LGBT Veteran Service Clinic Los Angeles

4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Bob Hope Patriotic Hall
1816 S. Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90015
Contact: vetsupport@aver-gla.org

August 21

Inaugural Career & Resources Fair

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Home of the Battleship Iowa Pacific
Battleship Center
250 S. Harbor Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90731



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CalVet News

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