Monty Roberts’ “Horse Sense & Soldiers”
The Next Workshop – March 22-24, 2013

By Rees Lloyd

The third “Horse Sense & Soldiers” equine therapy “Join-Up”* workshop developed and offered free to veterans by the legendary “Monty Roberts – the “Horse Whisperer” – to help vets with stress in conjunction with Patriot Outreach and our Department of California Patriot Outreach Pilot Project will be held March 22-24, 2013 at Roberts’ “Flag Is Up Farm” in Solvang, California. Register at www.Join-Up.org/veterans

*“Join-Up” method to help vets with stress (from Roberts’ left) Terry Tracy, Past Dept. Service Officer; Col. Tony Monaco, Patriot Outreach founder; Bugler and Eagle Scout Robert Morgan; Rees Lloyd, Post 79, District 21.

April 19, 2013 is the deadline...

Help brand your American Legion

BRAND, continued on page 2

Monty Roberts (center) at “Horse Sense & Soldiers” workshop explains his “Join-Up” method to help vets with stress (from Roberts’ left) Terry Tracy, Past Dept. Service Officer; Col. Tony Monaco, Patriot Outreach founder; Bugler and Eagle Scout Robert Morgan; Rees Lloyd, Post 79, District 21.
is that of Alicia, a homeless, helpless and hopeless veteran who, after going through Monty Roberts’ “Join-Up” workshop for veterans, went from living under bridges to earning a scholarship to Harvard where she is studying today to become a psychologist. (See her story at www.MontyRoberts.com)

Terry Tracy, former Marine and Past Dept. of California Service Officer and one of the most knowledgeable people in the state and nation on VA affairs and rehabilita-
tion, said he went to the “Horse Sense & Soldiers” workshop in December extremely skeptical, but “left convinced that Monty Roberts’ ‘join-up’ method really does work and is an effective way to help veterans overcome debilitating stress, including PTSD.” Similarly, Jim Banakus, Chairman of the California American Legion Riders Commission, and a personal friend of Monty Roberts, said, “I have seen remark-
able progress in the lives of those who have attended several sessions. Even after their first three-day clinic, you can see them starting to come out of the shell they arrived with on Friday morning, to one of learning to trust in themselves again by Sunday afternoon.” (See past issues of California Legionnaire for more testimo-
ries, www.CALEGION.org.)

Legends from other fields are expected to attend the March 22-24 workshop. One is Matt Lindland, Mixed Martial Arts legend as fighting for the Olympic Silver Medalist in Greco-Roman Wrestling, a founder of the world renown MMA training center Team Quest in Gresham, Oregon and the present Head Coach of the U.S. World [Olympic] Greco Roman Wrestling Team.

Lindland, an MMA great who has done a great deal of volunteer work with troops and veterans, including teaching hand-to-
hand combat, said, “I grew up in Eagle Creek in rural Oregon. Monty Roberts was one of my heroes. I think I read all of his books. I am really looking forward to working with Monty Roberts and the veter-
ans at the ‘Horse Sense & Soldiers’ work-
shop, along with my daughter, Robin.”

Another is Christi Edelbrock, she of the family whose “Edelbrock” brand name is legendary in the world of hot rodders and high performance cars needing high perfor-
mance parts. She is an equestrian who has performed at the Olympic level; is an industry leader at Edelbrock; has her own Christi Edelbrock Foundation doing chari-
table work; and among other things, will be staging her annual Edelbrock “Revved Up For Kids” car show and fundraiser on May 5, 2013, in Torrance, California. (See, www.Revvedup4kids.com)

“For as long as I have been involved in the equestrian world, competing profes-
ionally, I’ve never seen the kind of profes-
sionalism that Monty Roberts consistently demonstrates. What he is contributing to support veterans to overcome stress is nothing less than outstanding,” said Christi Edelbrock, who is also the national spokes-
woman for Patriot Outreach.

Monty Roberts’ remarkable life has been the subject of movies, television documen-
taries, books, articles and countless media interviews. His autobiography, The Man Who Listens to Horses, has sold over 6.5 million copies worldwide in fifteen languages. Altogether, some 10 million of his books have been sold. Yet he remains a man on a mission in his humanitarian work, traveling all over the world more than 300 days a year to teach his “Join-
Up” method to gentle horses without violence and to heal veterans, abused and autistic children, battered women and others who have suffered traumatic stress injury. (See www.montyroberts.com)

I asked him, “Why does he continue to do it at age 77?” He answered, “Since the late 1940s I have stated that my life’s goal is to ‘leave the world a better place for horses and people, too.’ Veterans returning from combat are not just people but, ‘special people’. These are individu-
als who deserve our assistance if there’s anything we can contribute to their lives.”

For all he has contributed to the lives of veterans, The American Legion Depart-
ment of California Executive Committee have before it at their March 8-10, 2013, a resolution from District 21 calling for Monty Roberts to be honored at the 2013 California Dept. Convention in Palm Springs in June.

For now, there is an opportunity for veterans and their families to join up with Monty Roberts and his horses at his “Horse Sense & Soldiers” workshop in a commis-
sion with Patriot Outreach and the Califor-

BRAND, continued from page 1

Posts to give this information the widest dissemination, as we will do in your national publications. All submissions must be received no later than April 19, 2013, in order to be considered.

The Internal Affairs Commission will be the final reviewer of submissions and will draft a resolution recommending a permanent tagline. The decision of the National Executive Committee is final.

If your tagline is the one recommended to the NEC, and adopted exactly as submitted, you will receive a $500 check, and a certificate of appreciation plaque signed by the National Commander in recognition of your winning entry. The winning entry will be posted on the Legion website after the NEC meets in mid-May 2013. In the event of duplicate winning entries, the earliest received will be declared the winner.

Remember: April 19, 2013 is the deadline, and the email address is tagline@legion.org. Please include your name and phone number on each entry. Only one entry per email submission. All entries will be acknowledged by a return email. Save that receipt as proof of your submission.

Do you know someone who may appreciate Membership in The American Legion?

Mail completed form and dues to:
The American Legion Department of California
401 Van Ness Avenue Room 117
San Francisco, California 94102-4570

Don’t forget, women are veterans too!!!

THE AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(VANG) (PHONE)

(Mailing Address)

(State, Zip Code)

(PLEASE CHECK ONE)

LOCAL MEMBERSHIP POST*

POST 1000 MEMBERSHIP (HEADQUARTERS)

**FEE CHECK AMOUNT ELIGIBILITY RULES AND CHARGE OF SERVICE BELOW**

August 2, 1990 - ADonated States as determined by U.S. Government
December 20, 1989 - January 31, 1990
August 24, 1989 - July 31, 1989
February 28, 1961 - May 7, 1975
June 25, 1930 - January 31, 1955
December 7, 1941 - December 31, 1946
April 6, 1917 - November 11, 1918

I certify that I served at least one day of active military duty during the dates marked above and was honorably discharged or still honorably serving.

(SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT) (EXECUTIVE)

MY ANNUAL FEES FOR $35.00 ARE PAID BY:

PERSONAL CHECK

U.S. Army

U.S. Navy

U.S. Air Force

U.S. Marines

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Merchant Marines (12/74-8/15/45 only)

U.S. Navy (12/74-8/15/45 only)

(CREDIT CARD NUMBER) (EXPRIATION DATE)

(MONEY ORDER)

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(CASHiers CHECK)

(AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERSHIP)

(COMPLETE RETURN IF PAYED BY CREDIT CARD)

(CREDIT CARD SIGNATURE)

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PUBLICATION POLICY

California Legionnaire is the official publi-
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NOTICE: Submissions to the California Legionnaire must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the month being included in the upcoming monthly issue.

To submit articles and/or photos: Please e-mail article and any photos attached at a mini-
mum 200 DPI (1600 x 1200) to calegion@calegion.
com or mail prints, negatives or slides to Ed PRIVATE Photo, P.O. Box 1329, Palm Springs, CA 92262. All submissions become the property of The American Legion Department of California. All submitted material is subject to edit, rework and omission. We are not responsible for lost or misplaced material.

Please send “Change of Address” and “Deceased Notifications” to:

e-mail address: kathy@calegion.org or mail to: The American Legion, Department of California, 401 Van Ness Avenue Room 117, San Francisco, CA 94102-4578

Do not direct them to the Editor

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DoD and VA to scrap electronic health record program

WASHINGTON — The departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are scrap-
ing their joint effort to create an Inte-
grated Electronic Health Record (eHR) system by 2017, after spending about $1 billion on the project.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric Shinseki and Department of Defense (DoD) Secretary Leon Panetta made the announcement February 5 at VA’s Central Office here.

The eHR was previously lauded by VA and DoD as a solution to the ongoing prob-
lem of incompatibility between the two departments’ electronic health record sys-
tems (VA’s VISTA and DoD’s ALTA).

“We applauded both agencies for their efforts in trying to develop a truly seamless solution to this problem,” said James E. Koutz, National Commander of The American Legion. “But our veterans are the real losers in this decision. Without a joint DoD-VA record that is easy to access, veterans have to ask for copies, and those requests often take months to process.”

“We understand the financial con-
stRAINTS that both departments are under,” Koutz said. “We’re cautiously optimistic about the new plan and eagerly wait to hear more details.”
I am compelled to address delinquent membership this point. If you have not renewed your 2013 membership dues by now, I urge you to do so. Alternatively, you may be considered “a Legionnaire in good standing.” We, the California Legion, don’t want to lose you as a member. The American Legion. What can we do to motivate you to renew? What can we do to help? We are all in this together – veterans helping veterans. The very same day that every American was deployed in Iraq and every Post in the State to reach out to members who have not yet paid their dues. These are very difficult times for us all and may some good Legionnaires in your Post cannot afford to pay membership dues this year. Sometimes, it just comes down to putting ‘beans and rice’ on the table and there’s not enough money for the extras. Believe me, I understand.

By the time you receive this article I will have been in Washington, D.C. with Alan Lennon, our ex-Serviceman. Hopefully we will get a chance to see our congresspeople and twist their arms on Veterans’ Affairs. This is what this trip will be all about – trying to help our warriors.

During the month of March, I will continue to visit Districts as time permits. I will arrive in Santa Maria on Thursday, March 7 to attend a meeting hosted by the 23rd District and the Spring Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting. On March 23, I will venture to the south to visit area 6 at East Pasadena Post 280, followed by a dinner banquet at the 7th Annual Azusa Mayhem Post 252 in Los Angeles. On Sunday, March 24, I will attend an Area 5 meeting at Larry E. Holmberg Post 731 in San Diego. On Monday, I will have the Fall DEC meeting at the 9th and 10th of March in Santa Maria, California. We should talk about Disaster & Relief with what is going on in the country. We have had everything, but an Earthquake in California. Thank God, we didn’t lose one yet. There are many other issues on the agenda that we need to discuss. We will have a visit from a candidate for National Convention Adjutant in Delaware. As you probably know by now, Department Headquarters will be temporarily relocating in April of this year due to a two-year retrofit project of the War Memorial Building in San Francisco. It is uncertain at this time exactly where Headquarters will be relocated, but that information will be shared with you as soon as possible. Please be patient and cooperative with Headquarters staff during this period. Also, if you have some free time on your hands, do get involved with your Post or District. It would be appreciated. Just contact Department Adjutant, Bill Silser III or Executive Secretary, Mary Jasinski. I consider the officer a very special thank you to those of you who were able to attend the Four Chaplains Observance in San Francisco in February. As always, the Department of California sponsors the event to remember National Commander James Koutz motto, “Every day is Veterans’ day.”

As we write about today’s veterans let us not forget the words of General of the Armies John Joseph Pershing: “The point I wish to make is that these things cause the soldier to remember that the people at home are behind him. You do not know how much that is going to mean to us who are going overseas. You do not know how much that means to any soldier who is over there carrying the flag for his country. That is the point which should be uppermost in your minds whenever you see a young man who are working for the soldier.” In our Nation’s populace today, are those words true today as they were spoken in WWI? Generally within the confines of Veterans, Patriotic Organizations and at the very heart of those who individually serve the Veterans Administration. However, are we, as a nation of one, remembering our military and veterans?

The need of our veterans is great and yes, greater than the resources rationed by our government. The backlog of veteran’s claims has increased as the conflicts in the Middle East continue to grow on and on. Many of our military, active, reservists, National Guard, and many multiple deployments, and as the state of our world shows will probably deploy again and again. That means we, as an organization, must work on solutions to meet this challenge. Just as our government, The American Legion has limited resources, which will constantly need resupplying as we care for those who have served us and their dependents. Those of us who serve our veterans as “Affiliates of the Veterans Administration” will have job security based upon the abundant amount of work available in most VA offices. However, with the above, our duties will be limited in what we can do for our present veterans, as well as our future veterans. Rehabilitation programs in The American Legion have always been a viable asset, by helping veterans with claims and advocacy of veterans’ rights. The Department of California is a leader in the VA Rehabilitation effort. The “Rehab Fund Drive for the purpose of offsetting expenses incurred in the operation of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation programs” is a service of thirteen full time employees staffing the three offices. These offices are located with Department of Veterans Affairs regional offices. The Department of California, as well, also supports a part-time staff at almost every VA medical center and outpatient clinic in California. The mission of the staff is to make veteran’s lives easier by providing expert, no-cost representation in VA claims to veterans, their dependents or survivors. But operational expenses of the VA&R clinic have also increased, and we’ve had a serious shortfall for several years. In 2012, the Rehab Fund Drive raised $221,572.09 of net income. Unfortunately, we were short on our fund drive net income in 2012 by about $12,900. We are asking all of you to make sure this isn’t a trend and bring in the best year ever in 2013. These necessary funds offset the VA&R budget of $948,678. We’d like to have the full amount raised this year. We appreciate anything you can do to help us. Every DOLLAR DONATED TO THE REHAB FUND DRIVE IS APPLIED TO REHAB. IT IS REQUIRED IN THE DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER’S FUND.

