



Legion Indy Car, p.10



Helping Vets with PTSD, p.8

DELIVERIES TO BUCHA: US Army veteran trucks aid to battle-scarred Ukrainian towns

By Jared Morgan
Editor

Army veteran Chris Loverro is one of thousands of Americans who have traveled to Ukraine to assist in that country's effort to defend against the recent Russian invasion.

But Loverro isn't taking

up a Kalashnikov rifle. He's manning a truck and delivering humanitarian aid to some of Ukraine's hardest hit towns, including Bucha, the site of alleged Russian war crimes that came to global attention earlier this month.

From his Los Angeles home, Loverro had been watching the Russian invasion unfold on TV when he decided he had to do something.

"Like so many other veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan — and military vets in general — we feel compelled to do something," Loverro said in a Signal call.

His journey to Ukraine started with research to see who he could volunteer for. "Another veteran I served with in Mosul with the 2nd Infantry Division, Juan

Continued on page 11



U.S. Army veteran and American Legion Hollywood Post 43 member Christopher Loverro stands in front of a badly damaged building in war-torn Ukraine. (Courtesy Photo)

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L.A. County Sheriff's approach to homeless helps de-escalate crisis

By Scott Marshutz
Contributor

Over the last decade, homelessness in Los Angeles County has exploded. Statistics compiled by the L.A. County Sheriff projected the number to hit 80,000 by the end of 2021.

Of those 80,000, more than 10 percent are veterans. In 2019, there were 13,000 homeless veterans in the county. The count, however, was suspended for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The reasons behind the year-to-year increases are numerous: failed measures and propositions,

jurisdictional battles, narcotics decriminalization, efforts to keep law enforcement out of the issue, limited resources and the inability to regulate public space.

L.A. government's limited resources have been taxed even further with the influx of homeless people from out of state.

Money spent by the county and city, earmarked exclusively for homeless programs, approached \$1 billion in 2020-21.

And while the homeless numbers continue to rise, so do the number of homeless deaths, which are estimated to be five per day



A significant percentage of Los Angeles' homeless veteran population lives on Skid Row, pictured here. (Photo: Staff Sgt. Andrew Lee/ Air Force)

or nearly 2,000 per year.

Combined, the situation has negatively affected property values, tourism and the health and safety of many communities.

L.A. County Sheriff Alex Villanueva argues that law enforcement should be involved.

"We are literally the

backbone of a civil society," Villanueva said last summer. "Because we can't regulate public space, we're enabling dependency."

Villanueva's point is that certain nonprofit agencies are providing the homeless with food, clothing and other products they can

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**THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA**

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- Submissions to the Department website can be made at any time by visiting caLegion.org/ugc (please email the editor to let them know you've submitted online)
- Photos should be sent at the highest resolution possible
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- All submissions become the property of The American Legion Department of California. All submitted material is subject to edit, rework and omission. We are not responsible for lost items or misplaced material
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Memorial Day Speech



On Memorial Day this year, the American Legion Family will honor the more than 1 million men and women who have lost their lives defending America since the revolutionary War. An American Legion Memorial Day speech for 2022 is available for American Legion departments, districts and posts to use for Memorial Day events at Legion.org/publications under Media & Communications.

Who will you be honoring this Memorial Day?

Email editor@caLegion.org or write to Department HQ: 1601 7th St., Sanger, CA 93657

Every member is a recruiter; Membership survey results

By Autrey James
Department Commander

Are you working on your 8 for this month? Remember, we need every Post in the Department to reach out and renew a minimum of 8, bring in 8 new members or a combination of the two. Help our organization to stop the membership slide for the first time since 2010. This also helps all the programs we support.

We recently worked with

Victory 360 on a survey of our Department. It is important that the results be shared with you so you can see where we need to improve. If interested follow this link to the survey result:

bit.ly/2022calegionsurvey

Also if you have ways that we can work to improve our organization here in California I want to hear from you send me an email with your thoughts: commander@caLegion.org. If we want to remain relevant in California to our



veterans we have to adapt to fulfill their needs.

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Renewing your membership is as easy as pulling out your phone. Scan this QR code and you'll be taken to the national website to renew, where you'll be asked for your member number and last name. If you're reading this on your phone screen, click here to renew.

CALEGION CALENDAR

Visit caLegion.org/calendar



May 12-15 - California American Legion College
The Department of California will hold its California American Legion College (CALC) in Clovis. CALC is a prerequisite for any Legionnaire looking to attend National American Legion College in December.



May 14 - Armed Forces Ball
The 6th District will hold its 1st Annual Armed Forces Day Ball on the evening of Saturday, May 14 at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. The proceeds from this black-tie gala will benefit the American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors program.



May 19 - DEC Meeting
The Department of California Executive Committee will hold its monthly meeting online at 7 p.m. on May 19.

May 26 - Clovis Memorial Day Golf Tourny
Cecil Cox Post 147 is holding its 9th Annual Veterans Memorial Day Golf Tournament at the Belmont Country Club.

