

newsletter



CalVet Women Veteran's Conference



Enhancing Inner Beauty, Inner Strength

October 7 - 8, 2011

DoubleTree Hotel, Ontario Airport
222 North Vineyard Ave
Ontario, CA 91764



REGISTER FOR THE 2011 CALVET WOMEN VETERAN'S CONFERENCE!

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and the Inland Empire Veterans Collaborative are joining forces to host the 2011 CalVet Women Veteran's Conference: Enhancing Inner Beauty, Inner Strength on October 7 & 8 at the DoubleTree Hotel, Ontario Airport in Ontario, CA.

The two-day conference is designed to educate active duty military, National Guard members, reservists and women veterans on issues that currently impact them. The conference will provide tremendous networking opportunities and will address available benefits, VA health care, employment assistance, rural health and updates from the Center for Women Veterans. Women veterans all share the distinct honor of having served their country, and the 2011

CalVet Women Veteran's Conference gives women veterans the opportunity to share their experiences, career aspirations, inspiration and family life in this unique forum.

Conference highlights include:

- Motivational Speakers
- Keynote Speakers
- Military Women Veterans Panel: Telling Their Stories
- 2011 California Women Veteran of the Year Award Presentation
- Open California Legislator Forum
- The Play: Into the Fire (an exploration of returning veterans with disabilities and trauma as they integrate into their families, communities and workforce)
- Workshops

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- Beauty Makeovers and Massage Treatments
- Raffle Drawings
- Free Flu Shots

Visit the conference website for updates and to locate the following:

- Hotel registration information
- Draft conference agenda
- Corporate sponsorship form
- Individual sponsorship form
- Vendor form
- 2011 California Woman Veteran of the Year Award Nomination Form

Please register early for this conference! The cost for registration before September 14 is only \$30.

To register visit www.calvet.ca.gov/WomenMinority/Conference.aspx.

REMINDER All veterans are reminded that the fastest way to inquire and secure the benefits you have earned is by visiting your local County Veterans Service Office. A listing of these offices is available at www.cacvso.org or on CalVet's website at www.calvet.ca.gov/resources/database.aspx



(L-R) Undersecretary Lawrence "Larry" Gonzales and Deputy Secretary for Veterans Services Trevor Albertson.

BROWN APPOINTS CALVET UNDERSECRETARY AND DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR VET SERVICES

Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. today announced that he has appointed Lawrence "Larry" Gonzales to serve as the Undersecretary for Administration and Trevor Albertson as Deputy Secretary for Veterans Services at the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet).

"We are very pleased with Governor Brown's choice of appointees," said CalVet Secretary Peter Gravett. "The combination of military service and teaching experience both Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Albertson bring to their positions will undoubtedly enhance CalVet's efforts to reach and assist California veterans of every era," said Gravett.

Gonzales, of Laguna Niguel, is a retired colonel with more than 38 years of enlisted and commissioned service in the United States Marine Corps and is a combat veteran of Operation Desert Storm. He served on the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Committee from 2003 to 2009 and as director of the Equal Opportunity Branch for the United States Marine Corps from 2002 to 2003.

He also held multiple positions in the Los Angeles Unified School District from 1968 to 2000, including the position of principal at three elementary schools from 1982 to 2000.

Albertson is a captain with more than nine years of commissioned service in the United States Air Force and Air Force Reserve. He has served as an intelligence officer since 2010, and was director of public affairs from 2009 to 2010, in the Air Force Reserves' 713th Combat Operation Squadron. He also served on the staff of Headquarters US Strategic Command from 2007 to 2009 and held multiple positions in the 11th Mission Support Squadron from 2002 to 2004.

He was an adjunct professor at Yuba College from 2010 to 2011, a teaching assistant at the University of California, Merced from 2006 to 2009 and an assistant professor at the United States Air Force Academy from 2004 to 2006. Albertson was a University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation Dissertation Fellow and served on the staff of Congressman Dennis Cardoza from 2008 to 2010.

SERVICE TO ARMED FORCES, KEEPING PACE WITH CHANGING MILITARY

The American Red Cross links members of the U.S. Armed Forces with their families during a crisis, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Red Cross quickly sends emergency communications to deployed service members on behalf of their family. For emergency communications call (877) 272-7337. Military members can have peace of mind knowing that when they are on a mission, in training or stationed far from home—and leaving cell phones and emails behind—they are still connected to home.

While providing service to 1.4 million active duty military personnel and their families, the Red Cross also reaches out to more than 1.2 million members of the National Guard and Reserves and their families living in America.

Red Cross workers in hundreds of chapters and on military installations briefed 974,573 departing service members and their families regarding available support services and explained how the Red Cross can assist them during the deployment.

Both active duty and community-based military can count on the Red Cross to provide emergency communications that link them with their families back home, access to financial assistance in partnership with the military aid societies, information and referral and assistance to veterans. Red Cross personnel form a global network in 700 U.S. chapters, military installations worldwide and in forward deployed locations in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AWARDS NEARLY \$60 MILLION IN HOMELESS PREVENTION GRANTS

Through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki announced the award of nearly \$60 million in grants to support the prevention of homelessness among the veteran community. The grants were awarded to 85 private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives that will serve roughly 22,000 homeless and at-risk veteran families in 40 states and the District of Columbia.