**SVC. OFFICER, continued on page 4**

### ROSTER 2012-13

**CHANGES IF YOU THINK YOU ARE LISTED ON THE DEPARTMENT Roster that your address and/or telephone number is wrong, please let me know ASAP. I am making up a Roster Correction List** to send out to those who received a roster. The changes will also be in the March Mailing. Addresses and telephone numbers are taken from the National Membership Database for California. If you have any problems, please do the following: Go online to www.mylegion.org

1. Click on “Members Click here.”
2. Get started (new or already a member)
3. Click on “Edit my profile” if any of your information is incorrect.
4. Then change incorrect information.
5. IRS AGAIN: A law still requires small American Legion Posts – those with annual gross receipts of $50,000.00 or less to electronically file Form 990-N (e-Postcard) with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) starting with the year 2012 and starting with the year 2013. It is required to review the annual Form 990, even if they have never filed one in years. A Post cannot use the EIN of its department or national headquarters. If it does, AGAIN, it risks losing its tax-exempt status. The State of California has changed their law starting with the Tax Filing for 2012 and starting with the year 2013. It requires all annual Forms 990, even if the $25,000.00 limit they have used up until now. The electronic file form FTB 199-N (California e-Postcard) must be filed with the California Franchise Tax Board or the Form 199 if the Post’s Annual Gross Receipts are OVER $50,000.00. REMEMBER: The Federal e-Postcard is Form 990-E. The California e-Postcard is FTB 199-N.

### REMINDER

The American Legion “Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies” is your guide to The American Legion. It also contains the National Constitution and Bylaws of The American Legion, Membership Qualifications, How to run a Post meeting and many more things to have to do with The American Legion. The “Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies” has already been sent to all Posts in the Department of California, along with a Department Roster and “Post Service Officers Guide”. If you go on the Internet to the National Website: www.legion.org and to the Department Website: www.calegion.org you will find a lot of manuals, brochures and forms that can be downloaded at no cost to you. We have sent to you these two websites. You will be glad that you did explore the websites. Please mark the following dates on your calendar:

DE – March 9-10, 2013 in Santa Maria Legislative Day – May 1, 2013 at the State Capitol in Sacramento

Cornwell Convention – June 28-30, 2013 in Palm Springs

The last word is that the Department of California is still moving to a temporary location so the building can go through a two-year retrofit and remodel. We are still supposed to be moving out of the building sometime in 2013. The new address will be: 205 13th Street, Suite 3300, San Francisco, CA 94103-2461.

### CALIFORNIA LEGIONNAIRE

**“Freedom Of Religion”, not “Freedompress Religion”**

This statement pretty much sums up the current situation fac-
ing the American Legion and religion in America today. Religion has always been a part of America’s heritage.

The Pilgrims came to America seeking to practice their faith without being persecuted, harassed or denied their faith beliefs. Others followed later looking for new opportunities and freedom and from the turbulent times of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The writings of our Founding Fathers show the importance of religion in America today. Religion was a part of their everyday lives.

General George Washington asked the Continental Congress to authorize the position of chaplain for the Continental Army so that he could have an ordained minister attend to the morale and wellbeing of the troops as they endured many hardships, from bitter cold winters to being unable to return home to harvest crops.

When the Constitution of the United States was ratified, there was a call for amendments to address issues relating to religion in the Constitution. Thus ten amendments were approved and added to the Constitution to address delegates’ concerns. What became known as the “Bill of Rights”.

Amendment 1 reads: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof (emphasis added); or, abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.”

As you probably know by now, the California e-Postcard must be filed with the California Franchise Tax Board or the Form 199 if the Post’s Annual Gross Receipts are OVER $50,000.00. REMEMBER: The Federal e-Postcard is Form 990-E. The California e-Postcard is FTB 199-N. As you probably know by now, the California e-Postcard must be filed with the California Franchise Tax Board or the Form 199 if the Post’s Annual Gross Receipts are OVER $50,000.00. REMEMBER: The Federal e-Postcard is Form 990-E. The California e-Postcard is FTB 199-N.
The addresses for the Post 1000 in your area are listed in myLegion.org and if you’re just starting using this great tool (Why not?), you may ask for the list from Department by your own post. If you happen to have issues, there is an 800 number on the site to get you that help (800-433-3318).

Janet M. Wilson Membership Director

Mission Statement: To foster and promote membership in The American Legion, Department of California.

If your Area, District or Post has an event for membership, please share those on the website; some members will travel to assist, or learn from, you.

Remember,Recruit, Renew and most important Just Ask! Keep The American Legion the number one Veterans’ Service Organization in the world.

The chart below lists the veterans residing in each county. As you can see, we should be asking these veterans to join our service organizations. By the slap of a finger, Califor- nia should lead all states in membership. As of February 13, we are 29th nationally.

VETERANS IN ALL COUNTIES IN CALIFORNIA –
We left off 19 counties in the last issue of the paper:

Useful Websites for Veterans Interested in Legislation and California Government

To find your state, local legislator and Congre-ss Representative:
1. You should first find your 9 digit zip code. To do this go to http://zip.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp and type in your address. This will tell you your 9 digit zip code.
2. Next, go to this website: http://www.vote-smart.org/index.htm. Enter the 9 digit zip code and it will tell you who your U.S. Congress and State Legislators are.

To access the Governor’s website, go to http://gov.ca.gov/
To find information on legislation; CA Senate and Assembly, go to http://www.calegis.gov/ To find CALVET information, go to http://www.callegion.org/
Unfortunately, there is not much to report between this month’s article and last month’s. However, I would like to reiterate that the role as National Executive Committeeman first and foremost is a fiduciary relationship responsibility as a director with the National American Legion.

Second is the responsibility to report to the California Legionnaires the events that transpire at the NEC Convention. During these events an abundance of information is gathered from the happenings of The American Legion across the nation is relayed to the National Executive Committee. I strongly feel that it is my responsibility to relay this information across our state.

I received positive feedback up and down the state after the last report, and will continue to help disseminate the information from NEC as I receive it. Finally, another important role of the NEC Committeeman is to take mandates and to from and National to the Department. If the NEC votes to mandate any position or action, the National American Legion Convention, which happens annually, makes the decisions. If the NEC votes to mandate some action or position, the National American Legion Convention typically makes the executive decisions.
April 12-14, 2013 – Amador, California
Department of California Convention
Official Call to 7th Annual American Legion Riders Department of California

The American Legion Riders

The American Legion Riders Department of California
Official Call to 7th Annual American Legion Riders Department of California Convention
April 12-14, 2013 – Amador, California

To all Chapters of The American Legion Riders Department of California; American Legion Riders Department of California Executive Committee Members; American Legion Riders Department of California Past Presidents, All Past Department Presidents and Past Department Secretaries.

Pursuant to Article VIII of the American Legion Riders Department of California, the 7th Annual American Legion Riders Department of California Convention will be held Friday through Sunday, April 12-14, 2013 in Sonora, California hosted by American Legion Amador Post 108 at 11350 American Legion Drive, Sutter Creek, CA 95685.

