CALVET
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2012

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.

2012 WOMEN VETERANS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The California Department of Veterans Affairs will host a Women Veterans Leadership Conference for veterans and community partners on October 4th, in Sacramento at the Double Tree Hotel. Unlike previous CalVet conferences that focused on connecting women veterans with benefits and community resources, this year's conference, titled "A Call To Service, A Call to Action" will empower attendees to take leadership roles in their communities when working with women veteran issues.

The conference will also feature retired Navy Commander Zoe Dunning as keynote speaker, an evening reception and awards ceremony.

As part of the Women Veterans Leadership Conference, CalVet is seeking nominations for three awards that will be presented at the meeting: Woman Veteran Leader of the Year, Lifetime Achievement Award, and Outstanding Volunteer Award. Individuals who do an outstanding job serving veterans in their community and women veterans who demonstrate exemplary leadership in their communities may be nominated. A draft agenda and applications for nominations are available at www.calvet.ca.gov/womenminority.

To register for the conference, go to http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=ga8vqpfab&oeidk=a07e63ar7nd8effe40a or call (916) 653-1402 for more information.

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Secretary's Message

Greetings, I hope your summer so far has been enjoyable and that you have spent quality time with your family and friends. September is a month of change in that the weather begins to cool off, children go back to school, and we at CalVet are deep in planning for the CalVet Women's Leadership Conference and Veterans Day.

But during this month we especially remember Prisoners of War and those still Missing in Action throughout Asia. Our hearts go out to all the families of POW/MIAs. Please remember them in your prayers this "POW/MIA Recognition Day," Friday, September 21.

I now want to discuss CalVet's Farm and Home Loan program and why it is still the best deal for veterans trying to purchase a home. This great benefit for veterans has been around since 1921. It is now one of the most fiscally sound programs in our Golden State.

Thanks to restructuring of its debt, making sound financial decisions, and taking proactive steps to better position the program in today's chaotic real estate market, the CalVet Farm and Home Loan program has secured AA ratings from Standard and Poor's, Fitch's, and Moody's rating agencies for our Revenue and General Obligation Bonds.

Also, the CalVet Farm and Home Loan program has one of the lowest foreclosure rates in California. We work diligently with veterans to help keep them in their home, because we understand that many of them have taken an economic hit due to our nation's down economy.

If working carefully with our veteran mortgage holders to find ways to help them stay in their homes was not enough, we offer the best program for veterans getting into the housing market as well. For starters, although our rates may not be as low as those in the open market, we more than make up for it in benefits the veteran will enjoy during the life of the loan.

Among the added benefits that make our CalVet Home Loans more attractive is that once approved, most veterans have to provide little to no money for the down payment. In addition, our 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, so we are very happy to offer this benefit to California veterans.

Currently, our rates range between 4.25% and 5.95%, while these may seem a little higher than in the open market, when compared with FHA and Conventional interest rates and expenditures, CalVet's Farm and Home Loans really do offer an advantage. For example, with a 4.25 percent interest rate, an FHA $160,000 loan will require around an $8,800 down payment. For a Conventional loan with a 5.00 percent interest rate for the same amount, the down payment would roughly run around $11,600. With a CalVet Farm and Home Loan with a 5.25 interest rate for the same $160,000 loan, the down payment would be, get this, around $3,500!

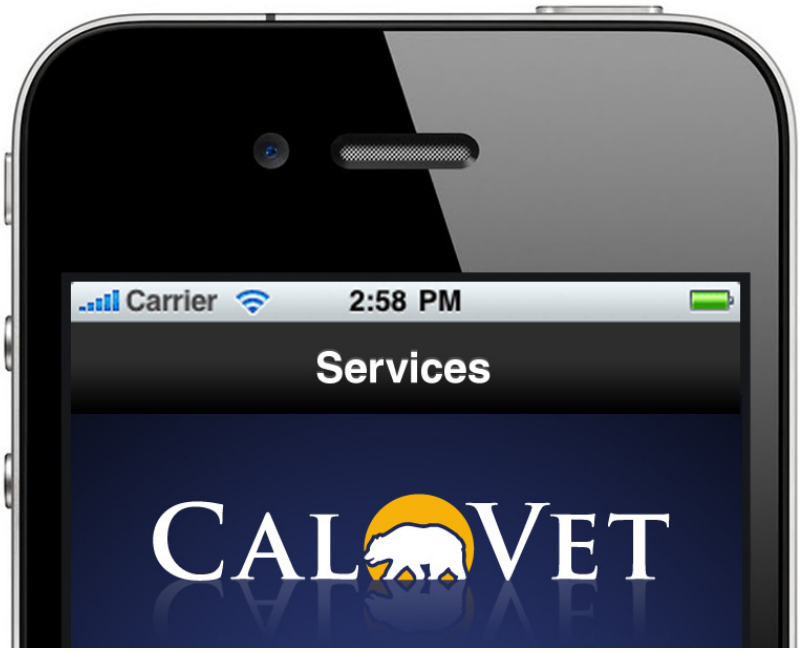
Now, I don't think anyone can argue that for veterans in California, the CalVet Farm and Home Loan program is the best way to go when purchasing a home.

