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All veterans are reminded that the fastest way to inquire and secure the benefits they have earned is by visiting their local County Veterans Service Office. A listing of these offices is available at www.cacvso.org.

FEBRUARY 2013



REDDING VETERANS HOME ADMINISTRATOR APPOINTED

Congratulations are in order! Governor Brown has appointed U.S. Air Force veteran Ronald Brown as Administrator of the Veterans Home of California in Redding. Brown brings with him a wealth of valuable experience.

He has been a nursing home administrator at the Yuba Skilled Nursing Center since 2010. He was a nursing home administrator at Riverside HealthCare from 2006 to 2009 and a skilled nursing facility administrator at Health Care Management, Inc. from 2003 to 2006. Brown was chief operating officer at Sunny View Lutheran Homes in 2002

and a nursing home administrator at Olive Vista from 1980 to 2002.

"The appointment of Ronald Brown as the Redding Veterans Home Administrator moves CalVet a significant step closer to opening the Home and admitting its first residents in the fall of this year," said CalVet Secretary Peter J. Gravett. "Undersecretary for Veterans Homes of California Robin Umberg and I have every confidence that the Redding Home, its residents and its staff will thrive under Ronald's leadership."

ABOVE THE CALL

Many would call CalVet Undersecretary Robin Umberg a hero for her years of service and sacrifice to this country, including deployments in support Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Those who attended the Fresno Veterans Home recruitment fair on January 23rd may consider Umberg a hero for another reason—especially the man whose life she saved that day.

Around 3 p.m., an elderly gentleman attending the job fair collapsed and hit the floor hard. Umberg came running when she heard the commotion and realized someone needed medical attention. Carol Sindorf, a nurse from CalVet HQ, joined Umberg. "He was conscious initially, but then his skin became cold and clammy, his eyes rolled back and he blacked out," said Sindorf. "He stopped breathing, and we couldn't find a pulse."

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Secretary's Message

This year's Black History Month theme, "At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality," reminds us of two very important dates in civilian and military history. The first is the Emancipation Proclamation, decreed by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, and the second is the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which took place on August 28, 1963, in Washington D.C.

The Emancipation Proclamation declared slaves in all confederate states then at war with the Union "forever free" and made them eligible for paid military service in the Union Army. Although it did not end slavery in the nation, it did transform the character of the war. After the proclamation was made, every advance of Federal troops expanded the domain of freedom and black men were allowed to serve in the Union Army and Navy. By the end of the war almost 200,000 black soldiers and sailors had fought for freedom.

It is the military service of African Americans that I would like to highlight this month. In spite of adversity and limited opportunities, African Americans have played a significant role in U.S. military history since Colonial times to the present. Harriet "Moses" Tubman not only led more than 75 slaves to freedom, but also served in the Union Army as a cook, nurse and spy. She was the first woman to lead an army attack in war when she guided the Union raid on the Combahee River in South

Carolina that ended up freeing more than 700 slaves.

Black men were denied military leadership roles and skilled training because many believed they lacked qualifications for combat duty. Before 1940, African Americans were barred from flying for the U.S. military. Civil rights organizations and the black press exerted pressure that resulted in the formation of an all Black pursuit squadron trained at Tuskegee, Alabama in 1941.

The all-black 332nd Fighter Group consisting of the 99th (in which my father, the late Clarence Gravett Sr. served), 100th and 302nd fighter squadrons became known as The Tuskegee Airmen. The Tuskegee Airmen flew 200 bomber-escort missions over Europe without losing a single American Bomber. They also flew 311 missions with the 15th Air Force which included the bombing of a Daimler-Benz tank assembly plant that destroyed three elite German ME-262 jet fighters.

A little known chapter in U.S. Army history revolves around the participation of African-American troops of the 24th Infantry and 9th Cavalry, who built roads at both Yosemite and Sequoia national parks in 1899, 1903, and 1904. Most of these men were veterans of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War in which they were called "Smoked Yankees." Today, they are more commonly known as the "Buffalo Soldiers."

Even though the Buffalo Soldiers wore the uniform of the U.S. Army, their ethnicity, combined with the racial prejudice of the time, made the performance of their duties quite challenging. In the early 1900s, African-Americans were routinely abused, or even killed, for the slightest perceived offense. They occupied one of the lowest rungs of the social ladder; a fact which served to undercut the authority of any black man who served in any position of power. Yosemite's and Sequoia's Buffalo Soldiers had to be simultaneously strong and diplomatic to fulfill the duties of their jobs but avoid giving offense. Buffalo Soldiers served valiantly in a number of conflicts, including our war with Mexico and ending with the Korean War.

