

THE CALIFORNIA VETERAN

FALL 2017
VFWCA.ORG



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS

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HOW TO SUBSCRIBE THE CALIFORNIA VETERAN MAGAZINE

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STATE COMMANDER
Wayne Wright

Comrades, Sisters and Brothers of the Auxiliary,

I'd like very much to thank and acknowledge the tremendous support you have vested in me by electing me to serve as your State Commander for the ensuing year of 2017-2018. I am going to make the Department of California as transparent to the entire membership of California as I possibly can.

As we start the year there are many things that must happen at once. However, making sure that our membership is in the front of everyone's mind and that we respond to all Veterans with the

ASSISTING VETERANS, IT'S WHAT WE DO BEST.

same expediency as we would like to be responded to, if we were in need. When a Veteran is down and out and hurting, they cannot wait for assistance. We are not a "please take a number" and wait type of organization. We need to be there for them. As my motto for the year says, "ASSISTING VETERANS, IT'S WHAT WE DO BEST".

At the same time, we are running a large business, in which every member is a part of. At the end of June we had 79,910 members in the State of California. The new Commander in Chief is expecting California to be at 84,000 at the close of next year on June 30th. We all share in its successes and its shortcomings alike. Making sure your Post and District elected officials remain eligible to serve requires current dues paid. Making sure your Quartermaster and other necessary Post officials are bonded as required. Make sure your Program Chairpersons have the tools and training they need to complete their tasks with proficiency.

Work with your communities to ensure they think on the VFW as an asset and not a burden.

Over the past 5 years, California has had the Department Voice of Democracy winner in the top three. That says a lot about the quality of our youth and the teachers that teach them. That only begs for California to be submitting teachers for the Teacher of the Year, which speaks to the quality of the students they produce.

The State of California has over 39 million residents, and National bases their expectations for the distribution of Buddy Poppy's in proportion to population. Now we all know that we will never see that kind of number in our distribution. However, we should be able to make our Buddy Poppy Chairman a chairman of over 1 million buddy poppy's purchased and distributed this year. That may seem impossible, but that is what I've asked him to do.



JR. PAST STATE COMMANDER
Dale Smith

From the Jr. Past,

I want to personally thank everyone of the Comrades who so willingly gave of your support this last year.

WE DID IT! We achieved that magical 100% and it could not have been done without all your help and support. What a wonderful feeling it was that last few days of June to see all the support come in for reaching our membership goal.

It seemed like everything I asked for you gave me and I am so appreciative. I cannot even start to name every individual who helped along the way but I must recognize Steve Milano and Doug Scholl for keeping things on track. They did one Hell-of-a job. Thank you.

Now let's start working for this year's 100%!!!!

Dale Smith

Jr. Past Commander



**STATE SENIOR
VICE COMMANDER
Lamont Duncan**

Comrades, Sisters & Brothers,

First, I want to thank the Department for your support in voting for me as Sr. Vice Commander. Secondly I want to congratulate all the new Officers at the Post, Auxiliary, District and Department level and thirdly let me congratulate and commend those Posts and Districts that achieved All-American status. Finally, congratulations to our Auxiliary for their extraordinary effort to be 100% in membership back to back.

We are now starting the 2017-2018 year. Last year, Department, under the leadership of Commander (Triple

LET'S HAVE A TERRIFIC YEAR AND HAVE SOME FUN DOING IT!

Crown) Dale Smith attained All American status, a feat that was last done by Past Department Commander Bobby Price. We also had a record number Posts achieving All State and All American. Obviously, this will be a year of challenges to equal or exceed the accomplishments of last year. Therefore, use this first quarter to access what needs to be done in your Districts and Posts to improve on the previous year.

We just returned from a fantastic National Convention in New Orleans and therefore it will take a bit more time for the Department website to be updated with all the new information. Please make sure you visit the site for all the new information for the 2017-2018 year.

Commander Wright has outlined a program with an emphasis on membership and programs in support of our National Commander-in-Chief, Keith Harmon. Commander Harmon's

membership program for All American is to increase membership by 5%. This means California needs roughly 4,000 more members for the upcoming year. Let's think outside the box and get those community service events going; visit your local colleges; visit your local military units; participate, participate, participate. This will get your name out in the community and more members.

We have an objective and it's to change the perception of the VFW let's make it happen. If you have a problem don't hesitate to call me or email me; do not wait until it festers and turns into something ugly. We need to be proactive and not reactive when it comes to our Posts and Districts.

God bless you and your families.

Bridging the Gap,

Lamont Duncan
Sr. Vice Commander



**TEACHER'S AWARD
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
Bob Magner**

Comrades, it is time to reach out and support and recognize the hard work that our teachers do. Comrades, I gave all the District Commanders an application for each post Commander in their District and you can go on the web to get all the info for Teacher's Program. Comrades, be sure to report all your programs in order to get credit. Comrades, I look forward to getting a lot of applications and good luck to all the posts and districts. Remember the deadline to Post-October 31 to District November 15 and to Department December 8 Comrades, take care and I am looking for a good year.

Bob Magner
Dept. Teachers Award Chairman



STATE CHIEF OF STAFF
Deborah Johnson

Congratulations Commander Wright and thank you for appointing me as your Chief of Staff. Since it is the start of a new year, I would like to encourage all Post and District Commanders to focus on training, educating and mentoring new members, as well as posts in your districts that may be

struggling. Pair them up with an All State or All American Post to provide guidance and leadership. There are a lot of comrades that have experience that can help as well. Our three Training and Education teams have started the School of Instruction and Commander Wright has made it mandatory that at least 1 Trustee from your post attend training if your post wants to achieve All State Status. Monitor the CA VFW website at www.vfwca.org for updated program information, reporting and any forms or documents you need for your post and district. I also encourage you to monitor the www.vfw.org website for important training tools and to see what the National organization is working on. There is a lot of information available

for us to use, we just need to take a few minutes to browse through the websites to find what can be beneficial for our posts. Lastly, there are going to be changes in our National Bylaw and Manual of Procedures that was voted in by the membership at the National Convention. The new Podium Editions will be available in October and you can pre-order through the VFW Store. The VFW is changing our parliamentary procedure guidelines from Demeter's to Roberts Rules of Order 11th edition. I encourage you all to get a copy now, so your materials will be up-to-date. If you have any questions or need guidance, do not hesitate to contact me. We are all here to support you.



NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER
PSC Earl Fulk

What an honor it was to witness the State, District and Post Commanders receive their All-American caps at the 2017 National Convention in New Orleans! Congratulations to all for an outstanding job representing each and every one of us in California. May you all wear it with pride and good health for many years to come!

I want to again wish all the best to State Commander Wayne Wright and his cadre of Officers and Chairmen for the 2017-2018 year. As the National Council Member from California I want to extend

my hand to assist in any way I can. Do not hesitate to reach out if the need arises. At the National Convention the delegates present approved a number of a bylaw, manual of procedure and ritual changes. You can sign in to My VFW to find them but most importantly order the new podium addition when it becomes available in print or CD. I must admit I was a little surprised when the resolution to use Robert's Rules and leave behind Demeter's passed without discussion on the convention floor. Times are changing and in some cases very rapidly; there is a new generation evident in leadership roles.

I have to share a very proud moment with you the comrades of the Department of California. While returning to my assigned hotel on the shuttle from the convention center I had the pleasure of sitting next to and talking to Past Commander-in-Chief 1976-1977 R.D. "Bulldog" Smith, Georgia. When he found out I was from California his eyes lit up and he proceeded to tell me his

experience he had in California with our State Commander. He could not remember his name but said he was an, "Irishman". I asked him if he was referring to C.W. Kelly? He explained with a broad smile, "yes and I spent a wonderful week with him traveling up and down your great state meeting the outstanding VFW and Auxiliary members". He went on to say he did not drink and it was not an issue until he went to Don Diego Post to earn his Sombrero. Commander Kelly reportedly came to the rescue when he substituted water for Tequila and no one was the wiser. We both had a good belly laugh when I told him as State Commander I did the very same thing with water although I had to sip a small amount of Tequila to earn the much coveted Sombrero.

May God continue to bless each and every one of you, our active duty military, reserves and guard units and this great country of ours.



**SERVICE COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN**
Art Napiwocki

Our Service Department has some new faces. DSO Jerry Martinez in the L.A. Regional Office has moved on to work for the VA. We thank Jerry for his hard work and professionalism and wish him all the best. Our new L.A. Regional Office DSO is Jorge Betito (Air Force). DSO Betito has been volunteering at that same office and brings experience into his new position. Our Long Beach Facility has another new hire, ADSO Lucia Hernandez (Army). Welcome Aboard Jorge and Lucia.

**REMINDER: SUPPORTING THE BUDDY POPPY PROGRAM HELPS FUND OUR SERVICE DEPT.
– BUY BUDDY POPPIES!**

As of this writing, we are waiting for President Trump to sign Legislation that will extend the “Veterans Choice Program” (VCP). Under VCP, Veterans can seek care from Private-Sector Providers if: *They face Wait Times longer than 30 days for care from a VA Medical Facility. *The closest VA Medical Facility is Greater than 40 miles from their home; or *Their Closest VA Facility is Not Easily Accessible from their home due to Geographic Barriers (Mountains, Large Body of Water, etc.). Veterans who believe they are eligible for VCP should contact **TriWest @ 1-866-606-8198** to verify eligibility and obtain authorizations for care.

As always, in my articles, I cannot express enough the importance of Veterans, who have been exposed to certain Environmental Hazards during their Military Service, to participate in

Registries. These Registries target illnesses associated with exposure to these Environmental Hazards. The Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the resources to access VA’s Specialized Programs and Services. There are Registries for Agent Orange, Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pits, Depleted Uranium, Gulf War Related Exposures, Ionizing Radiation & Toxic Embedded Fragments. For these Exposures, special registry evaluations are available at No-Cost! Registry Data helps the VA understand and respond to health problems of Veterans more effectively.

To Enroll and learn more about Registry Evaluation, You can contact your local VA Environmental Health Coordinator. For an On-line Listing of Coordinators, go to www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp



**HOMELESS VETERANS
CHAIRMAN**
Deborah Johnson

With summer in full swing, many of us think about vacations and back to school for our children and grandchildren. It is also the time of year that many communities launch their Stand

Down events throughout the State of California. The VFW plays an integral part of these events by providing much needed leadership, funds, clothing and volunteer support. As the Homeless Veteran Chairman, I pour over hundreds of reports of the work that the posts in California do to assist our homeless veterans. Last year, one post entered 109 reports on the work they do to provide military funeral honors to homeless veterans in their local National Cemetery. In northern California, another post puts together and hands out bag lunches to veterans that are entrenched in the mountains. Another post allows the VA and community service providers to have

office space to provide services and benefits counseling to homeless veterans once a month. I had the opportunity to hand out awards to the following posts at the VFW State Convention in June:

- 1st Place Post 9934 District 2**
- 2nd Place Post 8547 District 3**
- 3rd Place Post 10218 District 4**

The awards for the Districts were:

- 1st Place District 1**
- 2nd Place District 10**
- 3rd Place District 4**

Congratulations and let’s keep this work moving forward. Our goal is to end veteran homelessness, one veteran at a time.



LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN
Art Napiwocki

The Department Legislative Committee has a new member, Tim Bryant, who also serves as our Department Membership Chairman. Welcome Aboard, Tim.

Our Department Legislative Committee also serves as our California National Legislative Committee. The Committee will be attending the VFW National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. in September. The Committee's purpose in Washington is to visit all 53 of our Congressional Offices and our 2 Senate Offices. Our Lobbying Efforts will focus on many Veteran Issues. We will be presenting our VFW

REMEMBER TO CONTACT YOUR STATE AND NATIONAL LEGISLATORS IN YOUR DISTRICT TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM.

Concerns and Solutions on Appeals Modernization, G.I. Bill Improvements, VA Care Giver Program, Veterans Health Care, Toxic Exposures and Concurrent Receipt, etc.

On the State Level, along with our Lobbyist, Aaron Read and Associates, we continue to track State Legislation affecting Veterans. Our VFW Sponsored Bill AB 1618 has been re-referred to the Appropriations Committee. This bill would Establish a Competitive Grant Program.

Remember to contact your state and national legislators in your district to build a relationship with them.