As you can see, CalVet continues to work hard on behalf of California's veterans. We not only offer veterans the most benefit in terms of farm and home loans, but also a home-like environment in one of our eight veterans homes for older and disabled veterans when the time comes and they need the added care.

Until next month, stay safe, stay cool, and stay committed to working on behalf our national heroes – our veterans.

Sincerely,

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



CALVET MOBILE APP NATIONAL AWARDS FINALIST

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) is among 30 finalists across all categories being considered by the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) for the 2012 Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Information Technology award. The CalVet app is one of only three awards finalists in the Digital Government-to-Citizen category.

The CalVet mobile app, available for both Apple and Android devices, gives users 24/7 access to information about employment, education, housing, health and other benefits and services available to California veterans. The app provides details of specific veteran benefits, including eligibility, providers, hours of operation, and contact information. Using GPS technology, the app also provides maps and driving directions to nearby County Veterans Service Offices, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs health facilities and clinics, and organizations that offer services to veterans. The Android app can be downloaded for free from Google Play and the Apple app can be downloaded for free from the Apple Store.

NASCIO's prestigious Recognition Awards are given annually to states that have implemented exceptional programs which have made an important contribution to the operation of state government.

This year, NASCIO received more than 120 nominations. According to NASCIO, the 2012 State Recognition Award nominations demonstrate that states strive to support the public policy goals of state leaders, provide cost-effective service to citizens, and make available solutions that are transferable to other agencies or units of government.

"To put this in sports terminology, being selected as a finalist by NASCIO is like going to the Super Bowl – it's really the highest recognition we can receive at a national level," said Mark Lennon, CalVet Deputy Secretary for Administration.

During NASCIO's Annual Conference in San Diego, the organization will highlight outstanding state initiatives, including the CalVet mobile app, during a Best Practices Breakfast on Tuesday, October 23, 2012.

In addition to the NASCIO award, the CalVet mobile app was given an Honorable Mention in the Driving Digital Government State Government Category of the 2012 Digital Government Achievement Awards presented by the Center for Digital Government. The Center for Digital Government is a national research and advisory institute on information technology policies and best practices in state and local government.

AREA VETERANS ENJOY FREE SPORTING EVENTS

Veterans in Sacramento and surrounding counties have been the happy recipients of complimentary tickets to a variety of exciting sporting events. These tickets are the result of relationships developed by CalVet with sports franchises including the Sacramento River Cats, Sacramento Kings, Raceway in Sonoma, and the Sacramento Mountain Lions.

The Sacramento River Cats, have been incredibly generous with ticket donations this summer. In August alone, the Triple-A baseball club donated more than 1,800 tickets to CalVet to pass along to veterans through area veterans service organizations.

"We're so grateful to the River Cats and to other sports franchises for helping us care for veterans and their families," said CalVet Secretary, Peter J. Gravett. "Being able to connect veterans with the benefits and services they've earned through military service and offer them opportunities to enjoy a day of fun with their family or friends is wonderful."

A couple of weeks ago, area veterans were given the opportunity to enjoy Armed Forces Day at the 2012 GoPro Indy Grand Prix—a race that involved cars and stars of the Indianapolis 500®. Drivers like Will Power, Dario Franchitti, Helio Castroneves and Tony Kanaan reached speeds in excess of 170 mph on what has been called the most challenging road course on the race circuit. Eight hundred tickets, compliments of the Raceway in Sonoma and Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Tickets for Troops program, were given to CalVet, and were distributed to grateful veterans through nearly 30 veteran service organizations.

