



California

LEGIONNAIRE

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October 2020

Official Publication of The American Legion Department of California

caLegion.org

California American Legion backs multiple bills

By Seth Reeb
Legislative Advocate
Reeb Government Relations

The Legislature adjourned for the 2019-2020 legislative session on Aug. 31.

Bills that passed that process were sent to Gov. Newsom. We have submitted letters to the governor requesting his signature on these bills on behalf of The American Legion. If you would like to contact the governor and voice your individual support for a particular bill or bills, there are four ways you can do it:

1. Email:

<https://govapps.gov.ca.gov/gov40mail/> There is a drop down menu where you can select the bill number.

2. Call: (916) 445-2841

3. Fax: (916) 558-3160

4. US Mail: Governor Gavin Newsom, 1303 10th Street, Suite 1173, Sacramento, CA 95814

For more information on legislation, contact American Legion Department of California Legislative Commissioner Don Harper: govia@comcast.net

For more information on these bills such as the language, amendments, votes, history, and committee analyses, go to: <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml>

[More on pages 4-5]

WINNERS PICKED IN KIDS ART CONTEST

View art entries from the contest winners • Pages 8-9



From left: Judges Anthony Bernal, Post 509 commander; JD Bennett, Post 23 commander; and Fran Kilgore, Post 147 past oratorical chairperson, pose with winning entries from the "Patriotism & Purpose" art contest at California American Legion headquarters in Sanger on Monday, Sept. 7, 2020. (Photo: American Legion Department of California)



1st place winner Claire Lu, Category A, ages 5-12 years old.

Korean War

Memorial breaks ground in Fullerton

By Brian L. Johnson
Adjutant, District 29

On Aug. 14, 2020, Orange County District 29 Commander Sandy

Schneeberger, District 17 Commander George Aguilar, Fullerton Post 142 Commander Marylin Harris, and Korean Bunker Post 829 Command-

er Tony Pak joined by Legionnaires from his post represented The American Legion at the ground-breaking ceremony

[See MEMORIAL, page 6]

World War II Veterans remember victory over Japan

By Christian Southards
Contributing Writer

Veterans and others celebrated the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Bakersfield, California on Sept. 2. The event was held at the Kern Veterans Memorial and was closed to the general public due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19.

In addition to six veterans who served during the war, many prominent veteran services organizations were present, including the Sons of the American Legion.

Organizers held the event to commemorate the end of the Pacific theater of the war and in hopes of

[See VICTORY, page 3]



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Let's set ourselves up for success in 2021



By Ed Grimsley
Department Commander

As the Commander of the Department of California, I'm so proud with what we are doing across the state to "Improvise, Adapt & Overcome" during these challenging times.

Posts are finding ways to meet. Riders are still out there doing good for the community. Even tedious challenges like updating bylaws and getting reports completed are happening. I truly commend all the great work being done out there in California.

Now that Autumn is upon us, we will have new challenges and opportunities, and I'm confident that California will lead the way. I want us to enlist the entire American Legion Family to make an impact this year.

We can still partner with Toys-For-Tots. We can do food drives. We can support organizations doing

outreach to the homeless. We should also never forget the immense power of a buddy check. The holidays can be stressful for people, especially those who do not have family or may not have family nearby.

2020 is likely to make the mood even worse, as travel will be limited. Many people will not have the financial resources to celebrate the holidays, as they would normally. We all know that a simple phone call can be a life saving event.

I would like to challenge every Legionnaire to do buddy checks throughout this holiday season. Stay connected and leverage the camaraderie of our shared experience.

Utilize the Department website and social media to stay connected. Log in and check the Facebook page and talk about ideas. There is amazing information being put out by both our Facebook team and our website team (caLegion.org). We do that work for the members and we'd love to have you take advantage of them. We would be excited to see you engage with us on these platforms.

Finally, we need to start preparing for 2021.

2020 will be behind us and the opportunities of a

new year will be waiting. Now is a great time to start planning and preparing for a post-pandemic revival. With few events happening, make use of that time.

Revisit your policies, bylaws, etc. Take some time to get committees organized and energized. Send letters to those who have not renewed, just to see how they are doing and how we can help. Please feel free to reach out to the Department Training Committee and the Media & Communications Commission for assistance with these missions.

The execution of that preparation will require leadership. Is your Post identifying and engaging with future leaders? Are members being reminded that The American Legion Basic Training is online and free? This training is a great first step because, it explains what the organization is about and answers the questions about what we do.

Autumn is upon us and we are all looking forward to a fresh start in 2021.

We have opportunities to affect this new year with positive action and leadership.

Let's do this together, "for the good of the Legion" and for the "community, state, and nation".

DEC meetings moved online, once a month

In early September, Commander Ed Grimsley sent out an email to leadership calling for the Department Executive Committee to meet online once a month each second Thursday at 6 p.m. starting in October. The commander wants to make use of the skills we have developed during this pandemic and continue to get the Department's business done instead of waiting seven months until our next scheduled face to face DEC in March. The meeting agendas will be formatted to last an hour. After the business portion of the meeting, there will be optional training lasting 20-30 minutes. The provided training will target to assist district commanders.

An agenda and associated materials will be distributed two weeks prior to the meetings.

Our posts have handled change extremely well



By Paul Brown
Department Adjutant

We have all experienced a lot of change this year, some good, but mostly of the sort which makes our eyes role and have to create a lot of work to cre-

ate a solution. A great example of the latter is the steps all of the posts are having to create to continue communication with their members and keep the post operations going.

Especially for those posts dependent on lounge operations to generate revenue, this is turning out to be very trying times. Not having a convention this year also created some issues regarding distribution of awards and other year-end culminating activities.

On the good side, these events have forced us to use virtual communication to our benefit. Through this process, the department re-

alized it is a good tool for us to communicate effectively more frequently throughout the year to keep the business of the Department moving forward.

In this light, the commander will be holding a monthly Department Executive Committee meeting the second Thursday of every month, at 6 p.m. starting Oct. 8. His intent is to conduct an hour of business, followed by 20-30 minutes of training focused on district operations.

As we move forward with this and possibly some other changes, please be patient and let us know how we can help.



The Veterans Family Band performs during a remembrance ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII at the Kern Veterans Memorial on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2020. (Photo: The Californian)

Kern County remembers end of WWII

[VICTORY, from page 1] preventing current and future generations from forgetting the most devastating conflict in human history.

Though the event was closed, veterans and family members noted the event still had a big turnout.

At the memorial event were glass panels inscribed with the names of nearly 700 Kern County residents who lost their lives during the war.

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that in total, 405,339 US servicemembers died during the course of the war.

In 2018, the Federation of American Scientists determined of that total, 31,040 servicemembers were from California.

Sept. 2, 1945 – Official End of World War II

Though Imperial Japan declared surrender on

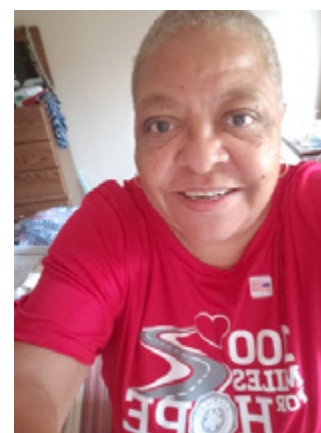
Aug. 14, 1945 following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, WWII did not officially end until Sept. 2, 1945, when surrender documents were formally signed on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay under the supervision of Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

Before the atomic bombings, U.S. forces were preparing to launch an invasion of mainland Japan.

In the preceding months, Imperial Japan had suffered two critical and historic defeats at the hands of U.S. forces, first at Iwo Jima, and then at Okinawa.

Former U.S. Navy officer and California native Victor Killingsworth, who attended the memorial event in Bakersfield, witnessed U.S. Marines raise the American flag at Iwo Jima from the USS Artemis. He turns 100 on Nov. 11, Veterans Day.

100 miles for hope



Marilyn Rideaux

100 Miles for Hope is a virtual 100-mile walk/run/ride challenge that started Aug. 3 and going through Veterans Day 2020.

It's a way to invigorate donations for the Veterans & Children Foundation, as well as encourage American Legion Family members to be active in this time of social distancing.

Participants in 100 Miles for Hope would have from the official kickoff to run, walk, bike or ride their motorcycle for 100 miles.

That time frame is 100 days so it would mean being active for just a mile day, roughly 20 to 30 minutes for walkers — which coincidentally is the activity level many health experts recommend.

Some may choose to walk a mile a day. Others may do longer stretches of walks, runs and/or bike rides on a less frequent basis. Legion Riders could easily knock off 100 miles on a single trip.

For a \$30 registration fee, participants will receive a men's, women's or children's tech shirt, and a sign they can display once

the 100 miles is completed.

After figuring the cost for the shirt, other materials and shipping, the remaining proceeds will go directly into the Veterans and Children's Foundation.

