



The California Zephyr



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CSC PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

On April 14, 2015 The Toxic Exposure Act of 2015 was introduced. The Senate bill is S. 901 and the House bill is H.R. 1769. Both bills have bipartisan sponsorship

As CSC President I have written to every California Representative asking them to sign on to co-sponsor this bill. I have also written both of our Senators asking them to co-sponsor the Senate bill.

To date, I have only heard back from Senator Feinstein. The Senator thanked me for my letter and said she supports veterans. She also said if the bill makes it to the floor she will watch it. Nothing about co-sponsoring the bill; just watch it if it makes it to the floor. At least I heard back from her.

On the House side only six, yes six, California Representatives have signed on to co-sponsor H.R. 1769. We need write to the remainder of them asking them to sign on to co-sponsor the bill. Each and every VVA member needs to contact their individual Representative asking them to sign on as a co-sponsor of H.R. 1769.

While VVA's exploration has centered on the families of Vietnam veterans, the veterans of more recent wars also report health issues in their children. For this reason, VVA is calling for more research on the generational legacy of toxic exposures for ALL WHO have been exposed while serving in the armed forces.

The Toxic Exposure Research Act of 2015 directs the VA secretary to select one VA Medical Center to serve as the national center for the research of the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of descendants of individuals exposed to toxic substances while service in the Armed Forces.

It is our hope that this legislation will be passed so that the research can begin, and science can provide the answers so desperately needed by all our veterans and their families.

The six California House Members who have co-sponsored the bill so far are Paul Cook, Barbara Lee, Zoe Lofgren, Julia Brownley, Scott Peters, Adam Schiff and Ted Lieu. If your Representative is not one the six, please sit down today; write them asking for their support.

These two bills are for our children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and beyond. So let's get busy and write those letters. We cannot go wrong in doing this.

On August 21, 2015 I had the privilege of representing Vietnam Veterans of America while attending the taping of the television game show Wheel of Fortune at the Sony studios in Culver City, CA. The shows that were taped will air in November 2015 over Veterans Day week. All the contestants on the show for that week are veterans. In between the taping of the shows the show honored all their co-workers who are veterans by taking their pictures in front of the game board.

At the request of National VVA I was honored to present the show's host, Pat Sajak, the VVA Achievement Medal. Six shows were taped that day. During a break I was called to the studio set and present Pat the medal.

The presentation was taped, not for the show, but for their social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Pat Sajak was very humble about receiving the medal; he immediately put it around his neck and thanked me numerous times. Vanna White, also, thanked me for presenting the medal to Pat.



Pat Sajak, joined the U.S. Army in 1968. He was a DJ for the Armed Forces Radio in Siagon, Vietnam in 1969.

Pat is a proud Vietnam Veteran and is sincere in letting people know how he feels about Veterans. The following statement from Pat Sajak was taken from the American Veterans Center web page:

"Dear Friend,

You might not know this about me, but long before I became the host of Wheel of Fortune, I served in the Army as the morning disc jockey at Armed Forces Radio in Saigon.



Each morning, I roused my fellow soldiers out of bed with shouts of "Gooooood Morning, Vietnam!"

I am proud to count myself among the 2.7 million veterans of the Vietnam War. Like every war in our nation's history, the Vietnam War is filled with thousands of stories of bravery, heroism and valor.

Unfortunately, many of these stories remain untold and unknown. When our troops returned home from war, many were greeted with insults, not cheers, and all too often were portrayed in the media and in Hollywood films as drug addicts, misfits, perpetrators of atrocities and losers. The reality is that the Vietnam Veterans compiled an outstanding record of courage, service, and patriotism. They should be proud of their record and we should be proud of them.

That's why I'm excited to tell you about the National Vietnam Veterans Committee (NVVC). The NVVC is working hard to ensure that every Vietnam veteran is proud of their service and that the American people recognize and appreciate their service.

I'm enclosing a letter from the Chairman of the National Vietnam Veterans Committee, Brigadier General Steve Ritchie. Please take a minute or two to read about what this organization is doing to protect the honor and legacy of our nation's Vietnam vets.

It's time we set the record straight regarding America's Vietnam veterans. So when you are done reading the enclosed letter, won't you please join with me in supporting this worthy institution

The Vietnam War began over a half century ago. It's long overdue that we give the veterans of this war the respect and honor they deserve.

Yours Truly,

Pat Sajak"

Thank you and "Welcome Home" Pat Sajak

Steve Mackey

PATHWAY HOME GRADUATION

Kate O'Hare-Palmer

The tranquil town of Yountville hosted another graduation ceremony for the men that graduated from the Pathway Home program. Director Fred Gussman was a little

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nostalgic during this ceremony because it is his last group that he will be working with. The program will go on, but Fred is going to take a break and then move onto another phase of his many careers. He talked about the history of the first PTSD program and how the group from Santa Rosa, Flowers to Dragons, was instrumental in helping the Vietnam Veterans start the movement for programs for combat veterans. Fred started the first 120 bed PTSD men veteran program in Palo Alto VA. The Vietnam veterans in Cleveland, Ohio were the first to voice concern over the VA lack of care and a volunteer called Fred to come and help with the “dissent.” The result was the creation of the National Center for PTSD and Stress Center.

The men graduating now come from backgrounds in

the Army and Marines. Their personalities are as different as their reactions to the moral, physical, and psychological traumas of war. They called themselves the Dirty Half Dozen. They formed a unit as they went through this program. Each one had a turn at thanking those in their lives that helped them get to this point. The Staff at Pathways, community of Yountville, the folks of Napa, the Rotary Club, and the many other businesses and service organizations in the area have kept this program alive.

I have to tell you that there were moments of tears because of what they shared. One said that Pathway House is a place where they do “Loud, mistakes, pain, suffering, anger, apologies, love, gratitude, food therapy, art, not feeling so alone, and trying to adjust to civilian life. So many KEY PHRASES were shared by these men. They

expressed how wonderful it was to have the opportunity to be able to go through this program... when some had failed in others.

I want to just list some of the KEY QUOTES here...and let them sink in...they touch us all:

Native American quote: “Healing doesn’t mean the damage never existed... it just doesn’t control our lives all the

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Steve Mackey.

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Tom Hohmann

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of VVA, the State Council or its members.

Who Are The Vietnam Veterans Of America?

Founded in 1978, Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. is the only national Vietnam veterans organization congressionally chartered and exclusively dedicated to Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA is organized as a not-for-profit corporation and is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

VVA’S FOUNDING PRINCIPLE

“Never again shall one generation of veterans abandon another.”

PURPOSE

The purpose of Vietnam Veterans of America’s national organization, the state councils, and chapters is:

To help foster, encourage, and promote the improvement of the condition of the Vietnam veteran.

To promote physical and cultural improvement, growth and development, self-respect, self-confidence, and usefulness of Vietnam-era veterans and others.

To eliminate discrimination suffered by Vietnam veterans and to develop channels of communications which will assist Vietnam veterans to maximize self-realization and enrichment of their lives and enhance life-fulfillment.


To study, on a non-partisan basis, proposed legislation, rules, or regulations introduced in any federal, state, or local legislative or administrative body which may affect the social, economic, educational, or physical welfare of the Vietnam-era veteran or others; and to develop public-policy proposals designed to improve the quality of life of the Vietnam-era veteran and others especially in the areas of employment, education, training, and health.

To conduct and publish research, on a non-partisan basis, pertaining to the relationship between Vietnam-era veterans and the American society, the Vietnam War experience, the role of the United States in securing peaceful co-existence for the world community, and other matters which affect the social, economic, educational, or physical welfare of the Vietnam-era veteran or others.

To assist disabled and needy war veterans including, but not limited to, Vietnam veterans and their dependents, and the widows and orphans of deceased veterans.

FUNDING

Vietnam Veterans of America relies totally on private contributions for its revenue. VVA does not receive any funding from federal, state, or local governments.



time.”

I want our country to love us as much as we love our country...some of us died for it.

I learned that I can't smile all the time: I can't fake it: I have learned to face the pain.

Guys get angry, it eats them away, and it kills them.

Veterans should be honored and cared for. They need help in finding their way.

Only he who has seen better days and lives to see better days again... knows how valuable these days are.

In the typical humor that this group seemed to have, they voiced a need to have an anniversary dinner next year. They want to bring the group(including Fred) back together at the French Laundry, that famous restaurant they all have heard about ...but couldn't afford to get there.....

CA AVVA

By Elayne Mackey, CA AVVA President

THE AVVA 'TOGETHER ALWAYS' BRAND



The Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America's brand is TOGETHER ALWAYS®. Since the organizational meeting of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA) in 1999, the brand TOGETHER ALWAYS® has been our tag line to describe the AVVA services and describes our sentiment toward Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. (VVA). AVVA has always dedicated and focused our TOGETHER ALWAYS® projects and programs to enhance the lives of the Vietnam Veteran and their families. We will continue to work alongside VVA and we will support their accomplishments, needs, and efforts as long as the two organizations exist. It is AVVA's intention to carry this brand through to the future, to mean that we will stay TOGETHER ALWAYS® with all Veterans, from all eras.