Under the SSVF program, 17 non-profit organizations within California were awarded grants to provide very

low-income veteran families with assistance in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing. The overall focus of the program is to ensure housing stability to very low-income veteran families. Grantees will provide outreach, case management, and also assist these veteran families obtain public and VA benefits. These services will help as many as 4,000 of California's Homeless veteran population and their search for stable permanent housing.

In order for a veteran to qualify for the services offered through SSVF, the applicant must be a member of a veteran family in which either the head

of household or spouse is a veteran, the household adjusted income does not exceed 50% of the area median income, and the family resides in permanent housing; is homeless and scheduled to become a resident of permanent housing within 90 days; or has exited permanent housing within the previous 90 days to seek other housing that suits the needs and preferences of the family.

For a listing of grantees and further details into the SSVF program visit, www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.

BICYCLE RIDE TO END HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS

The Vet Hunter Project, in conjunction with its parent organization, Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day ("WHVVD"), a 501(c) 3, is honored and proud to announce the "The Ride Against Homelessness Bike Ride". This monumental bike ride is designed to raise awareness and support of our homeless with a focus on the homeless veterans. The ride will be conducted by a diverse 20-member team of Active Duty service members, veterans, Wounded Warriors, supporters and homeless veterans.

The journey began July 27th, from The Salvation Army Bell Shelter in Bell, California. The team will travel between 186 to 350 miles per day, with the final destination being St. Louis, Missouri. Upon arrival in St. Louis, the team will participate and address the AMVETS and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (USDVA) National Stand Down on August



7, 2011. USDVA Secretary Eric Shinseki and National AMVETS Commander Jerry Hotop will be in attendance at the AMVETS National Opening Ceremony where "The Vet Hunters Project Platoon" will be given the opportunity to share the names and faces of forgotten Warriors that they met on their journey.

During their journey, The Vet Hunters Project Platoon will visit homeless shelters, veterans hospitals and burn centers to meet with homeless heroes and Wounded Warriors. Vet Hunter and Platoon member Dave Adams, will perform his "Comin Home" song at all our engagements.

The Vet Hunter Project bike riders will have a film crew documenting the entire ride to St. Louis, MO, including their preparations and training. Actor Jon Voigt will be narrating and appearing in the documentary to show his support of this project. This is an amazing opportunity to continue the impact and awareness that the bicycle ride will bring to all Americans.

You can follow The Vet Hunters on their bicycle ride at facebook.com/thevethuntersproject or visit www.vethunters.org.

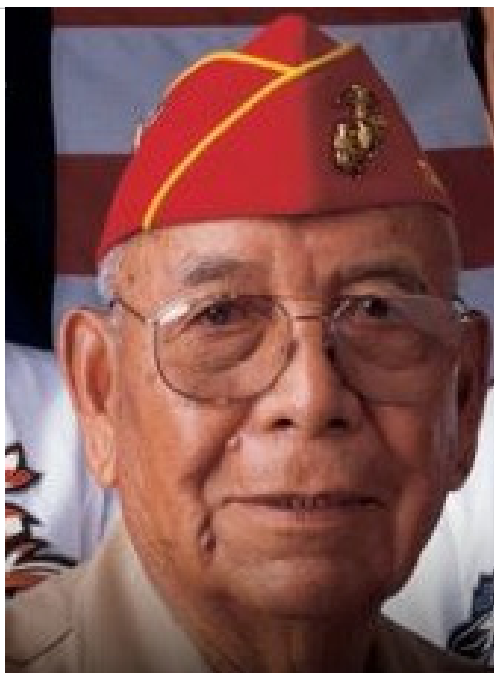
NAVAJO CODE TALKER PASSES AWAY

On July 17, 2011, Joe Morris, Sr., one of the few remaining World War II Navajo code talkers passed away. Morris served in the United States Marine Corp from 1944-46 in Guadalcanal, Guam, Saipan, Okinawa, and Tinstao, China. He was 85 years old.

Morris was one of more than 400 American Indian Navajo code talkers that played a pivotal role in helping the U.S. win World War II. Navajo code talkers took part in every assault the U.S. marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945. They served in all six Marine divisions, Marine Raider battalions and marine parachute units, transmitting messages by telephone and radio in their native language, a code that the Japanese never broke.

The idea to use Navajo for secure communications came from Philip Johnston, the son of a missionary to the Navajos and one of the few non-Navajos who spoke their language fluently. Johnston, reared on the Navajo reservation, was a World War I veteran who knew of the military's search for a code that would withstand all attempts to decipher it. He also knew that Native American languages, notably, Choctaw, had been used in World War I to encode messages.

Johnston believed Navajo answered the military requirement for an undecipherable code because Navajo is an unwritten language of extreme complexity. Its syntax and tonal qualities, not to mention dialects, make it unintelligible to anyone without extensive exposure and training. It has no alphabet or symbols, and is spoken only on the Navajo lands of the American Southwest. One estimate indicates that less than 30



The late Joe Morris, Sr.

non-Navajos, none of them Japanese, could understand the language at the outbreak of World War II.