Participants are encouraged to wear their shirts when they are walking, running or riding their 100 miles.

Additionally, they are encouraged to share their experiences on social media using the hashtag #100MilesForHope.

To register, go to the Emblem Sales site.

<https://emblem.legion.org/100-Miles-For-Hope-Registration/productinfo/100MILES>

In American Legion History

Veterans Claims

Oct. 16, 1989

The long-standing objective of the Legion to improve adjudication procedures for veterans claims is achieved when the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals becomes operational. Most of the provisions contained in the law creating the court were originally included in the Veterans Reassurance Act, written by the Legion and introduced in Congress in 1988.

Family Support Network

Oct. 11, 1990

The Legion creates the Family Support Network to assist families of servicemembers deployed for operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the Middle East. Through local posts, the network offers a wide range of assistance, including financial assistance, mowing lawns, baby-sitting and more. Today, FSN continues to assist families affected by military activation and deployment.

Legacy Scholarship

Oct. 10-11, 2001

The American Legion creates the American Legacy Scholarship Fund for children of military members killed on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT 2021

Key legislative dates:

-Nov 3: General election.
-Dec 7: The new 2021-22 Legislature convenes.
-Jan 1: Statutes signed into law in 2020 take effect (unless they were urgency bills, which take effect immediately)

Going forward:

The COVID-19 pandemic severely curtailed the legislative activity this year.

Many good (and bad) bills were shelved to make time to address legislation relating to the pandemic.

Since a lot of the leg-work was done putting the bills together in early 2020, there is a good chance a lot of those bill ideas will come back in 2021.

Barstow Veterans Home:

The State budget that was passed in June provided a process that must be followed by CalVet in determining the fate of the Barstow Veterans Home.

Part of the process called for stakeholder input. We have notified CalVet of your organization's desire to be part of that process and there will be a tele-meeting soon between CalVet and vet org leaders.

AB 408 (Frazier D) Vehicles: disabled veterans.

Status: 8/28/2020-Read third time. Passed. Ordered to the Assembly. (Ayes 39. Noes 0.). In Assembly. Ordered to Engrossing and Enrolling.

Location: 8/28/2020-A. ENROLLMENT

Summary: Would require the Department of Motor Vehicles to accept a certificate from a coun-

ty veterans service officer or the Department of Veterans Affairs that certifies that the applicant for a special license plate or placard is a disabled veteran.

Position: Support

AB 2046 (Voepel R) Family law: child support.

Status: 8/28/2020-Read third time. Passed. Ordered to the Assembly. (Ayes 39. Noes 0.). In Assembly. Ordered to Engrossing and Enrolling.

Location: 8/28/2020-A. ENROLLMENT

Summary: Current law provides that if the person who is required to pay child support is disabled, meets certain federal eligibility requirements, and is receiving or would be eligible for certain state and federal disability payments, and the person has supplied the local child support agency with proof of eligibility or receipt of these benefits, then the order/notice to withhold income issued for the liquidation of the arrearage shall not exceed 5% of that person's total monthly disability payments, as specified.

This bill would similarly prohibit the order/notice to withhold income for the liquidation of the arrearage from exceeding 5% of a person's total monthly disability compensation if the person who is required to pay child support is a disabled veteran receiving disability compensation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs who meets specified income requirements and has supplied the local child support agency with proof of receipt of disability compensation and other income and assets.

Position: Support

AB 3137 (Voepel R) Community colleges: California College Promise: members of the Armed Forces of the United States.

Status: 8/28/2020-Read third time. Passed. Ordered to the Assembly. (Ayes 39. Noes 0.). In Assembly. Ordered to Engrossing and Enrolling.

Location: 8/28/2020-A. ENROLLMENT

Summary: Would require that a student who is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, as defined, and is called to duty as specified, may withdraw from participation in the California College Promise and resume participation in the program upon the student's return from duty without losing eligibility for the fee waiver or any other benefit of the program.

The bill would also provide that the time during which the student was obliged to withdraw because of active duty shall not count toward the limit of the period of that student's eligibility for participation in the California College Promise.

Position: Support

AB 3371 (Committee on Veterans Affairs) Veteran suicides: report.

Status: 8/31/2020-Enrolled and presented to the Governor at 5 p.m.

Location: 8/31/2020-A. ENROLLED

Summary: Current law requires the State Department of Public Health to implement an electronic death registration system and to access data with-

in the system to compile a report on veteran suicide in California that includes information on the veterans' ages, sexes, races or ethnicities, and methods of suicide.

Current law requires the department to provide that report annually to the Legislature and the Department of Veterans Affairs. This bill would require that report to include information on the counties of residence of the veterans, and would authorize the report to include additional information.

Position: Support

SB 588 (Archuleta D) Public contracts: Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program.

Status: 9/1/2020-Enrolled and presented to the Governor at 1 p.m.

Location: 9/1/2020-S. ENROLLED

Summary: Under current law, the Department of General Services, except in the case of contracts for professional bond services, is the administering agency of the California Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program, which requires state agencies and all other state entities contracting for materials, supplies, equipment, alteration, repair, or improvement to have at least 3% participation goals for disabled veteran business enterprises (DVBEs), as defined.

Current law requires an awarding department, upon completion of an awarded contract for which a commitment to achieve a DVBE goal was made, to require the prime contractor that entered into a subcontract with a DVBE to certify to the awarding department specified infor-

mation relating to amounts paid under the contract, as specified. This bill would require an awarding department, on a contract entered into on or after January 1, 2021, to withhold \$10,000, or the full payment if it is less than \$10,000, from the final payment on a contract until that certification is received by the awarding department.

Position: Support

SB 907 (Archuleta D) Child abuse or neglect investigation: military notification.

Status: 8/30/2020-Read third time. Passed. (Ayes 63. Noes 0.) Ordered to the Senate. In Senate. Concurrence in Assembly amendments pending. Ordered to special consent calendar. Assembly amendments concurred in. (Ayes 39. Noes 0.) Ordered to engrossing and enrolling.

Location: 8/30/2020-S. ENROLLMENT

Summary: Would require a county child welfare department investigating a case of child abuse or neglect to determine if the parent or guardian is an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States.

The bill would authorize the county child welfare department to develop and adopt memoranda of understanding with military installations that would govern the investigation of allegations of child abuse or neglect against active duty service members, as specified.

The bill would specify that these provisions do not limit or change the responsibilities of a county child welfare department with respect to investigations of, or responses to, allegations of abuse or neglect.

Position: Support

Veteran-backed bills go into effect in 2021



Gov. Gavin Newsom delivers a press briefing at Yountville Veterans Home on Friday, May 22, 2020.

By Seth Reeb
Legislative Advocate
Reeb Government Relations

Gov. Newsom has signed the following veteran bills into law.

AB 240, Irwin. Veterans' homes: lease of property.

Existing law establishes the Veterans' Home of California system for the operation of veterans' homes at various sites.

Existing law sets forth the duties of the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding the administration and regulation of veterans' homes.

Existing law authorizes the Director of General Services to lease or let any real property held by the department for a home, as specified, to any entity or person upon terms and conditions determined to be in the best interests of the home.

This bill would prohibit a lease or let from exceeding 5 years, unless the lessee is a local government or a nonprofit organization that provides services exclusively for veterans of the Armed

Forces of the United States and their families, or the contract for the lease was executed before January 1, 2021.

The bill would require each use, other than an easement, of real property held by the department for a home by a person or entity, other than the home or a resident of the home, to be in writing and meet certain criteria, including that it provide substantial and direct benefits to the home and its members and be appropriate and compatible with the nature of the home.

AB 408, Frazier. Vehicles: disabled veterans.

Existing law authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue special license plates or distinguishing placards to disabled veterans for purposes of certain parking privileges. In issuing a special license plate or placard to a disabled veteran, existing law requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to accept as proof of disability a certificate

from the United States Department of Veterans

Affairs certifying that the applicant is a disabled veteran.

This bill would additionally require the Department of Motor Vehicles to accept a certificate from a county veterans service officer or the Department of Veterans Affairs that certifies that the applicant for a special license plate or placard is a disabled veteran.

AB 2192, Committee on Veterans Affairs. Governor's Military Council.

Existing law establishes the Governor's Military Council that advises the Governor on efforts to retain military installations and operations within the state.

Members of the council are appointed by the Governor and include bipartisan representatives from both houses of the Legislature, as specified.

Existing law repeals the law establishing the council on January 1, 2021.

This bill would extend that repeal date to January 1, 2026.

AB 3371, Committee on Veterans Affairs. Veteran suicides: report.

Existing law requires the State Department of Public Health to implement an electronic death registration system and to access data within the system to compile a report on veteran suicide in California that includes information on the veterans' ages, sexes, races or ethnicities, and methods of suicide.