Make an appointment by speaking with their Scheduler and let them know you want 15 minutes to meet with your Officials. Also, get to know your Officials Veteran Aid. **Get involved!**

I urge every VFW Member to become a Veterans' Legislative Advocate. Join

the VFW Action Corps. Simply go to www.vfw.org/weekly. It is free to all VFW/Aux. members and patriotic supporters of Veterans. So, encourage your friends and neighbors to join. The VFW Action Corps is what gives the VFW strength for our efforts on Capitol Hill. Aside from receiving the VFW Action Corps weekly, an electronic newsletter that keeps you, "in the know", you will receive regular VFW "Action Alerts" telling you how to get involved to email, write or call your National Lawmakers.

MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH:

Making our VFW Voice heard loud and clear is where membership numbers come into play. We need numbers to Strengthen our Political Clout when we Lobby at the State and National Capitols.

Recruit those members!!!!



**CHAIRMAN, CITIZENSHIP ED,
COMMUNITY SERVICE
& SAFETY COMMITTEES**
Robert "Brock" McMahon

One of the VFW Objectives is: "To promote Americanism through education in patriotism and constructive service to the communities in which we live." If your Post does the work; take the credit and report it on-line!

Citizenship Education (Americanism)

Posts should promote these remaining Patriotic Days of 2017: **Patriot Day** – September 11th; **POW/MIA Recognition Day** – September 15th; **Veterans Day** – November 11th; and **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day** – December 7th. These Patriotic Days provide you the opportunity to enhance

Flag Education in your community. Public Law 94-344, known as the Federal Flag Code, contains rules for handling and displaying the U.S. flag. The language of the federal code makes clear that the flag is a living symbol. For more than 110 years, the VFW has fought to perpetuate the values that have made this nation great. Fostering patriotism and honoring America's veterans is part of the VFW's philosophical core. Public commemorations hosted by VFW Posts worldwide cultivate an appreciation of both the responsibilities and benefits of being an American.

Community Service

The key to community service is visibility; how does your Post benefit the community? I encourage each Post to join their local Chamber of Commerce to increase identity and networking opportunities in the community. If your Post is ever questioned in regards to its nonprofit status, the Community Service on-line reports will be invaluable proof that the Post engages in activities that entitles it to tax exempt status.

Safety Recognition

Safety Recognition highlights the VFW’s long-standing commitment

to provide and promote programs designed to safeguard each Post’s community by reducing mishaps through diligent hazard identification and risk management in **Highway Safety, Pedestrian Safety, Recreational Safety, Home/Fire Safety, and Drug Awareness**. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines Safety as the condition of being safe from undergoing or causing hurt, injury or loss; to protect against failure, breakage, or accident.

The success of these 2017 – 2018 programs will be measured by me having a difficult time selecting the 1st, 2nd and 3rd overall (Post & District) award recipients for each category.

I appreciate State Commander Wright’s confidence in me to serve as State Chairman.

Brock
R. Brock McMahon
State Chairman, Citizenship Education, Community Service & Safety Recognition



**VETERANS SERVICES
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
Gerry Blake**

Comrades, Sisters, and Brothers,
I would like to first begin this article by thanking our Department Commander Wayne Wright for having the confidence in me to lead the Veterans Service Program as Chairman for the Department California during his administration. I look forward to working with each District and Post representative in order to provide the highest level of service to our veterans and their families in obtaining the Medical,

Educational, Housing and Survivors benefits they so rightly deserve.

It is very important that all our District and Post Service Officers receive the latest training and are registered with the Department of California, which helps support our National and Local Veterans Service Programs. I am committed to keeping you and our membership updated on information regarding benefits and hospital events within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Two of the most important components in the success of the Veterans Service Program is Commitment and communication; doing what you say you’re going to do, getting the word out to our membership and reporting what we do for veterans. I run across veterans everyday who don’t know what they may be eligible to receive.

Some of you just returned from our National Convention and had the privilege of meeting Comrades and

Sisters and Brothers from all over globe. Let’s get a head start on showing them why the Department of California is a leader in providing service to our veterans throughout the VFW. One of my favorite sayings is REPORT, REPORT, REPORT.

The Program reporting system has gotten a few new improvements which make submitting reports much easier online. Feel free to contact me for assistance and we can walk through it together. I’m just an email, text, or phone call way. Once again looking forward to a great year working with each one of you in providing service to the Nations Hero’s and building our ranks.

And lastly If you are a District Service Officer please email me you contact information at: **Gerryb241@gmail.com**.

Gerry Blake
Veteran Service Program Chairman



THE VFW'S 1 STUDENT VETERAN PROGRAM PROVIDES EXPERT ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS SEEKING:

- Guidance in filing for GI Bill benefits.
- Help accessing education benefits.
- Answers to any VA benefit questions.
- Resolution of wrongly denied or delayed benefits.



**CHAIRMAN, SCOUTING,
JROTC & YOUTH ACTIVITIES**
Frank Squire

SCOUT YOUTH ACTIVITIES UPDATE

Congratulations to Wayne Wright and his team for 2017-18. I am looking forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead. This past year 27 Posts forwarded applications to 9 Districts for Scout of the Year.

The Department winners were:

**1st Place – Anna Benedict,
District 4, Post 2828**

**2nd Place – Tyler Barnhoorn,
District 2, Post 6024**

**3rd Place – Bryan Hsieh,
District 17, Post 10125**

Other Award winners:

**Outstanding Scout Leader of the Year –
Jim Clements, Post 6024, District 2**

**Outstanding Scout Unit of the Year –
Troop 6024, District 2**

**VFW Post Most Active in Scouting –
Troop 3010, District 17**

Guidelines for this year's Scouting, Youth Activities, and JROTC/ ROTC Program are available on the Department website under Programs. Two of the Programs awards listed were not awarded

to my knowledge: **A Project Award for a recipient of Eagle Scout, Quartermaster, Venture Summit Award, GSA Gold Project Award to recognize a service project that helps U.S. veterans and VFW Post Most Active in Youth Cadet Program Award** which recognizes the VFW Posts that, through proper reporting procedures, have demonstrated a level of excellent and well-rounded participation in the VFW Scouting and Youth Cadet Programs. Award determination will be done through the Department of California Online Program Reporting system.

All awards will be determined by the Program Chairman and Team members.

Last year there were only 717 Reports submitted for Youth Activities. The goal for 2017-18 is to increase Post participation in Youth Activities. A summary of activities reported last year will be available at one of your upcoming District meetings this year. Let's increase our support of youth activities in your community.