The Convention will be convened at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 13, 2013 at the Amador Post 108. A copy of the 7th Annual Call and Convention Operating Rules may be obtained from The American Legion Riders Department of California website and at http://alrdocjag.blogspot.com/

The 7th Annual Convention shall be convened for the following purposes:
1. To complete all business of The American Legion Riders Department of California for 2013-2014. To consider and vote on all resolutions, which are properly presented to the Department Secretary. To adopt a Budget for fiscal year 2013-2014. To consider and act upon all other business of The American Legion Riders Department of California properly presented to the Department Secretary. To elect a Department President and all other positions of the Department Executive Committee for the ensuing year 2013-2014. Election shall take place on Sunday, April 14, 2013 at Amador Post 108.
2. To complete all business of The American Legion Riders Department of California for 2013-2014.
3. To go to at least one National Executive Committee session held twice a year in Indianapolis – impressive!
4. To plan to go to at least one National Convention; they rotate between all six Areas of the State of California.
5. To go to a National Executive Committee meeting held twice a year in Indianapolis – impressive!
6. To attend the annual Legislative Day sponsored by the Legion held at the Capitol in Sacramento.
7. To go to the barbecue at the Veterans Home in Yountville, then watch some Legion Baseball.
8. Riverside National Cemetery – Anything I would try to say wouldn’t describe it properly enough.
9. Any Veterans Home – there are several and two new ones waiting for funding to open the doors.
10. And now…all the Chapter Riders Ceremonies at St. Mary’s Cathedral held in San Francisco…do it!

As with any list, it is not possible for everyone to do, but over the last twenty years in the Sons of The American Legion, I have managed to do all of these events and numbers two through ten in just the last five years. It has been a great time for my wife, Molly and I to do most of the list together and as most of you know, we now have our dog, “Buddy” traveling with us in places where he is allowed to go with us. We enjoy every minute of it.

Keep the transmitteds flowing so that we can keep making our National Membership target dates happen and we will see you in Santa Maria for the DEC, then we get ready for the Convention in Palm Springs!

I want to thank all my area’s District Commanders and 1st Vice Commanders for doing a great job on their membership and all their programs. It has been a hard year for everyone and thanks to all officers in the area.

As of January 31, 2013 membership for the 5th Area stands at 83.61%. That puts us in 3rd Place. District 21 is at 80.01%, District 22 is at 83.12%, District 25 is at 82.45%, District 29 is at 87.89% and District 30 is at 85.01%.

In February, I will be attending the oratorical contest at AL Post 112-Ontario, the Boy Scout dinner at AL Post 777-San Bernardino and the Veterans Rehab dinner at AL Post 422-Rialto.

Memorial services for Past Department Sgts.-at-Arms and Past Alt. NEC man Chuck Neimeyer will be held at AL Post 106 Redlands, California on February 8, 2013.

For God and Country – God Bless the Legion Family and all troops who are protecting our freedom and God Bless America.

Department Executive Committee Meetings:
The Pre-Convention DEC Meeting will be held on Friday, April 12, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. at Amador American Legion Post 108. The Post-Convention DEC Meeting will convene one hour after the close of the 7th Annual Convention at Amador American Legion Post 108.

Delegates to the Convention shall be allotted in accordance with the provisions of Article VIII of the Department Bylaws.

Registration:
Chapters must elect delegates and alternates to the Convention before March 14, 2013. The Delegate Certification Form, a copy of the Chapter’s current Bylaws, Chapter Certification Form, Membership Roster and Delegate Fees must be received by the Department Secretary at the address printed on the Delegate Certification Form, no later than March 19, 2013. There are no exceptions to this rule. The Delegate Certification Form must be authenticated and signed by the Chapter President and the Chapter Secretary.

Check in for Delegates and Alternates will open on Friday, April 12, 2013 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.; Saturday, April 13, 2013 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.; and Sunday, April 14, 2013 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.

Credentialed will only be issued to properly certified and paid delegates. All Convention Delegates and Alternate Delegates must possess a valid and current 2013 American Legion Membership Card, American Legion Auxiliary Membership Card, or Sons of The American Legion Membership Card and must show their Membership Card when registering. All Delegates and Alternate Delegates must display their Convention Identification Credentials while on the floor of the Convention while the Convention is in session.

Newly Engaged!
Bill Siler iii and Donna Scott

Department Commander Ken Kramlich, Adjutant Bill Siler iii, Sgt.-at-Arms Anthony Guerrero, NEC man Al Lennox, Alt. NEC man Bobby Brown, Judge Advocate Bob Carolan, Department Membership Director Janet Wilson, Department Service Officer Scott McNair, Department Commander’s Aide Marilyn Rideaux.

I want to thank all my area’s District Commanders and 1st Vice Commanders for doing a great job on their membership and all their programs. It has been a hard year for everyone and thanks to all officers in the area.

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For God and Country – God Bless the Legion Family and all troops who are protecting our freedom and God Bless America.

If You’re a Member In Good Standing With Your Department of The American Legion...

You are eligible for LegionCare; $5,000.00 in Accidental Death Insurance at NO COST TO YOU if a covered accident occurs while traveling on official Legion business®, or $1,000.00 at NO COST TO YOU for all other covered accidents. This has been arranged on your behalf by Your Department of The American Legion. As soon as your enrollment is received, LegionCare will take effect, and will continue through August 31, 2016. Your acceptance is guaranteed, so mail your coupon today.
Former Californian gets Medal of Honor for valor in Afghanistan

By Michael Muskal, Los Angeles Times

A former Californian was awarded the nation’s highest military honor on Monday for his efforts against a 2009 Taliban attack on his Afghanistan outpost that U.S. officials have described as tactically indefensible.

Former Staff Sgt. Clinton Romesha, 31, grew up in Lake City in North- ern California, near the Oregon border, and now lives in Minot, North Dakota, with his wife and three children, all of whom attended Monday’s ceremony. Obama joked how Romesha’s youngest child had run around the Oval Office, sampling apples.

“We’re so glad that you’re here, along with your three beautiful children – Dessi, Gwenn and Colin,” Obama said. “Colin is not as shy as Clint. He was in the Oval Office, and he was racing around pretty good and sampled a number of the apples before he took off. Clint that was just two tours in Iraq as well as his time in Afghanistan. He left the Army in 2011. In his book, “The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor,” CNN anchor Jake Tapper described the battle.

“Everything was just about his buddies and trying to save his fellow soldiers and trying to do everything he could, literally everything he could, at great risk to his own life and over,” Tapper told the Associated Press. “He’s still very broken up about how he couldn’t save everyone. He saved lives that day, without question, but eight of the guys died that day and that still tears him up.”

Obama described the fight as “one of the most intense battles of the entire war in Afghanistan.”

“And if you seek a measure of that day,” he said later in the ceremony of those who fought, “you need to look no further than the reports every year and who can confirm that it’s $350 to $415 per student that you’ll be glad you spent.

