



{ CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD

This edition of the newsletter will report on the accomplishments of the past two board meetings and the activities in which our members have been involved during the past two months.

NEWS OF THE MOMENT



In an effort to encourage younger veterans to participate, the California Veterans Board held their April meeting at San Diego State University (SDSU), where they were hosted by the San Diego

State University Student Veteran Organization (SDSUSVO), and University President Stephen L. Weber. SDSU has one of the largest student veteran populations of any California university. The Board also hosted the evening's dinner with veteran students, where CalVet Secretary Tom Johnson and CalVet Chief Counsel Rob Wilson participated in one-on-one meetings with each student.

Trek for Troops, a charity that uses music to raise awareness and money to build homes for severely disabled veterans provided the evening's musical entertainment. SDSU President Weber generously provided refreshments for the meeting.

WHAT IS A VETERAN?

A Veteran –whether Active Duty, Retired, National Guard or Reserve is someone who, at one point in his or her life, wrote a blank check made payable to “The United States of America”, for an amount of “up to and including my life.”

—Author Unknown

OUT & ABOUT

In February, board member Tom Richards represented Governor Schwarzenegger at a dedication ceremony in Orange County where the Veterans Advisory Council dedicated a Medal of Honor monument for Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael A. Monsoor.

On Veterans Day 2008, Chair Astafan represented CalVet at the Mather USDVA Health Care Clinic. She also participated in the Annual Veterans Day VetFund Golf Tournament and attended VetFund regular meetings.

Board member Dr. Vernon Chong also attended the Annual Vet Fund Golf Tournament.

Board member Tom Richards represented Secretary Johnson at a Veterans Day event to distribute certificates to Veterans of the Year. He also attended the Veterans' Day ceremony at the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial, worked on the San Diego Veterans Day Parade, spoke at the Operation Impact Ceremony on the Midway, and attended the dedication of the Paul Nenner Memorial Courtyard at Veterans Village of San Diego. He also spoke at four Marine Corps Birthday Ball ceremonies.

Board member Jake Alarid represented Governor Schwarzenegger and CalVet at a Veterans Day ceremony in Artesia, California. On November 10, the Marine Corps' Birthday, he attended an event at Huntington Park during the day, and another during that evening. In March 2009 he represented the Governor at the “Welcome Home Viet Nam Veterans Day” event in Whittier.

BOARD MEMBERS

Alice Astafan
Chairman

Vernon Chong
Member

Tom Moran
Vice Chairman

Thomas Richards
Member

Jake Alarid
Member

Edward Olson
Member

Board Contact:
Bonnie Kelly, Executive Officer
916-653-2041
Dec./Apr. 2008-09

MISSION

The California Veterans Board serves as an advocate for Veterans affairs identifying needs and working to ensure and enhance the rights and benefits of California veterans and their dependents.

NOTE FROM EDITOR:

This California Veterans Board Newsletter and previous CalVet Board informational documents are available on the Board's website at www.cdva.ca.gov/board and via e-mail from CalVetBoard@cdva.ca.gov.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

DECEMBER 12, 2008

YOUNTVILLE



- Secretary Johnson presented a plaque for Veteran of the Year to Tom Fisk. Mr. Fisk was unable to attend, so Larry Glenn accepted the plaque on his behalf.
- The Board was honored to have the National Commander of the American Legion, David Rehbein briefly address the group.
- Chair Astafan announced the appeal decisions from the October Board Meeting.
- Gloria Anderson from the Department of General Services gave an update on the Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise.
- Farm and Home Chief Debra Lehr gave an overview of the CalVet Farm and Home loan process.
- Secretary Johnson updated the Board on the budget deficit, the cemeteries, construction on the new homes, and staffing for the Department.
- J.P. Tremblay, CalVet Deputy Secretary for External Affairs briefed the Board on the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Twentieth Anniversary event held December 10 – 12, 2008 in Sacramento. He also presented each Board Member with a commemorative book.
- CalVet Deputy Secretary for Veterans Homes, Stan Oppegard gave an update on the implementation of Policy C-12. The purpose of this policy is to maximize resident participation in federal, state, USDVA, or private health service plans and to ensure that the Department seeks reimbursement for health care that is provided to the residents of the Veterans Homes of California.
- Chair Astafan presented the meeting schedule for 2009-2010. The Board voted unanimously to approve it. In an effort to meet in cities where the Board has not previously visited, they will not be meeting in the veterans homes in 2009. Instead, Board Members will visit the homes during the months they do not meet. The Board will also hold several meetings at college campuses to encourage younger veterans to participate.

APRIL 24, 2009

SAN DIEGO

- Chair Astafan presented appeals received from John Hahn, Victor Holiday, Clarence Larry, Kristin Banks ton and Michael Lindsey. These appeals will be heard at the next meeting if not resolved.
- Secretary Johnson updated the Board on the progress of the new veterans homes, noting that the opening of the Ventura and Lancaster Homes will be delayed until October. He also announced two new additions to the Department, Assistant Deputy Secretary for Capital Assets and Facility Management, David Gerard and a new position to focus on Native American Veterans outreach. He reported that Title 38 staff will be moved into CalVet Headquarters on August 8 from Consumer Services. These Title 38 employees will now fall under CalVet jurisdiction and be targeting veterans with benefit information on education and the G.I. Bill.
- SDSUSVO President Peter Salas discussed the issues of student veterans and their activities and outreach on the San Diego campus.
- Barbara Jean from ReturningVets.org provided information on an upcoming "Moving On Retreats" being planned for August. The six-day retreats are provided free of charge for returning Veterans to help address the effects of PTSD, identify challenges and create new goals.
- Trek for Troops presented a video explaining their mission to raise \$100K to benefit Homes for Troops, a non-profit organization that builds or adapts homes for severely disabled veterans. The three college roommates will take a sixteen week, 2,650 mile fundraising trek across the Pacific Crest Trail this summer.
- Captain Paul Marconi discussed an initiative to establish a San Diego Veterans Service Center that would offer wellness options for veterans and transitioning military. The Center would be a one-stop resource for veteran service programs, and delivery of benefits through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the California Department of Veterans Affairs and other organizations.
- The Board is working on developing overall strategic goals, which will be presented at the next meeting in June 2009.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next meeting will be held on June 26 in Lancaster. These meetings are open to the public - plan to attend and meet the Board and key members of the Department of Veterans Affairs.