WHEELCHAIR GAMES PROGRAM

Joe Velasquez

Comrades, Auxiliaries and friends,

For the first time in over 30 years I had to miss the Cooties Grand Scratch, the VFW Dept. Convention, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and the Golden Age Games due to having to endure some emergency surgery which resulted in 8 weeks of extremely limited duty. I was not released to travel until the Thursday before the VFW National Convention and I just could not make it. I did make the MOC Supreme Convention but was not my usual shy, quiet, innocent self as I am still struggling to get back into shape. No excuses, just facts.

As you read, which I am sure you all will (sarcasm?) you will notice that the games overlap on dates. I have already contacted the powers in charge explaining that this will not work so, the dates listed may change.

Attracting more than 600 athletes and 4,000 volunteers each year, the **National Veterans Wheelchair Games** in 2018 will be in Orlando, Florida July 29-August 4 and is the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. The Games serve as a rehabilitation and wheelchair sports program empowering Veterans with spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, amputations and other neurological injuries to live a more active and healthy lifestyle through sports and recreation.

Over the years, the Games have produced a number of national and world-class champions. The event provides the opportunity for newly disabled Veterans to get involved and push further than they thought possible. Typically, one quarter of the competitors are new to the Games.

Veterans will compete in 19 wheelchair sports events that range from swimming, table tennis, weightlifting, archery, air guns, basketball, boccia, nine ball, softball, quad rugby, bowling, handcycling, trapshooting, wheelchair slalom, power soccer, a motorized wheelchair rally and track and field. Athletes compete in all events against others with similar athletic ability, competitive experience, or age.

For more information about the National Veterans Wheelchair Games contact coordinator Karen Shamlin at karen.shamlin2@va.gov or (321) 246-0805.

The National Veterans Golden Age Games in 2018 will be in Albuquerque, New Mexico, August 3-8 and is the premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the United States, and the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. The VA Challenges and encourages senior Veterans to be proactive in embracing a healthier lifestyle.

The games are open to Veterans, ages 55 or older, who receive health care from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Please send all donations to Dept. HQ's and memo the checks "Wheelchair Games Programs". All donations are greatly appreciated.

Special thanks to The Auxiliary (\$10,000.00), Turlock Post 5059 (\$3000.00), Ceres Post 10293, the VFW MC group and MOC Pup Tent 68 for their very generous and continuous support.

Very Respectfully,
Joe Velasquez AKA Rollin' Joe



PRAYER CORNER

IT IS WITH VERY DEEP REMORSE THAT WE SHARE THE PASSING OF PAST STATE COMMANDER AND LONGTIME COMRADE OF DON DIEGO POST 7420, WALTER HAMILTON. WALTER PASSED AWAY ON JULY 24, 2017 AND WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS WITH HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS DURING THIS VERY SOLEMN TIME.

SOLDIERS' PSALM

Psalm 91*

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. **2** I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. **3** Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. **4** He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. **5** Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; **6** Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. **7** A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. **8** Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; **10** There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. **11** For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. **12** They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. **13** Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. **14** Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. **15** He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. **16** With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

* The King James Version



GOVX ANNOUNCES GREEN BERET FOUNDATION AS JULY'S RECIPIENT OF MISSION GIVEBACK DONATION PROGRAM

The non-profit provides financial and medical assistance to the U.S. Army's elite Special Forces soldiers and their families

GovX, the online shopping site exclusively for current and former military and first responders, selected the Green Beret Foundation as July's recipient of the Mission Giveback donation program. Each month, GovX selects a new service-related foundation performing work in the military, first responder, or law enforcement communities. Each organization receives a portion of GovX proceeds from all orders placed during the given month.

Green Beret Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to supporting soldiers of the United States Army Special Forces—commonly known as Green Berets—and their families. As a segment of the Armed Forces that suffers a higher casualty rate than the rest, Green Berets are often faced with expenses relating to rehabilitation, medical and surgical costs, among other fees. The Green Beret Foundation steps in to provide advocacy and services to get the most from a Green Beret's military benefits to meet the entire family's needs.

"We consider it an honor to support the work of the Green Beret Foundation in all they do for these elite soldiers and their families," said Alan Cole, GovX CEO. "Considering how hard they fight to defend our country, these special operators deserve all the support we can give them, and we look forward to donating to the GBF at the end of this month."

When a Green Beret is wounded and MEDEVAC'ds out of theater, GBF sends him and his family a \$1,000 check and a rucksack packed with essential gear for a temporary hospital stay. Additionally, Green Berets in need of

continuing care may apply for more extended care assistance through the foundation, which has been known to support soldiers' recoveries through expensive medical procedures including laser nerve therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, and the use of adaptive and recovery equipment not covered by the Veterans Administration.

In addition to assisting Green Berets with medical expenses, the foundation also provides educational funding to qualified dependents of Green Berets, awarding three scholarships per year; one for dependents of non-commissioned officers, another for dependents of warrant officers, and also dependents of commissioned officers.

The Green Beret Foundation also assists soldiers during their transition out of the military through their Next Ridgeline program, a service which connects Green Berets with mentors and networking opportunities to ensure their transition to civilian life is successful and rewarding.

"Being selected as recipients of this program is incredibly humbling," said Jen Paquette, Executive Director of the Green Beret Foundation. "Green Berets are some of our nation's greatest assets, and thanks to GovX, we will continue to support the mission of the Special Forces here at home."

Learn more about the Green Beret Foundation by visiting their website: www.greenberetfoundation.org/.



GOVERNOR SIGNS JACKSON BILL TO HELP VETERANS AND PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY

AUGUST 2017 | Source: State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson

Governor Jerry Brown has just signed a bill by Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara) that clarifies that military veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health disorders associated with their service in the military are eligible for pretrial diversion programs for misdemeanor DUIs, thus ensuring that these veterans get the help they need sooner and more effectively.

Senate Bill 725 clarifies contradicting language in California law that had resulted in differing state appeals courts' rulings last year at a time when courts were experiencing an influx of requests from veterans charged with these misdemeanors. Provisions in the penal code established criteria for these veterans to qualify for diversion programs, while the California vehicle code prohibited it.

"This bill will not only clarify once and for all that these veterans are eligible for pretrial diversion programs, it will also ensure that veterans and service members who have served our country will get the help they need to address substance abuse and mental health issues," Jackson said. "This will ultimately help protect public safety and help prevent repeat DUIs, while giving these veterans a more hopeful future."