Barbara Ross
Program Coordinator
916-795-3317
ross408vivacommuter

Record-Breaking Federal Benefits Payments to Veterans

Thanks to the efforts of the Califor- nia County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs), tens of thousands of California veterans are getting the federal benefits they’ve earned through their military service. In fact, during Fiscal Year 2011-2012, CVSOs set a new veterans benefits record by garnering $346,727,459 in benefit payments which are paid directly to qualifying veterans. That accomplishment bests the previous fiscal year’s total by nearly 6%.

“The partnership between CalVet and the CVSOs is critical to the ability of each to effectively reach and assist California veterans and their families,” said Secretary Peter J. Gravatt. “Besides improving the lives of families, the dollars veterans benefits bring into the State improve local communities, as well. We appreciate the work the CVSOs do and congratulate them on their steadily increasing benefit payment numbers.”

State and federal veterans benefits are available to everyone honorably discharged from the U.S. military, include disability compensation and pension payments, healthcare, money for education and training, housing, home loans and many others. Unlike Social Security, veterans’ benefits must be applied for individually. The CVSOs are trained, accredited professionals located in each county who help veterans and their families navigate the complex and often frustrating benefit application processes. By law, this service is provided at no cost to the veterans.

For a list of County Veterans Service Offices in California, go to www.cacvso.org and click on Contact Us.

Baseball Commission

Harold Hall, Chairman

With springtime coming, it is time to think baseball! Again – we will play our state tourna- ments at the Yountville Veterans Home.

Baseball Commission

Senior tournament is July 27-30, 2013.
Junior tournament is August 3-6, 2013.
We trust you will come out and watch our many players and visit with the Veterans Home members.

VA & R Challenge Coins

Ways and Means Commission

Bill Clapp – Area 4 Commissioner

First, I would like to thank all who have made donations so far to the VA&R Chal- lenge Coin program. We are on our way to achieving our goal of $10,000. We still have coins available (600), and you can still get your coin(s). Just send your check ($15 per coin), payable to the Department of California or to me, Bill Clapp. Please add ($3.00) three dollars for shipping and hand- ling. Mail your check to: Bill Clapp, 4422 Canehill Avenue, Lakewood, CA 90713.

We have received your donation, I will get your coin(s) in the mail to you. I will have Challenge Coins available at the upcoming DEC in March. If you

Get your VA & R Challenge Coin TODAY!

would like to reserve a coin, please email me at clappbill@yahoo.com and I will reserve your coin(s). Thank you in advance for your donations, and I’m hoping everyone has a happy and prosperous New Year.

YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE

California’s “Premier” Youth Program

We hope that you have not forgotten California’s “Pre- mier” Youth Program – the only one of its kind in the nation! For those Posts, Auxiliary- chapters, Chapters, Squad- rons that would like to make sure this one-of-a-kind program con- tinues, please send your checks payable to American Legion Youth Environmen- tal Leadership Conference to P.O. Box 60464, Sacramento, CA 95860.

It’s really disheartening to know that some of our Posts are pretty wealthy and do not even sponsor a student. Why doesn’t everyone support this premier “California” program? There should be

at least one person in each District who knows what the program is about. There are six Area Chairman of the Agricultur- e and Natural Resources Commission who, hopefully, can answer your ques- tions and concerns.

But, if all else fails, drop me an email and I’ll answer any questions you have… or talk to reps from Posts who sponsor 2, 3 or 4 students every year because they know the value of the program. I can refer you to the person in those Posts who hear the students’ reports every year and who can confirm that it’s $350 to $415 per student that you’ll be glad you spent.

Dates for 2013 are May 17-20, 2013. All forms are available at the Department website at www.calegion.org under the Agriculture and Natural Resources Com- mission or forms page.
Our year is coming to a close and it is the dreaded time of reporting. Have you completed your report forms yet? If not please complete them and get them to the appropriate chairperson. Do you need a form or help with a report? Just contact the appropriate chairperson and we will provide you with whatever information that you require.

The leprechauns are doing a great job on membership! If you have not renewed, please send your dues into your Units; we need the strength in our membership to make a difference in the lives of active duty military and our Veterans. The head leprechaun does not want to take baskets to the National Convention so please send off any of your uncollected dues so that we can get our membership numbers up. We are not sure what the area bents are for Convention, but hearing the losing area sing at Mid-Year was a real treat, and it looks like we have so many Units receive certificates for reaching goals.

Check out the pictures on the website. Our Mid-Year meeting was held at Travaasa Hana on Maui. Membership was in the air and will remain so until Convention. If you did not attend, you missed it...really missed it. We had a great attendance for our membership payoff party. Awards were presented to the first ten (10) 100% Units with a 100% pin, and the (13) early bird Units received a blue and gold ribbon, along with a beautiful scarf made by Ruby Amquinones. Also presented were certificates for reaching Milestone goals of 73.39%, “Ain’t no stopping us now!”

We presented (153) certificates to Units that met Milestone one – by November 14, 2013, Milestone two – 70% (98 units), Milestone 3a – 80% (44 units), Milestone 3b (85%), Milestone 4 – 100% (29 units), Milestone 5 100%/2 members (18 units), DNSThat you trimmed one 55% (13 districts), Milestone two – 70% (2 districts). A total of 433 certificates were presented.

Leprechauns, you are amazing and I am looking forward to the next year! We will enhance Madam President’s vision for the future of our great Department.

The Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules and Code are living documents and as such, are open to change. Any change must be accomplished by way of a systematic approach leading to a consensus of the general membership. Resolutions are a form of presenting recommendations for changes in policy or procedure. They should be concise and deal with only one subject. An attempt to deal with more than one issue is both complicated and confusing. If you are planning to submit a resolution to the Department Convention Body, keep it simple. Before you start, ask yourself the following questions: Will this action be feasible? Will it benefit the entire membership or just a few? Is it affordable? If your answers are yes, then by all means, submit your resolution.

There is no need to rush. You may submit a resolution. The Preamble, which consists of the “Whereas” Clause, comes first. In deciding how many “Whereas” Clauses a resolution should have – in general – the fewer you have, the better. The Resolve Clause is the intent or simply put, it states what you want to accomplish by this change.

Resolutions must be typed on the official form, in triplicate, double-spaced and signed before they are sent to the Department Office. Please do not mail resolutions to me. Strict deadline dates must be adhered to: April 9, 2013 for resolutions pertaining to the Constitution/Bylaws; April 24 for finance; May 9, 2013 for other matters. Exact details and further information can be found in the Department Constitution, Article IV, Section 4. A form and information will also be mailed out by the Department Office.

Margaret Quinones
Tel: 626-962-4605
Aminquiones241@verizon.net

**American Legion Auxiliary**

**Department of California**

**See us on the Web at www.calegionaux.org**

**Empowering Women – Inspiring Communities**

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN**

Daniele White

What a joyous time we had at the DEC meeting in Travaasa Hana on Maui. Membership was in the air and will remain so until Convention. If you did not attend, you missed it...really missed it. We had a great attendance for our membership payoff party. Awards were presented to the first ten (10) 100% Units with a 100% pin, and the (13) early bird Units received a blue and gold ribbon, along with a beautiful scarf made by Ruby Kapsalis. Congratulations to these Units for their hard work and determination to make their Unit’s goal!!!!