June 3 - Denim & Diamonds Baseball Gala
The event is \$50 per person. For tickets and sponsorship, email baseball@caLegion.org



June 10-12 - 2022 Legacy Run, American Legion Riders
The Legacy Run's primary purpose is to raise money and awareness for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. The Legacy Scholarship Fund originally was available to the children of U.S. military members who have been killed while on active duty since September 11, 2001 to pay for college education expenses.



June 18-25 - 2022 California Boys State Program
For more information, visit calegion.org/boys-state.



June 23 - Pre-Convention DEC in Visalia
June 24-26 - Department Convention
June 26 - Post-Convention DEC in Visalia



July 22-26 - State Championship Baseball Tournament
California American Legion Baseball will hold its tournament at Pete Biden Field, Fresno State College, Fresno.



WIN WITH THE FREEDOM RAFFLE!

13 Chances to win

The American Legion Department of California Freedom Raffle is truly a WIN, WIN, WIN.

How you can WIN

Each \$5 raffle ticket gives you 13 chances to win cash prizes, which grow with each raffle ticket sold. The more tickets that get sold, the more prize money will be available to win!

\$1 of every raffle ticket enters the prize pool. If 65,000 raffle tickets are sold, there will be \$65,000 in prizes and a GRAND PRIZE of \$32,500!

How California's veterans WIN

\$2 of every raffle ticket supports the programs of The American Legion, Department of California.

That means our at-risk veterans get more support, giving them the "hand up" they need to live a better, healthier life.

How California's communities WIN

\$2 of every raffle ticket goes to the local Post or sponsoring part of the Legion family. That means if you buy a ticket from your local Post, your donation directly impacts the community you call home.

Everyone is eligible to participate and there is no limit on tickets purchased. Encourage your family, friends, neighbors and anyone else who cares about our veterans in California to buy a ticket.

If you would like to sell tickets to help fund-raise for your post, please contact Department at (559) 875-8387 or visit locally.

PRIZES DRAWN ON JULY 1

- 1st Prize: 50% of prize pool
- 2nd Prize: 10% of prize pool
- 3rd Prize: 8% of prize pool
- 4th Prize: 6% of prize pool
- 5th Prize: 5% of prize pool
- 6th Prize: 3% of prize pool
- 7th Prize: 3% of prize pool
- 8th Prize: 3% of prize pool
- 9th Prize: 3% of prize pool
- 10th Prize: 3% of prize pool
- 11th Prize: 2% of prize pool
- 12th Prize: 2% of prize pool
- 13th Prize: 2% of prize pool

The American Legion Flies New York to Paris in 1927

By Kevin Burns
Chair
Aerospace Commission

In 1927, the race for the Orteig prize became one of the greatest sporting events in all history. People around the world followed every tidbit of news that was reported on it. Often if there was no news, reporters simply made it up to sell newspapers. It was part of the culture of the times.¹ Raymond Orteig, a New York hotel owner from Paris, set the goal of flying non-stop from New York to Paris, or from Paris to New York, with a prize of \$25,000. From 1919 to 1925, no one attempted to win this prize. The technical advancements to make it possible just were not there.

Although a number of fliers announced their intent to compete in the race, only two filed applications in 1927 for the New York to Paris contest; Charles Lindbergh and Noel Davis. Others like Richard Byrd and Clarence Chamberlin announced that they would compete and comply with the race rules, but were not interested in the prize money and did not want to be restricted by the requirement of having to register for the prize sixty days before the flight.

Lt. Cdr. Noel Davis was Commander of the Naval Air Reserve under Admiral Moffett. He had gone to the Naval Academy with his copilot, Lt. Stanton "Bob" Wooster, whom was head of the Navy's Propeller Research Center at Langley Field in southern Virginia. Both of them were excellent aeronautical engineers and as members of the American Legion, they looked to the Legion for support. Davis had two huge tasks ahead of him now; finding a suitable airplane to make the transatlantic trip and to find sponsors to fund the expedition.

He decided upon the Huff-Daland LB-3; an



Army heavy bomber plane that had a solid reputation. It was a two-engine biplane with a large machine-gun emplacement in the nose. Davis planed on taking out the machine-gun emplacement and putting in a third Wright Whirlwind engine. The reliable air-cooled radial Whirlwind engine was the technology that finally made the attempt possible with its thrust to weight ratio.

Davis still faced some formidable obstacles; he needed to raise cash quickly, get his publicity arrangements made, and to come up with a name for the airplane. Being a well known veteran of World War I, having set and removed the North Sea Barrage under Admiral Strauss, and being a vocal proponent of military aviation, he turned to the American Legion organization. In 1927 the national convention was to be held back where it originated in Paris, France, on the tenth anniversary of the US entering the Great War. Who better to sponsor the flight of two war veterans who were still active in military aviation?