AVVA OFFERS A SPECIAL PRICE FOR LIFE MEMBERSHIPS!

For a limited time, AVVA is offering a Life Membership for the special price of \$100 per person. These memberships will be offered to everyone who is not already a fully paid life member, regardless of their age! Please see all details of this special offer on our News and Press Releases page. This offer will be good between November 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015. Website: avva.org

Membership application can be found:
http://www.avva.org/forms/membership/Individual-AppForMembership_fill.pdf

SPECIAL LIFE MEMBERSHIPS OFFERED BY AVVA

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America is offering a Life Membership special, during the months of November and December, 2015!

The offer is Life Memberships in AVVA for the total cost of \$100.00. For many this will be as much as 60-70% off! The offer is available to anyone, whether new or existing members, unless you are already a fully paid up Life Member at this time. This includes people who are currently annual or 3 year members, and it even includes

One-time amnesty program for unpaid traffic and non-traffic infraction tickets

On June 24, 2015, the Governor signed into law a one-time amnesty program for unpaid traffic and non-traffic infraction tickets.

More information can be found at this link: <http://www.courts.ca.gov/trafficamnesty.htm>

Traffic Tickets / Infractions Amnesty Program

On June 24, 2015, the Governor signed into law a one-time amnesty program for unpaid traffic and non-traffic infraction tickets. Here is what you should know:

When will the amnesty program be available?

Start: October 1, 2015

End: March 31, 2017

Who can participate in the amnesty program?

There are two groups of people who can participate in the amnesty program:

- Persons with unpaid tickets whose fines were originally due to be paid date on or before January 1, 2013, who have not made a payment after June 24, 2015, may be eligible to have *both* their debt reduced by 50 or 80 percent depending on income *and* their driver's license reinstated, unless an exclusion discussed below applies.
- Persons who made a payment after June 24, 2015 on a ticket are not eligible for a reduction for *that* ticket, but may be eligible to have their driver's license reinstated if they are in good standing on a payment plan with a comprehensive collection program.
- Persons with more than one ticket may not be eligible for a reduction on an individual ticket if the eligibility criteria are not satisfied for the ticket. Please check with your court for additional information.

Any persons eligible to have a driver's license, (including undocumented individuals who are eligible for a driver's license under AB 60) are entitled to participate in the traffic amnesty program if they meet the eligibility requirements.

Who cannot participate in the amnesty program?

Eligible persons may be excluded from the amnesty program if they owe victim restitution on a case or have certain outstanding misdemeanor or felony warrants.

What if I made a payment after June 24, 2015?

People ineligible due to timing may still have their driver's license returned, but will not have their fines reduced on tickets with a payment after the deadline.

What tickets will be eligible for amnesty?

Any infraction may qualify for amnesty. Unpaid tickets and related "failure to appear" violations with an initial payment due date on or before January 1, 2013, are eligible.

Individual superior courts and counties may extend this program to include some misdemeanors.

What tickets will not be eligible?

This amnesty program does not apply to parking tickets, reckless driving, and DUI offenses.

How much will I have to pay?

1. Under the amnesty program, eligible participants will not have to pay any civil assessments. Once the civil assessment amounts are deducted, the remaining balance owed will be reduced by 50 to 80 percent depending on income or receipt of specified public benefits.
2. The discount will be 80 percent for those who certify that they make 125 percent or less than the federal poverty level — \$14,712 for an individual, or \$30,312 for a family of four — or who receive public assistance.
3. The discount will be 50 percent for all other eligible participants

How do I participate in the amnesty program?

Beginning on October 1, 2015, contact the superior court in the jurisdiction(s) where you received the ticket(s) to determine your eligibility to participate in the amnesty program. People who are eligible for amnesty will have their application processed without seeing a judge.

Will there be a fee to participate?

Courts, counties, and third party collections vendors are permitted to collect an amnesty program fee of \$50 payable to the superior court or county. The Department of Motor Vehicles will also charge a \$55 driver's license reinstatement fee as it does for any license reinstatement.

Will there be an installment payment option?

Yes, a payment plan option will be available through the superior court, county, or third party collections vendors and payments scheduled under the plan will be based on the ability to pay.

those who have already signed up for a Life Membership on time payments!

CRITERIA FOR LIFE MEMBER SPECIAL:

Applications must be postmarked between November 1, and December 31, 2015

Any annual or new member may sign up for \$100 life membership

Membership dues must be current (if you are already a member of AVVA)

If on time payments, and the member has paid \$100 or more by November 1, their payments will automatically stop, and they will receive their life membership

If on time payments and have not paid the minimum of \$100 on time payments by November 1, the member may pay a one-time payment of the difference and receive a life membership

There will be no time payments offered on this \$100.00 life membership

Any member who is a 3 year member, regardless of where they are at with their due date can sign up, but must pay \$100 for a life membership

No life member gifts will be given for this time period

Dual members ARE INCLUDED, following the above criteria.

Remember. This offer is only available from November 1st through December 31st of 2015.

AVVA 2015 NATIONAL BOARD

ELECTION RESULTS:

The following are the members of your 2015 - 2017

National Board of Directors.

National Officers:

President: Sharon Hobbs

Vice-President: Cathy Keister

Secretary: Joanna Henshaw

Treasurer: Kathy Andras

Regional Directors:

Region 1: no director (vacant)

Region 2: Nancy Rekowski PA

Region 3: Beverly Pounds TN

Region 4: Jeri Wallis GA

Region 5: Cecilia Essenmacher MI

Region 6: Diane Nicholson KS

Region 7: Percilla Newberry TX

Region 8: John Birch OR

Region 9: Elayne Mackey CA

As CA State resident and Region 9 Director, I was very proud of the delegates that attended the 2015 AVVA National Convention in Springfield, Ill. As always their questions, interest and dedication makes it such a privilege to work with you all.

Thank you: Nina Schloffel CA State Alternate, Alice Gomez Ch. 47, Linda Johnson Ch. 357, Richard (Sunny) Farrand Ch. 472, Kathi Bramblett Ch. 391, Bobbi Miller Ch. 933 and Penny Chamousis Ch 982.

Serving as an Election Teller was Ch. 982 AVVA member Teresa Brewer.

Thank you everyone. CA AVVA is the best!



Last but certainly not least, CA is the home of the

2015 AVVA National Member of the Year recipient, AVVA State Vice President, Nina Schloffel (photo at left). If you know Nina and her dedication to CA AVVA, our Secondary PTSD program and her 'heart felt' work and dedication to Habitat for Humanity, then you understand why Nina was honored with this award and why we are honored to have her with us.

VET CONNECT IN GUERNEVILLE

By Charles Earthman



For more than eight years Sonoma County Vet Connect has held weekly cost-free veteran's assistance clinics in Santa Rosa and monthly clinics at five other locations around the county. One of those locations is the sparsely-served West County, which includes the town of Guerneville. This area, because it is under-populated compared

to other parts of Sonoma County, has always struggled for its piece of the pie when it comes to county dollars and services. This has created a real burden for those less-privileged folks at the bottom of the economic ladder.

Vet Connect has started a new program in West County to help those at the very bottom of that ladder. On July 2 Vet Connect held their first homeless outreach clinic at the Veterans Building in Guerneville. Vet Connect had been working for a month to get showers and services for the homeless at the Veterans Building there in Guerneville. They met with resistance from the local community, including the Sheriff's Office in Guerneville, who were not really enthusiastic about providing services to the homeless population, but Vet Connect went forward with their plan. They were reaching out to all in need, whether they were veterans or not. Vet Connect President Richard Jones says "I can't in good conscience say you can't come in because you are not a veteran. We have the stuff, right now to do this and I'm going to use it."

When the Clinic first opened they had about 27 homeless participants, but since then it has grown in popularity; it has become a big success. Every Thursday from 10 am to 2 pm the Clinic provides a full range of services to the homeless population of West County. There are showers and haircuts for those who want them and there is fresh

food donated and served on site. They also give out snack bars and canned goods, complete with a P-38 (can opener). They are also given toiletries. Laundry services are provided at a local laundromat, with quarters provided by Vet Connect. "They come out of there smelling good and feeling good about themselves," says Jones.

The Clinic is staffed with help from SAY (Social Advocates for Youth) who make sandwiches and hot coffee for the participants. Other assistance is also provided by Russian River Empowerment and West County Health. St. Joseph's Health Care visits the Clinic twice a month with needed health care services. This is truly a full service outreach for the homeless in Guerneville and the locals, including the Sheriff's Office, are starting to see the benefits of this program.

Like so many of the projects that Vet Connect has been involved in, this project is benefiting those in need in our community. In this case it is not only vets helping vets, but it's vets serving the community

VVA FIRE SALE ON LIFE MEMBERSHIPS IS A HIT

So far National membership have processed 1098 Life Memberships for the \$100.00.