"This law serves the dual purpose of restoring veterans to health while protecting public safety," said Jude Litzenger, executive director, California Veterans Legal Task Force, one of the sponsors of the bill. "When service members or veterans with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, substance use, or other mental

health conditions caused by their military service get DUI misdemeanors because they self-medicated instead of seeking mental health treatment, they will be ordered to get appropriate and timely treatment. A judge will monitor them for 12-18 months, which protects public safety by reducing repeat DUIs."

"THIS BILL WILL NOT ONLY CLARIFY ONCE AND FOR ALL THAT THESE VETERANS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR PRETRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAMS, IT WILL ALSO ENSURE THAT VETERANS AND SERVICE MEMBERS WHO HAVE SERVED OUR COUNTRY WILL GET THE HELP THEY NEED TO ADDRESS SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES."

– Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara)

"All of California's military and veterans owe a great debt of gratitude to Senator Jackson for taking up this important issue and clarifying state law that current and former military members are eligible for treatment instead of prison when they are charged with a DUI," said Pete Conaty, a governmental advocate for veterans. "Without this legislation, active duty military careers would have been ruined by one non-injury DUI offense, and we would have had to wait for

18 months for the California Supreme Court to decide this issue."

Enacted in 2014, pretrial diversion programs provide an alternative to traditional criminal justice proceedings, and are designed to help veterans get the services they need as a result of untreated trauma experienced during their military service. If they successfully complete a closely monitored program, they can have their criminal charges dismissed.

Under SB 725, veterans charged with felonies would not be eligible, and veterans could still have their licenses suspended and revoked by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Data shows that timely treatment for conditions underlying substance abuse is effective and significantly reduces recidivism.

This bill continues Jackson's long-standing work assisting veterans. She is the author of laws giving teachers, school employees and state employees who are disabled veterans additional sick leave during their first year in the workforce to seek treatment for their service-related disabilities.

Jackson was previously named the Leo P. Burke Legislator of the Year by the American Legion, Department of California, for her work authoring a law to ensure that eligible veterans going through the justice system are steered to Veterans Treatment Courts. Jackson also authored Senate Concurrent Resolution 27, which designated portions of Highway 101 in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties for inclusion in the National Purple Heart Trail.

UNMET NEEDS HELPS VETERAN SEEK MEDICAL CARE FOR PTSD

“The VFW provides a hand up to veterans in need. No one wants to be in the place where they have to ask for help, and being prideful at times, I can assure you that I did not. But to have an organization help me when I was at my lowest because of the service and sacrifices I made for my country ... it helped me not feel so alone.”

David E. White III, 32, of Dover, Del., served 9 years, 8 months in the U.S. Army. He deployed three times to Iraq and on one special assignment to Afghanistan.

He incurred various injuries during his time serving in Iraq, including a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), PTSD, Narcolepsy, Tinnitus, and a back injury. He recently entered a PTSD inpatient treatment program at the Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center, after he lost employment due to his Narcolepsy and PTSD-related symptoms.

David’s wife, Emily, said, “We had previously begun a re-rating process, as David hadn’t received a VA rating for his TBI or PTSD. At a 40% rating, David wasn’t eligible for the temporary 100% disability other veterans receive when they are in the hospital.”

Having been in the hospital for almost three months, this placed great financial strain on the family.

Fortunately, they heard about the VFW’s Unmet Needs program from another veterans’ service organization.

“The grant paid a month’s rent and for new tires on our family car,” David said.

“The support has meant my wife could continue getting to work and providing for the family while I was not capable of doing so. We were able to put less money on credit cards – this truly helped us stay afloat.”



Veteran David White with wife, Emily, and their children, Bailey (7) and Logan (3).

“THE SUPPORT HAS MEANT MY WIFE COULD CONTINUE GETTING TO WORK AND PROVIDING FOR THE FAMILY WHILE I WAS NOT CAPABLE OF DOING SO.”

– David White, U.S. Army veteran

SACRAMENTO SAILOR PROTECTS THE SEAS AND SKIES OFF GUAM ABOARD USS NIMITZ



WATERS OFF GUAM (June 29, 2017) U.S. Navy Aviation Machinist’s Mate 2nd Class Rainee Strebel, a native of Sacramento, Calif., performs maintenance on an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter, from the “Eightballers” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 8 in the hangar bay of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68), June 29, 2017, in the Pacific Ocean. Nimitz is currently on an underway period in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. The U.S. Navy has patrolled the Indo-Asia Pacific routinely for more than 70 years promoting regional peace and security.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Weston A. Mohr



97TH ANNUAL

VFW STATE CONVENTION





97th Annual VFW
State Convention –
Ontario, CA
June 8 – June 11, 2017



NISEI VFW ANNUAL REUNION



The 67th Annual Nisei Reunion was held on May 21 – 23 this year at the Sands Regency Casino Hotel, located in Reno, Nevada.

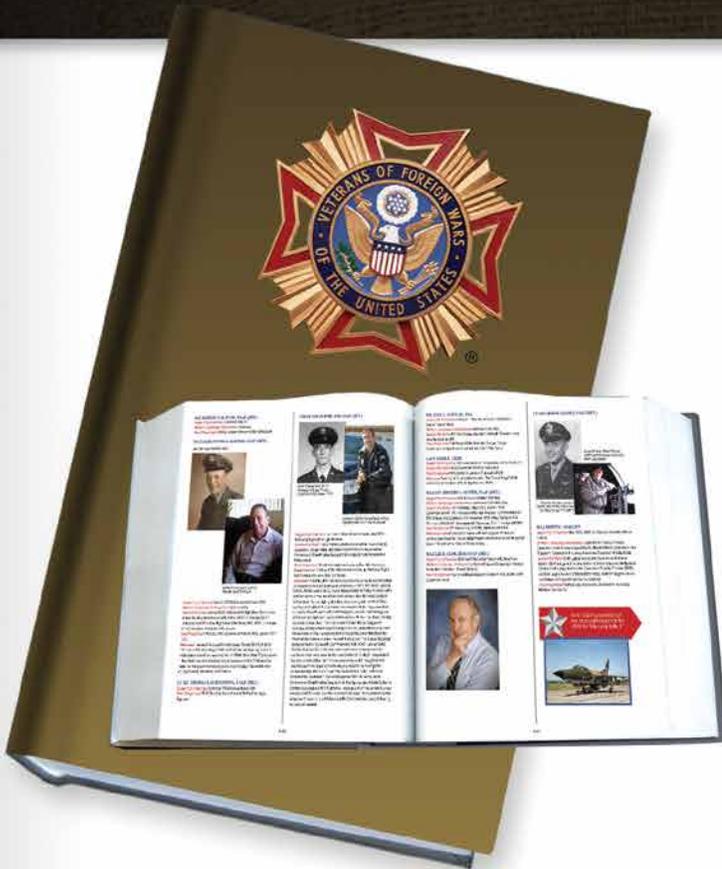
For the past 67 years, the members of the Nisei VFW Posts throughout California have traveled far and near to the reunions to renew old friendships, to “talk story” with fellow comrades and to honor our fallen comrades at the Memorial Service.