Millions of defense-industry jobs were being created while the United States prepared to enter World War II. For Blacks seeking jobs in the growing defense industries, the prospects of securing one of these jobs was nil, given the rampant violence and discrimination they were subjected to. Black leaders at that time met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his administration to urge that he sign an executive order banning discrimination against black workers in the defense industry. Under the threat of tens of thousands marching in Washington, D.C. demanding a right to work in the defense industry, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941. The Order barred government agencies and federal contractors from refusing employment in industries engaged in defense production on the basis of

race, creed, color or national origin. This order also required the armed services, including the United States Marine Corps, to recruit and enlist African Americans. Before that time, blacks were barred from enlisting in the Marine Corps.

Recruiting for the "Montford Marines" began on June 1, 1942. Thousands of African-American men, eager to serve, flocked to recruiting offices. The first black recruits received basic training at the segregated Camp Montford Point in Jacksonville, North Carolina. The enlisted 1,200 men were housed in prefabricated huts. Although blacks were enlisted in the Marines, racism still pervaded, as was the case in American society in general at that time. Railroad tracks divided white residents from the camp for African-American troops, and the black recruits were not allowed to enter the main base of nearby Camp Lejeune unless accompanied by a white Marine. By 1945, all drill instructors and many NCOs at Montford Point were African Americans.

Between 1942 and 1949, more than 20,000 men were trained at Montford Point. In July 1948, despite strong opposition from Democrats of the segregated South, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981, which required the desegregation of the military. In 1949, Montford Point was deactivated, and new black recruits were sent to Parris Island and Camp Pendleton. During the Korean War, the United States Marine Corps fully integrated.

Although Executive Order 9981 ended segregation in the federal military forces, it did call on the

State National Guard to do so, even though various states soon followed suit. Soon after his election in 1960, former Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Sr., officially ended segregation in the California National Guard, which had been segregated since its founding. The last State to officially end segregation in its National Guard did so in 1968. I, myself, was the product of a segregated National Guard Unit when I enlisted as a Private. On July 18, 1999, I was honored as being the first African American to serve as a National Guard Division Commander, the 40th Infantry Division (Mechanized), in the United States.

On November 23, 2011, President Barak Obama signed a bill that bestowed Congressional Medals of Honor on the Montford Point Marines for their patriotic and valiant service during World War II.

The "Golden Thirteen" were the thirteen African American enlisted men who became the first African American commissioned and warrant officers in the United States Navy in 1944.

Throughout the history of the United States until the end of World War I, the Navy had enlisted African Americans for general service, but they were barred from joining from 1919 to 1932. From 1893 onwards, African Americans could only join the Navy's Messman's and Steward's branches, which not only segregated African Americans from the rest of the Navy community, but also precluded them from becoming commissioned officers.

Responding to pressure from First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Adlai Stevenson, in January 1944, the Navy began an accelerated 2-month officer training course for 16 African-American enlisted men at Camp Robert Smalls Recruit Training Center Great Lakes (now known as Great Lakes Naval Training Station), in Illinois. The class average at graduation was 3.89 out of 4.0. All sixteen members of the class passed the course, but only twelve were commissioned in March 1944.

Although commissioned eight months after the "Golden Thirteen," Samuel Lee Gravely, Jr. (June 4, 1922 – October 22, 2004) was the first African American in the U.S. Navy to serve aboard a fighting ship as an officer, the first to command a Navy ship, the first fleet commander, and the first to become a flag officer, retiring as a vice admiral.

As you can see, there have been many contributions by African Americans in our country's military service. Currently, African Americans make up approximately 17 percent of the nation's total military personnel. Once again, history proves that African Americans are patriotic, tenacious, and resilient. Please join me in celebrating Black History Month.

Sincerely,



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

LEGAL SERVICES FOR CA VETS

Finding free legal services for veterans is relatively simple if you know where to look. The VALOR Guide provides a comprehensive list of all known providers of free legal services for California veterans. The

six-volume Guide covers Northern California, Central California, Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and San Diego and Imperial Counties.

The Guide creates a network of law firms, clinics and other providers dedicated to providing free legal services for veterans. Not every legal clinic or military legal assistance office can handle every type of

problem, but by working together, providers listed in the Guide strive to provide the right service in the right location. Legal providers are listed in the Guide by practice area, by location, and alphabetically.

For questions about the 2012-2013 VALOR Guide, including corrections and requests for copies, please call (310) 586-6536 or email sieglera@gtlaw.com

FREE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM FOR WOMEN VETS

CalVet and the Glendale YWCA will host a free conference for women veterans February 27—March 1, 2013. The conference, led by Sunergos, is intended to elevate women veterans' capacities in leadership, resilience, and grace.

Sunergos, an organization that focuses on transformational

leadership in lives and in careers, believes the conference will help female veterans learn to exercise leadership under all circumstances; put the past in the past and regain personal footing; be in the flow of life and open to undeserved "miracles"; and gain a greater capacity to exercise love, kindness and service in any situation.