"The Wounded Soldiers and the Soldiers that take care of them deeply appreciate the tickets that CalVet is able to provide," said Wendy Van Houten, Army Wounded Warrior Advocate. "Those events allow the Wounded Soldiers to escape from their many doctor appointments to enjoy time with family and friends. The Soldier cadre is so involved with making sure that the Wounded Soldiers are cared for that the tickets provided by CalVet allow them to take a moment for themselves as well."

If you are the point person for a nonprofit organization that serves veterans in Sacramento or a surrounding county and would like to be considered for inclusion on CalVet's ticket distribution list, contact Carolyn Ballou at carolyn.ballou@calvet.ca.gov.

TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

If you have suffered the loss of a loved one in military service to America, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) may be able to help you. In early October, TAPS will present the National Military Suicide Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors in San Diego.

The seminar will offer carefully chosen workshops, sharing groups, and peer mentor training for adults, and a special program for children who have lost a parent, sibling or loved one in military service. The Good Grief Camp allows children to be surrounded by others of their own age who have experienced a similar loss. Both the Adult Seminar and the Children's Good Grief Camp run concurrently. Childcare is also offered for those under 4 years old.

TAPS is a nonprofit organization that provides immediate and long-term peer-based emotional support, grief and trauma resources, seminars, case work assistance, and 24/7 crisis intervention care for anyone grieving the death of a loved one who served in the military.

Through their Survivor Seminars and Good Grief Camps, TAPS has provided support to more than 30,000 surviving family members of fallen military members since 1994. Services are provided free of charge. For more information go to www.taps.org or call the toll-free crisis line at 800.959.TAPS.

Thanks to the generosity of the Fisher House Foundation, TAPS is offering flight assistance to survivors attending Survivor Seminars and Good Grief Camps (see web site for restrictions).

To register for the Survivors Seminar and Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors, go to www.taps.org.

VETERANS UNITED SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The ever-increasing expense of a post-secondary degree is one of the greatest challenges facing so many of our nation's finest. Despite the aid of benefits like the GI Bill, the financial burden of college can be discouraging and seemingly insurmountable.

In an effort to address this need, Veterans United Foundation has established the Veterans United Scholarship Program. This program aims to assist military service members and their families by awarding five bi-annual $2,000 scholarships to help pay for tuition and books.

Potential applicants must be pursuing a post-secondary degree at an accredited college or university

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Get connected to your benefits!

CalVet mobile app now available for iPhone and Android devices.

www.calvet.ca.gov

COLLEGE TUITION FEE WAIVER FOR DISABLED VETERANS' DEPENDENTS

By Ted Puntillo

Disabled veterans can get help sending their children to college thanks to the help of the College Tuition Fee Waiver program.

This program waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California institution of higher learning. These institutions include any college in the University of California, California State University and community college system.

There are several plans under the College Tuition Fee Waiver program, but the most commonly used plan entitles the children—natural, adopted and step children—of disabled veterans (at any percentage) for a waiver of most of the fees (also referred to as tuition) at the aforementioned institutions. The entire fee package is not waived, but the program usually waives about 90 percent of the fees. This program does not cover the expense of books, housing or parking.

The plan includes the dependent children of a veteran who has a service-connected disability or had a service-connected disability at the time of death, or died of service-connected causes. There is no requirement of war time service for the veteran and no age limit for the child of the veteran.

There are income restrictions. The child's annual income, which includes the child's adjusted gross income and the value of support provided by the parent, may not exceed the "annual income limit." This limit is announced every year as the national poverty level. This year it is $11,702.

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<< SCHOLARSHIP

and have a connection to the military by being one of the following:

- Active-duty service member
- Veteran
- Spouse of military member or veteran
- Surviving spouse of a fallen soldier
- Child of a military member or veteran

Eligibility also requires potential applicants be either currently enrolled in a post-secondary school or planning to attend a post-secondary school the following year. This includes high school seniors. Eligible applicants must submit transcripts reflecting a minimum 2.5 grade point average on 4.0 scale.