California is responsible for 55 of those life memberships. Lets keep it going. Get those who are not life members to sign up. Get your friend who is not yet a VVA member to sign up. A fillable PDF is available on the CSC Web site - http://vvacalsc.com/files/lm_special.pdf



Vietnam Veterans of America

8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100, Silver Spring, MD 20910 • Telephone (301) 585-4000

Membership FAX (301) 585-3019 • www.vva.org

One Time Special Offer August 1 – December 31, 2015

Life Membership Application

New: _____ Renewal: _____ Membership # _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone #: _____ E-Mail: _____

Life Membership Dues **\$100.00**

Life Membership Payment: Check _____ Money Order _____

Credit Card: Visa _____ MasterCard _____ Amex _____ Discover _____

Card Number: _____ Exp.Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Eligibility: Membership is to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purpose) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975. You MUST submit a copy of your DD2-14 with this application.

Send To: Vietnam Veterans of America, P.O. Box 64299, Baltimore, MD 21264-4299

911 DINNER DANCE

BANQUET

By Charles Earthman

On September 11, VVA Chapter 223 held its annual Dinner and Dance fundraiser. This was the fourth annual event of this kind the Chapter has staged at the end of summer. This year the Chapter joined with the next generation of vets from the Santa Rosa VFW Post 1844. The infusion of younger OIF/OEF blood seems to be just what we ageing Vietnam vets needed. The date (9/11) set the theme for this year's event and first responders were on hand and honored at this veteran community fundraiser.

The evening commenced when guests started arriving around 5 pm. The late summer heatwave did not hinder the enthusiasm as many guests wore ties and gowns while others dressed more casually. Formal or casual--the mood was upbeat and patriotic.

Master of Ceremonies Julia Sutton opened the evening's events. The Colors where posted by the Santa Rosa Fire Department's Color Guard and the National Anthem was tastefully sung by Andrea Ingraham. Dinner was catered by Louie's Fine Foods and was served buffet style. Music was provided by DJ Andy Martinez of A. N.D. Y - Brown Production, DJ

– 173rd. Andy really knows how to set the mood for all occasions as many of these guests already knew from past experiences. The guest speakers were Captain Don Ricci of the Santa Rosa Fire Department and Nate Boyer, a US Army Special Forces (Airborne) veteran and NFL football player. Both gave inspirational talks about duty and patriotism. As the evening progressed there was a dance demonstration by ballroom dancers Isamar Rios and Rafael Candelas of Arthur Murray Dance Studio. There were two great door prizes (“50 & “40 big screen TVs) for ticket holders and a silent auction with some wonderful items donated to help raise money for the event. The sale of raffle tickets was brisk and gave everyone a chance to participate in the night’s fundraising activities. A great time was had by all and the money raised was going to a great cause.

Donations from the Dinner Dance go to support many services in the veteran community such as transportation for disabled veterans, benefit counseling, legal representation to help veterans with their benefit claims, personal assistance programs, peer support counseling, advocating for veterans in need, and eliminating homelessness. Without events like this it would be difficult to provide support for these services.

A big note of gratitude goes out to the sponsors of this event, especially Soroptimist International and West Coast Diesels who made large charitable donations. There were many other businesses and individual sponsors who contributed to making this event possible. We thank them all. Special thanks must also go out to the volunteers who help make this whole thing go. Countless hours of dedicated work helped bring this whole thing together. After the success of this event, I think we will be doing it again next year; September 10, 2016. See you there.

CHAPTER 223 SANTA ROSA

Ken Holybee, President

Chapter 223 has been very busy the last couple of months. We had an information booth at a Wednesday night market in Santa Rosa that ran for 16 weeks and ended in August. This booth provided outreach to veterans of all eras and gave information about all health issues to anyone that would listen. We invited the local VFW to spend time in our booth since they have younger leadership and they could communicate better with OEF/OIF veterans. They seem to speak a different language than we do. Just about like us trying to speak to the older veterans when we came home. There were times I had to ask what they were saying. They would translate and laugh about it.

After the market ended we were involved in some fun fundraisers. One was a cabaret show and a week later was our annual dinner dance fundraiser. The cabaret show was a fun event where, if something could go wrong, it did. Not much for fundraising, but we are planning another for next year and working through the problems. It should be successful next year. The dinner dance was our best one yet. We teamed up with the local VFW 1844 to get the younger crowd involved. This was a learning experience for them and a teaching experience for us. This was a successful event that we are working on for next year and looking at how to make it more of a “must attend” event. This year our chapter was the host of the POW/MIA Recognition Day program. We had a good turnout and a good program. A thank you to all of the helpers and organizations that made this program a success.

Five days a week we operate a free coffee and donut stand at the front door of our local VA Clinic. We have a lot of members and other veterans there to offer help to those that cannot pour a cup of coffee without assistance. This is a great place to talk to veterans of all eras and offer assistance to anyone in need. The staff at the Clinic appreciates the work we do talking to veterans entering and leaving. Sometimes a cup of coffee and a cookie or donut is welcome after you’ve been fasting for a blood draw or while waiting to catch the bus. The Santa Rosa Clinic is the transfer point for the VA buses coming in from Eureka, Fort Bragg, Ukiah, and Lake County on their way to the San Francisco VA Hospital. They also transfer there on their way home. For some of the veterans this is an all-day trip one-way, and to ride the bus down and back can be tiring and challenging. The buses arrive for a 0800 start to San Francisco and the last buses going north leave at 1600. I am not sure what time they arrive in Eureka, but I am sure it is after sundown most of the time. Our members always offer a kind word and information on programs and groups to help the veterans. Sometimes just listening to someone’s troubles or the story of their service time can be very rewarding. No one goes away with a temper problem or without a smile after talking to our volunteers. These volunteers really make a difference to our veterans and our community.

Our next upcoming event is the Wings Over Wine Country Air Show on September 26 and 27. This is another chance for outreach and to sell hats and pins and pass out information. Our Christmas Party will be on December 4th, the first Friday of the month. All are welcome to this fun event. The first Saturday of each month we hold our monthly Texas Hold ‘Em Tournament at the veterans building. This is always an exciting time for the winners, of course. And there’s our involvement with Sonoma County Vet Connect every Tuesday morning. The fourth Tuesday of each month we host a food give-away program with the Sonoma County Food Bank, at the veterans building.

We have a lot of members that are involved with assisting in the community and helping in more ways than I can list. These members mostly go unnoticed and unnamed but we all appreciate their assistance. We have a couple of core groups that work quietly to make everyone look good at their tasks. Just like in the military, all of the troops work together not looking for any individual recognition—a list of their names would take a page. I could not do much without the backing and assistance of our members and the cooperation and support from the organizations we work with. We have a lot that we can teach and still have some things to learn. Working together, it becomes much easier.

CHAPTER 500 SACRAMENTO POW/MIA CEREMONY AT THE CA VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL



CHAPTER 201 SAN JOSE

Members of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 201 participated in the dedication ceremony on POW/MIA National Recognition Day, September 18, 2015, to fly the POW/MIA flag in front of San Jose City Hall year round.

Chapter 201 members Fran McVey and President David Sanders were instrumental in obtaining the approval to fly the POW/MIA flag in front of San Jose’s City Hall 365-days a year. During two public City Council hearings, Fran McVey, also President of the United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County, and President Sanders gave testimony in support of an initiative presented by San Jose Vice Mayor Rose Herrera to display the POW/MIA Flag at City Hall. Vice Mayor Herrera is a Vietnam Era Air Force Veteran who supported military personnel return from Vietnam while stationed on Okinawa. The first Council hearing in June 2015 resulted in flying the flag on seven specified days during the year. The second hearing, on August 25, 2015, received unanimous approval from the City Council for the 365-day initiative.

On September 18, 2015, members of Santa Clara County Veteran organizations, and the general public, witnessed the dedication of the historic resolution by the San Jose City Council to fly the POW/MIA Flag below the National Colors 365-days a year in front of City Hall.

Members of VVA-201 Associates, lead by Associates Chapter 201 Vice President Cang Kim Dong, provided an Honor Guard for the Ceremony as members of American Legion District 13 raised the National Colors and POW/MIA Flag in front of the San Jose City Hall.

Darwin J. Thomas VVA Memorial Chapter 201 President David Sanders and Fran McVey publicly thanked



Vice Mayor Rose Herrera for sponsoring and encouraging the San Jose City Council to fly the POW/MIA Flag at City Hall. San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo and Vice Mayor Herrera presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Fran McVey and Dave Sanders for their efforts to support the initiative during this year's National POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony.

The next effort will be to meet with members of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to develop and implement a similar initiative to fly the POW/MIA flag at the County Building 365-days a year.

Bob Kadlec Vice President
Darwin J. Thomas Chapter 201

VA & PAIN MEDS

THE VA'S ATTEMPT TO FIGHT OPIOID DEPENDENCE LEAVES PAIN PATIENTS CUT OFF

By Darisse Smith

After the Department of Veterans Affairs scaled back its prescriptions of opioids, many patients were left to deal with their chronic pain by themselves.