According to Sunergos, women

who attend the conference will gain clarity about the direction of their lives and their futures and gain the ability to freely move on to their next life phase, unencumbered by past events. Doing so will allow women veterans to perform beyond previous limitations and lead an integral life where all component parts are working in harmony—both personally and professionally.

The conference will be in Glendale, CA. The conference is free. Visit www.sunergosllc.com/leading-resiliency-and-grace.

<< HERO

Umberg immediately began mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. There was no time to worry about a mouth guard, gloves or other personal health precautions; the man was in trouble! "I knew if my efforts didn't work, he was still in good hands because Carol was by my side," said Umberg. As soon as she began to blow air into his lungs, he came back around and began breathing on his own.

"When we say we love our veterans, we mean it!" Umberg said with a

smile. "This was a tiny example of the professional and quality care employees in our veterans Homes provide every day. Caring for California veterans isn't just a profession, it's a calling,"

Following Undersecretary Umberg's life-saving action, she received a personal thank you letter from Senator Darrell Steinberg on behalf of the California Senate. "Your deed was not only heroic, but it sets a good example for the rest of us. Californians are fortunate to have

the benefit of your public service in more ways than one," the letter read. "Good job!"

The American Heart Association's CPR and AED (Automatic Electronic Defibrillator) learning programs help increase survival rates by training people just like you. Find a training program in your area or watch a 60-second hands-only CPR video by going to www.heart.org. According to the American Heart Association, Hands-only CPR can be as effective as CPR with breaths.

LANCASTER SIDEWALKS IMPROVE MOBILITY FOR DISABLED VETS

Residents at the Veterans Home in Lancaster, especially those with limited mobility, can more easily and safely access the Home and the city now that new sidewalks have been installed adjacent to the Home. Thanks go out to the City of Lancaster and to Veterans Home resident Tom Dever.

Dever, a United States Air Force Vietnam veteran, serves as Chairman of the Home's Allied Council and resides at the Veterans Home with his wife. He wanted to find a way to improve mobility for himself and other disabled and able-bodied veterans at the Home, but a lack of sidewalks hampered their movement.

Determined to find a solution, Dever contacted the Mayor's office for help. Before long, the sidewalks were installed. "I am so grateful to the City of Lancaster for expediting the completion of the sidewalk," said Veterans Home Director Norman Andrews. "This makes it possible for walker and wheelchair-



The Lancaster Veterans Home presents Lancaster Mayor Rex Parris with a Certificate of Appreciation for installing sidewalks adjacent to the Lancaster Veterans. Shown are: Mayor Rex Parris, City of Lancaster (standing with Certificate of Appreciation); Lancaster Veterans Home resident Tom Dever (seated), and Veterans Home Director Norman Andrews (right); surrounded by Lancaster City Council members.

bound veterans to access all of the wonderful services of Lancaster and significantly improves the quality of their lives. Prior to the sidewalks, we had veterans walking in the mud and street."

As an expression of gratitude, Andrews and Dever, along with other Lancaster Veterans Home residents and staff, recently attended a Lancaster City Council meeting and presented City of Lancaster Mayor Rex Parris with a special Certificate of Appreciation from the California Department of Veterans Affairs. Andrews and Dever made the presentation and thanked the Mayor and City of Lancaster for installing the sidewalks and helping to improve not just their mobility, but the quality of their lives as well.

Dever is delighted! "The Veterans in our Home fought to preserve our Country's freedoms, and the City has given us the freedom to access the services of Lancaster by putting the sidewalk in," he explained. "This gives us continuous sidewalks connecting us to the City. We are very grateful!"

FOLLOW US!



TELE-HEALTH COMING TO BARSTOW VETERANS HOME

By Isa Baca

The long-anticipated Tele-Health and Tele-Medicine kiosk program will soon be available at the Barstow Veterans Home. This program will save residents both time and money as they will no longer have to go to Loma Linda Veterans Administration to obtain critical health care information. Transitioning to Tele-Health and Tele-Medicine will mean residents at this home will have easy access to appointments, medication

refills, and online conversations with their physicians.

With the Tele-Medicine kiosk for example, if a resident had a routine check-up, the resident does not have to take the five-hour trip down to Loma Linda. Through this kiosk, the doctor will be able to see the resident via video conference and review vital statistics with the help of the nurse on duty in the clinic. After the doctor's assessment, the doctor will be able to prescribe the course

of action to be taken. They will even be able to perform psychiatric evaluations for at-risk residents.

Collaboration between the Barstow Veterans Home team and the Loma Linda Veterans Administration began about six months ago. As a result, Tele-Health and Tele-Medicine equipment was installed at each site.

"I am ecstatic that our residents will be able to take advantage of this new technology," said Raymond Lau, Director at the Barstow Veterans home. "This is just a part of the quality care we provide for our veterans."