In May 1942, the first 29 Navajo recruits attended boot camp. Then, at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California, this group created the Navajo Code. They developed a dictionary and numerous words for military terms. The dictionary and all code words had to be memorized during training.

Once a Navajo code talker completed his training, he was sent to a Marine unit deployed in the Pacific theater. The code talkers' primary job was to talk, transmitting information on tactics and troop movements, orders and other vital battlefield communications over telephones and radios. They also acted as messengers, and performed general Marine duties.

Praise for their skill, speed and accuracy accrued through the war. At Iwo Jima, Major Howard Connor, 5th Marine Division signal officer, declared, "Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines

[CODE TALKER, page 5 >>](#)

COMPANION DOGS FOR RETURNING MILITARY

Twenty Five dogs matched with 25 veterans in 20 months is only the beginning for U.S. Army Veteran, Mary Cortani who has been training dogs for more than 30 years. She received her training while serving in the military, thus becoming a certified Master Canine Instructor.

Almost two year's ago, Cortani began training dogs for Iraq and Afghanistan returning service men and women because she saw a "huge need for service dogs for those returning from combat." Cortani's service dogs help heal the invisible wounds of war like post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury - wounds people do not see, but where dogs can assist in many ways.

Cortani's program builds confidence for wounded warriors at The Pathway Home at the Veterans Home of California in Yountville. By spending time with veterans prior to matching them with a service dog, Cortani assesses their needs, and then trains the veteran to train their dog. What makes her program different from other programs? She finds the perfect match between veteran and canine and rescues dogs from shelters or rescue groups and from owners who can no longer afford them.

Cortani is the founder of K9 Coach Plus (Now Operation Freedom Paws) Dog Training Services in Gilroy, serving

[DOG, page 5 >>](#)



<< CODE TALKER

would never have taken Iwo Jima.” Connor had six Navajo code talkers working around the clock during the first two days of the battle. Those six sent and received over 800 messages, all without error.

The Japanese, who were skilled code breakers, remained baffled by the Navajo language. The Japanese chief of intelligence, Lieutenant General Seizo Arisue, said that while they were able to decipher the codes used by the U.S. Army and Army Air Corps, they never cracked the code used by the Marines. The Navajo code talkers even stymied a Navajo soldier taken prisoner at Bataan. (About 20 Navajos served in the U.S. Army in the Philippines.) The Navajo soldier, forced to listen to the jumbled words of talker transmissions, said to a code talker after the war, “I never figured out what you guys who got me into all that trouble were saying.”

In 1942, there were about 50,000 Navajo tribe members. As of 1945, about 540 Navajos served as Marines. From 375 to 420 of those trained as code talkers; the rest served in other capacities.

Navajo remained potentially valuable as code even after the war. For that reason, the code talkers, whose skill and courage saved both American lives and military engagements, only recently earned recognition from the Government and the public.

Excerpts from Naval History & Heritage Command, Navajo Code Talkers: World War II Fact Sheet www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-2.htm



(L-R) Undersecretary Lawrence “Larry” Gonzalez and Deputy Secretary for Veterans Services Trevor Albertson.

<< DOG

California and the U.S. “Paid training” helps support her efforts to match companion dogs with veterans since the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs does not cover the price of the dog or training at this time. A service member can return home, be diagnosed with an injury, illness, confined to a wheelchair, walker or suffered a stroke and their doctor will issue a letter or prescription that says “they would benefit from a service dog.” Then it is up to the service member to find a service dog. Although there are several places in the U.S. providing service dogs, Cortani decided to match a veteran named Tommy with a dog named Champ because, prior to the match, he had been on a long waiting list to receive a service dog. Cortani did not like hearing how long he had been on a “waiting list” and because of her work with The Pathway Home, she ended up finding a rescue dog for Tommy to train as his companion dog. Champ has really lived up to his end of the bargain and Cortani refers to this process as “One lost soul finding another...”

For more information contact Mary Cortani at (408) 623-7887 or info@k9coachplus.com.

VETERANS!

You may be eligible
for a home loan!

For more information contact CalVet at
www.calvet.ca.gov/calvetloans or call
(866) 653-2510

CAL VET
HOME LOANS



OVER ACHIEVERS RECEIVE RECOGNITION FROM THE VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA, YOUNTVILLE.

By Jody Price
Public Information Officer

On Wednesday, July 20, 2011 several of the Veterans Home of California, Yountville staff were recognized for outstanding performances and dedication to the home and its residents.

Arcelia Orozco, Sanitation Service Custodian was awarded Veterans Home of California, Yountville, "Employee of the Quarter" for the period April through June 2011.

Orozco was nominated for this award due to her positive attitude and superior work performance. Orozco is recognized as a "take charge" person. Her monthly inspection percentages have never been below 98%. Her attendance, attitude, work ethic and performance are that of an ideal employee. Congratulations Orozco on being a most valued member of the Veterans Home of California Team.

Rosa Johnson, Certified Nursing Assistant was awarded Veterans Home of California, Yountville, "Employee of



(L-R) Arcelia Orozco, Marcella McCormack, Tim Luce, and Linda LaRue

the Quarter" for the period April through June 2011.

