



# VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CALIFORNIA STATE COUNCIL

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## VVA-CSC ANNOUNCES SENATOR BILL MONNING AND ASSEMBLYMAN JIM FRAZIER AS 2013 LEGISLATORS OF THE YEAR

The Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council (VVA-CSC) has named Senator Bill Monning (D-Carmel) and Assemblyman Jim Frazier (D-Oakley) as their Legislators of the Year for 2013. The VVA-CSC Legislator of the Year award is bestowed upon legislators who have supported California's veterans and their families during their service as California legislators.



Senator Monning has fought for state funding for the Fort Ord Veterans Cemetery ever since he was elected to the Assembly in 2008. His latest bill on the issue was SB 232 in 2013 which provided an allocation of funds for establishment of a Veterans Cemetery at the former Fort Ord. SB 232 provided an additional and immediate \$2.6 million requirement by the State to assure acceptance of a US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) cemetery grant for design and subsequent construction of the cemetery. The effort to get a Veterans Cemetery built on the grounds of the former Ft. Ord base has been going for 10 years. SB232 was the key that opened the door for receipt of the USDVA grant.

“The VVA applauds Senator Monning’s commitment and tenacity in tackling the Fort Ord cemetery issue, an issue which has been the goal of Central Coast veterans for over a decade”, said Steve Mackey, President of the Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council.



Newly elected Assemblyman Frazier authored key veterans legislation in 2013. AB 287, which requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) to annually compile a list of names of Vietnam veterans to be added to the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial, was signed into law by the Governor. AB 287 also directs the CDVA to form a committee to review and consider requests from the public to include names on the Memorial. Assemblyman Frazier has also requested that he be involved in the committee process.

AB 531 would have required the Department of Motor Vehicles to print the word “VETERAN” on the face of a driver’s license or identification card issued if requested by a veteran who provides proof of their veteran status. The bill died in committee last year, but Assemblyman Frazier will carry similar legislation this year.

Assemblyman Frazier was also a major sponsor and participant of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial event in 2013. A close relative of Mr. Frazier died from exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam. This year, he is bringing, at his own expense, “The Wall That Heals” Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall to the State Capitol in late February.

Ken Holybee, VVA-CSC Legislative Chair noted, “We look forward to continue working with Assemblyman Frazier on issues of importance to all veterans and their families, especially on the drivers license bill for veterans”.

**Senator Monning and Assemblyman Frazier will be presented their awards at the VVA-CSC’s Annual Capitol Legislative Day event on March 26, 2014. This is a day when VVA-CSC leaders and members alike travel to the State Capitol to advocate on issues of importance to veterans and to educate legislators, consultants, and staff.**

The **Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council** has over 4,600 members and is the California unit of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). VVA was founded in 1978 to promote, support, and aggressively advocate on the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans, the next generation of America’s war veterans, and to also serve our local communities. The Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the only national Vietnam veterans organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families. Nationwide, the VVA has over 70,000 members.

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