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HIRING OUR HEROES

JOB FAIRS FOR VETERANS, SPOUSES

Hiring Our Heroes—launched in March 2011—is a nationwide initiative to help veterans and military spouses find meaningful employment. Working with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's network of 1,600 state and local chambers and other strategic partners from the public, private, and non-profit

sectors, the program's goal is to create a movement across America in hundreds of communities where veterans and military families return every day. Since its inception, Hiring Our Heroes has hosted more than 400 hiring fairs in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. More than 14,100 veterans and military spouses have obtained jobs.

Hiring our Heroes expanded its efforts with the establishment of a stand-alone program for military spouses and with a sustained campaign to enlist the commitments from the small business community to hire veterans and military spouses

by the end of 2014.

A number of Hiring our Heroes job fairs have been scheduled in California this year:

- February 13, 2013 – Sacramento, CA
- February 28, 2013 – Oakland, CA
- March 28, 2013 – Fresno, CA
- April 4, 2013 – Long Beach, CA
- April 11, 2013 – San Jose, CA
- April 30, 2013 – Walnut Creek, CA

These hiring fairs are free to both job seekers and employers. For more information and to register, go to www.uschamber.com. If you don't find a job fair in your area, check back. New jobs fairs are added to the list frequently.

DIRECT DEPOSIT REQUIREMENT LOOMING

According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, beginning March 1, 2013, all payments from the federal government must be made electronically. That means most military retirees and annuitants receiving paper checks will be required to sign up for direct deposit. Those who are over 90 years of age as of 1 May, 2011 and those who have mental impairments, which have been substantiated by a physician, are exempt from this requirement.

After March 1, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will send payments directly to your bank account, giving you immediate access to the money on pay day and eliminating the risk of lost or stolen checks, forged signatures and identity theft.

It can take 30 to 60 days from the day DFAS receives your enrollment

for direct deposit to start. If you have not already made your direct deposit arrangements, you need to do so right away! There are three ways to start direct deposit:

- Send a signed Fast Start Direct Deposit Form available at www.fms.treas.gov/eft/2231.pdf to Defense Finance and Accounting Service, U.S. Military Retired Pay, P.O. Box 7130, London, KY 40742-7130; or
- Use your myPay account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx> to set up a direct deposit to your checking or savings account; or
- Call the DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay Customer Care Center at (800) 321-1080.

Don't have a bank account? Find a reputable bank or credit union in your area and provides the services you need at little or no cost. Make sure they offer FDIC coverage of your account and accept direct deposit.

Military members or civilian employees paid by DFAS should contact their base finance office, employer's Customer Service Representative (payroll liaison) or human resources office to start direct deposit if they are unable to access myPay.

If, after enrolling, you receive a paper check, cash or deposit it as you normally would. DFAS will notify you when your direct deposit request has been activated.

According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, each paper check costs \$1.04 while each electronic payment costs only 8 cents. The new process will save the American taxpayers about \$120 million every year.

For additional assistance, retirees and annuitants may call DFAS customer service at (800) 321-1080; military and civilian employees may call DFAS (888) 332-7411.



RETIRED MAJOR GENERAL PETER J. GRAVETT, SECRETARY OF THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS "LISTENS UP" TO SOME OF THE EXECUTIVES OF SONOMA COUNTY VET CONNECT. FROM THE LEFT, SECRETARY GRAVETT, CHARLES EARTHMAN, JOHN CROOKER, KEN HOLYBEE, AND JAMES POORE.

FREE WELDING CLASS FOR VETERANS

Thanks to a grant through the California Employment Development Department, Pacific Gas & Electric's (PG&E) PowerPathway has teamed up with the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency and American River College to help California's veterans prepare and compete for high demand jobs in the energy and utilities industry.

PG&E's PowerPathway™ is now accepting applications to Welding for Veterans—a FREE customized, 18-week career preparation program. Coursework includes five welding classes with hands-on welding practice, job-specific skills for the industry, technical reading, math and physical conditioning. Students will earn 17.5 units of college credit (15 in welding, 1.5 in math and 1 in physical conditioning) as well as a Shielded Metal Arc Plate and Pipe Certificate.

The course will prepare you with the entry-level skills needed to be considered for job opportunities in a high growth industry that offers good salaries and a variety of career opportunities.

PG&E entry-level field operations workers earn starting salaries of up to \$34 per hour with a competitive benefits package, including:



THE PRICE IS RIGHT FOR BARSTOW HOME VETS

Residents at the Veterans Barstow Home got a rare treat. They attended a taping of the Price is Right game show with celebrity host Drew Carey at the CBS studios in Los Angeles. The group was recognized by Mr. Carey and applauded by the audience. It was an exhausting but thrilling day for the residents. The show is scheduled to air on CBS stations on March 8.

company-paid pension and matching 401(k), medical/dental/vision benefits, developmental opportunities, tuition reimbursement and more.