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**CONVENTION CHAIRMAN**

Estella Avina

The Palm Springs Convention Committee is getting the Kingdom Castle ready to go for our Auxiliary Department Convention. We hope that you are all planning to attend. The reservation forms have been handed out and we hope that you will send them in as soon as you can. This is a beautiful hotel, and I know that you will be very happy that all of the Convention activities are in the Hotel, so you will not need to go out into the heat of Palm Springs.

We do have a standby list for those who would like to stay at the headquarters hotel, but are not on the Preferred Housing list. Just call me at 928-649-3027 or email me at avinahotelgram@aol.com and as soon as rooms are available, you will be contacted.

Look forward to seeing all of you in Palm Springs!

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**MARGARET QUINONEZ, CHAIRMAN**

We are just a couple of months away from Junior Conference. I hope that we have a good turnout. I also have a challenge out; any Junior that brings a new junior (who has never been to a Junior Conference) will receive a special gift from me. We also have a special guest that will be spending the weekend with us.

Looking forward to seeing all of you there. Don’t forget! I have promised the Department President that we are going to “ROCK THE CASTLE”.

**Department President Terry Meskell’s theme “Magical Mystical Fantasy” is proving to be a fun one. The Resolutions Chairmen are the “Magic Wands” as they “wave” with thoughtful care over proposed changes in the procedure and policy of our organization in a way that will enhance Madam President’s vision for the future of our great Department. The Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules and Code are living documents and as such, are open to change. Any change must be accomplished by way of a systematic approach leading to a consensus of the general membership. Resolutions are a form of presenting recommendations for changes in policy or procedure. They should be concise and deal with only one subject. An attempt to deal with more than one issue is both complicated and confusing. If you are planning to submit a resolution to the Department Convention Body, keep it simple. Before you start, ask yourself the following questions: Will this action be feasible? Will it benefit the entire membership or just a few? Is it affordable? If your answers are yes, then by all means, submit your resolution. There is no need to rush. You may submit a resolution. The Preamble, which consists of the “Whereas” Clause, comes first. In deciding how many “Whereas” Clauses a resolution should have – in general – the fewer you have, the better. The Resolve Clause is the intent or simply put, it states what you want to accomplish by this change.

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**CONVEN**
Call to the 94th Annual Department of California Convention
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
Department of California
401 Van Ness Avenue, Room 113
San Francisco, CA 94102-4586
(415) 861-5092 FAX (415) 861-8835
E-mail: calegionaux@calegionaux.org
The Annual Convention, to be held at Palm Springs, California on June 27-30, 2013, is hereby called for the purpose of electing, for the ensuing year, amending Department Constitution and Bylaws, receiving reports of Department Officers, Chairmen and their committees and finding delegates to the upcoming Department Convention as may be brought before the delegate body. Representation – The annual Convention shall be composed of regularly elected and appointed Department Officers, Department Presidents, Past Department Presidents in good standing in their respective Units, chairmen of Department committees, members of the Department Finance Committee, Girls State Director, Junior Conference Director, Hospital Representatives and regularly elected delegates and alternates from each Unit. Each Unit shall be entitled to two (2) delegates and two (2) alternates for charter and one (1) additional delegate and one (1) alternate for each seventy-five (75) members or major fraction thereof, paid up in Department Headquarters forty-five (45) days prior to the opening of Department Convention. The vote of each Unit shall be equal to the total number of delegates to which the Unit is entitled, provided full registration fee has been paid for each delegate at the call of the Department Secretary/Treasurer prior to pre-convention caucus (Article IV, Section 2 Department Constitution). Delegates in Their Own Right-Department Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Chaplain, Historian, Parliamentarian, Sergeant-at-Arms, Marshal, Musician), District Presidents, Past Department Presidents in Good Standing in Their Respective Units, Chairmen of Department Committees (Americanism, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Children and Youth, Community Service, Constitution and Bylaws, Convention Commission, Editor, Education, Girls State, Junior Activities, Leadership, Legislative, Membership, Music, National, Past Presidents Parley, Poppy, Public Relations, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation), Members of the Department Finance Committee, Girls State Director, Junior Conference Director, Hospital Representatives. Appointed Chairmen (Advisory Committee, Distinguished Guest, Resolutions, Elections, Roles, Credentials, Ways and Means). DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES MUST BE ELECTED – They cannot be appointed! Registration Fee – All Units in good standing shall pay a registration fee not to exceed twenty dollars ($20.00) per delegate. Fee shall cover full voting strength of the Unit prior to the District pre-convention caucus. (Article IX, Section 3. Department Constitution) The fee is due whether or not the delegates and alternates attend Convention. Indebtedness-No delegate or delegates from any Unit shall be seated in Department Convention or pre-convention caucus unless all obligations to Department shall have been paid or satisfied (Article IV, Section 2. Department Constitution) Indebtedness includes Fidelity Bond, purchase of Poppies, ten (10%) net proceeds from Poppy donations, filing of Poppy Financial Reports. CREDENTIALS – Upon receipt of the registration fee of $20.00 per delegate (including those accorded voice and vote in their own right), the certificate of delegate and alternates, the Department Secretary/ Treasurer will issue credential cards. The Credential cards will be available at the registration desk and will be signed by the Department Secretary only. Alternates Serving in Place of Delegates – A delegate or alternate cannot be seated on the floor unless he/she has issued ONLY to those properly certified as delegates and alternates. 1. Those alternates serving in place of delegates who will not be attending Convention will then be registered as delegates upon turning in their credential cards 45 days prior to the opening of Department Convention. The vote of each Unit shall be equal to the total number of delegates to which the Unit is entitled, provided full registration fee has been paid for each delegate at the call of the Department Secretary/Treasurer prior to pre-convention caucus (Article IV, Section 2 Department Constitution). 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Note: Emergency resolutions are those which arise during the Convention or after the date established for admitting them (Article IV, Section 4C). Time is passing quickly, and Department Convention will be upon us before we know it. Here are a few “reminders” to give you a head up about Delegates and Alternates who will be attending. Delegates and Alternates are “Elected” and CANNOT be “Appointed”. In addition to your elected Delegates and Alternates, you MAY have Delegates in their “Own Right” in your Units. Be sure to read all the information sent out from Department to know who is eligible to be a Delegate in her own right. List your elected Delegates and Alternates, along with those in their own right, on the Certification Form that is returned to Department. Delegate Fees must be paid, whether or not they are attending Convention. You will not be seated if these fees are not paid. Each Unit is entitled to Two Delegates and Two Alternates for Charter, and one additional Delegate and Alternate for each 75 members or major fraction thereof, paid into Department Headquar ters 45 days prior to the opening of Convention. Alternates serving in place of Delegates not in attendance will be regular Delegates and given given proper credentials. Alternates are moved up to Delegate status in the order that they were elected. All Unit obligations must be paid to the Department Office in order for your Delegates to be seated at Convention. You will receive a LOT of valuable information from Department between now and time for Convention. PLEASE BE SURE TO READ EVERYTHING! We want the registration process and Roll Call of delegates to go smoothly. Let’s “Be Prepared” and have a GREAT Convention. See you in Palm Springs! Anita Biggs Candidate for Department President 2013-2014 American Legion Auxiliary, Department of California Anita Biggs is a 21 year, honorary Lifetime member of Jackie Robinson Unit 252 located in Los Angeles, California. Anita is eligible for the Auxiliary through the service of her late father, William Robinson. Anita has been a member of the Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee; Girls State Western Division Chairman and is currently serving on the Legislative Committee. Anita has been an active member in the mortgage industry for over 30 years and is currently employed as a Senior Loan Manager. Anita resides in Los Angeles, California. Anita Biggs has been a member of The American Legion Auxiliary for 13 years. As a member of Jackie Robinson Unit 252 she has served as Membership Chairman for 2 years and is currently serving as the Department Membership Committee Chairwoman. On the Department level she served as Membership Chairman, leading the Department to goal for the first time in many years; also Leadership, Unit Development and Revitalization, Poppy and earning National Awards for Americanism, Children & Youth and Veteran’s Affairs & Rehabilitation. Anita is currently serving as Department Vice President and Constitution & Bylaws Chairwoman. Anita served on the National level as Unit Development & Revitalization Chairwoman, and is currently serving on the Legislative Committee. Anita has been employed in the mortgage industry for over 30 years and is currently employed as a Senior Loan Manager. Anita resides in Long Beach, California and has three adult children and five grandchildren, who are all members of The American Legion Family. The “Teaming” 23rd District and Jackie Robinson Unit 252 have proudly and wholeheartedly endorsed Anita Biggs for the office of President, Department of California 2013-2014. Harriet Clendenin Candidate for Department Vice President 2013-2014 American Legion Auxiliary, Tahachapi Unit 221 and District 15 are pleased to announce that Harriet Clendenin is a candidate for the office of Department Vice President for 2013-2014. Her eligibility is through her husband, Norm, who served in the Armed Forces. Harriet has been a member of The American Legion Auxiliary for 13 years. She joined Camarillo Unit 741, District 16 in 2000 and in 2005, she and her husband, Norm, moved to Tehachapi and transferred to Tahachapi Unit 221, District 15. On the Unit and District levels she served as Unit President for six years from 2006 to 2012 and District President in 2007-2008. On both levels she has chaired numerous programs including Children and Youth, Education, Junior Activities, Leadership and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation. On the Department level she has served as the Department Musician and chaired Poppy, Education, Children and Youth and is currently serving as the Department Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Chairman. Professionally, her background is in retail management having managed several stores and received a customer service award while working for Nordstrom. She actively serves within her community and recently chaired a very successful event – “Wall to Wall” – raising community awareness of the needs of our veterans and raising $11,000 to help CREDENTIALS - CLENDENIN, continued on page 10
Los Angeles County Council
The American Legion
2012-2013 Officers