Johnson was nominated for this award due to her consistent and exceptional care that she provided to the Home Members living on Ward 6. Johnson is recognized as a "Superstar" amongst her co workers and Home Members. She is organized, goes above and beyond the call of duty and provides outstanding service with a warm smile and calm demeanor. Congratulations Johnson on being a most valued member of the Veterans Home of California Team.

Ruth O' Leary, Personnel Supervisor; Mora Ortega, Personnel Specialist; Luz Fernandez, Personnel Specialist; Shauntae Spaulding, Personnel Specialist and Celia Cendejas, Personnel Specialist; who make up the Human Resources Transactions Unit were awarded the Veterans Home of



(L-R) Rosa Johnson and Marcella McCormack

California, Yountville, "Employees of the Quarter" group award for the period of April through June 2011.

The Human Resources Transactions Unit was nominated for this award due to their dependable, accountable, hard working and effective teamwork. This group works tirelessly on making sure that the employees personnel needs are taken care of while at the same time providing quality service with a smile at all times. Congratulations Human Resources Transactions Unit for being most valued members of the Veterans Home of California Team.

Anthony Tyler, Matt Lopez and Ron Lee who make up the Property Department were awarded the Veterans

ACHIEVE, page 7 >>



(L-R) Ruth O'Leary, Patsy Potter, Luz Fernandez, Shauntae Spaulding, Celia Cendejas and Marcella McCormack

EVERYONE LOVES A BBQ

By Jody Price
Public Information Officer

Andy Henderson of Western States Barbeque Association, and voted Most Enthusiastic Volunteer for 2010

at the Veterans Home of California, Yountville, is proving himself to be the Most Enthusiastic Volunteer for 2011 as well. Every time I turn around I smell barbequed ribs and sure enough, I find Andy and is gigantic BBQ station at one of our Sections barbequing for the residents.

What a wonderful treat to enjoy during these beautiful summer days. There is nothing better then spending time with friends on the patio sharing a barbeque. Andy makes this possible on a regular basis for our residents.

Western States Barbeque Association is a non-profit 501C3 that has cooked barbeque for the Air Force Thunderbirds, the Navy Blue Angels, the Sacramento Sheriff Motor Patrol, Army National Guard, Shriner's Children's Hospital, Sacramento Burn Center, Make-a-Wish Foundation, Feed the Hungry programs and the Veterans Home of California, Yountville's residents.

Located in Sacramento, Andy has to get up at 4:30 am to be to the Veterans Home in time to prepare for an afternoon barbeque for our residents. The dedication and loyalty that this organization has shown to the Veterans Home is incredible. We look forward to many more barbeques with Andy and his crew.

<< ACHIEVE

Home of California, Yountville, "Employees of the Quarter" group award for the period of April through June 2011.

The Property Department was nominated for this award due to their positive attitude and excellent production skills. These fellows have the ability to prioritize the needs of our Home Members, Administration and other departments. They always have a "can do" attitude and are always able to complete their missions ahead of deadline. Amazingly enough, these 3 men have worked in the absence of a direct supervisor for two years. Congratulations Property Department for being most valued members of the Veterans Home of California Team.

Last but certainly not least, Karen Zanetell, Patricia Maclean, Jody Price, Irene Gastelum, Rosita Artero, Lori Cantu, Gwen Robinson, Linda White, Nicole Edwards, Becky Chiurco, Julie Angeloni and not pictured, Dorothy Eliason, Beth Katzner and Lynda Mohr were recognized for their Service with the Employee Activities Committee. Their dedication, hard work and extensive contribution is appreciated and valued. This committee fundraises all year long for the Employee Picnic and Christmas Party. It is also a great way for staff to get to know one another and gives them a chance to share a cup of coffee or corn dog once in awhile.



Andy Henderson cooks up a feast.



(L-R) DiPasqua, Marcella McCormack, Anthony Tyler, Matt Lopez, Ron Lee and Linda LaRue



Employee Activities Committee

WHAT'S NEW AT THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA VETERANS CEMETERY

By Mike Coffey
NCVC Staff

The California Conservation Corps' (CCC) Crew 21 accomplished enough work in just four days in early July to eliminate weeks of backlogged and scheduled projects. The Northern California Veterans Cemetery (NCVC) is extremely indebted to the CCC's continuing support of cemetery operations by periodically sending work crews to assist cemetery staff.

Work accomplished included the following:

1. Along Small Farms Road and the SW perimeter fence, from Veterans Memorial Drive, past the maintenance gate and to the Veterans Memorial Building parking lot, 500 linear feet weed block landscaping material was laid and topped with white decorative rock. This eliminates unsightly weeds and greatly enhances the appearance of the cemetery from that direction.
2. A large, dying Digger Pine that posed a safety hazard in Section 13 was removed, including the limbing and discarding of debris, and the tree was bucked and rounds stacked for a local non-profit to pick up for distribution to the needy.
3. The outside of the north perimeter boundary fence was cleared of dying and dead trees and brush that were becoming an eyesore, thus enhancing the scenic appearance of the cemetery in that direction.