The Welding for Veterans program will be offered at American River College, Sacramento, CA, from May 28 to October 1, 2013, Mon –Thurs, 7 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Application deadline: February 28, 2013.

To apply for consideration, complete a course interest form at www.pge.com/about/careers/powerpathway/keepmeinformed. This program is open only to recently separated military veterans (since December 2008). Background, physical and drug checks may be required for program eligibility. Qualifying military veterans are encouraged to apply.

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL GOES ON TOUR

After Pearl Harbor, anti-Japanese hysteria in America reached a fever pitch. Executive order 9066 created military zones in Hawaii and the West Coast. People of Japanese ancestry were rounded up and herded into camps. They lost homes, businesses and personal belongings. Conditions in the camps were abysmal. Nevertheless, thousands of young men volunteered to fight for America.

They joined the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service. These units



played crucial roles in European combat and decoding Japanese communications. They proved that, in America, shared values, not ancestry, determine allegiances.

More than six decades later, Congress recognized their achievements with a Congressional Gold Medal. The National Veterans Network—a coalition of Japanese American veteran and civic organizations is

working with the Smithsonian on a Congressional Gold Medal traveling tour. The tour will honor the men of the U.S. Army who were part of the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service. The original medal will be displayed at museums in select cities across the United States to honor surviving veterans and to educate the public about a group that overcame prejudice with patriotism.

The medal will be displayed at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles May 4–June 9, 2013 and at the De Young Museum in San Francisco June 29–August 4, 2013.

Visit www.nationalveteransnetwork.com/medaltour.shtml to view the full Congressional Medal of Honor tour schedule.

WALMART PLEDGES EMPLOYMENT FOR RETURNING VETERANS

Returning veterans seeking employment have a friend in retail. Bill Simon, President and CEO of Walmart announced that, beginning

Memorial Day, Walmart will offer a job to any honorably discharged veteran within his or her first twelve months after active duty.

“Not every returning veteran wants to work in retail,” Simon said. “But every veteran who does will have a place to go.” Walmart projects it will hire more than 100,000 veterans over the next five years.

Simon believes hiring a veteran can be one of the best decisions any of us make. “They have a record of performance under pressure. They’re quick learners, and they’re team players. These are leaders with

discipline, training, and a passion for service,” he said.

Most of the jobs will be in Walmart stores and clubs. Others will be in distribution centers and the Walmart home office.

“The transition to civilian life can be difficult for returning veterans, and finding a job is often their first priority,” said CalVet Secretary Peter J. Gravett. “In a downturned economy, finding a job can be difficult. Hopefully, Walmart’s veteran hiring program will take some of the anxiety out of coming home.”



CALVET RECRUITMENT FAIRS SUCCESSFUL!

With 500 job seekers lined up at 5:00 a.m. for the Fresno Veterans Home Recruitment Fair held on January 23rd, a much larger crowd by the time the event opened three hours later was certain. What few anticipated was the more than 2,200 job applicants that attended the event that day. The Redding Recruitment Fair held a week later attracted 1,200.

The recruitment fairs were held to encourage applications at CalVet's newest veterans homes. More than 600 positions will ultimately need to be filled when both the Fresno and Redding Homes reach resident capacity. The immediate goal is to hire the staff needed to ensure the Homes are ready to admit their first residents in the fall of this year.

"We're excited that so many quality job seekers came out to apply at our Homes," said CalVet Secretary Peter J. Gravett who attended both events. "We're sure to find the caring,

compassionate, committed and qualified staff we're looking for to care for our veteran residents."

CalVet continues to schedule the examinations necessary to create employment eligibility lists and to post job announcement bulletins for open positions. To find current Veterans Homes and other CalVet job and examination announcements, go to www.calvet.ca.gov/AboutUs/Jobs/JobAnnouncements.aspx.

For more information about Fresno or Redding Homes recruitment or admissions, contact each home directly:

Fresno: (559) 493-4400, or toll free at (855) 769-5792;

Redding: (530) 224-3300 or toll free at (855) 769-5791.

For specific job-related questions, e-mail CalVet at Join.CalVet@CalVet.ca.gov.

FREE PARALYMPIC SPORTS DAY FOR VETERANS

The Northern California Regional Paralympic Sport Program invites injured, ill or wounded veterans to enjoy a day of sports, recreation, and camaraderie in Sacramento on Saturday, April 20, 2013.

This event will be held at the River Cats Independence Field at the Sam Pannell Community Center, 2450 Meadowview Road in Sacramento. It is hosted by the City of Sacramento and Paralympic Sport Sacramento and made possible by a grant provided by the U.S. Olympic Committee with funds originating from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The day features a variety of adaptive track and field events, along with swimming, strength and conditioning training led by past and current paralympic coaches and athletes. Lunch is included. The event is free but pre-registration is required by April 5. Bring sunscreen and a swimsuit and towel if you're going in the pool.