Existing law requires the department to provide that report annually to the Legislature and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This bill would require that report to include information on the counties of residence of the veterans, and would authorize the report to include additional information.

The bill would also require the report to include a cross-tabulation of that data and to compare the data to the data from the previous year.

The bill would require the report to be submitted on or before March 15 of each year.

SB 588, Archuleta. Public contracts: Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program.

Under existing law, the Department of General Services, except in the case of contracts for professional bond services, is the administering agency of the California Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program, which requires state agencies and all other state entities contracting for materials, supplies, equipment, alteration, repair, or improvement to have at least

3% participation goals for disabled veteran business enterprises (DVBEs), as defined.

Existing law requires an awarding department, upon completion of an awarded contract for which a commitment to achieve a DVBE goal was made, to require the prime contractor that entered into a subcontract with a DVBE to certify to the awarding department specified information relating to amounts paid under the contract, as specified.

Existing law subjects a person or entity that knowingly provides false information on this certification to certain criminal and civil penalties, as specified.

This bill would require an awarding department, on a contract entered into on or after January 1, 2021, to withhold \$10,000, or the full payment if it is less than \$10,000, from the final payment on a contract until that certification is received by the awarding department.

The bill would require the awarding department to give a prime contractor that fails to meet those certification requirements 15 to 30 calendar days to cure the defect.

The bill would require the awarding department to permanently deduct \$10,000 from the final payment, or the full payment if it is less than \$10,000, from a contract with a contractor who does not comply with those requirements within the specified time period.

The bill would require the Legislative Analyst's Office to complete an assessment and report of the DVBE program, as specified, and submit that report to the Legislature on or before January 1, 2024.

Future home of the Fullerton Korean War Memorial

[MEMORIAL, from page 1]

ny for a Korean War Memorial on the grounds of Hillcrest Park in the city of Fullerton.

More than 100 spectators representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars, The Consulate of the Republic of Korea, the Orange County Korean community, representatives from Washington and Sacramento, County, City and local civic leaders marked this important occasion. In March 2020, the Department of California Executive Committee passed resolution 2020.002 in support of the construction of this memorial in the hopes of fostering an “ongoing dialogue about the War’s historical significance while reminding the public of the great sacrifice made by America’s fallen heroes...”

The resolution concludes with the stated purpose “to pay respect and to memorialize those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Korean War.”

The Fullerton Korean War Memorial is the first memorial of its kind to list the names of all 36,492 US service personnel killed in action during the conflict.

As is well known to members of The American Legion, the Korean War began on June 25, 1950 and was brought to an end by



Participants break ground for the Orange County Korean War Memorial (left to right: Fullerton Mayor Pro Tem Jan Flory, Committee member Seungnam Chung, Committee Adviser Sukhee Kang, Pastor Ki Hong Han, Grace Ministry, Fullerton, Member of Congress Gil Cisneros, Republic of Korea Consul General Park Kyung-jae, Fullerton Mayor Jennifer Fitzgerald, Member of California State Assembly Sharon Quirk-Silva, Honorary member of this committee; President of Committee Myung Soo Ro, Commander of the 40th Infantry, Major General Laura Yeager, Committee member Ki Ho Pai, Orange County Supervisor Doug Chaffey, City Councilman Ahmad Zahra (Photo courtesy of Gaston Castellanos, Indivisible CA39)

the armistice signed on July 27, 1953.

While every state, the District of Columbia and five US territories are represented with names on the memorial, 2611 of those names belong to Californians who answered their countries call.

Members of the Republic of Korea Marine Corps Veterans Association, Orange County Color Guard reminded the spectators of the close cooperation between US and Republic of Korea forces during the conflict.

Welcoming comments were made by representatives of the Republic of Korea, the Orange County Korean War Memorial committee, Fullerton Mayor, Jennifer Fitzpatrick, a past Girl’s State and Girl’s Nation delegate, and the commander of the 40th Infantry Division, Major General Laura Yeager who is the first female commander of an Army Infantry Division.

Among the notable attendees representing the Republic of Korea were, Secretary General Pak

Dong-woo and Consul General Park Kyung-Jae; Orange County Korean War Memorial Committee Chairman Ro Myung-soo.

The 39th Congressional District Representative Gil Cisneros Jr., California 65th District Assembly member Sharon Quirk-Silva and Orange County Supervisor Doug Chaffey presented proclamations to the Memorial Committee.

Members of the Fullerton City Council, Mayor Jennifer Fitzgerald, Mayor-Pro Tem Jan Flory and Councilmember Ahmad

Zahra along with prominent members of the Orange County Korean community, participated in the ceremonial ground breaking.

The memorial will consist of a central monument surrounded by smaller monuments bearing the name of the 36,492 service members killed in action.

The total budget for this first of its kind memorial is \$720,000 with \$320,000 raised by the monument Committee and \$320,000 pledged by the government of The Republic of Korea.

The Orange County Korean War Memorial Monument Committee is an IRS approved non-profit organization and is seeking assistance from the community through individual donations through a Go Fund Me page

(www.gofundme.com/f/orange-county-korean-war-memorial-monument)

to meet their construction funding goals.

Construction of the memorial will coincide with a revitalization project for Hillcrest Park being undertaken by the City of Fullerton.

The two projects are planned for completion in June 2021.

Members:
Sign up for American Legion Department of California email updates to receive training, membership info and other important updates.
bit.ly/calegion-emails

Veterans work together to clear property



The dedicated crew are from left to right, Dusty Bower (VFW), Larry LaVerne (American Legion), Bart Ruud (American Legion), and Shawn Simmons (VFW).

By Larry LaVerne
Past Service Officer
Laverne Post 84

Four dedicated Veterans spent many hours clearing brush, mowing weeds, and removing refuse from the yard of a bed bound Iraqi War Veteran.

Due to his severe injuries sustained while in Iraq, this decorated Veteran was unable to do the work to keep his property fire safe.

This is where the Au-

burn, CA American Legion Post 84 and Lincoln, CA VFW Post 264 members came together to get the work done.

With tools and sweat they were able to bring the property up to Fire Safe standards.

Follow up work included getting the Veteran new eyeglasses, cell phone, and groceries.

Veterans working together to help other Veterans.