Commander Lawrence Van Kirk (20/826) – 818.427.1577 – vankirkan@ix.netcom.com
Adjutant Michael A. Gombar (20/150) – 818.727.0086 or 818.383.3886 – gombar_michiel@yahoo.com
Treasurer Gil Soto (19/51) – 562.692.9783 – ghstoto@roadrunner.com
Judge Advocate Robert C. Brown Jr. (23/252) – 510.516.0427 – bobbrown252@hotmail.com
Past Commander Robert W. Mitchell, Jr (19/352) – 310.625.6969 – mitchilrob@aol.com
Chaplain James A. Hadley (23/252) – 323.664.4698 – no email
History Roy C. Allen (23/252) – 323.291.5549 – eyeamr@oxdlexezene.com
Sergeant at Arms Leroy Baca (17/381) – 562.863.6337 – no email
LACC 17th District VC John J. Leonard (17/381) – 818.992.1414 – tjsmccbmc@sbcglobal.net
LACC 18th District VC Luis Dominguez (18/580) – 909.966.8863 or 909.518.4770 – no email
LACC 19th District VC Gil Palmer (19/272) – 562.464.8809 – palmergbb@gmail.com

LACC 20th District VC Larry Whible (20/206) – 323.258.2352 – larrywhible@aol.com
LACC 23rd District VC James A. Hadley (23/252) – 323.664.4698 – no email
LACC 24th District VC Robert L. Miller (24/252) – 323.293.3037 – no email
LACC VP Women Juliana F. Potter (18/790) – 626.338.4264 or 626.343.3273 – no email
LACC D17 Exec Committee Hugh E. Crooks, Jr (17/8) – 323.227.6697 or 323.821.8778 – MRHESC@msn.com
LACC D18 Exec Committee George “Bucky” Curtis (18/755) – 626.339.6879 or 626.695.5430 – dspdoctor.george@verizon.net
LACC D19 Exec Committee Robert Boyd (19/352) – 310.503.9644 – bbboyd446@gmail.com
LACC D20 Exec Committee John Mika (19/308) – 818.966.4636 – john.mika@sbcglobal.net
LACC D23 Exec Committee Roy C. Allen (23/252) – 323.291.5549 – royay@oxdlexezene.com
LACC D24 Exec Committee Tim Carr (24/322) – 213.382.7910 – tshaneri@aol.com

Motivation for a Healthy Nation

Our generation has many addictive electronics. We all sit down, bored, hoping for something fun to do. We stare at the computer, the TV, XBox, Wii, iThis and iThat — all that stuff. After about two minutes, everybody jumps to their game device no matter what time or game it is and starts playing. It’s not a bad thing. I’m not against them, even still play. But what I’m trying to say is that there are a lot of ways to play and be active at the same time.

I’m here today to talk to you about living a healthy life. If I were principal, I would encourage students to put down the video games, get up, and get active. Everything you do affects your health. This includes what you eat, what you drink, and how much physical and mental exercise you get. If you fuel your body with good drinks and food, you’ll have the energy needed to take the day. Use that energy to get up and get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get moving. Put down the iPad and pick up a ball. Where we live, we enjoy near perfect weather all year long. Our opportunities to get movin...
In order to provide a great Christmas for the families of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, Newport Harbor Post 291 and ALA Unit 291, along with the 29th District supported “Operation Santa Claus” held on Saturday, December 22nd at VA Medical Center-Long Beach.

The total was over $25,000 of donated goods, including 1,700 boxes of clothing, over 200 new toys and games and 160 Christmas stockings full of goodies presented by Santa and Mrs. Claus.

New Film: VA “Betrays” Homeless Vets

By Rees Lloyd

“Duty, Honor, Country — BETRAYAL” is the title of a new documentary film, now available on DVD, dramatically exposing how the VA is failing homeless vets by giving away land donated solely to assist veterans to wealthy, politically-connected non-veteran interests through the VA’s so-called “Enhanced Use Leases.”