For more information or to register, contact Jenny Yarrow at jyarrow@cityofsacramento.org or at (916) 808-6017.

VA MODESTO OUTPATIENT CLINIC MOVING

The VA Modesto Community Based Outpatient Clinic on McHenry Avenue is moving to a new location. Outpatient care will continue to be offered at the McHenry Avenue site through February 20. The site will be

closed February 21 through 26 while the clinic moves to its new location. The new clinic, located at 1225 Oakdale Road, Modesto, will open for service on February 27.

If you have any urgent medical or mental health concern during the transition, please call (800) 455-0057 to locate an appropriate site of care.

Visit www.paloalto.va.gov/construction.asp to follow construction of the new site.



TEACHER CREDENTIALING FOR RETURNING VETERANS

If your teaching credential expired while you were serving your country, there may good news for you from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

A credential, certificate or permit which expires while the holder is on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces or a full-time employee of the American Red Cross or the United States Merchant Marine is automatically continued in force to a date six months after honorable discharge, termination of service, or placement on inactive duty. If the credential, certificate or permit expires within six months after the holder honorably leaves such service or has been placed on inactive duty, the document will remain in force

HIGH TECH TRAINING FOR VETERANS

The technology industry continues to lead the way in growth and opportunity. Now, veterans can get tuition-free high tech training from SAP, a global market business software leader.

SAP's Veterans to Work Program helps military veterans successfully transition to civilian life by giving them valuable skills that will make them more employable in an industry with seemingly unlimited growth potential. The Veterans to Work Program offers:

- Certifications in SAP database, analytics and mobility technology solutions;
- Full-tuition scholarships;

- In-person and online courses from one to nine days.

Headquartered in Germany, with offices in 130 countries and 60+ U.S. locations—including Irvine, Carlsbad, Los Angeles, Dublin and Palo Alto, California—SAP software technology helps companies of all sizes and industries run more efficiently.

According to the SAP web site, the company has nearly 60,000 employees and more than 195,000 customers; 64% of the world's transaction revenue touches a SAP solution; and SAP customers include 79% of the Global Fortune 500.

To learn more about SAP's Veterans to Work Program, go to www.sap.com/veteranstowork. To determine your overall program eligibility, review specific course requirements, and apply online, visit <https://yoh.avature.net/sap>.

<< CREDENTIALS

until six months after the date of honorable discharge or placed on inactive duty. A credential, certificate or permit need not be renewed while the holder is in active service.

If you are employed during the six-month period immediately following your discharge or separation, you should register your credential, certificate or permit with the county superintendent of schools. Presenting evidence of discharge or separation from service will act as proof of your document's validity.

If you want to renew your teaching credential, a renewal application must be submitted within six months after termination of your service or your placement on inactive duty. The application packet consists of an application form, current fee, verification of any completed renewal requirements, and evidence of the dates of active service.

If you were unable to complete renewal requirements within the six-month period allowed by law, Commission staff will renew the credential by appeal.

For more information about teacher credentialing for veterans and their spouses, go to www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials.



VIETNAM VETERANS WALL REPLICA COMING TO SACRAMENTO

The Sacramento Blue Star Moms are honored to announce the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall is coming to Sacramento. The Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall is a traveling, three-quarter-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. The Memorial—which has been displayed in more than 200 cities across the country—bears the names of the 58,227 U.S. Military personnel who lose their lives in the war from 1959 to 1975. The faux-granite replica is 240 feet long and stands eight feet high.

This traveling Memorial reminds us of the great sacrifices made during the Vietnam War. It is intended to help heal, rekindle friendships, and allow visitors who cannot make the trip to Washington, D.C. to connect with loved ones lost to the war.

The traveling Vietnam Memorial will be on display at Mt. Vernon Memorial Park in Sacramento May 23 - May 27, 2013 and will leave for Ft. Benning, Georgia, its final destination, on May 28.

The Memorial will be open for school and group tours May 23 and 24 only. To schedule a tour for your group, contact Lisa Pryor at (916) 735-0568.

In addition, a "Tribute to the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall Gala" will be held on Saturday, May 18 at the Citrus Heights Community Center. Tickets are \$75 per person. Proceeds from the event will go to Blue Star Moms to help offset the costs they will incur in bringing the Memorial to Sacramento and help the organization continue its mission.

If you would like to make a tax deductible donation so that veterans, active duty military, wounded warriors or Gold Star Families can attend the Gala, contact Vivienne Yamamoto at (916) 316-8602.