California: 'By the Numbers' 2019 vs. 2020

By Rick Pushies
Tech Adviser
Media & Communications

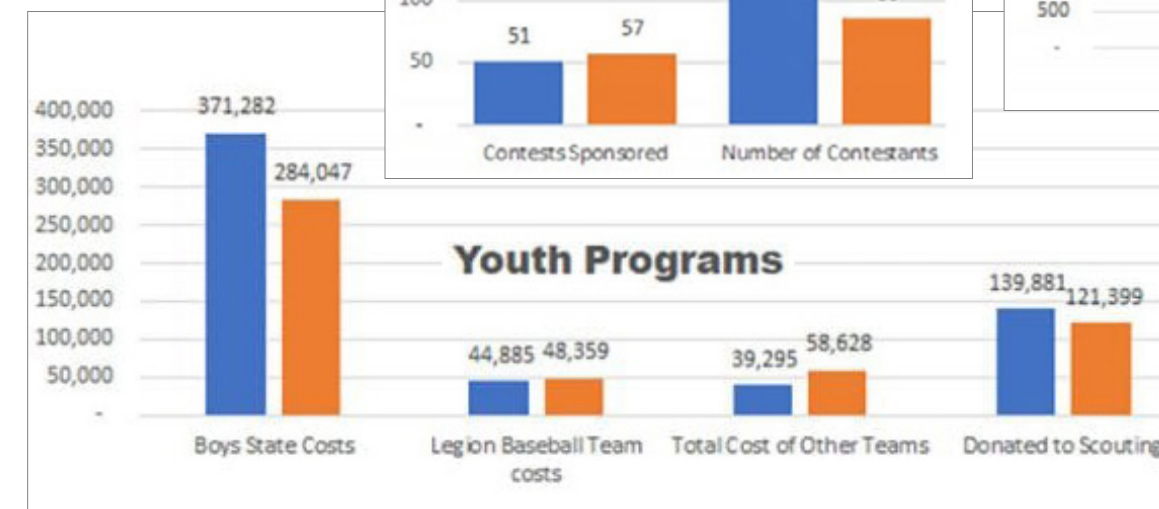
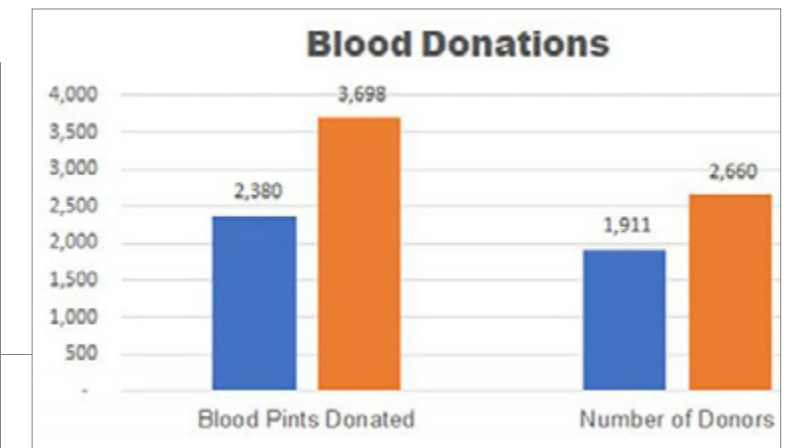
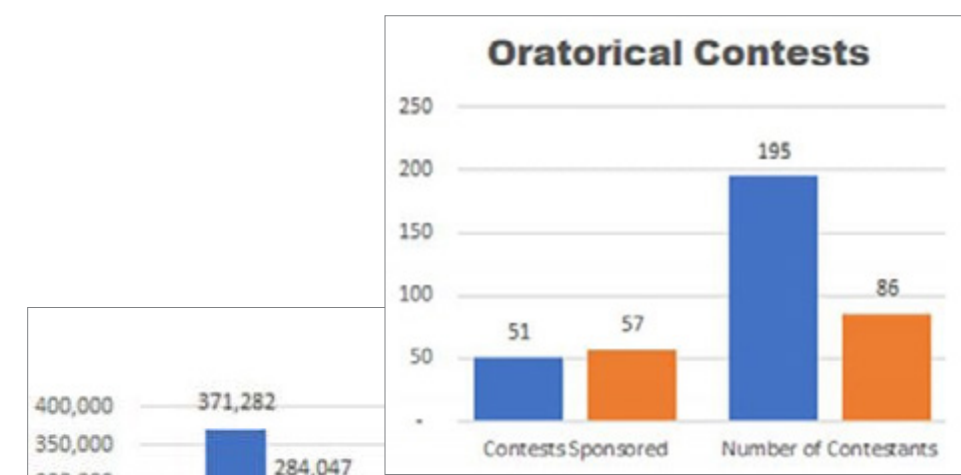
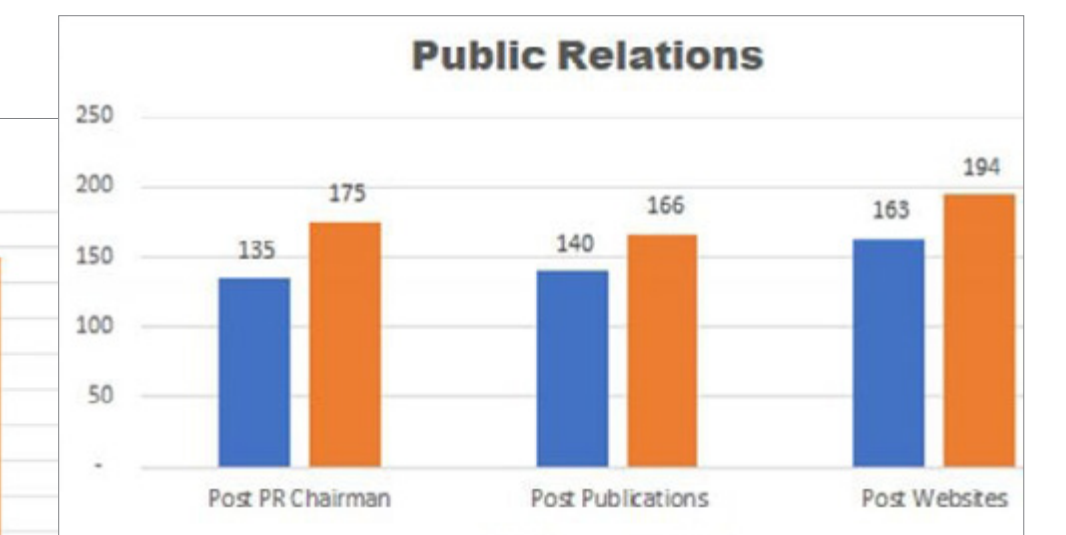
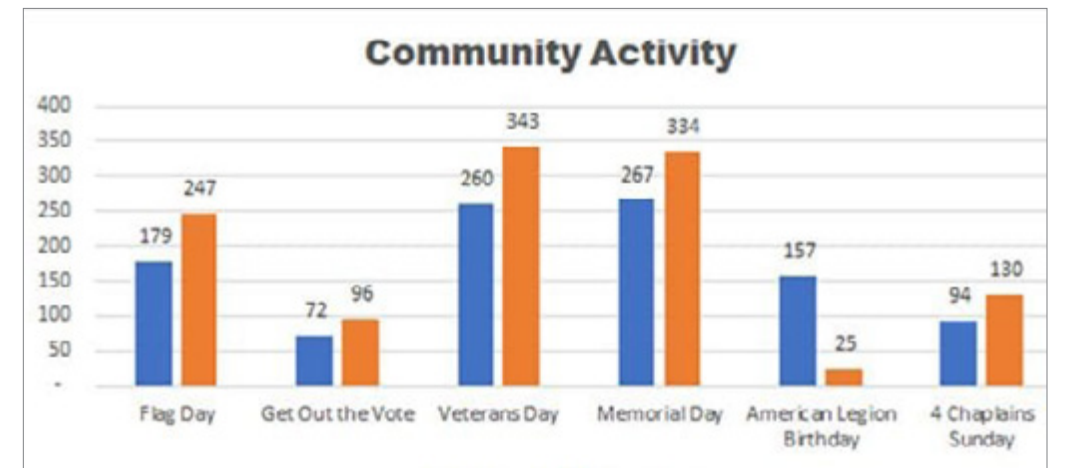
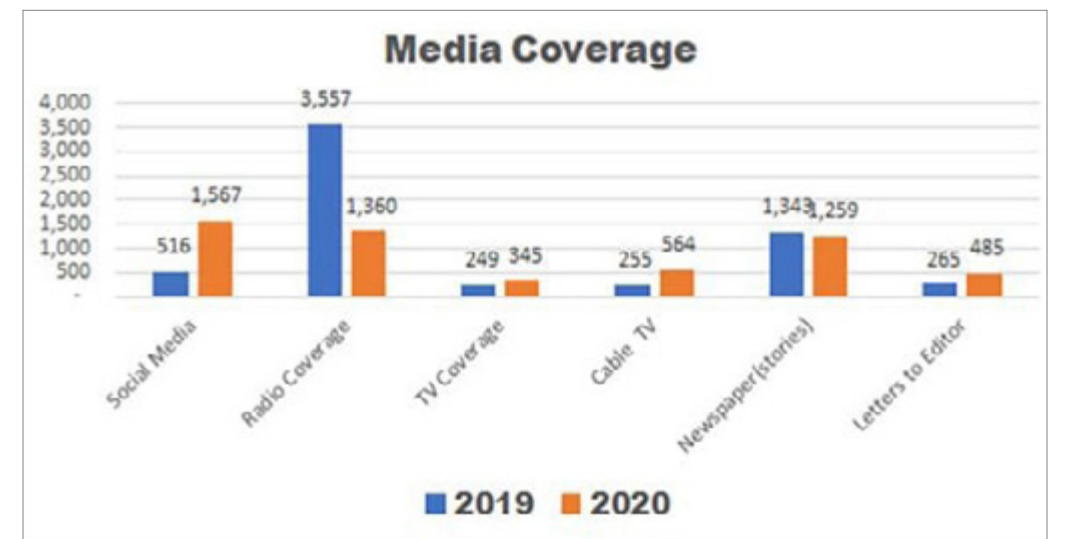
The Consolidated Post Report (CPR) brings the performance of our Legion posts into focus, much like a school report card. We have taken a look at the 2018 – 2019 CPR data and compared it with the most recent 2019 – 2020 CPR data.

The data submitted in your post’s CPR is so important that it is included with data of all other posts in California. Our California data, once it is compiled, is then sent to members of Congress along with

the data submitted from all The American Legion posts across the nation. The CPR is a report required by the Department of California bylaws.

More importantly, the CPR brings key post activities into focus. Accurate CPR data being submitted by every post in California provides a very important story of how much good work our California Legionnaires do every year in service to veterans, their families, and our communities.

In the graphics below are comparisons of 2019 and 2020 date for a number of items tracked in the CPR.