Applicants must also submit an essay no longer than 750 words based on one of three prompts made available in the spring and fall by Veterans United Scholarship Program. Fall submissions will be accepted October 1-31, 2012 with recipients announced by November 15, 2012. Spring essays will be accepted April 1-30, 2013 and recipients will be announced by May 15, 2013.

For more information about the scholarship and Veterans United Foundation, visit www.veteransunited.com/about/scholarships and www.enhancelives.com, respectively.

<< WAIVER

The basic requirement for this benefit is that the veteran must provide proof of the service-connected disability. This is usually done with the U.S. Department of Veterans Administration award letter. The applicant must fill out the DVS-40 form, which can be obtained online by at www.cacvso.org/uploads/dvs40.pdf.

The dependent child must provide proof of their relationship to the disabled veteran with either a birth certificate or adoption papers. In the case of a step child, the applicant must show proof of relationship to the veteran through marriage to the student's parent. This must be done with a birth certificate and marriage certificate.

The final document needed is the student's tax form for the last tax year showing that they made less than the income limit for this year. If the student did not work, they must produce a letter from the IRS or the Franchise Tax Board stating that they did not file taxes in the last tax year.

All of this information must be taken to the County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) where it is reviewed for accuracy and processed. The CVSO sends a letter to the college applied for and a copy to the student. The fees are then waived by the college.

There is no age limit or limit on the number of times a student may use this benefit. The only limitation is the amount of income reported by the student. The income and the parental support cannot exceed the income threshold. If the threshold is exceeded the student is denied the benefit. There is no wiggle room, and the benefit will be denied even if the student is one dollar over the income limit.

This benefit also applies to graduate schools in most cases. Certain classes that are not funded by the educational general fund can be excluded from this waiver. Extension and some summer sessions can sometimes be funded by other than general fund sources and the school may not accept the fee waiver for these classes.

There are three other plans that benefit veterans under the College Fee Waiver Program. In Plan A, the children and spouse, unmarried widow or registered domestic partner of a 100-percent disabled veteran may receive the tuition fee waiver under certain circumstances.

Plan C covers dependents and the spouse of any California National Guard member who was killed on active duty.

Plan D gives these benefits to the children of Medal of Honor recipients. It is for undergraduate studies only and the student must meet both the income and age restrictions.

The best place to apply for these benefits is the CVSO. To find the CVSO nearest you, visit www.cacvso.org. Click on "Contact Us," and then click on your county of residence.

Ted Puntillo is Director of Veteran Services for Solano County.

NEW PROGRAM INTRODUCES RETURNING VETS TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Transitioning veterans can learn the fundamentals of small business ownership and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) tools and resources available to them through the SBA's Boots-to-Business program. The SBA aims to ultimately provide entrepreneurship awareness and opt-in training nationwide.

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was created as a nationwide entrepreneurship training program to unleash the potential of the 250,000 service members that transition each year. To meet that goal, SBA is partnering with U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to include an entrepreneurship training component as a part of the overall changes to the existing TAP.

The goal is to strengthen service members' transition from military to civilian life and to prepare them for success in the next phase of their life. There are now three optional tracks a transitioning service member can choose to explore more deeply as a part of the new TAP:

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<< ENTREPRENEURS

1) Education; 2) Technical Training; and 3) Entrepreneurship. SBA and its Resource Partner network will deliver the Entrepreneurship track to transitioning service members who opt-in to receive such training.

To test the Boots to Business initiative prior to national rollout, SBA is working with the United States Marine Corps (USMC) to deliver a streamlined version of the Boots to Business phased entrepreneurship training to approximately 20,000 transitioning Marines in four pilot locations—two of which are in California: Camp Pendleton and Twenty-Nine Palms .

If you are a transitioning service member interested in learning more about the Boots to Business program, go to www.boots2business.org.

Source: VetOwnenedBusiness.com

MORTGAGE-FREE HOMES FOR VETERANS AVAILABLE IN CALIFORNIA

OEF and OIF combat-wounded veterans and unmarried Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Gold Star spouses may qualify for 100% mortgage-free homes.

The homes are donated by the Military Warriors Support Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting our heroes as they transition to civilian life. Besides the homes donation program, the Foundation's programs include employment assistance and outdoor recreational activities.