CCC Fire Crew 21, including supervisor Patrick Soriano (left), and Cemetery Administrator Stephen Jorgensen (right).

4. A large tree was dropped across the main dirt access trail for the cemetery water line. The dead tree was left in place to deter intrusion by all wheel vehicles or pedestrians and to increase security for the unfenced portion of property to the rear of the cemetery.
5. Weed eaters and chainsaws were used to eliminate high grasses, Manzanita, and other brushy material in the area between the Administration Building and the Veterans Memorial Building, and out to the new east boundary fence.
6. The crew used NCVC heavy equipment to replace deteriorating bark with lava rock surrounding Section 7, the Columbaria, and along a portion of the main cemetery driveway. This intensive project included the laying of weed block around landscaping and sprinklers. When this project is finished, it will ultimately save the State many thousands of dollars over the years, as well as save thousands of man hours – as the rock is permanent, retains its color, and is not as subject to the erosive affects of nature. Prior to the initiation of the project, decorative bark was replaced twice yearly.
7. A small part of Crew 21 assisted staff in the preparation of burials sites, casketed burials, and the installation of upright granite headstones.

We can't say enough about the work ethic of this crew and the leadership provided by Supervisor Soriano. Their invaluable assistance on this and many other occasions has proved to be exceptionally beneficial. In fact, we are so impressed with the young workers of the CCC, that we are exploring the establishment of an internship with the CCC's Redding Office. The internship would provide the cemetery with a dependable and stable alternative manpower source. These interns would assist with those tasks and workloads so critical to the completion of our mission.

The internship would be designed to provide CCC members the opportunity to learn valuable work skills and experience so necessary in competing in today's employment market.

LOCAL VETERANS ENJOYING RIVERCATS BASEBALL

By Carolyn Ballou

Public Information Officer

Thousands of local veterans are enjoying Triple-A baseball at Raley Field this summer, thanks to a generous donation by the Sacramento Rivercats. The Rivercats is donating thousands of tickets to this season's games to the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). In turn, CalVet distributes the tickets to veteran service organizations in the area.

"We're thrilled by the Rivercats' ticket donation and by the opportunity it creates to strengthen CalVet's relationship with veteran service groups," said Peter Gravett, CalVet Secretary. "Although we're never sure how many tickets we'll get for any given game, the veterans groups are incredibly appreciative of whatever we're able to send."

To date, CalVet has sent Rivercats tickets to the following veteran organizations and service clubs:

- American Indian Veteran Association
- American Legion Post 208
- American Legion Post 233
- American Legion Post 608
- AMVETS Post 9126
- Army Reserve 328th Combat Support Hospital
- Blue Star Moms
- California DVBE Alliance
- California Employment Development Department
- California National Guard Joint Forces HQ
- Colusa Veteran Service Office
- Community Based-Warrior Transition Unit
- Disabled American Veterans Chapter 6
- El Dorado County Dept. Veterans Affairs
- Fallen Warriors Memorial
- Lincoln Hills Veterans Group
- Los Rios Community College District Veteran Resource Centers
- Mather VA Hospital Dept. Voc Rehab
- Placer County Veteran Service Office
- Sacramento Veteran Resource Center
- Salvation Army
- San Joaquin Veteran Service Office
- Sierra College Veterans Office
- Soldiers' Angels Northern California Chapter
- The Soldiers Project
- U.C. Davis Veterans Affairs Office
- U.S. Coast Guard
- Veterans Affairs Military Retiree Office
- Veterans Affairs Sacramento Veteran Center
- VA Volunteer Services
- VFW Post 67
- VFW Post 1267
- VFW Post 1487
- VFW Post 8762
- VFW Post 9869
- VFW Post 10125
- Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 500
- Yolo County Veterans Coalition
- Yuba-Sutter Veterans Stand Down
- Sacramento Valley Veterans

If you would like your veteran service organization to be added to CalVet's ticket distribution list, please have your leadership e-mail carolyn.ballou@calvet.ca.gov.

"YOU CAN ALWAYS GET THE JOB DONE, IF YOU DON'T CARE WHO GETS THE CREDIT."

Jesse G. Ugalde, former Director of the California Department of Veterans Affairs passed away July 10, 2011 of kidney failure. Born in Oak Creek, Colorado on November 21, 1921. He received his education in Colorado where he studied primary, secondary and the first two years of college. His education was interrupted by World War II, but subsequently graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Ugalde served thirty three years in active duty service in the U.S. Army, retiring in February 1973 at the rank of Colonel. He served in World War II in Africa, Sicily and Italy. In Sicily he was promoted "on the spot" to Captain by General George S. Patton for outstanding leadership and bravery in a particularly hazardous yet successful operation. He then served in the Korean Conflict and multiple tours in Vietnam and command positions in Colombia and Venezuela in South America.



<< UGALDE

He was qualified and served as combat infantryman, parachutist, Special Operations (Green Beret) fixed and rotary wing pilot. Ugalde held key positions responsible for establishing indigenous special operations forces throughout the Pacific Command and was Secretary of the Theatre Cold War Activities Group. He commanded the U.S. Military Group in Venezuela, and served in the U.S. Mission in Colombia. He was also Chief, North Coast Affairs, South America in the Office of the Secretary of Defence.