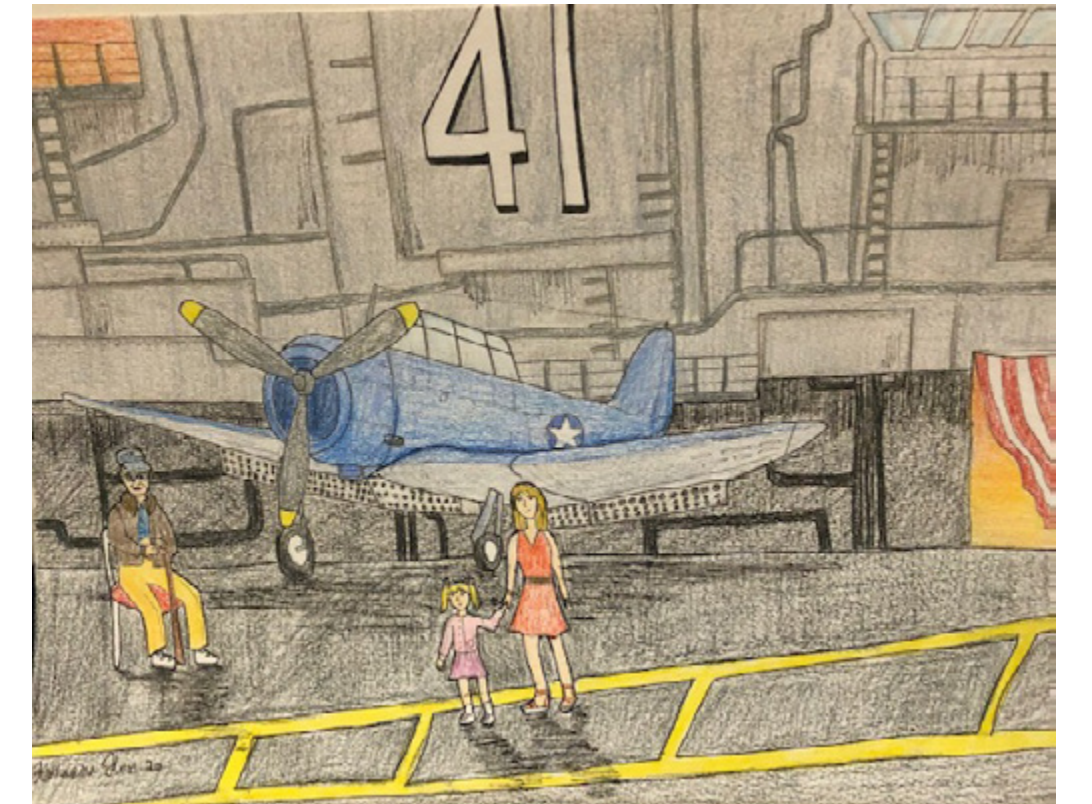




Pritiku Premkumar Category A Honorable Mention 2020



Aria Delgado 1st Place Winner Category B 2020



Katharina Hass Honorable Mention Category B 2020

Patriotism

The 2020 Patriotism & Purpose Youth Art Contest reflects the positive impact our veterans are making in communities across the country and was open to California kids ages 5-17.

Artwork was judged on its positive representation of military veterans and their impact on children.

The Department of California had 26 art entries for the contest. Entries were submitted from the following cit-

ies: Alta Loma, Bakersfield, Borrego Springs, Danville, Dublin, Pleasanton, San Diego, Sanger, Semi Valley, and Stockton.

The judging was done by numbering the entries, so no names or cities were used to identify the artist.

The judges were from The American Legion and were from Post 23 in Sanger, Post 147 in Clovis, and Post 509 in Fresno.

& Purpose

First prize of \$500 was given in each of the two categories. The kids will receive a framed copy of their artwork along with a certificate. Congratulations to all who entered the contest. They made it very difficult for the judges to select the winners as all the entries represented the very best from the kids of California.

Category A: 5-12 years old

1st Prize: Claire Lu, 10, from Dublin

Honorable Mention:

Aaditya Raja, 12, from Pleasanton
Claire Campbell, 9, from Pleasanton
Pritika Premkumar, 12, from Pleasanton

Category B: 13 - 17 years old

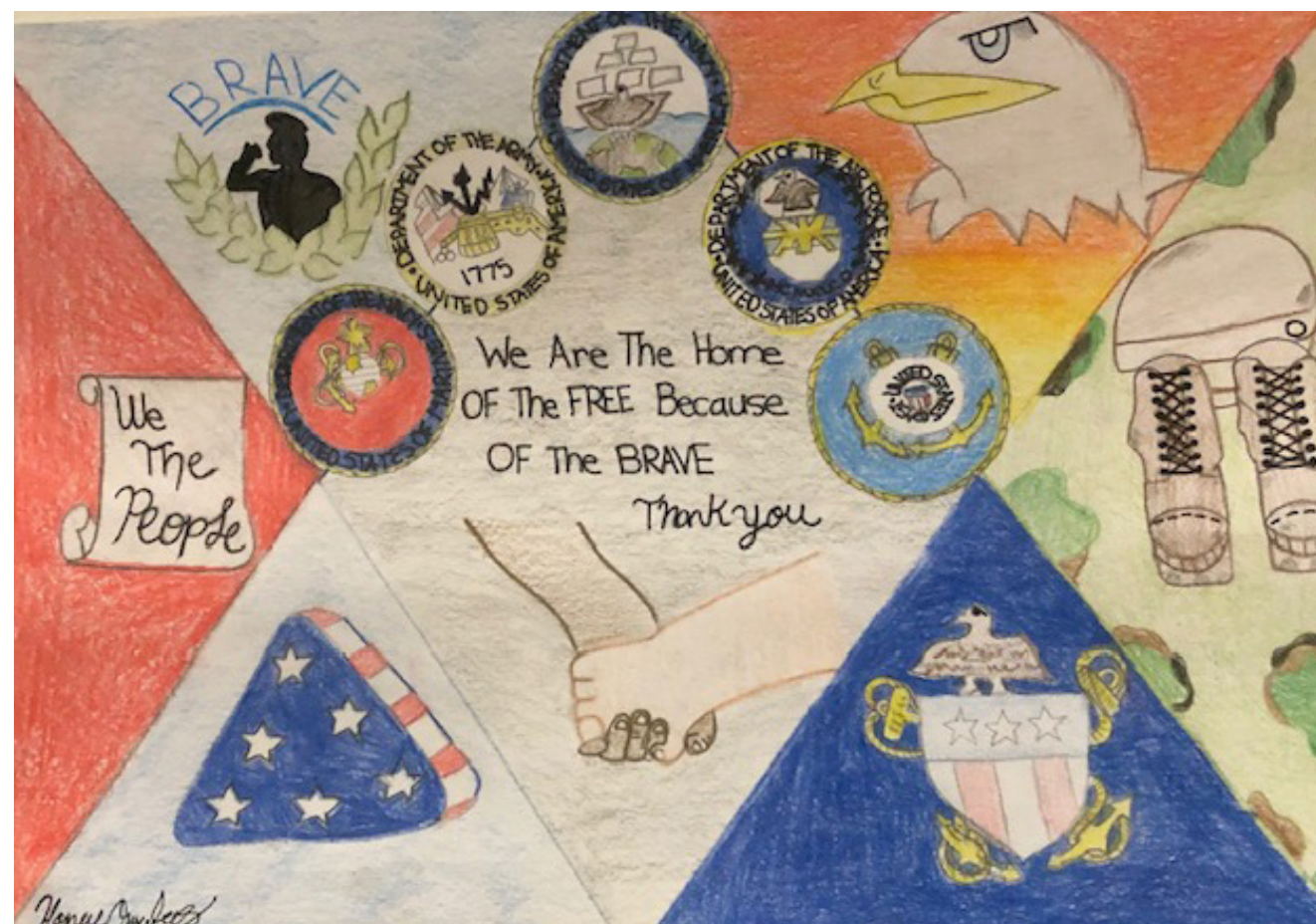
1st Prize: Aria Delgado, 16 from Sanger

Honorable Mention:

Skylar Ruby, 13, from Dublin
Katharina Hass, 17, from San Diego
Honey Ornelas, 13, from Bakersfield



Skylar Ruby Honorable Mention Category B 2020



Honey Ornelas Honorable Mention Category B 2020



Aaditya Raja Category A Honorable Mention 2020

VSOs Give Input On CalVet's Barstow Veterans Home

CalVet will make its report to the Legislature in February 2021 and commentary from the stakeholder calls and your written input will be included

By Seth Reeb
Legislative Advocate
Reeb Government Relations

CalVet held a stakeholder tele-meeting last month regarding the Barstow Veterans Home.

There were a series of eight stakeholder conference calls on the home, each gathering input from a different group of stakeholders such as the home's residents, local business, Barstow local government and veterans service organizations.

The Sept. 8 call was for veterans service organizations.

Here are our notes from that call:

The call was organized and chaired by the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

If there are any veterans, vet leaders, or anyone with an interest in the vet homes who still wishes to make comments, please make them at:

stakeholderinput@calvet.ca.gov

CalVet will make its report to the Legislature in February 2021 and commentary from the stakeholder calls or written input will be included.

Some key comments/questions were:

What has been done to try to attract/bring other vets to the home?

CalVet responded that they have tried to bring more vets in, especially homeless vets.