Thank you to all who were able to attend!





NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.



The California VFW Then and Now Member Publication Project is about to begin!

California VFW has contracted with Publishing Concepts (PCI), a trusted partner, to create this special member publication.

The publication will include a full-color glossy front section with the history of the California VFW. PCI will contact you via mail, phone and email to collect your unique story and give you the ability to submit photos so that your VFW history can be preserved for generations to come.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to be included!



www.publishingconcepts.com

118TH

VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION





**118th VFW National
Convention – New Orleans, LA
July 22 – July 16, 2017**

Approximately 10,000 VFW and Auxiliary members convened from all over the world at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, July 22-26, 2017. VFW members voted on organizational by-laws, attended workshops, networked with other veterans and attended business sessions.

Convention delegates also enjoyed addresses from several notable and distinguished guests.





118TH

VFW NATIONAL CONVENTION



SOCIAL MEDIA CORNER

#TheCaliforniaVeteran

 **@VFWCA**
FACEBOOK.COM/VFWCA

 **@CA_VFW**
TWITTER.COM/CA_VFW

 **CA_VFW**
INSTAGRAM.COM/CA_VFW

 **California VFW**
July 14 at 10:40am · 

Please join us for Women's Health Assistance Days at the Sacramento VA Medical Center in Mather, CA on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call Rebecca Stallworth at (916) 366-5453.

VA Disability Claim Services for Women Veterans

FREE CLAIM ASSISTANCE SERVICES CLINIC

Specializing in
MST Claims
& Claims for
LGBT Veterans



Sacramento VA Medical Center
Women's Health Clinic
10535 Hospital Way, Mather, CA 95655

- ✓ File a new claim
- ✓ Check on an existing claim
- ✓ Claim a benefit increase
- ✓ Find out about VA benefits
- ✓ Change Discharge Status

Veterans Benefits Administration: Karen Flowers & Carin Cater
(the 4th Monday of each month-9am to 4pm)

Veterans of Foreign Wars: Robyn King
(the 2nd Tuesday of each month-1pm to 4pm)

Call for an appointment
Rebecca Stallworth
916-366-5453

You served



We care!



California VFW shared **Military Times's** post.
31 mins · 



Marine awarded Navy and Marine Corps Medal for pulling man from burning vehicle

marinecorpstimes.com



Military Times
22 hrs · 

Sgt. Kevin Peach saw the smoke and knew he didn't have much time before the car caught fire.



California VFW
July 25 at 10:12am · 

Watch the 118th VFW National Convention live at <http://www.vfw.org/Convention!> #VFWConvention



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

www.vfw.org

VFW National Convention - VFW

Approximately 10,000 VFW and Auxiliary members will co...
vfw.org



California VFW shared Veterans of Foreign Wars VFW's post.

August 9 at 2:52pm · 🌐

We are proud to announce 107 #studentveterans have been named recipients of a VFW "Sport Clips Haircuts Help A Hero Scholarship" for the 2017 fall semester.



VFW Awards Nearly \$500,000 in Veteran Scholarships

vfw.org



Veterans of Foreign Wars VFW

August 9 at 2:04pm · 🌐

We are proud to announce 107 #studentveterans have been named recipients of a VFW "Sport Clips Haircuts Help A Hero Scholarship" for the 2017 fall semester.



California VFW shared Military.com's post.

July 18 at 11:59am · 🌐

Dr. Angela Boynton, a U.S. Army Research Laboratory researcher, hopes that by reducing the physical burden, soldiers will be able to put more energy into other types of tasks that involve cognitive or perceptual workload.



Army Testing Exosuit for Enhanced Soldier Performance

kitup.military.com



Military.com

July 17 at 8:00pm · 🌐

The suit has pulleys and gears.



California VFW shared Veterans of Foreign Wars VFW's post.

August 3 at 7:04pm · 🌐

The VFW has had an active year! Check out these highlights of what the VFW has done and will continue to do #ForVeterans, service members and their families.



Veterans of Foreign Wars VFW

August 2 at 4:50pm · 🌐

The VFW has had an active year! Check out these highlights of what the VFW has done and will continue to do #ForVeterans, service members and their families.



VFW Year in Review 2017

2016-2017 was another great year...

youtube.com



California VFW

August 3 at 12:01pm · 🌐

"Because of the VFW, I will enjoy memories of the Vietnam that's there now and not just when my boots were on the ground. It seemed funny looking at people sitting on their porches looking at their iPhones or driving by huts with glass windows and TV dishes on top. It meant a lot for a guy like me to go back to a place called Vietnam with nine other veterans who all left the blood, sweat and tears of our youth there." - James Jordan



Purple Heart Vets Return to Vietnam

VFW sponsored nine veterans on a return trip to Southeast...

vfw.org

VFW IN THE NEWS – SECTION 2

TOP WAYS VA DISABILITY APPROVAL HELPS YOUR SSDI APPLICATION

Over 20 million veterans currently live in the United States. Of these, over 6 million receive VA benefits of any size to help with conditions developed while on active duty. For many, these benefits are a wonderful support — for others, financial strain is still a large issue.

For veterans who continue to struggle financially because of their severe disorders, *Social Security disability insurance (SSDI)* may be an option. In fact, veterans experience a variety of advantages when applying for benefits that many other applicants don't receive. Below are the top three ways VA disability approval helps you to get benefits, as well as the advantages you see after SSDI approval.