The focus of the documentary by Bill Dumas Productions is the National Veterans Home at L.A. (L.A. is pronounced “El-A”) in Brentwood, Los Angeles. But the problem of the VA’s give-away of veterans’ land to benefit non-veteran, politically-connected interests is nationwide.

Bill Dumas, an award-winning documentary film maker, said he focused on the National Veterans Home in L.A., because he wanted the audience to see that land that was donated to the government for the sole purpose of assisting veterans is instead being turned over to wealthy interests in giving-away Enhanced Use Agreements while the VA locks out homeless veterans from that land.

L.A. is estimated to have some 20,000 homeless veterans in any city. The National Veterans Home was established on a large tract of land, some 400 acres, which was donated to the VA in the 1920s. One of the requirements for the sole purpose of aiding veterans in need of medical and other services.

Instead, many of the wealthy residents and interests of Brentwood and other communities of the ultra-rich who are politically connected to Democrat Rep. Henry Waxman and the so-called “Westside Machine” now have control of many acres of the National Veterans Home through Enhanced Use Leases. These leases are for as long as 75 years, at prices far below market value, often for as little as $1 a year, sometimes nothing at all.

Worst of all: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has the power to give that land to the lessees entirely in the Secretary’s sole discretion, without Congressional action, if the Secretary decides the land is no longer needed for veterans.

An estimated 80,000 acres of veterans lands by the rich and infamous is ultra-rich Brentwood, which adjoins the National Veterans Home. Among other things, some of the wealthiest and most influential residents who really don’t want home- less veterans out, about and visible in their neighborhood, created the misleadingly named “Veterans (sic) Park Conservancy” (which is not, in fact, a veterans organization), to grab veteran’s land for their purposes.

The non-veteran, wealthy, politically connected (to Henry Waxman, et al) Brentwoodites have obtained a lease of “16 acres” for “zero” payments, for “ten years”, at a “price” of $1 a year (nothing) for an additional ten years, in order to establish a “park.” The VPC boasted in its press release sealing the deal with VA brokered by Waxman and political cohorts will “benefit veterans and the general public.”

That is, the VPC will establish a public or semi-public “park” on land donated for the “sole” purpose of assisting veterans in need of medical, mental and emotional care and assistance, including housing.

Meanwhile, homeless veterans are locked outside the gates of their “National Veterans Home.” Many large dormitory-like buildings on the land which could be used for the homeless, are clearly unoccupied, determining whether the VA refuses to maintain them or build new adequate housing, or use the available land for temporary housing as new housing is built, as shown in the Bill Dumas documentary film. The VA, with great fanfare praising itself, announced it would start a $20 million project, which is but a public relations gesture as it is woefully less than needed.

Similarly, the ACLU, also with great fanfare praising itself, shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against the ACLU in its ten-year long litigation to destroy the Mojave Desert Veterans Cemetery (California v. Rogue River Basin Council, 888 F.2d 1197), has filed a face-saving lawsuit against the VA at the National Veterans Home in L.A. However, of the six major claims of discrimination that the court has given, and all that remains is one claim that the VA’s policies violate the Administrative Procedure Act, the documentary notes.

Thus, it appears that if veterans’ lands are going to be saved from the VA and politicians like Henry Waxman, it is going to take veterans actively fighting to save their land.

The Department of California, following exposure of the Brentwood “park” give-away lease at the National Veterans Home, adopted at the 2009 Convention. The resolution was written by Larry Van Kuran and sponsored by District 21 which established a policy opposing the Brentwood “VPC park,” and all VA land-use policies in which the land is not used “solely” to serve the needs of veterans, including housing.

At the 2010 Convention, the Department, the second stage of the project is to get all Calegion Districts to Adopt a Disaster Preparedness Plan by March 30, as well to make the process as easy as possible, a draft plan has been prepared for each District and has been provided to your Area Disaster Commander for forwarding to the individual Districts. It is requested that you contact each of your District Commanders to confirm that they have received their draft plan and that it is in process of being adopted. While these two phases are underway, the American Legion will adopt a new California Department Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan has now been finished. The Department Commander has reviewed it and authorized it to be presented for adoption at the next DEC meeting in March.

Once the Department, Regions and Districts have adopted plans in place, each Post will be provided a draft “edit and fill in the blanks” plan for them to adopt for their Post. The target date for Post plans adopted is December 2013.

Starting in June, disaster training will begin to be provided in several formats, including a PowerPoint slide show, news-letter articles, downloadable lists and guidelines, links to free online FEMA training courses and so forth.

The American Legion in California has a great deal of work to do over the next two to three years to be prepared when the next disaster strikes. Planning, preparation and training are all necessary components of being ready to protect ourselves and to respond to help our friends, neighbors and communities.

You would appreciate downloading the Plan, get familiar with it and then work with your District Commanders to get their plans adopted as soon as practical.

I am happy to answer questions either by phone or email. I can be reached at 707-429-4781 or by email at calegion182mike@lanets.com

Governor Brown Appoints Cal Vet Veterans Services Deputy Secretary

U.S. Army veteran Keith Bolyan of Winter Springs, Florida who has been appointed deputy secretary of veteran services at the California Department of Veteran Services and the California Veterans Services Deputy Secretary Peter J. Gravett. “His work with the California Association of Veteran Service Agencies and the Institute for Veteran Policy will be especially important in helping veterans and their families to create additional avenues through which veterans and veteran families can connect with the benefits they are entitled to.”

Deputy Secretary for Minority Veterans Affairs Lee Gutierrez, who has been also Acting Deputy Secretary for Veterans Services, will return to his duties exclusively to minority veterans issues.
The Last Bugle

O Lord, You have showed us that death is but the gateway to a more glorious life and that we must not fear its coming; and we know, also, that neither life nor death can separate us from Your love. Assure us, yet again, that our departed comrades are not lost to us, but sharing new life with You in the kingdom of our Father, where we shall in your good time be reunited. We know them to be with You forever … Amen.

Reporting Period: January 1, 2013 to January 31, 2013

During the Reporting Period there have been 248 transfers to Post Everlasting. The names of all our departed comrades may be seen on the department Web site. Just click on the highlighted “Post Everlasting” button on our homepage www.calegion-news.org/html/post-everlasting.html

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Senator Steve Knight (R-Lancaster) addresses Legionnaires at the 2012 Day at the Capitol event.

The American Legion, Department of California will hold its Annual Day at the State Capitol on Wednesday, May 1, 2013. Legionnaires from across California are invited and encouraged to attend.

Many veterans’ issues are debated and policies are formulated by the State Legislature. Some of these issues and policies are implemented by the various agencies and departments of the state government, such as the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Therefore, it is important that Legionnaires attend the Day at the Capitol to show our support for programs and policies which will benefit veterans as well as to educate legislators and staff on the issues.

American Legion-Department of California provides free Continental breakfast and lunch buffets to Legionnaire attendees. The day is spent at the State Capitol meeting your local legislators, educating legislators and staff on veterans’ issues and hearing from key legislative and Administration speakers.

Please spread the word to all Posts and members. More information to come.

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