CalVet also noted that the structure of the vet homes' long-term care licensing limits how much

they can stretch the requirements of who they can admit.

CalVet has tried to get homeless vets into the home as much as their federal and state licensing will allow.

Are there any medical services needed by the home's residents that are not provided for in the area?

CalVet responded that it is sometimes hard to get vendors to provide some supplemental services such as LVN, psychiatry, etc.

There is also a shortage of backup vendors.

Have you looked at utilizing telemedicine?

CalVet responded that they have been working on telemedicine at all the homes.

Can CalVet and local hospitals coordinate to share vendors, create partnerships, etc?

Do the home's residents face long wait times from the nearest VA hospital (Loma Linda)?

How many of the home's resident's medical needs are not being met?

Before you submit the report, are you going to find out how many vets needs are going unmet in San Bernardino County and the surrounding areas?

CalVet responded that that data may not exist anywhere. They were hoping to get some feel of that from these stakeholder calls.

A Trustee from the local college (which apparently had deeded the vet home land over to the state)

pointed out that the land deed stated the land must be used for a vet facility.

It could not become

a skilled nursing facility (SNIF) for non-vets.

I am not sure why this was brought up? Maybe someone had mentioned that as a possible alternative use for the home?

One person asked how difficult the drive to the Loma Linda VA was and are the wages for the Barstow Home employees attractive to retain employees?

Have you considered creating a partnership with Barstow Community College to provide as a feeder of trained employees?

CalVet will look into. CalVet also mentioned that there is a person working on a C&A. The program is in the early stages and CalVet is working to resurrect the C&A partnership.

I am not sure what a C&A is, but in the context of the question is probably a program to bring in trained or train students in the local college program.

The American Legion was concerned that the dollars were driving the final outcome of the Barstow Home rather than the needs of the vets.

The Legion also asked what kind of feedback has CalVet been getting from local vets and residents?

CalVet responded that feedback was as anticipated.

Residents were worried about where they would be living and they want to stay. Some responded they were for increasing SNIF beds.

One local commented that she felt the data on the mileage to the Loma Linda Va was not accurately portrayed.

She said that comparing freeway miles may not

be comparing apples and oranges.

For instance, 20 miles may not be a long trip in the high desert whereas a 5 mile trip could take a hour or more in the crowded Bay Area.

Are you still admitting vets to the Barstow Home?

CalVet responded that the pandemic has impacted the intake process.

They are still taking applications. Bringing new people in could also be medically risky during the state of semi quarantine.

A commenter noted that the state is going to face more growth and the High Desert is always growing.

Why would we want to push veterans services "down the hill" to the big city? It causes traffic, etc.

The process for determining the future of the Barstow Home is:

The process to decide the fate of the Barstow Home was outlined in AB 89, the state budget act signed in June:

The Department of Veterans Affairs shall conduct at least three stakeholder meetings regarding its proposed plan for the Barstow Veterans Home during the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide a report to the Legislature by February 1, 2021, on its proposed plan for the Barstow Veterans Home. The plan shall include the following:

(a) A list of the deferred maintenance needs and associated costs for

the home.

(b) A description of prior actions taken to attempt to increase occupancy of the home.

(c) A transition plan of the home that is in alignment with the vision of the 2020 Master Plan that includes:

(1) A detailed transition plan that ensures that no residents of the home are involuntarily discharged without being provided alternate placement options as part of any transition efforts, and includes changes in staffing.

(2) An estimate of the cost and programmatic impacts of the plan for the home on the department's Veterans Homes system and the methods for measuring savings and revenue losses.

(3) Options for expansion of the home's skilled nursing facility as recommended in the 2020 Master Plan.

(4) Options for conversion of the home's intermediate care facility into a residential care facility for the elderly as recommended in the 2020 Master Plan.

(5) An option for full closure of the home.

(6) A description of the precautions the department will take to maintain the safety of residents during the public health crisis and how the plan and timeline will be modified if the public health crisis worsens.

(d) A summary of the options discussed, and feedback received, at the stakeholder meetings required in Provision 4.



WWII Navy veteran Alex Chavez, a resident of the California Veterans Home in Yountville, takes a roll, Tuesday, April 17, 2018. (Kent Porter / The Press Democrat) 2018

CalVet, VA report low COVID-19 infection rates among California veterans

By Christian Southards
Contributing Writer

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced on Aug. 27 that new policies aimed at reducing the infection rate of COVID-19 at its health care facilities have thus far been successful.

The infection rate among VA patients and employees currently sits at less than 1% nationally, which the VA notes is "much lower than other health care systems."

COVID-19 testing capabilities at VA facilities throughout the country have dramatically improved as well.

In March, the VA was only able to provide approximately 631 tests per day; however, that number has increased to upwards of

6,300 tests per day.

Testing has allowed health care workers to make informed decisions on how to keep the infection from spreading in facilities.

The VA cites containment measures it began implementing back in March, such as full PPE gear and limited visitation, as well as virtual screening services it started using in June as the reason for this current success.

Breaking Down Veteran Infection Rates in California

In California, CalVet reported considerable success in maintaining exceptionally low infection numbers in the eight Veterans Homes throughout the state, noting on Aug. 21 that only one resident was currently infected, in addition to only 15 employees.

As recently as July, those numbers were only slightly higher, indicating a positive handle at Veterans Homes on a public health crisis that continues to hit the country hard.

As for the VA health care system in California, the VA reported that as of Aug. 27, California only had 238 active cases among its veteran population compared to 357 in Texas and 362 in Florida – states with smaller veteran and civilian populations.

The VA defines active cases as those where patients have not been discharged from medical treatment.

The VA notes that anyone who feels sick should avoid contact with others and that veterans should contact their local VA health care facility upon experiencing symptoms.

This includes the suspension of debt collection action for up to 90 days or extending repayment terms on preexisting VA debts, whichever the Veteran prefers.

To request assistance for VA financial debt relief, Veterans should contact the VA Debt Management Center at 1-800-827-0648.

VA notifies veterans of compromised personal information

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Management on Sept. 14 announced a data breach involving the personal information of approximately 46,000 Veterans and actions taken by the department to prevent and mitigate any potential harm to those individuals.

The Financial Services Center (FSC) determined one of its online applications was accessed by unauthorized users to divert payments to community health care providers for the medical treatment of Veterans.

The FSC took the application offline and reported the breach to VA's Privacy Office.

A preliminary review indicates these unauthorized users gained access to the application to change financial information and divert payments from VA by using social engineering techniques and exploiting authentication protocols.

To prevent any future improper access to and modification of information, system access will not be reenabled until a comprehensive security review is completed by the VA Of-

fice of Information Technology.

To protect these Veterans, the FSC is alerting the affected individuals, including the next-of-kin of those who are deceased, of the potential risk to their personal information.

The department is also offering access to credit monitoring services, at no cost, to those whose social security numbers may have been compromised.

Veterans whose information was involved are advised to follow the instructions in the letter to protect their data.

There is no action needed from Veterans if they did not receive an alert by mail, as their personal information was not involved in the incident.

Veterans or Veteran next-of-kin that receive notification their information is potentially at risk from this incident can direct specific questions to the FSC Customer Help Desk to VA.FSCVeteransSupport@va.gov or writing to VA FSC Help Desk, Attn: Customer Engagement Center, P.O. Box 149971, Austin, TX 78714-9971.

VA awards \$1.3 million for suicide prevention

The VA announced on Sept. 14 it recently awarded \$1.3 million in grants to 11 regional homelessness nonprofit organizations to bolster suicide prevention services for Veterans who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

VA's combined public health approach to preventing suicide and addressing homelessness aims to improve the identification of Veterans in need within the community, increase Veteran and

community awareness of suicide risk and protective factors, and increase Veterans' connectedness to community and care resources.

"Our data shows Veterans are at particular risk for suicide within 30 days of an eviction or the onset of homelessness, especially when it is paired with other risk factors, such as financial instability and difficulty meeting basic needs," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

VA offers debt relief after natural disasters

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced Sept. 16 its commitment to extend debt relief to Veterans adversely impacted by natural disasters.

The department recognizes Veterans and beneficiaries are negatively impacted by the wildfires and hurricanes prompting the

offering of financial debt relief.

"Veterans and their families should be focused on their health and safety during the natural disasters," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "VA is taking action to give those with pending debts greater flexibility during these challenging times."



WWII Veteran Red Moak in Army greens at his Vacaville home on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020.

Vacaville community gives birthday drive-by to WWII veteran

By Nestor Aliga
Post 603 Historian

On September 12, over 100 vehicles did a COVID-safe drive-by to joyfully celebrate the 100th birthday of World War II Veteran Red Moak.

Red and his family and neighbors on Larkspur Drive in Vacaville were all ecstatic with the parade of flag-waving and red-white-blue decorated vehicles.