His many awards and decorations include: the Silver Star w/OLC; Legion of Merit w/OLC; Bronze Star w/3OLCs; Air Medal w/3OLCs; Joint Service Commendation Medal; Army Commendation Medal w/2OLCs; and the Purple Heart w/2OLCs. He also received the various authorized Theatre Campaign Medals for the European, American, Pacific, and Far East theatres of operation. Ugalde was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Senior Parachute Wings, Army Aviator Wings, and Distinguished Unit Badge and decorations from Colombia, Venezuela, South Korea and South Vietnam. Also, he was awarded the California Distinguished Service Medal in 1991.

Ugalde retired from the U.S. Army in February 1973. After his retirement he served as: Executive Director of the North American Association of Venezuela, which is comprised of more than 25,000 American residents; Executive V.P. of the Venezuelan Corporación Náutica, S.A.; Executive Consultant to Science Applications, Inc., La Jolla, CA and to Specialist Group, Inc. and MARS, Inc., Miami, FL.

Ugalde also served in San Diego as Executive Assistant, Mexican & American

Foundation and Producer of its "An Evening with the Stars," and as V.P. of the Foundation's Executive Board of Trustees.

Ugalde served as Director of the California Department of Veterans Affairs from 1985-91. As director, he helped aid many veterans and their dependents, including a \$3 billion home loan program, as well as a 1,500-bed veterans home and hospital in Yountville, CA. Ugalde's most memorable motto was "You can always get the job done if you don't care who gets the credit."

During his tenure as Director of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, Ugalde also served as President of the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs and was Commissioner to establish the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Capitol Park in Sacramento, CA. While serving as Director of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, Ugalde was on a committee of veterans evaluating the creation of an additional veterans cemetery in San Diego County. Over the next few years, several locations were rejected and effort turned towards grounds located at the Miramar Air Station. After several years of meetings, negotiations, inspections, and

agreements, the results were the new Miramar National Cemetery.

Ugalde went on to serve as the Chairman for the Veteran Memorial Center, Inc., as California, Chairman of the Veterans Memorial Park Committee, and Chairman of the Veterans Cemeteries Committee. Ugalde became a member of the newly formed Fort Rosecrans and Miramar National Cemetery Support Foundation, serving as a member of the Board of Directors until his retirement.

Ugalde is survived by his wife, the former Judith McRae; daughters Evelyn Kuhr of Arlington, Texas, and Yolanda Martin of Omaha, NE.; sons Jesse George of Omaha, and J. Garr of Sacramento; sister Frances Hernandez of Pico Rivera; brother Tom Rios of Albuquerque, NM; stepchildren Nick Morgan of Sacramento, Kathy Walker of Sacramento and Kerry Rose of Northridge; five grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

CAL VET

WILLIAM J. "PETE" KNIGHT
VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA
LANCASTER

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Applications
for Residency**

For admission information, contact:
William J. "Pete" Knight
Veterans Home of California—Lancaster
45221 30th Street West
Lancaster, CA 93536
(661) 974-7035, ext. 6



GIVE VA A TRY—THERE'S NOTHING TO LOSE

By Kerri Childress

She told me that after returning home from combat in Iraq she spent nights baking cookies because she couldn't sleep. Reaching the brink of homelessness and suicide, she finally came to VA for help.

He told me he quit driving, took long leaves from his job and broke off his long-term relationship with his girlfriend, all because the nightmares, both day and night, were wrecking his life. He's now in counseling, and admittedly might be for a long time, but he's dealing.

She told me in tears that her son had killed himself in Iraq—devastatingly, it was her only child. Today, having worked through unrelenting pain, she provides spiritual counseling to young soldiers and Marines at VA and actively works to promote VA's mental health programs.

Since 2001, more than 2 million Americans have served in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, with nearly 6,000 killed in action and more than 43,000 wounded. According to a recent Rand Corporation study, returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan have experienced higher rates of homelessness, unemployment, suicide and divorce over the last decade than the non-military population. Sad news, but even sadder when one realizes it doesn't have to be this way.

Although VA is regularly bashed in the media—and the courts—for not meeting Veterans' needs, I contend it is the best mental health care for combat trauma in the world. From where I sit, it's not the care that's the problem, it's getting Veterans to come to VA for care. Many afflicted veterans will not

seek help, and others will not do so for some time. The stigma against mental health care is throughout our culture and much more so in the military. Some military members worry mental health counseling on their medical records will endanger their careers; others try to "gut it out."

I am a Vietnam era Veteran and we learned a lot from that conflict, not the least of which is the sooner one comes in for care, the better chance VA has to help. So I ask each of you—if you know someone, or know someone who knows someone, who is suffering and trying to readjust after Iraq or Afghanistan, encourage them to go their closest VA. They have NOTHING to lose and potentially their entire lives to gain.