"We are so glad that the Military Warriors Support Foundation is making mortgage-free homes available in California to our deserving veterans," said Peter J. Gravett, Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs. "I encourage qualifying OEF/OIF veterans and Gold Star spouses to take advantage of this opportunity. Imagine getting the title to your home after only three years of ownership!"

The homes donation program, Homes4WoundedHeroes, has awarded more than 140 mortgage-free homes across the continental U.S. since its inception in late 2010. The homes come with a free 3-year financial and family mentorship that helps the families understand the fundamentals of home ownership.

To be eligible, applicants:

1. Must be an OEF/OIF combat-wounded veteran (Purple Heart recipient preferred) or OEF/OIF unmarried Gold Star spouse;
2. Must be honorably retired or separated from the military. (Those with compelling situations, who are less than 90 days from retirement or separation may be considered); and
3. Must not currently have a mortgage;

For a list of homes currently available, go to http://militarywarriors.org/openhomes. New homes are added every week.

Don't see a home you are interested in? Fill out an Open Application at www.militarywarriors.org/openapplication. Specify up to four locations in which you would like to live. The Foundation will contact you when a home within 50 miles of your location becomes available.

HELP FOR CAMP LEJEUNE MARINES EXPOSED TO TAINTED WATER

By Ted Puntillo

President Obama recently signed into law the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act, which includes recognition of a water contamination problem that occurred at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, between 1957 and 1987.

During that time, Marines and their families living at the base apparently bathed in and ingested tap water contaminated with harmful chemicals. An undetermined number of former base residents later developed cancer or other ailments, which many blame on the contaminated drinking water.

In 2009, the federal government initiated investigations into the allegations of contaminated water. The contamination appears to have affected the water from two of the eight water treatment plants on the base. More than 70 chemicals have been identified as contaminants at Camp Lejeune including dry cleaning solvents and a degreaser. The Marine Corps has since cleaned up the water supply and safe water is being supplied to Camp Lejeune and its residents.

In 1999, the Marine Corps began notifying former base residents that they might have consumed contaminated water. The notifications were directed by a federal health study examining possible birth defects among children born at the base during the contamination years. At this time, there is insufficient scientific and clinical evidence to establish a presumptive association between service at Camp Lejeune during the period of water contamination and the development of certain diseases.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) is closely monitoring new research. USDVA representatives regularly attend the quarterly Community Action Panel meetings hosted by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

While all the facts are not in on this issue, all veterans who served at this Marine base between 1957 and 1987 and suffer from illnesses that could be tied to this exposure should file a claim for service-connected disability by going to their County Veteran Service Office (CVSO). To find the CVSO nearest you, go to www.cacvso.org. Click on "Contact Us," and then click on your county of residence. The USDVA will decide these claims on a case-by-case basis.

The families of veterans who lived on this base during that time should register at https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater/index.aspx to receive notifications from the Marine Corps regarding Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water.

Ted Puntillo is Director of Veteran Services for Solano County.

VETERANS BENEFITS AND CHILD SUPPORT CALCULATIONS

By Sheryl A. Watson

When a veteran divorces and there are minor children involved, there can be confusion about whether veterans benefits are subject to court-ordered child support calculations. Veterans ordered to pay child support are subject to the same laws and regulations as enlisted members of the military and non-veterans. They are all required to pay their child support on time and in full every month.

The dollar amount of child support owed each month is determined using the Statewide Uniform Child Support Guideline established in California state law. It is based primarily on earnings, regardless of the source, and the amount of time the child or children spend with each parent. Guidelines that allow parents to estimate the amount of child support they may owe are available at www.childsup.ca.gov/Resources/CalculateChildSupport.aspx.

The California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) and the Local Child Support Agencies (LCSA) work with parents and guardians to

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CALVET VETERAN BRINGS HOME SILVER MEDAL IN NATIONAL WHEELCHAIR GAMES

By Kara Marks

Every year, veterans across the country come together to compete in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games—the largest wheelchair sports competition in the world. Presented by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), this multi-event sports rehabilitation program is open to U.S. Military veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competitions due to spinal cord injuries, amputations or certain neurological problems, and who receive care at USDVA medical facilities or military treatment centers.