WWII Veteran Red Moak

According to the TheReporter.com article published on Sept. 13, Red took basic training at Camp Cooke (now Vandenberg Air Force Base) near Lompoc, CA, then to Oklaho-ma for artillery training, followed by more training at Fort Polk, LA.

Red went England in 1943, then to Normandy, France two months after the June 6, 1944, D-Day invasion. He fought in the Siege of Bastogne in Bel-

gium in December 1944, part of the Battle of the Bulge, then to the Battle of Hürtgen Forest until March 1945. He then crossed the Rhine River towards Berlin, arriving as the Germans were surrendering.

Red's unit also helped to liberate a concentration camp.

"Most of the people in that old brick building didn't even weigh 100 pounds... We left with no understanding of how humans can be so cruel to each other," he said.

Red came home in January 1946, and noted "the heroes are not the ones who came back, it's the ones who didn't come back."

The drive-by planning started a few weeks ago when Red's neighbor, GayLee Butterfield, distributed flyers about the 100th birthday of their well-loved, very kind, and generous neighbor. Then Nancy Adams, another neighbor, contacted the Vacaville Veteran's Memorial Building.

In turn, VacaVets.org notified all their member organizations: American Legion Post 165 and Auxiliary, American Veterans Post 1776 and Auxiliary, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 84, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7244 and Auxiliary.

As soon as I heard about it, I looked at my database of the nearly 2,000 Veterans that my American Legion Post 603 in Vallejo have honored since 2011. Red was one of our WWII honorees in December 2011 on the 70th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, and again in December 2016 (our invitation for "World Peace II" was announced in the California Legionnaire's October 2016 edition).

According to his daughter Sharon Barr, Red could not attend both events and never received his certificates of appreciation.

However, Post 603 kept scanned copies of the certificates from federal, state, county, and city elected officials which were re-printed for our humble WWII Veteran.

Like most of the great-generation WWII Veterans that I've met, I found out from Sharon that Red has not applied for his Veterans Affairs C&P (compensation and pension) benefits nor CalVet benefits. Good news is that Sharon and Red quickly visited Ted Puntillo of the Solano County Veterans Service Office - whose team is among the best per the www.CACVSO.org 2020 Annual Report.

Post 603 remembers 9/11

By Nestor Aliga
Post 603 Historian

Due to COVID safety precautions, most cities chose to not conduct their annual live 9/11 events.

The American Legion Manuel L. Quezon Post 603 has been helping to annually commemorate this solemn yet highly attended gathering — that includes a Vallejo Police and Fire Memorial Day — so an out-of-the-box solution had to be mind-stormed.

Post 603 started planning an alternative during its monthly virtual meeting in July.

A small committee was formed to quickly write and submit a 9/11 proclamation to the city mayor's office (30-day lead-time).

Then they asked various elected officials, city personnel, other veterans, and auxiliary members to make "selfie" videos.

The result is an 18.5-minute video that features: Rose Mendoza sing-

ing the National Anthem (wife of Avelino Mendoza, a Post 603, VFW1123.org, and FARUSAFSA.org member); Vallejo Police Dept. Chaplain Michael Brown (Post 603 member); Vallejo Mayor Bob Sampayan with the welcome and the proclamation; and remarks from State Senator Bill Dodd, Assembly-member Tim Grayson, Solano County Supervisor Monica Brown, Vallejo Councilmember Rozzana Verder-Aliga, Vallejo Police Dept. Chief Shawny Williams, and Vallejo Fire Dept. Deputy Chief Kyle Long.

The individual videos and graphics were compiled and edited by volunteer Rizal Aliga, a University of California Santa Cruz graduate and a current UC Merced post-graduate student, who also uploaded it to youtube.

The video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/KxQ5kMObkWk>



World Trade Center, Sept. 11, 2001 (Photo: The New York Times)



American Legion Post 776 members assist at the Fallbrook Food Pantry in May. Pictured above: Tom Lester, Marti Sonniksen, Joe DiMento and Al Ollivares.

Fallbrook Legion Family volunteers at food bank

By Marti Sonniksen
Commander
Fallbrook Post 776

As the world crawls toward Fall 2020, members of American Legion Post 776, in Fallbrook, are challenged to find a new normal in the face of COVID, fires, smoke and ash.

While forced to cancel many wonderful activities, members remain busy.

New officers were elected in May. Marti Sonniksen is the new Post Commander, Jeanine Domercq is Post Adjutant, Joseph DiMento is Finance Officer, Michael

Bermudez is the Chaplain, and Thomas Lester III holds the position of Sgt-at-Arms.

Membership meetings are currently held, socially distanced, on the first Saturday of the month, 1 p.m., at the VFW Hall, 1175 Old Stage Road. Those not comfortable attending in person, are linked in via Zoom. Members are advised that voting will take place at the October meeting to change our meeting date and time to the first Thursday of the month, at 6 p.m. We're adapting.

On Patriot Day, September 11, we encouraged those comfortable doing

so, to have dinner downtown and wear red, white and blue in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the 9/11 attack and subsequent wars on terror.

Several members also helped distribute food at the Fallbrook Food Pantry in September and participate in a blood drive in October. With precautions and masks, we remain dedicated to our community.

We hosted a successful Salmon Dinner Fundraiser earlier in the year and decided to do it again. Our delicious blackened salmon dinner was a huge hit.

Our Defender Bracelet

fundraiser continues and bracelets can be purchased at the VFW Hall, 1175 Old Stage Road, for only \$5. These bracelets make great gifts at a reasonable price.

You can also order by calling the Post Commander. Phone orders incur a shipping charge. (Details below)

We'd also like to thank the Fallbrook VFW, for graciously sharing space with us at their VFW Hall on Old Stage Road. We've been given a wall inside the Canteen, for our American Legion information, awards and memorabilia.

Contact the Com-

mander if you have anything to contribute and let's hope the Cantina will be allowed to reopen soon.

If you are able to support the VFW in their fundraisers and dinners, we encourage you to do so.

We are all in this together to benefit our fellow veterans and our community.

As always, if you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the Commander, Marti Sonniksen, 209-595-6804.

Our Defender Bracelet fundraiser continues and bracelets can be purchased at the VFW Hall, 1175 Old Stage Road, for only \$5.

In American Legion History

Disabled Veterans Tax
Oct. 17, 2003

American Legion efforts on Capitol Hill break the deadlock on the Disabled Veterans Tax when Congress creates a 10-year phase-in for service-connected disabled retirees to receive military retired pay and VA disability compensation without subtraction from either. Legion efforts also result in passage of the Military Family Tax Relief Act.

American Legion Riders
Oct. 17-18, 2007

The American Legion National Executive Committee passes Resolution 35 and adopts The American Legion Riders as a national program of The American Legion. The first American Legion Riders chapter was established by American Legion Post 396 in Garden City, Mich., in 1993.

Legacy Scholarship
Oct. 22, 2009

President Obama signs the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform Act of 2009, guaranteeing "advance funding" for VA appropriations. The new law sets funding for VA one year in advance.



(File Photo: Officers of American Legion Santa Monica Post 123 being inducted.)

The Legion remains non-political through November and beyond

By Ed Grimsley
Department Commander

As we approach the upcoming presidential election, I am compelled to speak again about the stance we have to take as members of this great veterans nonprofit.

We are a very political organization, in regards to the issues which directly affect our veterans and their families.

We are not, nor have we ever been, an organization which supports political candidates, political parties, or participate in partisan activities or en-

deavors.

Powers that be will always try to use outstanding organizations as ours to legitimize their efforts and put their candidates over the top.

If you follow the rules outlined in this article, you will avoid dragging yourself and your post into

controversies which always tend to occur this time of the election cycle.

As always, our American Legion stands for the principles we have outlined in our preamble. Stay focused on this whenever we engage our organization with our community and we will ride this wave

together, regardless of the outcomes of this and every election yet to come.

As veterans, our focus remains on helping veterans. Let us remember we have a long-term relationship with each other and our communities which extends much further than Nov. 3.

How to remain nonpartisan during an election season

by Janet Wilson
Past NEC
& Past Dept. of California
Commander

According to Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of The American Legion, "The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment."

The National Charter, approved by Congress, also stipulates The American Legion as an organization is nonpolitical (This means "non-partisan" in today's society) which has been interpreted by the National

Judge Advocate as "non-partisan" in modern lingo.

Therefore, The American Legion as an organization is prohibited from contributing, helping or endorsing a candidate. However, a member, as a private citizen, and not representing the organization, can employ whatever legal and ethical means to advance his or her candidate.

Appropriate wear of the Legion Cover at political events and rallies

The Legion cap is considered the official Legion uniform (see p. 42).

It is not an individual Legion member's decision on the appropriate usage of the cap and emblem.

If attending a political

event, The American Legion cap, or any clothing with the emblem visible, should be removed so as not to imply endorsement

It is not an individual Legion member's decision on the appropriate usage of the cap and emblem

by The American Legion.