A Vietnam-era Navy Veteran, Kerri has spent her lifetime caring for Veterans and currently serves as the Communications Officer and Congressional Liaison for the VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

VA TASK FORCE IMPROVES CARE FOR FEMALE VETERANS

By Melinda Malone
Staff Writer

U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki's newly formed USDVA Task Force on Women Veterans will partner with the USDVA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans and the Defense Department to develop a comprehensive USDVA action plan that examines the major issues facing women veterans and the specific actions needed to resolve those issues.

A draft action plan is due to Shinseki on January 1 and will address issues such as childcare, obstetric and gynecological care, military sexual trauma, homelessness and aging.

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FESTIVAL DEL SOLE COMES TO THE VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA, YOUNTVILLE

By Jody Price

The 6th Annual Napa Valley Festival Del Sole ran from July 15 – 24, 2011. On Monday, July 18, 2011 the residents along with the community received a special treat; a free concert in the newly refinished gazebo. The 6th Annual Napa Valley Festival Del Sole runs from July 15–24, 2011.

The United States Army Brass Quintet from Washington DC and the Russian National Orchestra Brass Quintet from Moscow performed for more than an hour to a very appreciative crowd.



The program consisted of anthems from the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The first few pieces played were of combined quintets; the Procession of the Nobles by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, arr. Keith Snell and Persischer Marsch by Johann Strauss, arr. Rulan Milaev. After that, the United States Army Brass Quintet

performed My Spirit Be Joyful, Overture and Allegro by J.S. Bach, arr. Chuck Seipp; Carnival of Venice by Jean-Baptiste Arban, arr. Arthur Cohen; and lastly Flight of the Bumble Bee by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, arr. Paul Murtha.

The Russian National Orchestra Brass Quintet then performed excerpts from The Tale of the Priest and His Servant by Dmitry Shostakovich, arr. A. Serebrenikov and then Moscow Nights by M. Matusovsky.

As the crowd was clapping and dancing to the music, both quintets joined in on several popular American wartime songs, which brought people to their feet. It was just another wonderful day at the Veterans Home of California, Yountville.



VA HOSTS FIFTH NATIONAL SUMMIT ON WOMEN VETERANS' ISSUES IN D.C.

By Melinda Malone
Staff Writer

On July 16 and 17, an audience of more than 700 women veterans, women veteran advocates, active duty women service members (to include those

in the Reserves and National Guard), VA employees who provide care to women veterans and representatives from veterans service organizations and nonprofit agencies gathered in Washington, D.C. for the Fifth National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues.

U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki delivered opening remarks at the summit, which focused on expanding outreach to women Veterans and increasing awareness of the enhanced VA benefits and services available to them.

This is the first time U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) has provided targeted training, education, and collaborative cross training for its staff responsible for providing services and benefits specifically to women veterans and their families.

During the conference, Shinseki also announced the launch of free, drop-in childcare service centers at three USDVA medical centers. These pilot childcare

centers are operated by licensed childcare providers, and are free to veterans who are eligible for USDVA care and visiting a facility for an appointment. The three childcare centers are located in Northport, NY; Tacoma, WA; and Buffalo, NY. The free drop-in centers were established to meet the needs of veterans, particular the growing number of women veterans.

To read more about the Fifth National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues, visit www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2132.

To read more about the launch of the childcare center pilot program, visit www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2134.

WHAT IS THE PDBR?

The Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) provides Veterans who were medically separated from their Military Service between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2009, with the opportunity for review of their disability ratings to ensure fairness, consistency and accuracy. The PDBR was created by Congress as part of the Dignified Treatment of Wounded Warriors Act of 2008. Signed into law by President Bush on January 28, 2008, the PDBR began reviewing its first cases in June 2009.

WHO CAN APPLY TO THE PDBR?

To be eligible for PDBR review, a Veteran must have been medically separated between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2009 with a combined disability rating of 20 percent or less, and not have been found eligible for retirement. Former reserve members with greater than 20 years of Total Federal Military Service yet with fewer than 20 years of Active Duty and who meet the criteria listed above are also eligible to apply. There are roughly 75,000 eligible Veterans who are eligible to apply to the PDBR under the stated criteria. As of May 2011, just over 2,500 Veterans have applied.

HOW DOES THE PDBR OPERATE?

The Department of Defense (DoD) designated the Air Force as the lead component to establish and operate the PDBR. The PDBR evaluates and reviews cases for all services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard) and their reserve components. Located in Arlington, VA, the PDBR is a true joint service board (and the only existing joint service disability evaluation and review board). Each case is jointly reviewed by representatives

from three separate services (to include the service of the applicant). The PDBR examines each applicant's medical separation, compares DoD and Veteran's Administration (VA) ratings, and makes a recommendation to the respective Service Secretary (or their designee) as to whether or not the Secretary concerned should change a disability rating (which reflects a more accurate rating at the original time of separation) resulting in the Veteran's transfer to the Disability Retirement rolls. By law, the PDBR may not recommend a lower disability rating for any rating reviewed. All changes to disability ratings that are approved by the Service Secretary concerned will be backdated and effective the date of the original Physical Evaluation Board. The PDBR exclusively uses the Veterans Administration Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) as its adjudication guidance in reviewing unfitting conditions considered by the Disability Evaluation System [Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) and Physical Evaluation Board (PEB)]. If a particular condition was recognized and documented by the Service Department Disability Evaluation System, the PDBR will review it to ensure the Veteran was properly credited for physical ailments which may have caused the eventual medical separation of the Veteran. If a Veteran has a condition he/she feels should have been considered by his/her MEB or PEB, but it was not a part of his/her MEB or PEB, the avenue of redress is not through the PDBR; but instead through the Veteran's Board for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCMR/NR).