Anyone who has ruck marched with a heavy pack, performed a parachute landing fall out of a C-130 or worn body armor all day knows that the military lifestyle is rough on the body. Due to the physical requirements of the military, veterans experience a much higher rate of chronic pain than the civilian population. The recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to more advanced body armor, saving the lives of thousands of soldiers, Marines, sailors and airmen. These advances in equipment, though lifesaving, mean that troops survive with devastating injuries such as limb amputations and traumatic brain injury that require advanced, coordinated treatment.

According to a May 2014 Inspector General study of the Department of Veterans Affairs and its opioid dispensing methods, more than 50% of the veteran population experience chronic pain as well as other contributing factors such as post-traumatic stress disorder. The prevalence of PTSD is especially important to note in treating chronic pain because the two conditions work against each other. According to the National Institute of PTSD, the presence of pain can be a constant reminder of unwelcome memories and a veteran's increased anxiety can exacerbate his or her experience of pain. More than 2 out of 10 veterans with PTSD also have a substance abuse disorder making

it more difficult for doctors to prescribe opioid medication for their chronic pain. Veterans are not alone in experiencing substance abuse, especially when it comes to prescription drug abuse. From 2001 to 2013, 2.5 times as many people died due to an opioid drug overdose, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

A VA healthcare system that was underprepared for wartime casualties initially dealt with the increase in these debilitating injuries by prescribing larger amounts of opioids to help with the pain. From 2001 to 2013, prescriptions for opioid pain medications, such as oxycodone and morphine, increased by 259%, according to a report by the Star Tribune. In order to combat a growing number of accidental overdoses, suicides, and prescription drug abuse, the VA unveiled the Opioid Safety Initiative in 2013. In theory, the initiative promotes alternative methods of pain control, such as acupuncture and chiropractic care, while reducing the dosages and prescriptions for opioid medications. This coincided with a national campaign outside the VA to curb prescription drug abuse. The Drug Enforcement Agency expanded its regulatory authority and tightened the prescribing guidelines on several commonly utilized opioid medications such as hydrocodone. Instead of gradually weaning off veterans who had been on a steady dosage of opioids for several months and even years, patients were abruptly cut off, leaving users in a miserable lurch.

Anyone who has been on an opioid medication for a long period of time will experience withdrawal symptoms whether or not they are psychologically addicted. Though opioid withdrawal does not usually lead to death, a person experiences horrible physical and mental side effects including muscle cramps, diarrhea, insomnia, sweating, chills, nausea, and vomiting. There are few methods for combating these symptoms except for gradually weaning off of the dosage. Even after the acute physical withdrawal symptoms have passed, depression and anxiety can worsen due to the change in brain chemistry that occurs with a reduced dosage of opioids. This side effect is particularly troubling in veterans already struggling with anxiety and depression as symptoms of PTSD. The Star Tribune report details the stories of several veterans who were sent into devastating tailspins after the Opioid Safety Initiative launched at the Minneapolis VA. Two Iraq War veterans committed suicide after their local VA hospitals dramatically reduced their opioid medication without any other supportive treatments to help with their complex symptoms. Though statistics are difficult to conclusively determine, anecdotal evidence suggests that many veterans were pushed over the psychological edge when the Opioid Safety Initiative was launched.

In both the VA and private healthcare sector, the war against prescription drug abuse has mostly impacted chronic pain patients who rely on opioid medications for a higher quality of life. Increased DEA regulatory authority has led to large pharmacies adopting stricter guidelines that leave civilian pain patients in a similar bind. The VA is under intense scrutiny and pressure, making it especially crucial that it make a responsible comeback from this debacle.

Military medicine is extremely advanced when it comes to life-saving technology in combat, yet the military and the VA have failed when it comes to treating the lingering wounds of war. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan brought major advances in medical technology, from advanced prosthetics and one-handed tourniquets, to better methods for diagnosing traumatic brain injuries. Yet the VA launched the Opioid Safety Initiative with little analysis or preparation to transition veterans responsibly from large dosages of opioid medication. According to the 2014 Pain Management Opioid Safety guide, practitioners are encouraged to utilize cognitive behavioral therapy, family and peer support groups, alternative therapies such as chiropractic care and acupuncture along with interventional pain management injections. Medication should not be utilized as the only solution.

The initiative to curb prescription drug abuse, though well-meaning, has placed an even greater burden on the already-strapped mental health services available through the VA. In 2013, the VA launched a major recruiting effort to add over 1,600 mental health professionals nationwide. With a steady amount of veteran suicides each day, many would argue that the VA mental health care system still lags far behind the overall veteran need. As for alternative therapies, only 52 out of 153 VA hospitals provide chiropractic care and even fewer provide acupuncture. Though the VA has no solid numbers on veterans' use of heroin because it is an illicit drug, the crackdown on prescription drug abuse has forced many civilian pain patients to seek heroin as a method of controlling pain and there is substantial anecdotal evidence that many veterans have followed suit.

The answer to these devastating healthcare issues is not more knee-jerk mandates or restrictions, but to increase veteran access to mental health services, alternative therapies, and interventional pain management options immediately. This might mean expanding the VA healthcare network to include existing civilian practitioners already adapted to the needs of chronic pain patients. Access to reputable substance abuse treatment programs, whether these programs are in the VA healthcare system or not, is also imperative to reducing accidental and intentional prescription drug overdoses among veterans.

The VA can no longer afford to launch these well-intended yet clumsy programs at the expense of veteran welfare. The nature of military services can translate into a lifetime of physical and mental pain for veterans. It is time for the VA to be an asset to depend on for veterans suffering from chronic pain, PTSD, and substance abuse disorders even if the answer to the issue lies outside the VA healthcare system.

VETERANS EDUCATIONAL TALK SHOW

Steve Konstenius skonstenius@yahoo.com

I have been asked to Produce and Host a show that I have titled as VETS, Veterans Educational Talk Show. It will be 2 one hour segments twice per week probably on Tuesdays and Sundays, maybe Friday and Sundays. At any rate my format will be interviews with various Veterans, Veteran Leaders, Veterans Families. Maybe even some off site interviews down at the State Meetings if you want. If any of you are interested in being on the program please let me know. I will also be having call in segments from time to time. If you want me to keep you posted on the development and have certain topics you want to present on the show let me know, interviews can be done via telephone, etc.

I was on TV for two segments yesterday about our rib cook off, they asked me to come back for some other veteran fitness issues. Alex Backus (who I've come to know real well) is taking a new job with NBC in Fresno; I talked with her about doing some live TV about the CSC meetings, let me know if you want me to follow up on it.

Hope all of you are well. Oh the demographics etc. are 36-66 years of age (MEDIUM HIGH-HIGH INCOME). Northern CA, from Fresno to past Redding over to Williams and Quincy.

Tank

PTSD AND VIETNAM VETERANS: A LASTING ISSUE 40 YEARS LATER



Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is defined as having flashbacks, upsetting memories, and anxiety following a traumatic event. It was first officially recognized as a mental health condition in 1980, only five years after the end of the Vietnam War. For hundreds of years, these symptoms have been described under different names in soldiers from many wars. However, Vietnam Veterans with these symptoms were the first to have the term 'PTSD' applied to them. Despite the passage of 50 years since the war, for some Vietnam Veterans, PTSD remains a chronic reality of everyday life.

In 1983, Congress requested that VA conduct a study on the prevalence of PTSD and other postwar psychological problems among Vietnam Veterans. This was the first study to evaluate the prevalence of PTSD among Veterans, and became known as the National Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Study (NVVRS). The NVVRS brought greater attention to the issue of PTSD as it found that as many as 15 percent of Veterans had PTSD.

National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study

More recently, Congress requested that VA conduct a follow-up study among the participants of the NVVRS,

NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS LONGITUDINAL STUDY (NVVLS)
KEY FINDINGS

The 2013 NVVLS measured the long-term health and mental health of Vietnam Veterans. Results of the study were compared to the results of a similar study completed in 1987 on the same sample of Veterans. Findings confirm that while the majority of Vietnam Veterans are both mentally and physically healthy, a significant number are still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other chronic health issues related to their service.