More than 500 veterans with disabilities competed in the Games, which featured exciting competition in motorized wheelchair relay, softball, table tennis, track and field, trapshooting, power soccer, quad rugby, archery, swimming, basketball, bowling, weightlifting, nine-ball,

John Smith, resident of the Veterans Home of California–West Los Angeles, happily displays his two Silver Medals won at the 2012 National Veterans Wheelchair Games; one for the 200-meter race and the other for the motorized wheelchair relay.

wheelchair slalom and hand-cycling. For the third year, stand-up events were held in archery and table tennis for athletes who have amputations and chose to compete using prosthetic devices, instead of their wheelchairs.

Among the competitors was 70-year-old John Smith, a resident of the Veterans Home of California – West Los Angeles. When asked about the event, Smith stated, "I never had the feeling of being alone or dependent. Those things were dispelled the moment I was at the competition. The games are held just like the Olympics. I can't begin to tell you how much fun it was!" Smith is also a member of the USDVA Greater Los Angeles Shakers, the largest team represented at the competition this year.

Smith's hard work paid off as he took home two Silver Medals! Despite the 104-degree temperature, he placed

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<< CHILD

ensure children and families receive court-ordered financial and medical support.

Most court-ordered child support payments are made through employer income withholding. An Income Withholding Order can be placed on military pension, compensation, emergency officer's retirement pay, and certain disability benefits.

Federal statutes generally prohibit the garnishment of veterans benefits provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) to satisfy debts owed to private individuals. The exception is USDVA disability compensation for a service-connected disability received in lieu of waived military retired pay.

If a parent is late or doesn't pay, interest accumulates on unpaid arrears at 10 percent a year. Collections may be obtained through liens on real property and interceptions of unemployment and state disability payments, tax refunds and lottery winnings. Passports can be denied, driver licenses and professional licenses can be suspended, and bank accounts can be levied, under certain circumstances.

Help is available. If a parent loses a job, becomes disabled, goes to jail or has other circumstances that make that person unable to make the court-ordered child support payments, it is essential that they contact their LCSA as soon as possible to avoid or minimize any adverse actions. For a list of LCSAs in California, go to www.childsup.ca.gov/Home/LCSAOffices.aspx.

Options are available to parents who qualify that lower current child support owed each month and/or help pay off past due child support (arrearages). LCSAs can also help qualified veteran parents enroll in the Military Compromise of Arrears Program. This program is available to noncustodial parents who have been or are currently reservists or members of the National Guard who experienced a decrease in income as a result of being activated to U.S. military service and neglected to seek a modification to the child support order.

Child support services are available to individuals needing or already receiving support, as well as to parents paying child support. DCSS and the 51 LCSAs throughout California are ready to help participants provide financial and medical support for their children. To learn more, visit the California Department of Child Support Services web site at www.childsup.ca.gov/Home.aspx or call your child support office at (866) 901-3212.

Sheryl A. Watson is an Information Officer for the Office of Legislative and External Affairs at the California Department of Child Support Services in Sacramento.

<< SILVER

second in the 200-meter race and motorized wheelchair relay. Smith encourages more residents from the Veterans Homes of California to participate in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

"This is the first year that one of our residents has participated in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, said Louis Koff, Director of the West Los Angeles Veterans Home. Our congratulations to Mr. Smith and to all of the veterans who competed in this wonderful and worthwhile program. Mr. Smith – and every veteran who participated – is an inspiration to us all!"

"The Games display to the world what we already know about these veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "At this competition and during their rehabilitation throughout the year, they show the same determination and grit that they showed during their service to our Nation."

The 2013 National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held July 13 through July 18 in Tampa, Florida. For additional information or to volunteer, go to www.wheelchairgames.va.gov.

Kara Marks is a Recreation Therapist at CalVet's West Los Angeles Veterans Home.

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VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA
WEST LOS ANGELES

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

THE NEW TRANSITIONAL TREATMENT PROGRAM AT YOUNTVILLE

By Lynn Scott

The CalVet Home in Yountville is testing a solution to a serious problem. So far, the results are promising.

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) has an initiative to end homelessness for veterans. This past year, in response to the USDVA initiative, the CalVet Homes started to increase the admission of homeless veterans and to expedite the admissions process. This was good, but it created a problem.

Homeless veterans present unique challenges. Their situations are more complex and severe than those of veterans who are primarily aged or disabled. Challenges can include brain injury, serious mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse, years of neglected physical health, and other behaviors that are inconsistent with a peaceful and therapeutic communal living environment.