PREVIOUSLY COMPILED MEDICAL INFORMATION

VA benefits feature their own lengthy application process. In order to get approval, veterans must get multiple medical assessments and compile paperwork on their situation in order to file for benefits. Luckily, the majority of this information will also be requested on your SSDI application. This simplifies your application process because you can merely include all previous medical history documents you were already asked for. If you do not have a copy, all you need to do is contact your medical office to have file copies sent over.

Depending on when you filed for VA benefits, it is possible you may need updated versions of tests you've already taken. These can be done by any qualifying physician at a standard hospital or at one of over 800 veteran clinics located throughout the country.

A HIGHER CHANCE OF QUALIFYING

When veterans are awarded VA benefits, they are assigned a percentage amount, from 10% to 100%. This describes the severity of a veteran's disability and also determines the amount of benefits they will get each month. SSDI is not awarded this way — instead, applicants either qualify as “totally and permanently disabled” and receive full benefits, or they do not qualify for benefits at all. This all-or-nothing decision system is necessary when ensuring that those who need the help most receive it. However, it can also greatly increase the stress of applying.

Luckily, veterans can forego a bit of this stress if they have a *high VA rating*. VA ratings of 70% have a much higher chance of seeing SSDI approval because the VA system has already declared them to be severely disabled. This does not make SSDI benefits guaranteed, but it does greatly increase your chances.

AN EXPEDITED CLAIMS PROCESS

Most SSDI applicants face a long period of months waiting to hear back on their disability case. This can be even more disheartening if the answer ends up being a “no”, which leads to more work continuing the benefits process. Thankfully, as a show of thanks for serving their country, the US government allows all veteran applications to be expedited if they became disabled while on active military service on or after October 1, 2001. If your case decision is a “yes”, then you will begin receiving benefits much earlier than non-veteran applicants. If your case decision is a “no”, then you are already months ahead in the continuation process to keep fighting for benefits.

ADVANTAGES OF VETERAN STATUS AFTER SSDI APPROVAL

Even after being approved for SSDI, veterans continue to see advantages due to their status.

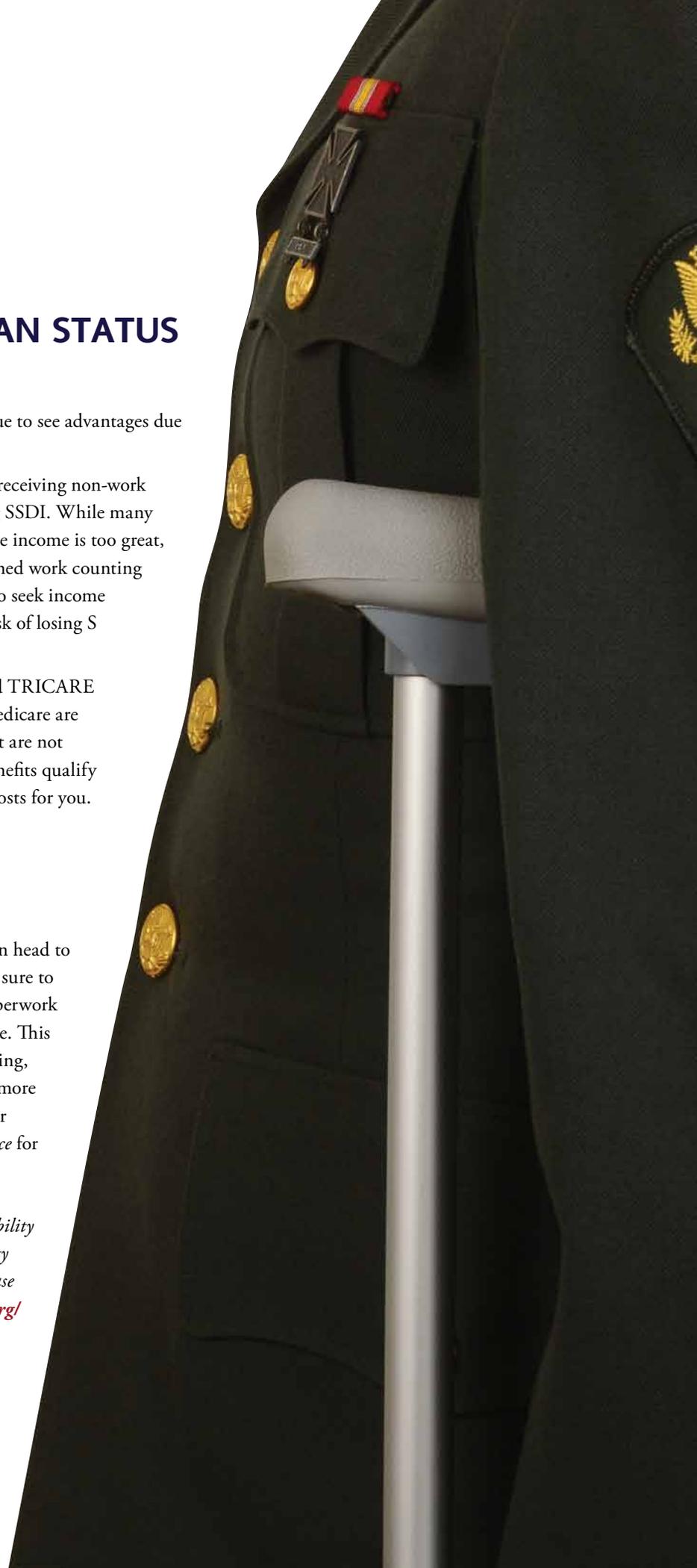
One of the biggest benefits is the ability to continue receiving non-work military pay and VA benefits without worry of losing SSDI. While many SSDI recipients can lose benefits because their outside income is too great, veterans are exempt from these two sources of unearned work counting against them. The majority of veterans do not need to seek income outside of these sources to make ends meet, so the risk of losing SSDI is low.

Another benefit is the ability to receive Medicare and TRICARE benefits simultaneously. While many people with Medicare are occasionally responsible to cover additional costs that are not covered under this insurance, veteran TRICARE benefits qualify as your secondary insurer and typically cover these costs for you.

STARTING YOUR APPLICATION

Whenever you are ready to begin the process, you can head to the SSA's *website* and start the application online. Be sure to have any medical, financial, and military-specific paperwork on hand that the application may ask you to reference. This application does not have to be completed in one sitting, so it is alright if you need to take a break or wait for more documentation. For questions or concerns about your application, you can call *your local Social Security office* for assistance from an SSA representative.