MORTALITY

MALE THEATER VETERANS WHO HAD PTSD IN 1987
WERE NEARLY TWICE AS LIKELY
TO HAVE DIED COMPARED TO THOSE WHO DID NOT HAVE PTSD



WITH PTSD WITHOUT PTSD

MALE AND FEMALE THEATER VETERANS WITH HIGH EXPOSURE TO WARZONE STRESS
WERE NEARLY TWICE AS LIKELY
TO HAVE DIED THAN THOSE WITH LOW OR MODERATE WARZONE STRESS EXPOSURE

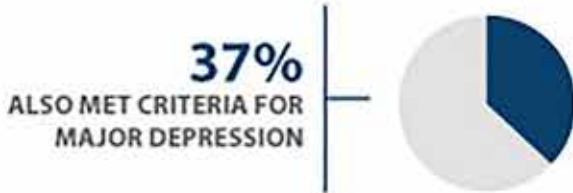
MENTAL HEALTH

2013 (40 OR MORE YEARS AFTER WARTIME SERVICE)

AMONG THEATER VETERANS, 7% OF FEMALES AND 11% OF MALES STILL HAD PTSD



AMONG THEATER VETERANS WITH PTSD



<1% LESS THAN 1% OF VETERANS WITHOUT ANY PTSD MET CRITERIA FOR MAJOR DEPRESSION

PHYSICAL HEALTH

THEATER VETERANS



MORE THAN HALF
REPORTED A HISTORY OF MUSCULOSKELETAL CONDITIONS (E.G. ARTHRITIS)



NEARLY ONE-THIRD
REPORTED A HISTORY OF CIRCULATORY DISEASES (E.G. HEART DISEASE) AND NERVOUS SYSTEM DISEASES (E.G. DEAFNESS)

THOSE WITH CURRENT WARZONE PTSD WERE **MORE LIKELY** TO REPORT A HISTORY OF CHRONIC CONDITIONS

USE OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

NEARLY 60%
OF THEATER VETERANS REPORTED RECEIVING OUTPATIENT HEALTH CARE IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS FOR PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



2/3 TWO-THIRDS OF VETERANS WITH CURRENT WARZONE-RELATED PTSD DISCUSSED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONCERNS WITH PROVIDERS

SOURCE: http://vaveteran.org/35-1/35-1_longitudinalstudy.html

known as the National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study (NVVLS). The NVVLS was completed in December 2013, and was the first study to measure the long-term health and mental health of Vietnam Veterans.

Both the NVVRS and NVVLS compared two groups of Veterans: those deployed to the Vietnam War (“theater Veterans”), and those who served during the Vietnam-era, but were not deployed to the Vietnam theater (“era Veterans”). The NVVLS assessment of the Veterans’ physical and mental health included a self-report survey, a phone interview, and for some randomly selected participants, an additional phone interview led by a mental health clinician that focused on issues including PTSD, depression, and substance abuse.

While NVVLS findings confirm that the majority of Vietnam theater Veterans are both mentally and physi-

cally healthy, a significant number are still suffering from PTSD symptoms and other chronic health issues related to their service.

VA is using the results of this study and other similar studies to better understand the long-term effects of military service. The results will allow VA to improve care and to better address Veterans’ long-term health needs, as well as anticipate future health needs of recent Veterans.

For more information on VA research related to the health of Vietnam Veterans, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/research-studies.asp.

- See more at: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/publications/agent-orange/agent-orange-summer-2015/nvvl.asp#sthash.ANHJn5Yi.dpuf>

FLU SHOTS AT WALGREENS

VA Partners with Walgreens to Offer Flu Vaccines: This week, VA announced a partnership with Walgreens drugstores to provide flu vaccinations for veterans enrolled to receive VA health care. This is a no-cost program for these veterans as Walgreens will bill VA for services. Family members and those enrolled only in Tricare are not eligible for this program. For more information on the program or to find a local Walgreens, visit: <http://www.ehealth.va.gov/immunization.asp>.

HOMELESS VET FUNDING

VA Announces \$4 Million in Funding to Help the Homeless

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald announced the award of \$4 million in renewal funding offered through the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program to 21 community agencies that currently provide enhanced services for homeless Veterans with special needs.

“These important grant renewals will allow community agencies to continue to provide critical transitional housing services where they are needed,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. “As a key component of the VA’s plan to significantly reduce homelessness among Veterans, the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Special Need grants will provide funding to community agencies that provide services to homeless Veterans.

The program promotes the development and provision of supportive housing and services with the goal of helping homeless Veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and income, and obtain greater self-determination. Specifically, GPD Special Need grant funding will assist with additional operational costs that would not otherwise be incurred but for the fact that the recipient is providing transitional housing and services for the GPD “Special Need” populations, including women, chronically mentally ill, frail elderly, terminally ill, and individuals who have the care of minor dependents.

As a result of these and other efforts, Veteran homelessness is down significantly since the launch of the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in 2010. The state of Connecticut and cities of New Orleans, Houston, Phoenix, and Salt Lake City have all recently announced the achievement of significant milestones related to ending Veteran homelessness.

More information about VA’s homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless. Community organizations seeking details and/or more information may visit VA’s National Grant and Per Diem Program website www.va.gov/homeless/GPD.ASP.

AO - CAUSES CANCER

More Evidence Agent Orange Causes Cancer
by Maggie Fox



Researchers have found more evidence that Agent Orange causes cancer in Vietnam-era veterans who worked with it.

The study of 479 veterans who were involved in Agent Orange defoliation missions during the war shows they have more than twice the risk of developing a blood condition that can lead to cancer as similar veterans who didn't work with the chemical.

The condition is called monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance or MGUS for short. It's a precursor for multiple myeloma, a type of blood cancer.

Agent Orange was used to strip Vietnamese and



Vietnam vet David Jonta (Army) helps carry panels to place in the Moving Wall at Green Hills Memorial Park in Rancho Palos Verdes. Photo by Brad Graverson/The Daily Breeze



Vietnam vets Richard Carlos (Air Force) and David Jonta (Army) carry a piece of the Moving Wall at Green Hills Memorial Park in Rancho Palos Verdes. Photo by Brad Graverson/The Daily Breeze



Volunteers seen in a reflection of the half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall as they build the memorial at Green Hills Memorial Park in Rancho Palos Verdes. Photo by Brad Graverson/The Daily Breeze



Volunteers help USMC vet Dennis Wild as he pounds in stakes to anchor the Moving Wall, a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Green Hills Memorial Park in Rancho Paso Verdes. Photo by Brad Graverson/The Daily Breeze



USMC veteran Dennis Wild, right, hugs his good friend Army vet Dick Cunningham as they visit the Wall to pay Respects to Kenneth Treadway, Wild's cousin who was killed in Vietnam. Green Hills Memorial Park, Rancho Palos Verdes. Photo by Brad Graverson/The Daily

Cambodian jungles and fields by U.S. forces during the Vietnam war. It refers to several herbicides, nicknamed for the orange stripe on the barrels in which they were stored. They include 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid and 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid.

The worst effects are seen among the people living in the areas sprayed.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes that Agent Orange causes multiple myeloma as wells as several types of leukemia, other cancers, diabetes, heart disease and Parkinson's disease. Veterans who can show they were exposed to it are supposed to get medical care for such conditions and they can get disability compensation.

Dr. Ola Landgren of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and colleagues compared 479 Americans involved in Operation Ranch Hand spraying missions to 479 veterans who were not.

They found 7 percent of the Operation Ranch Hand vets had MGUS, compared to 3 percent of other veterans.

"Our findings of increased MGUS risk among Ranch Hand veterans supports an association between Agent Orange exposure and multiple myeloma," they wrote in the Journal of the American Medical Association's JAMA Oncology.

Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange have a more than doubled risk of developing abnormal blood cells that can become cancerous, a new study suggests.

The researchers found that U.S. Air Force vets who conducted aerial herbicide spray missions of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War had a 2.4 times increased risk of developing the blood disease known as monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS).

The presence of MGUS in a person's blood is a pre-requisite for developing multiple myeloma, explained lead author Dr. Ola Landgren, a hematologist-oncologist and chief of the myeloma service at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City.

"Most people who have MGUS will not develop multiple myeloma, but everyone who has myeloma first had MGUS," Landgren said.

About 30 percent of people with MGUS will develop multiple myeloma within 30 years, said Dr. Nikhil Munshi, director of basic and correlative science at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center in Boston.

Agent Orange is an herbicide sprayed during the Vietnam War to kill off trees and vegetation that the enemy used as cover. The military sprayed millions of gallons of Agent Orange and other herbicides during the war, mainly in an Air Force effort code-named "Operation Ranch Hand," which ran from 1962 to 1971, according to background information in the study.

Agent Orange contained two herbicides that, when blended, produced a dioxin called TCDD as an unwanted byproduct, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. TCDD is the most toxic of the dioxins and is classified as a proven carcinogen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The chemical concoction has been linked to a wide array of illnesses for which veterans can receive benefits, including multiple myeloma. However, until now there has been no scientific evidence to show how exposure to Agent Orange might cause a person to develop the blood cancer, Landgren said.

To figure out the possible link, Landgren and his colleagues examined blood samples taken from 958 Vietnam veterans. These included 479 Operation Ranch Hand veterans who were involved in aerial herbicide spray missions, and 479 comparison veterans who were never exposed to Agent Orange.

The study found that about 7 percent of Operation Ranch Hand veterans had developed MGUS, which is a condition in which plasma cells produce an abnormal protein in the blood. But only 3 percent of unexposed veterans had developed MGUS.

The analysis also revealed that Operation Ranch Hand veterans were more likely to have higher levels of TCDD in their blood, and that their risk of MGUS increased as their TCDD levels increased.

"There is a dose-response relationship," Landgren said.

Munshi said the results provide strong evidence of a link between Agent Orange and multiple myeloma, although a direct cause-and-effect relationship can't be determined in this sort of observational study.

"It's not proof, but it's a good link to show there's a connection," said Munshi, who wrote an accompanying editorial to the study.

The findings were published online Sept. 3 in the journal JAMA Oncology.