Sacramento Blue Star Moms is a non-profit Veterans service organization that supports Mothers, Grandmothers, Step-Mothers, Adoptive Mothers, Foster Mothers and Guardians of a military service member, veteran or Fallen Warrior.



GOOD NEWS FOR HOME-BUYING VETERANS

Habitat for Humanity, San Fernando/Santa Clarita Valleys (SF/SCV), and the California Department of Veterans Affairs are working together to make homeownership a reality for veterans and their families. The program, called Habitat for Heroes, offers beautiful three- and four-bedroom homes which veterans can purchase using a CalVet Home Loan and a Habitat SF/SCV second loan.

"We're very excited about this collaboration with Habitat for Humanity because it will allow veterans in San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys to achieve the American Dream of homeownership," said CalVet Peter J. Gravett. "These planned veteran communities will not only bring veterans together but will also offer them a neighborhood that promotes self-sufficiency."

Approximately 100 homes will be built thanks to this collaboration. To help fund these homes for veterans, CalVet set aside more than \$21 million for qualified veterans. Once families are approved for the program by Habitat SF/SCV, they will undergo the approval process for a CalVet Home Loan.

To qualify for the Homes for Heroes program, applicants must:

- be honorably discharged U.S. veterans;
- demonstrate veteran status; and
- be a low-income family making \$45,000-\$83,650 a year.

For more information or to apply, visit www.humanityca.org or call (818) 884-8808.

USDVA BRIEFS

FREE TAX RETURN PREPARATION FOR VETERANS

The Internal Revenue Service's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program offers free tax help for Veterans. <http://1.usa.gov/Ql6U0h>

VETERANS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES TAKE ON SPORTS

Disabled U.S. Navy Veteran and U.S. Paralympian Michael Johnston encourages fellow Veterans to use adaptive sports to get back in the game with a new PSA from VA and U.S. Paralympics. <http://1.usa.gov/O16SGc>

VETERANS CRISIS LINE: HELP FOR VETS

The Veterans Crisis Line offers free, confidential support to Veterans, family and friends. Dial 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. You can also text professional responders at 838255 or chat online at www.veteranscrisisline.net.

VA BLUE BUTTON ENHANCED

VA released an enhanced VA Blue Button, adding several new categories of information from the VA Electronic Health Record. Blue Button is the personal health record inside the My HealtheVet self-service platform and through My HealtheVet, VA Blue Button enables Veterans to download an electronic file that contains their personal health information. <http://1.usa.gov/UAX0rZ>

INDIAN HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT

American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans will soon have increased access to health care services closer to home following a recent Department of Veterans Affairs and Indian Health Service (IHS) joint national agreement. As a result of the national agreement, VA is now able to reimburse the IHS for direct care services provided to eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans. <http://1.usa.gov/XSulM4>

CAL VET

VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA
BARSTOW



The Veterans Home of California—Barstow is a 400-bed, long-term care facility located on 22 acres with a panoramic view of the Mojave River Valley. The high desert atmosphere offers a climate that is healthful, quiet and safe with very low air pollution. The Veterans Home provides California veterans with a living environment that protects their dignity and contributes to their feeling of self-reliance and self-worth. It offers three levels of care that provide continuity in the lives of residents in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

1. **Domiciliary Care (Independent living)** for veterans who are self-sufficient and do not require assistance with activities of daily living. Non-nursing staff provides minimal supervision. Residents at this level of care have access to other levels of care and medical services.
2. **Intermediate Nursing Care** for veterans requiring some nursing assistance to perform activities of daily living. Licensed nursing staff assist veterans with medications and treatments.
3. **Skilled Nursing Care** for veterans who require a higher level of nursing care and require assistance with many activities of daily living.

Although this Veterans Home offers three levels of care, space is primarily available in the Independent Living (Domiciliary), and Intermediate Nursing levels of care. Amenities include:

- Room and board—three meals plus snacks
- Medical care and medications
- Optical care, dental care and podiatry services
- Transportation services to all medical appointments and off-campus activities

- Additional professional services include a beauty/barber shop, multi-purpose room and limited banking services
- Opportunities for worship for all denominations through the Chaplaincy Program
- A modern fitness center and exercise classes
- Library, cable television, and wireless Internet
- Housekeeping and laundry services
- Caring and compassionate staff, and
- Variety of community outings and an enhanced activity program

The Veterans Home of California—Barstow enjoys the strong support from the local community as well as camaraderie from the neighboring Marine Corps Logistics Base and the National Training Center at Fort Irwin.

Veterans Homes of California are also located in Chula Vista, Lancaster, Ventura, West Los Angeles, and Yountville. Veterans Homes in Fresno and Redding will begin admitting residents in the Fall of 2013. Veterans considering assisted living are encouraged to apply to any of the Veterans Homes of California. Spouses are also eligible to apply with the veteran.