Upon receipt of a Veteran's application, the PDBR will request copies of all applicable VA medical and rating documents as well as all Military Service

Department Physical Evaluation Board related records, including the Veteran's Service Treatment Record (STR). The Veteran may submit any additional information pertinent to the request with his/her application. The review is records based only and no provision is made for a personal appearance by the Veteran or his/her representative.

WHY SHOULD I APPLY TO THE PDBR?

Since the PDBR began reviewing cases in June 2009, in more than 50% of cases, Veterans have had their original disability determination upgraded, resulting in a disability retirement for the Veteran. Although no guarantee of this re-characterization rate can be made going forward, it is a good indicator of the degree of success applicants have had with the board up until now. If a Veteran is awarded a disability retirement as a result of the review process, it may not result in any immediate monetary gain by the Veteran (previously awarded payments from the VA and DoD as related to the original disability must be recouped by the government, prior to new payments being made; but this recoupment is made from the new monthly disability annuity payments going forward). Regardless, from the time of disability retirement award, the Veteran becomes eligible for all retirement benefits normally awarded military department retirees (health care, exchange, commissary, travel, etc).

Information about the PDBR, how to apply, including links to the application form (DD 294) is available at www.health.mil/About_MHS/Organizations/MHS_Offices_and_Programs/PDBR.aspx

— USDVA BRIEFS —

VA Launches New Prevention Initiative to Serve 22,000 Veteran Families at Risk of Homelessness

Nearly \$60 Million in Homeless Prevention Grants Awarded Nationwide

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today the award of nearly \$60 million in homeless prevention grants that will serve approximately 22,000 homeless and at-risk Veteran families as part of the new Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. This initial \$60 million award will serve Veteran families at 85 non-profit community agencies in 40 states and the District of Columbia under VA's new homeless prevention initiative. www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2139

Special Journal Showcases VA Women's Health Research

WASHINGTON - A special supplement of the journal Women's Health Issues published July 13 shows the tremendous growth and diversity of VA women's health research in recent years. Its publication comes as VA recognizes July as Women Veterans

Month, which included a National Training Summit on Women Veterans held July 15-17 in Washington, D.C. www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2135

Hud, VA to Provide Permanent Housing and Support to Thousands of Homeless Vets

Funding part of Obama Administration plan to end Veteran homelessness

WASHINGTON – U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced today that HUD will provide \$46.2 million to public housing agencies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to supply permanent housing and case management for 6,790 homeless Veterans in America. www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2131

VA Creates Women Veterans Call Center

Major Outreach Effort Launched

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has embarked on a major initiative to reach out to women Veterans in order

to solicit their input on ways to enhance the health care services VA provides to women Veterans. www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2129

VA Begins Implementation of Open Source Program

TIAG Selected to Build Custodial Agent

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it has begun the implementation of an open source community based on its electronic health record (EHR), selecting The Informatics Applications Group (tiag) to create the Custodial Agent that will serve as the community's central governing body. VA will contribute its current EHR, known as VISTA (Veterans Integrated System Technology Architecture), to seed the open source effort. www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2124

OUR SOCIAL NETWORKS!



UPCOMING events

AUGUST 17

Vietnam Veterans of America National Convention

Silver Legacy Resort and Casino, Reno, NV

AUGUST 22

Mission Solano - Drive Away Hunger Golf Tournament

Green Valley Country Club, (707) 580-8490

AUGUST 26

Job Fair, Hosted by Congressman Duncan Hunter

Cuyamaca College, Student Center Room 900 Rancho San Diego Pkwy. El Cajon, CA 92109

www.hunter.house.gov

CalVet News

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JP Tremblay
Deputy Secretary, Communications

Jaime Arteaga
Public Information Manager

Thomas Morales
Graphic Designer

Angela Slater
Graphic Designer

AUGUST 27

Tuskegee Airmen Day

Dodger Stadium

Contact: Farrell J. Chiles (951) 318-6830

SEPTEMBER 2

2nd Annual Battle at the Capital Football Invitational

Del Oro High School Stadium, Loomis, CA
www.battleatthecapital.com

SEPTEMBER 11

Harley Davidson Charity Ride

West Los Angeles Veterans Home

Contact: Brittney Thomas, (424) 832-8384

SEPTEMBER 16

Honor a Hero, Hire a Veteran

Marriott Hotel, 9am - 12pm

1600 E. Belle Terrace Bakersfield, CA

SEPTEMBER 21

Central Valley Veterans Stand Down

VFW Post 8900, 3585 N. Blythe Ave
Fresno CA 93722

Contact: (559) 255-8838

SEPTEMBER 16

8th Annual Homeless Veterans Stand Down

Compton, CA

www.usvetsinc.org