This article was written by the Outreach Team at Disability Benefits Help. They provide information about disability benefits and the application process. To learn more, please visit their website at www.disability-benefits-help.org/ or by contacting them at help@ssd-help.org.



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**STATE SENIOR
VICE COMMANDER**
Lamont Duncan



**STATE JUNIOR
VICE COMMANDER**
Michael King



**STATE
QUARTERMASTER/
ADJUTANT**
Steve Milano



**STATE
CHAPLAIN**
Aaron Rasmussen



**STATE JUDGE
ADVOCATE**
PSC Nick Guest



**STATE
SURGEON**
Dawn Napier



**PAST STATE
COMMANDER**
Dale Smith, Jr.



**STATE
INSPECTOR**
Chuck Anfuso



**STATE
CHIEF OF STAFF**
Deborah Johnson



**STATE
PARLIAMENTARIAN**
Buford Maples



**STATE
HISTORIAN**
Dan Schmaltz



**DISTRICT 1
COMMANDER
Douglas Scholl**



**DISTRICT 2
COMMANDER
Janine Fountain**



**DISTRICT 3
COMMANDER
Daniel Moon**



**DISTRICT 4
COMMANDER
Douglas Perkins**



**DISTRICT 5
COMMANDER
Terri Judd**



**DISTRICT 6
COMMANDER
Robert Shaull**



**DISTRICT 7
COMMANDER
Martin Yingling**



**DISTRICT 9
COMMANDER
Alan Hansen**



**DISTRICT 10
COMMANDER
Terry Murphy**



**DISTRICT 12
COMMANDER
Thomas Peavy**



**DISTRICT 13
COMMANDER
Michael Seward**



**DISTRICT 14
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Lawrence "Phil" Irvine**

CALIFORNIA VFW STATE OFFICERS



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COMMANDER**
Wes Cochran



**DISTRICT 16
COMMANDER**
John Goodrich



**DISTRICT 17
COMMANDER**
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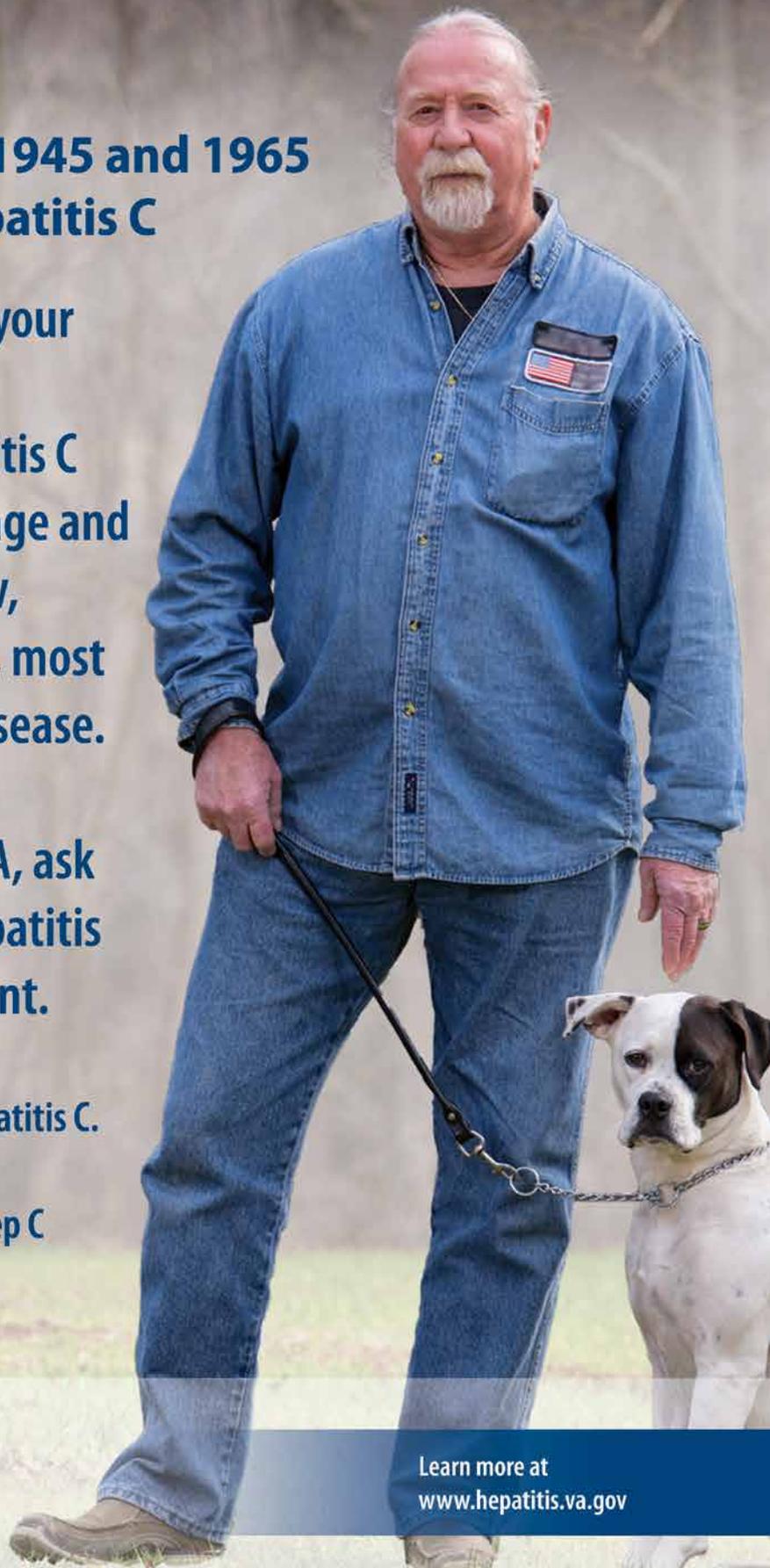
-  **Veteran**
-  **Born between 1945 and 1965**
-  **Living with hepatitis C**

Not knowing can put your health at risk. Often symptom-free, hepatitis C can lead to liver damage and even cancer. With new, advanced treatments, most can be cured of the disease.

If you're enrolled in VA, ask your doctor about hepatitis C testing and treatment.

Don't hope you're free of hepatitis C. Know for sure.

— Mark, a Veteran free of hep C



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

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www.hepatitis.va.gov**

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