For admission information, contact:

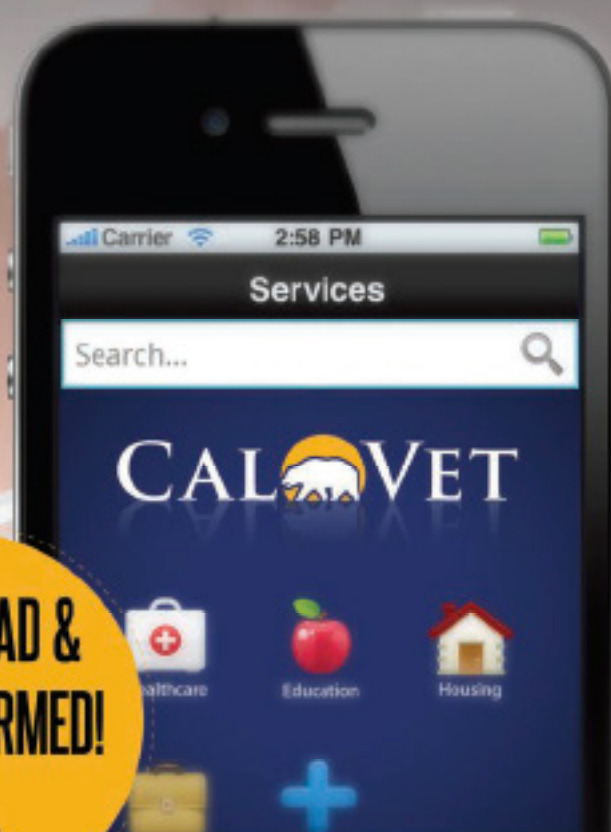
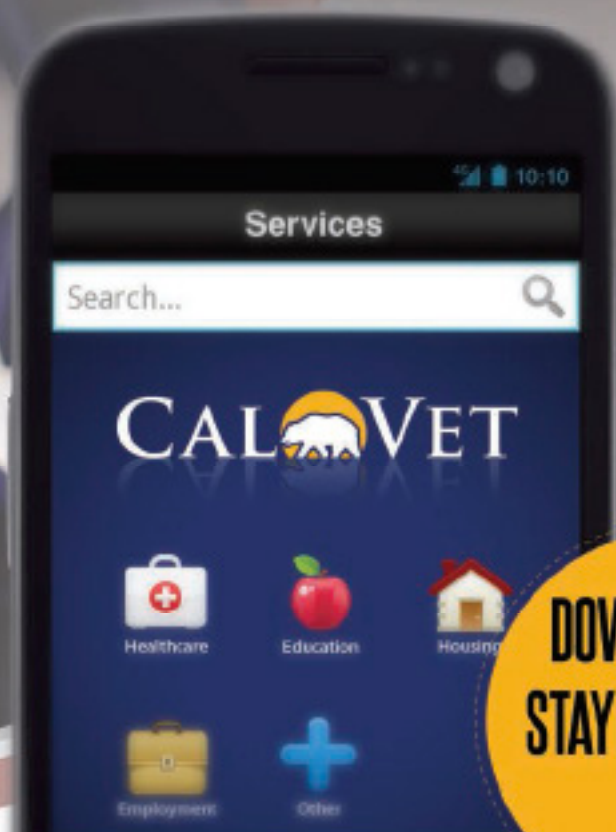
Veterans Home of California—Barstow
100 E. Veterans Parkway
Barstow, CA 92311
(800) 746-0606, ext. 1

www.calvet.ca.gov

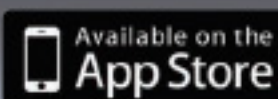
★ Veterans! ★

Getting the benefits you've earned?

Aware of benefit changes? Know where to find services?



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STAY INFORMED!**



UPCOMING EVENTS



FEBRUARY 10

Black History Month Celebration
SF Bay Area Veterans
War Memorial Veterans Bldg.
www.sfbaveterans.wordpress.com

FEBRUARY 11

Job Preparation Academy
Employment Development
Department
Compton WorkSource Center
Contact: Alma Diaz (323) 242-6700

FEBRUARY 13

Sacramento Job Fair
Veterans/Active Duty/Guard/
Reserve/Military Spouses
10:00 am - 1:00 pm
Clarion Inn, Sacramento

FEBRUARY 25-28

Council of College and
Military Educators
40th Anniversary Symposium
Bayfront Hotel, San Diego
www.ccmeonline.org

FEBRUARY 26

Embracing Our Veterans
9 am - 1 pm
SF Interfaith Council
Mt. Diablo UU Church
Walnut Creek, CA

FEBRUARY 27

Veterans Town Hall/Collaborative
Civic Center Plaza
Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco
Contact: Eddie Ramirez
(415) 740-4399

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

CalVet News

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