Landgren and Munshi said that veterans exposed to

Agent Orange should have their blood tested for signs of MGUS. If the disorder is detected, they will need to schedule regular follow-ups to keep track of their MGUS and make sure it doesn't progress.

Studies have shown that tracking people with MGUS can increase the survival rate of multiple myeloma by at least 15 percent, because patients received prompt treatment for their cancer, which reduced their risk of complications, Landgren said.

However, just because vets have MGUS does not mean they need to have their blood tested frequently, Landgren and Munshi said. In most cases, annual checks will be enough.

"I don't want veterans to get an impression that they need to be seen monthly if they have been exposed to Agent Orange and they have MGUS," Munshi said. "They need to be followed appropriate to what their MGUS stage is. MGUS is an easy disease to follow."

SOURCES: Ola Landgren, M.D., Ph.D., hematologist-oncologist and chief, myeloma service, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York City; Nikhil Munshi, M.D., professor, Harvard Medical School, and director, basic and correlative science, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center, Boston; Sept. 3, 2015, JAMA Oncology

HealthDay

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VVA WOMEN LOGO APPAREL

VVA WOMEN LOGO APPAREL (Regular and Life Time) As you know, I have been actively involved with trying to obtain an MOU with a vendor that sells women LOGO apparel that is more suited to the shape and fit for our women veterans, rather than the women veteran buying male clothing and trying to shrink or alter the item to fit and also look professional.

I believe that Kate O'Hare Palmer (VVA Women Veteran Chair) passed the information to you that on July 9, 2015, the MOU with Ideal Images was signed and Joe Sternberg gave the "go ahead" to share the WEB site with all of the women VVA members. The process to service the VVA women veterans has taken quite a long time to locate a vendor that has the style and cut that is flattering to women veterans... and I am happy to announce that the Web site is up an running and ready for orders. I believe that orders are shipped on the 1st and the 15th of each month. Could you please pass this information to the CSCP Presidents that the Web site is up ad running; and that the CSCP Presidents can share this newsworthy information with the VVA women veterans at the state and chapter level?

AVVA will be doing the same with an MOU with Ideal images and they will disburse information to the AVVA women members accordingly after the MOU is signed.

<http://corporate1.ideal-stores.com/> - code: vva

Dottie Barickman
Vietnam Veterans of America
At Large Director
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VETERAN BOND SALE

TREASURER CHIANG TO SELL \$446 MILLION IN VETERANS GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS
CALIFORNIA IS HOME TO NEARLY 2 MILLION VETERANS, THE LARGEST NUMBER IN THE U. S.

California State Treasurer John Chiang is announcing the sale of up to \$445,700,000 of Veterans General Obligation Bonds.

California's Veterans served our state and nation with honor, Chiang said. We owe them a debt of gratitude that this bond sale will begin repaying by way of helping our returning service members and their families realize the American dream of homeownership.

The General Obligation Bonds are being issued to finance home and farm mortgage loans for California military Veterans under the Farm and Home Purchase Program, administered by the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet).

This is an important bond sale directly aiding California's Veterans, said CalVet Secretary Vito Imbasciani, M.D. I'm proud California offers these bonds as an expression of our thanks to our Veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice. This General Obligation Bond sale will provide CalVet with funding sufficient to offer

home loans to hundreds of California's Veterans.

The joint senior managers include: Bank of America Merrill Lynch, which currently employs more than 10,000 Veterans, Guards and Reservists with a major initiative to increase the hiring over the next several years and Academy Securities, the nation's first and only Post 9/11 DVBE broker-dealer founded by a U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis graduate. Along with these two firms, the underwriting group will also include Drexel Hamilton, LLC, a full-service institutional broker-dealer that offers meaningful employment opportunities to disabled veterans in the financial services industry; and, Mischler Financial Group, founded by a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point who served with distinction and decoration in Vietnam before becoming disabled.

Bank of America has proudly provided financial services to the U. S. Military for 95 years. With our long history and ongoing commitment to U. S. veterans, we were pleased to be involved in this deal, working with veteran-owned firms in a deal that will benefit former Californian service men and women, said John Lawlor, head of Municipal Banking & Markets Group at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, himself a former U. S. Navy veteran, and graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy.

We are honored to be appointed as Joint Senior Manager on the upcoming California Veterans General Obligation bond transaction. California has the largest population of military Veterans nearly two million - in the United States and we are proud to be associated with CalVet's and Treasurer Chiang's efforts to assist our state's Veterans with their housing needs, said Chance Mims, CEO of Academy Securities.

Our mission every day is to help those who sacrificed so much for us, and we are pleased to be involved in a transaction that will allow for the State of California to continue that same mission of supporting our returning military heroes, said James Cahill, President of LLC Drexel Hamilton.

As the financial industry's oldest and largest SDV owned/operated firm and rooted in California, our legacy is dedicated to supporting Veteran initiatives. We are therefore honored to continue our long relationship with the State and to have been selected Co-Senior Manager for this CalVet financing, said Dean Chamberlain, CEO of Mischler Financial Group.

Sale details: The State will sell approximately \$445,700,000 of Veterans General Obligation Bonds in three separate series. The bonds will provide funds for the purchase of homes and farms (by California military Veterans through programs managed by the CalVet).

The bonds received ratings of Aa2 by Moody's, AA by S&P, and AA- by Fitch. The State will offer the bonds to investors on October 7 and 8. The sale is expected to close on October 29, 2015.

To learn more, read the preliminary official statement (<http://www.buycaliforniabonds.com/bcb/vets/offering.asp>).

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

VA Implements Choice Program Expansion: As a result of recent legislation, VA has expanded eligibility for the Choice Program to any veteran enrolled in the VA health care system. Eligibility was previously limited to

veterans who enrolled in VA health care before August 1, 2014. VA intends to make more expansions to the Choice Program in the near future. Stay tuned to the Action Corps Weekly to learn about changes as they occur. To learn more, visit: <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/23201/va-implements-the-first-of-several-veterans-choice-program-eligibility-expansions/>.

NEW CALVET SECRETARY GOVERNOR BROWN APPOINTS NEW CALVET SECRETARY

Vito Imbasciani, 69, of Los Angeles, has been appointed secretary at the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). Imbasciani has been director of government relations at the Southern California Kaiser Permanente Medical Group since 2004, where he has been a urologic surgeon since 1997. He served as state surgeon for the California Army National Guard from 2006 to 2014 and as a surgeon in the U.S. Army Medical Corps from 1986 to 2014. Imbasciani is president-elect of the Los Angeles County Medical Association and a member of the California Medical Association Board of Trustees and the California Association of Physician Groups Board of Directors. He earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Vermont College of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Arts degrees in musicology

from Cornell University. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$188,451. Imbasciani is a Democrat.

For more information, please see the official announcement: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=19115>

PENSION PROTECTION GOVERNOR SIGNS ALLEN LEGISLATION TO PROTECT VETERANS FROM PENSION SCAMS

Today Governor Jerry Brown signed into law a measure authored by Senator Ben Allen (D Santa Monica) to protect veterans from pension scams. The bill, Senate Bill (SB) 386, was proposed in response to the increasing number of veterans who are falling prey to investment schemes in which they are promised a lump-sum cash payment in exchange for their monthly retirement income.

It is completely unacceptable that veterans are being taken advantage of through these financial scams. California's 2 million veterans deserve better. This legislation is a modest, but important, reform that will help prevent our retired servicemen and women from being duped into similar schemes in the future, Senator Allen said.

Nearly half of the 38 companies engaged in these phony investment deals are located in California. Once a veteran signs away his or her benefits, the company sells

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs


The Veterans Choice Program provides eligible Veterans the option to receive VA Community Care from approved providers in their communities.

Am I eligible?

If you were enrolled in VA Health care on or before Aug 1, 2014 or you are eligible to enroll as a combat Veteran, and answered

"YES"

to any of the questions, you may be eligible!



- Have you been told by your local VA medical facility that they can't schedule your appointment **within 30 days** of the clinically indicated date or if no such date can be determined, your preferred date?
- Is your current residence **more than 40 miles** from the closest VA medical facility?
- Do you need to travel by air, boat or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to your home?
- Do you face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to a VA medical facility based on the presence of a body of water or a geologic formation that cannot be crossed by road?


How do I set up an appointment?

Call: 866-606-8198

- 1** Gather your information about any other health insurance coverage you may have (e.g., employer, union-based health plans)
- 2** Call 1-866-606-8198 to make sure you qualify + schedule an appointment. When you call, we will walk you through the following steps:

 - You will be asked to enter your ZIP code, and first and last name.
 - We will check to make sure you are eligible for this program.
 - We will check which of your needs are covered by the VA.
 - You will be asked for your address and the name of your preferred VA Community Care. Unfortunately, not all providers will be eligible to participate so if your preferred provider is not available, we will recommend other providers in your area.
- 3** We will then work with you to schedule an appointment.

This hotline is exclusively for making sure you are eligible for the Choice Program and setting up a VA Community Care appointment. If you have questions about other aspects of your VA medical care or want to learn more about enrolling in VA health services, please visit www.va.gov/health.



LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE’S REPORT:
TOP VETERANS BILLS MOVING TO THE GOVERNOR’S DESK
September 14, 2015

The bills listed below are a listing of the key veterans bills that made it through the legislative process and are on their way to the Governor’s desk for signature or veto.

A new feature of these legislative updates is “Who this legislation helps”. You will see that the legislation your organization is supporting helps not only veterans, but also active duty military, their dependents, Reservists, and National Guard.

THE LANGUAGE, STATUS, ANALYSES, AND VOTES ON ALL CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION CAN BE
ACCESSED AT: [HTTP://WWW.LEGINFO.CA.GOV/BILINFO.HTML](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html)

AB 82 - Garcia

TITLE: Vehicles: Driver's License: Selective Service Registration.
SUMMARY: Requires a person who is required to be registered under the federal Military Selective Service Act and who submits an application for an original driver's license to be deemed to have consented to registration with the federal Selective Service system.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.
THIS BILL WILL HELP: Young male adults, those seeking a college education, student loans, getting a job, etc. Not registering for the draft can affect a young males in many ways such as making them ineligible for many federal jobs, grants, programs, etc.

AB 306 - Hadley

TITLE: Attendance: Children of Military Personnel
SUMMARY: Prohibits a school district of residence from prohibiting the transfer of a pupil who is a child of an active military duty parent to a school in any school district, if the district to which the parents of the pupil applies approves the application for transfer.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.

THIS BILL WILL HELP: Military families in California with school aged children.

AB 413 – Chavez

TITLE: Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise Program
SUMMARY: Allows the immediate family of a disabled veteran with a DVBE to operate the business as a DVBEfor three years upon the death of the disabled veteran.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.
THIS BILL WILL HELP: Disabled veteran business owners’ families have time to terminate, restructure or sell a family business upon the veterans death.

AB 442 – Irwin

TITLE: Governor’s Military Council.
SUMMARY: Codifies the Governor’s Military Council, under the direction of the State Military Department. This Council was originally initiated by the Governor to address the federal base closure process and to lessen its impact on California.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.

THIS BILL WILL HELP: Ensure that the needs of California’s military bases are addressed.

AB 931 - Irwin

TITLE: Taxation: Credit: Hiring
SUMMARY: Amends existing law which provides a credit for hiring qualified full-time employees within specified economic development areas designated as a pilot are from one year to three years. Revises the definition of a qualified full-time employee to include qualified veterans who separated from service within a specified time before commencement of employment with the qualified taxpayer.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.
THIS BILL WILL HELP: Veterans seeking a job.

AB 1361 – Burke

TITLE: Student financial aid, Veterans Cal Grant Program.
SUMMARY: Exempts a current or former member of the Armed Forces of the United States, unless the individual received a dishonorable discharge, from the age limitations of the California Community College (CCC) Transfer Cal Grant Entitlement Program.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.

THIS BILL WILL HELP: Older veterans who wish to attend college.

SB 111 - Fuller

TITLE: School Facilities: Military Installations
SUMMARY: Expresses the intent of the Legislature that certain assistance be provided to school districts in the 2015-16 fiscal year to meet the matching share requirement of a school construction grant made by the Office of Economic Adjustment of the federal Department of Defense to construct, renovate, repair, or expand elementary and secondary public schools located on military installations. Requires the exploration of options, including loans available to districts, in meeting the federal grant matching share.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.

THIS BILL WILL HELP: School aged children of military families in California.

SB 221 - Jackson

TITLE: State Public Employees: Sick Leave: Veterans
SUMMARY: Enacts the State Wounded Warriors Transitional Leave Act. Grants a State officer or employee who is a military veteran with a minimum service-connected disability rating by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs an additional credit for sick leave with pay for the purpose of undergoing medical treatment for that disability. Prohibits the carryover of such leave beyond a specified time period. Permits submission of satisfactory proof the leave is being used for treatment of such disability.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.

THIS BILL WILL HELP: Helps disabled veterans who are new state employees.

SB 549 - Hall

TITLE: Charitable Raffles.
SUMMARY: Authorizes a raffle conducted by professional sports team raffles for the purpose of directly supporting specified beneficial or charitable purposes or financially supporting another private, nonprofit, eligible organization that performs those purposes if, among other requirements, each ticket sold contains a unique and matching identifier, 50% of the gross receipts generated from the sale of raffle tickets are used to benefit or provide support for beneficial or charitable purposes.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.
THIS BILL WILL HELP: Veterans Service Organizations who want to raise money for the programs they have that help veterans by partnering with professional sports teams.

SB 685 - McGuire

TITLE: Alcoholic Beverage Service: Veterans' Club License.
SUMMARY: Authorizes a holder of a veterans' club license, to serve members of other Veterans Service Organizations and unaffiliated veterans and active duty and reserve military.
STATUS: On Governor’s desk.
THIS BILL WILL HELP: Veterans Posts and Chapters that have a veterans club ABC license, who want to attract new members, by allowing other VSO members as well as any veteran or active duty personnel, National Guard member or reservist to use Post facilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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interests in the revenue stream generated by those future benefits to investors. This practice is illegal under federal and state law, but several companies continue to advertise the transactions in publications targeting veterans. SB 386 makes the act of advertising these pension poaching scams illegal, and allows prosecutors to file suit against the companies responsible for the advertisement.

Veterans are often led to believe they are agreeing only to a short-term loan to get them through a rough patch. In many cases, they have no other source of income than their pension when they return from active duty.

Senator Allen is a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. His 26th senate district is home to the Los Angeles Air Force Base and thousands of active and retired military members.

ONLINE BENEFITS

VA/DoD Online Service Tops 5 Million Users
eBenefits Growth Surpasses Goal Two Months Early

Participation in the joint Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) eBenefits



(<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>) website topped five million users this week, two months ahead of schedule. VA established an agency priority goal of reaching five million eBenefits users by the end of fiscal year 2015. VA achieved this early milestone through aggressive outreach efforts and with the support of DoD and its Veterans Service Organization partners.

“Veterans are encouraged to enroll in eBenefits and file their claims online through this one-stop shop for benefits-related tools and information,” said Under Secretary for Benefits Allison Hickey. “We have already implemented nearly 60 self-service features and we continue to expand eBenefits capabilities to give Veterans and Servicemembers greater flexibility in securing their information.”

The number of eBenefits users is a key measure of VA’s success in improving Veterans’ access to VA benefits and services and is reported on www.performance.gov.

To enroll in eBenefits, Veterans and Servicemembers must obtain a DoD Self-Service Logon (DS Logon), which provides access to several Veterans and military benefits resources using a single username and password. The service is free and may be obtained online at www.ebenefits.va.gov or in person at a VA Regional Office.

“The successful collaboration of eBenefits and DS Logon is just one more example of how the DoD and VA are working together to continue bringing current and former Servicemembers secure online access to the benefits they've earned,” said Mary Dixon, Director of Defense Manpower Data Center.

The rapid and continued growth in the utilization of the eBenefits website demonstrates the importance of giving Veterans greater access to information about their own benefits. In addition to filing claims online and checking the status of those claims, Veterans can also message their VA doctor, order prescription drug refills and obtain official military documents through eBenefits. More than 7.5 million VA letters have been generated and downloaded by Veterans that show proof of disability, income or Veterans preference used in federal or state government hiring.

For more information about VA benefits, go to <http://www.benefits.va.gov>.

VETERANS HEALTH COUNCIL

The Veterans Health Council is now working with MedMatRx and Gilead Sciences on our Hepatitis C



Awareness Campaign!!!

Representatives from MedMatRx will be reaching out to state councils and individual chapters throughout the US to coordinate a fun and educational event. The event can be in conjunction with your state council and/or chapter meeting or held as standalone. It is open to all VVA members and their spouses/partners in your area.

Jim Sherlock (fellow VVA member), Christine Pan-

ek, and/or Sherry Hoffman, from MedMatRx, will be reaching out shortly by email and/or phone to schedule the event with you. These events will be held between October 2015 and October 2016.

The suggested format of each meeting should include a welcome to guests and our Hep-C partners. Next will be a 10-15 minute talk by a fellow VVA Team Leader discussing their Hepatitis C journey. Followed by that will be a 10-15 minute discussion, by a Gilead Clinical Educator discussing Hepatitis C, risks of HCV related to serving our country, HCV screening and questions to ask your doctor. Last but not least, the catering and/or a fun activity, which will be discussed with you.

If you have any questions, please give me a call at 301/585-4000, ext 148

Tom Berger, Executive Director, Veterans Health Council

The Veterans Health Council is a program of Vietnam Veterans of America

8719 Colesville Road, Suite 100, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Phone: 301-585-4000, x148 | Fax: 301-585-3180 | Toll-free: 1-800-882-1316

Mt. SOLEDAD MEMORIAL

Mt. SOLEDAD VETERANS MEMORIAL—SAVED AT LAST “AS IT IS, WHERE IT IS”!

The Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial in La Jolla, CA, has been purchased — and hopefully thereby saved “as it is, where it is” for generations of Americans to come — by the non-profit Mt. Soledad Memorial Association from the federal Department of Defense.

The Memorial Association announced on Monday, July 21, 2015, that its purchase of the Memorial for \$1.4-million was finalized on July 17. This effectively transferred ownership of the memorial site honoring veterans from “public land” under federal ownership to “private land” of the Association, a non-governmental, non-profit, private organization. The Association has maintained the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial since its founding in 1954 in conjunction with American Legion La Jolla Post 275.

Originally established to honor Korean War Veterans, it was expanded to honor all veterans, especially those who gave their lives in defense of American freedom. The Memorial is on land originally owned by the City of San Diego, which was transferred to the federal DOD in 2006. It now has some 3,500 plaques on tiered walls beneath a 29-foot cross honoring all veterans atop Mt. Soledad. (See: www.soledadmemorial.com)



HOUSEHOLD GOODS DONATIONS

ClothingDonations.org is a service of Vietnam Veterans of America. We'll pick up your used clothes and household goods at your convenience and use them to support programs that address the concerns and needs of all veterans.

Support all veterans by scheduling a pickup today.

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is a national veterans service organization serving the needs of all veterans throughout the nation and elsewhere. VVA is funded primarily by various fund-raising activities and its membership.

One source of funding is through the solicitation and resale of donated household items. VVA solicits these donations by various marketing techniques and profits from the donations by selling them through contractual agreements with qualified retailers. As VVA is a veterans service organization it does not own retail outlets that sell the donations, instead has chosen to sell the donations through a bidding process to qualified retailers.

Today, VVA has a national membership of over 70,000, with more than 650 chapters in 48 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. VVA state councils coordinate the activities of local chapters in 43 states and territories. VVA places great emphasis on coordinating its national activities and programs with the work of its local chapter and state councils and is organized to ensure that victories gained at the national level are implemented locally.

AGENT ORANGE TOWN HALL MEETING

The Legacy of Exposure to Agent Orange and Other Toxic Substances On Veterans and Their Offspring

Learn About The Health Problems Associated With Exposure to Agent Orange and Other Toxic Chemicals And How They Affect Your Health and The Health of Your Children and Grandchildren.

Date: Saturday, October 3, 2015

Time: 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Location: Shasta County Veterans Hall

1605 Yuba Street
Redding, California 96001

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Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 357

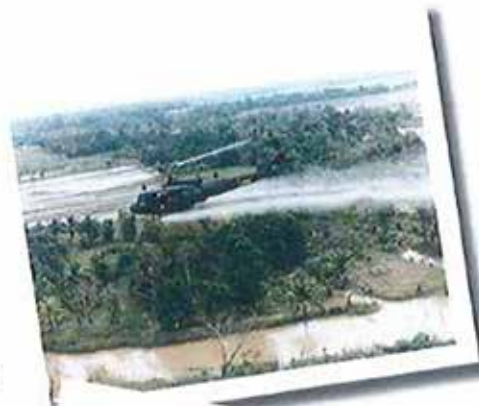
For more information, contact:

Eddie McAllister

530-524-7504

eddiesphagetti@yahoo.com

Facebook: Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 357



Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc

&

Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America

Present

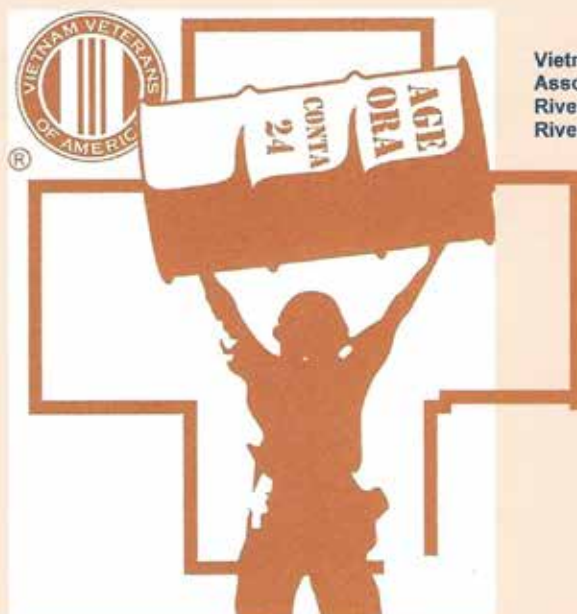
Faces of Agent Orange: Agent Orange Town Hall Meeting

October 17, 2015
12:00p.m. – 3:00p.m.
Orange Terrace Community Center
20010 Orange Terrace Pkwy
Riverside, CA 92508

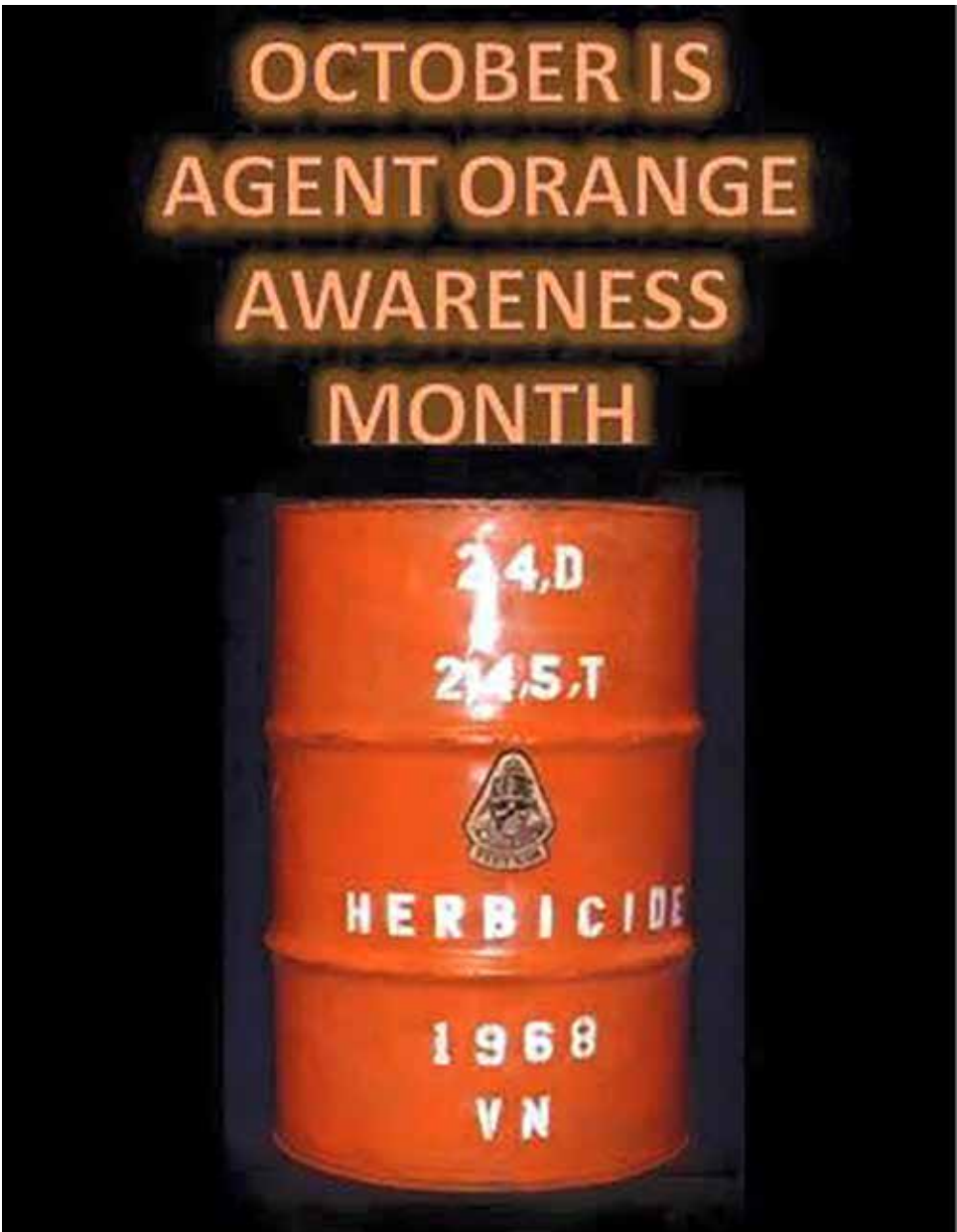
Contact : Zack Earp
(951) 352-1278 (951) 522-5091
wyatt48@att.net

Co-Sponsors

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 47
Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America
Riverside County Veterans Services
Riverside County Veterans Advisory Committee



**Agent
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VVA Chapter 223 - Postal Permit
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VVA CA State Council contact info inside - page 2

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To:

In this issue:

- Activities-Events/Photos
- Legislative News
- Useful Veteran Information
- Agent Orange Info

And more...

VVA & CSC Meeting Dates & Events

CSC Full Council - October 23-25, 2015, Fresno, CA
Tentative:
January 22-24 /April 29 - May 1 / August 26-28
October 21-23, 2016