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RETIRED MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY AT NAS LEMOORE

By Joe Wright

Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore is hosting its annual Retired Military Appreciation Day on Saturday, September 15, 2012 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, starting at the base theater. The event will provide military retirees and their spouses information and updates on their veteran benefits.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office, along with representatives from the Naval Hospital, Social Security Administration, Tri-Care, Personnel Support Detachment (PSD), Legal Department, Delta Dental, Navy Exchange, Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society, Navy Commissary, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and others will be providing valuable information and will be available to answer questions from event participants. The keynote speaker will be Daniel Contreras, Adjutant of the Disabled American Veterans of California.

All retired military, spouses and widow/widowers are invited to attend. For more information, call the Fleet and Family Support Center at (559) 998-4042. To obtain access to NAS Lemoore, it is important to have a current ID card (PSD will be available to assist with new ID card needs). If your vehicle does not have a base decal, you must have a current vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and driver's license, and present them at the Pass and Decal Office.

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

SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANT PROGRAM

Disabled veterans who are not ready to leave their home but are facing challenges continuing to live there can get help remodeling their home to make it more accessible.

Veterans or service members who have specific service-connected disabilities may be entitled to a grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) for the purpose of constructing an adapted home or modifying an existing home to meet their adaptive needs. The goal of the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) Grant Program is to provide a barrier-free living environment that affords the veterans or service members a level of independent living he or she may not normally enjoy.

Since 1948, USDVA has provided adaptive housing assistance grants to eligible individuals who have certain service-connected disabilities to construct an adapted home or modify an existing home to accommodate their disabilities. Today, USDVA provides adaptive housing assistance primarily through three programs—Specially Adapted Housing (SAH), Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) and TRA benefit which allows veterans to apply for a grant to adapt the home of a family member with whom they are temporarily residing.

There are three types of grants which are available to help severely

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<< TRANSITION

Yountville's Behavioral Wellness team accepted the challenge of the USDVA initiative, redirected their resources, and developed a pilot Transitional Treatment Program to meet the needs of this population of veterans. Members of the interdisciplinary team include psychologists, social workers, recreation, occupational, and music therapists, residential care unit leaders, alcohol and drug treatment counselors, physicians, and security personnel. The program considers new admissions to the Home as well as current residents who may not be adapting successfully due to the problems noted above.

Currently, there is room for six veterans in this intensive, multi-month program. Many of these are veterans who would not previously be admitted to a veterans home; too often they would remain homeless.

The program is highly structured, including group activities, one-on-one counseling, exercise, work and recreation five days per week. The interdisciplinary team reviews each veteran's progress weekly, and an individualized care plan is developed. The plan is adjusted to meet unique needs, e.g., brain injury, drug and alcohol addiction, aggression and anger, withdrawal and isolation, destructive behaviors, extreme fearfulness or anxiety, etc. Each veteran has input into their plan of care, and goals are spelled out in a written behavioral contract.

The program has had its first graduate; others are showing steady improvement. Within this program, residents bond with each other and develop peer support. They get immediate feedback when they misbehave or act out. They learn time management skills, adaptive social skills, and positive ways to express their emotions. They learn to accept and embrace the benefits of sobriety. They are offered opportunities to exercise employment skills within the Home's stipended volunteer program. As skills are acquired and exercised, Transitional Treatment Program veterans are integrated into Home's activities and social events.

The Transitional Treatment Program is an opportunity to help underserved veterans in a new way. It is restoring lives. The program moves CalVet Homes closer to the goal of "no veteran left behind." We look forward to refining and expanding this much-needed program.

Lynn Scott is Assistant Deputy Secretary, CalVet Homes Division

<< GRANT

disabled veterans in adapting housing to their special needs.

Specially Adapted Housing Grant
The maximum amount of this grant is $63,780. It is available to veterans with service-connected permanent and total disability due to one of the three following conditions:

- the loss or loss of use of both lower extremities or,
- blindness in both eyes, having only light perception, plus loss or loss of use of one lower extremity or,
- loss or loss of use of one lower extremity together with other disabilities which precludes locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes or a wheelchair

Special Home Adaptations Grant
The maximum amount of this grant is $12,756. It is available to veterans with service-connected permanent and total disability due to one of the two following conditions:

- blindness in both eyes with 5/200 visual acuity or less or,
- the loss or loss of use of both hands.