The problem is the assumption of endorsement by those who see the emblem or name worn at in improper location, such as a partisan rally.

Hosting a political candidate at your Post

When using post facilities to host candidates, post should remove emblem and Legion flag to avoid any impression of endorsement.

Candidates for all parties must be presented equal opportunity at the same time to use the facilities on the same terms and conditions as other competing candidates.

Accepting donations from a political figure

If financial contributions are offered by candidates for political office, campaigns, political action committees or political parties, The American Legion should politely decline.

Accepting these contributions may be perfectly legal, but The American Legion must avoid any perception of supporting any candidate or political party.

The American Legion values its independence and effectiveness on veterans' issues.

This stance is best maintained by neutrality on individual candidates or political parties.

The American Legion by legal definition is non-partisan and supports only issues which impact the Four Pillars.

The American Legion is allowed by Congress to lobby for veterans' benefits and a strong United States of America.

(NJA, October 25, 2012)

American Legion revises vision, mission, values and motto

American Legion National

The nation's largest wartime veterans service organization revised several areas of focus in order to better focus on serving America's veterans.

The National Executive Committee of the The American Legion recently passed Resolution 5, which revises its vision, mission, values and motto.

Vision: "The American Legion strengthens America by improving the lives of our veterans, the military and their families."

Mission Statement: "The American Legion strengthens our communities, states and nation with programs and services for our veterans, the military and their families."

Motto: "Veterans Strengthening America."

Value Principles:

A VETERAN IS A VETERAN – which means The American Legion embraces all current and former members of the military and endeavors to help them transition into their communities.

SELFLESS SERVICE – which means The American Legion celebrates all who contribute to something larger than themselves and inspires others to serve and strengthen America.

AMERICAN VALUES AND PATRIOTISM – which means The American Legion advocates for upholding and defending the United States Constitution, equal justice and opportunity for everyone and discrimination against no one, youth education, responsible citizenship and honoring military service by observing and participating in patriotic and memorial events.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – which means The American Legion meets the unique needs of local communities.

The organization with a



ADVANCING THE VISION – which means The American Legion educates, mentors and leads new generations of Americans.

Vision: "The American Legion strengthens America by improving the lives of our veterans, the military and their families."

HONORING THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US – which means The American Legion pays perpetual respect for all past military sacrifices to ensure they are never forgotten by new generations.

One big advantage of having a sound vision and mission is that it provides the organization with a

very clear lens through which to view issues and decide whether we should publicly comment on said issue(s).

Motto: "Veterans Strengthening America."

As you know, when The American Legion speaks we carry the voices of all our members and veterans across the nation and the globe. As such, we have an enormous responsibility to be thoughtful, judicious and measured when we do elect to enter any conversation in a public forum.

Therefore, we will strive to publicly comment on issues that do in fact have a direct impact on improving the lives of veterans, the military and their families.

Additionally, as you are aware, National has made many public comments on

a number of social issues so our position is quite clear on almost any recent topic – Law Enforcement, Sanctuary Cities, Flag Code, etc., so the need to con-

Mission Statement: "The American Legion strengthens our communities, states and nation with programs and services for our veterans, the military and their families."

tinuously reiterate those statements is in many instances simply redundant.

We do, however, recognize that on a local and regional level the needs of your Department(s) may be somewhat different so we wanted to provide you

with some thoughts on how to comment on public issues if you deem the need to comment necessary:

Local media and officials looking for comment desire to hear from their local American Legion leadership when it comes to issues that pertain to their specific communities.

Remarks made by local Legion leadership to the media (or other officials) should be based on Resolutions only – and not the personal beliefs or wishes of the designated local spokesperson.

Resolutions on specific topics can be searched here – <https://www.legion.org/resolutions>

For reference purposes, you can also search for past comments National has made on issues here – <https://www.legion.org/pressrelease>

Finally, we would highly recommend that local Legion leadership apply the same lens as National does and comment on issues pertinent to improving the lives of veterans, the military and their families.

We hope this information is helpful, and thanks for all you do on a daily basis to improve the lives of veterans, the military and their families.



Sign up...

for email newsletters from American Legion National Headquarters to stay up to date on training and the latest news out of Indianapolis and Washington DC.

[Legion.org/newsletters](https://www.legion.org/newsletters)

Jones Awarded Legislator of the Year

By **Kerry Cortinas**
Historian, District 22

Department of California Commander Ed Grimsley presented the Legislator of the Year Award to Sen. Brian Jones on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020, the 101st anniversary of the charter and incorporation by Congress of The American Legion as a patriotic veterans organization.

Jones shared some of his experiences with Boys State and the American Legion and joked, saying although he finished second place, he still realized his goal of becoming an elected member of Congress who continues to work hard for America's veterans.

The senator was elected in 2018 to serve the people of California's 38th Senate district.

He is Chair of the Senate Republican Caucus.

Prior to serving in the Senate, Jones was a Santee City Council Member for eight years from 2001 to 2010 then again from 2017 to 2018.

Jones was the representative for the 71st Assembly District from 2010 to 2016.

Jones grew up in the district and attended San-



Department Commander Ed Grimsley hands a challenge coin to Sen. Brian Jones, awarded Legislator of the Year on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020, the 101st anniversary of the charter and incorporation by Congress of The American Legion as a patriotic veterans organization.

(Photo: Kerry Cortinas)

tee Elementary, Cajon Park Middle School, and Santa Ana High School.

He continued his education at Grossmont College before earning a bachelor's degree in business administration at San Diego State University.

Some of the legislative priorities during his Assembly years were lowering taxes, improving the economic development for small businesses, supporting our Armed Forces and veterans, removing unnecessary red

tape, and protecting the 2nd Amendment right.

Jones' legislative achievements include the introduction and co-authorship of "Made in America" legislation, which makes it easier for manufacturers to do business in California, legislation to support the expanding craft beverage industry in California, and legislation allowing non-motorized vehicles such as scooters, bicycles, and wheelchairs in skate parks.

He became well known for his annual 2nd Amendment Awareness event, which educated his constituents on the Second Amendment rights and related state legislation and gave attendees opportunities to learn how to control a firearm safely or improve their accuracy.

Earlier this session Senator Jones introduced Senate Bill 1177, a measure responding to a State Auditor's Report about some properties at State

Veterans Homes be leased out for long periods of time under terms that didn't always prioritize the best possible benefits for the Home, the state taxpayers and the veteran residents of the Home.

SB 1177 easily cleared the Senate and helped clear the way for a final similar measure – AB 240 – to pass the Legislature and get recently signed into law by the Governor.

Also this session Senator Jones hosted 101-year-old WWII Veteran Sidney Walton at the California State Capitol.

Walton was on a tour to visit all 50 state capitols. <https://jones.cssrc.us/content/101-year-old-ww-ii-veteran-sidney-walton-visits-california-state-capitol>

Additionally, Senator Jones worked with local veterans and law enforcement on the "Back the Badge" motorcycle rally in July.

Jones rode his own motorcycle in the rally in which riders visited several law enforcement agencies in the San Diego region to demonstrate support for the men and women in law enforcement.

'Communication Toolkit' will help Legion Family

By **Rick Pushies**
Technical Adviser
Media & Communications

More than a few of our local posts have gotten in trouble over the years with the IRS and lost their non-profit status because they were not aware that their American Legion post was required to report IRS Form 8822B annually.

Posts are also not always comfortable marketing their good work to their Legion Family and the local community.

These and many other communication topics our Legion Family leadership

must face each year.

They can be especially challenging to those new to their post leadership role.

That is why we developed the Communications Toolkit.

The Media & Communications (M&C) Commission has put the critical communications challenges our Legion Family may encounter each year into a single document to make them easier to find.

The Toolkit's content is divided into two broad categories: Operational and Marketing Communications.

The Toolkit's "Con-

tents" page will quickly show the topics covered.

Please take the time to read the topics that interest your post the most. The Toolkit contains links to webpages and materials on our caLegion.org website and The American Legion national website. There are also some informative videos.

When searching for information on the internet, sometimes there is almost too much information available; this makes finding what you need confusing and challenging.

We have filtered through a large quantity of

internet data for information on communication for the Toolkit.

We tried to find information that would help our Legion Family leaders the most.

As an example, we viewed close to a dozen videos on the topic of press releases before we found the one we were comfortable with sharing.

The video we chose to share is in clearly spoken English (no heavy accents).

It is short, and it covers the topic of press releases rather well.

Legionnaires with decades of marketing experi-

ence in the business world also produced the Post Marketing & Communication PowerPoint presentation specifically for the Toolkit.

The Media & Communications Commission has many responsibilities to improve communications throughout our Legion.

Effective communication is an especially important and challenging leadership skill. We believe the communications that take place within our post Legion Family are some of the most important.

<https://calegion.org/mc-commission/>