Temporary Residence Grant
The TRA grant program enables veterans and service members eligible under the SAH and SHA programs to use up to $14,000 and $2,000, respectively, to modify a family member's home. Each TRA grant counts as one of the three grants allowed under either SAH or SHA. TRA grants also count toward the maximum allowable amount, $60,000 under SAH and $12,000 under SHA. The TRA grant program is available through December 31, 2012.

For more information or an application, visit www.homeloans.va.gov/sah.htm or contact your local USDVA Regional Office at (800) 827-1000.

SAH Grants can be used in conjunction with the CalVet Home Improvement Loan or in acquiring a new home with a CalVet Home Loan. For more information on these programs contact the CalVet Home Loan program at (800) 952-5626 (toll free) or (916) 503-8362 or on the web at www.calvet.ca.gov/HomeLoans.

Adapted from VA information pages at www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/sah.asp and www.insurance.va.gov/gli/buying/sah.htm.

USDVA BRIEFS

SMARTPHONE APP FOR ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY
A new smartphone app, due out this fall, will be able to provide a virtual tour of Arlington National Cemetery, list events there, and help visitors locate gravesites. The app, which can be downloaded for free from the iTunes Store, Google Play, or the Army Marketplace, should be available by October 20, 2012 and is expected to prevent future problems with site identification.
http://1.usa.gov/MqLdt6

STUDY FINDS OBSERVATION AS EFFECTIVE AS SURGERY IN EARLY PROSTATE CANCER
A major federal study led by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs found no difference in survival between men with early-stage prostate cancer who had their prostate surgically removed and those who were simply watched by their doctors, with treatment only as needed to address symptoms if they occurred. **http://1.usa.gov/OE43N2**

USDVA EXCEEDS 2012 GOAL TO IMPROVE ONLINE ACCESS TO BENEFITS INFORMATION
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that 1.67 million Veterans and Servicemembers have registered for the secure, joint VA-Department of Defense (DoD), self-service web portal, eBenefits, which provides online information and access to a wide variety of military and Veteran benefits resources.
http://1.usa.gov/Qgfbml

USDVA ANNOUNCES NEW GRANTS TO HELP END VETERANS HOMELESSNESS
Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today the award of nearly $100 million in grants that will help approximately 42,000 homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families.
http://1.usa.gov/MgTT4J

INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT OFFERS CONVENIENCE TO VETERANS' PRESCRIPTION REFILLS
Nearly 250,000 patients served by the Indian Health Service (IHS) have utilized a prescription service available through an interagency agreement between IHS and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
http://1.usa.gov/SYNP30

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

FOLLOW US!

UPCOMING EVENTS

CalVet
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SEPTEMBER 6
Veteran Opportunity Expo
Corky McMillin Event Center
San Diego
Contact: (513) 677-7088

SEPTEMBER 11
Employment Assistance Workshop
Project Hired
VA Long Beach Healthcare System
Contact: (562) 826-5593

Entrepreneur Workshop
Entrepreneurs4Change/VAMBOA
Ventura Co. Community Foundation
Camarillo, CA
Contact: info@E4C.net

SEPTEMBER 13-16
East Bay Stand Down
Alameda County Fairgrounds
Contact: (925) 743-8850

SEPTEMBER 18-20
Placer County Veterans Stand Down
Gold Country Chaplaincy
Roseville, CA
Contact: (916) 259-1001

SEPTEMBER 18-21
Central Valley Stand Down
VFW Hall, Fresno, CA
Contact: (559) 977-3697

SEPTEMBER 20
Honor a Hero/Hire a Vet Job & Resource Fair
Employment Development Department
Concord Hilton, Concord, CA
Contact: (925) 602-5022

SEPTEMBER 21-23
Homeless Veterans Stand Down
City of Compton
Contact: (310) 348-7600

SEPTEMBER 21-23
Stand Down in the Foothills
Tuolumne Veterans Hall
Contact: (209) 536-0439

Sacramento Stand Down
Camp Pollack, Sacramento, CA
Contact: (916) 489-5669

SEPTEMBER 28
Homeless Veterans Stand Down
San Joaquin County Employment
Stockton, CA
Contact: (209) 954-3920

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

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