There was immediate support from the Aeronautics Commission, and at the urging of the chief lobbyist for the American Legion, John Thomas Taylor,² Davis wrote to Bowman Elder³ (who was the Chairman of the American Legion

convention to be held in France) and to Howard Savage⁴ (the National Commander of the American Legion), whereby Davis conveyed his plans in detail. These letters were accompanied by letters from Porter Adams⁵ (President of the National Aeronautic Association, and Chairman of the Aeronautic Committee for the American Legion's Department of Massachusetts) and Rear Admiral William Moffett⁶ (Chief of the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics); both urging the American Legion to lend their support to the effort.

Elder, at the national headquarters of the Legion in Indianapolis, promised to bring it before the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the American Legion and to promote the Legion's support of the effort, and asked for more details.⁷ There was a ground-swell of support from the average Legionnaire to many officers in the state and national organizations of the American Legion, but funding such an expedition was breaking new ground and many within the organization were hinting that the National Executive Committee would be cautious in their decision.

They were correct. After the National Commander had made national news at the christening of the airplane as it was named the "American Legion;" the

NEC ruled that because they were going for a cash prize, it was a commercial venture that the American Legion could not support. However, they softened the ruling by allowing the airplane to be named "The American Legion," providing it could be accomplished without obligating Legion funds for the purpose.⁸ If Elder had his way, the Convention Committee would have underwritten the entire expedition by themselves.⁹

By this time, Davis and Wooster found other financial support, and spoke to some of the management of the American Legion Monthly Magazine as a back-up plan.¹⁰ What they came up with was, in the April edition, they would publish an article authored by Davis telling of his plans for the flight. By this time the flight would either be completed or very near completion. In same edition, Davis would run an advertisement whereby for two dollars Legionnaires could send in to buy a post card that was transported on the flight, and it would be sent to them from Paris. The card would urge them to attend the Legion's great tenth anniversary convention in Paris.

While already on leave from the military, Davis and Wooster decided to perform one last set of tests at Langley Field where Wooster was stationed,

before flying to New York. Concerned about the extra thousand pounds of weight they had not calculated for in the airplane, they decided to make a series of ten more take-off flights. By adding extra fuel on board, it was weight that would dissipate during the flight and insure that they would not run short of fuel just before making it to Paris.

Not sticking to the test plan, the last five hundred pounds was put on the plane for the final test flight. It was too much. The airplane shuddered as it lifted into the air. Unable to lift above the tree at the end of the runway, it banked and soared over the Back River. Caught in ground effect and unable to lift the airplane over the trees on the far bank of the river, Davis and Wooster decided to set the airplane down in the flat tidal marsh. Coming in for a perfect landing, the front wheels suddenly dropped into a hidden drainage ditch and skid nose first into a small pond. With no safety equipment at the time, Davis and Wooster were sitting in wicker seats and didn't have a chance for survival. A few weeks later, Charles Lindbergh successfully made the flight.

Some weeks after the crash, Harry Guggenheim personally, not acting on behalf of the Daniel Guggenheim Fund, donated a trophy to the Aviation Division of the Naval Reserve "in memory of the late Lieutenant Commander Noel Davis, and that it might properly be called "The Noel Davis Trophy."¹¹ Posthumously, Davis got the trophy he wanted for the men who served under his command. However, no lasting memorial or tribute was ever made to Davis or Wooster by the American Legion organization. Letters of condolences were sent to the National HQ in Indianapolis from around the world on the loss of their pilots.



Helmets for Heroes sets sights on military museums in California

By Jeffrey Freeman
Chair, Helmets 4 Heroes
Sub-Committee

Helmets for Heroes has been working very hard this year and we have made a new stand using a full-size M-1 helmet and are currently arranging to get one distributed to every district in the department. We have also made over 400 new table top stands and have them across the state collecting change from the public to fund our VAR programs.

Now we are setting our sights on the Navy Museum Ships and Air and Space Museums in California. We have been able to place a Helmets for Heroes stand aboard the USS Iowa in LA and tried to set one aboard the USS Midway with no luck on the Midway. However, the operations officer of the Midway is working on having our display placed

in the San Diego Air and Space Museum.

We are in talks with the USS Hornet and the Jeremiah O'Brien in Alameda and San Francisco. We are also looking at getting the displays in the March Field Air Museum and the Castle Air Museum. What we need is Post who will collect the money from these displays that are near the locations. We have been having trouble finding Post in some of these areas and remember every cent collected pays for our VAR program in the Department. If your Post can help please reach out to Jeff Freeman and candjf@future-tek.com

Helmets for Heroes is on a mission of paying 100% of the VAR program and we will not be satisfied till that mission is achieved. If we can get in to all or even half of these museums then we feel this goal will be accomplished.

SPIKE IN VETERAN CALLS EXPECTED WITH LAUNCH OF NEW THREE-DIGIT SUICIDE PREVENTION LINE THIS SUMMER

By Military Times

Veterans Affairs officials expect calls to the Veterans Crisis Line to increase by as much as 150% after a new three-digit dialing code for suicide prevention services starts operating this July.

That would mean hundreds of thousands more veterans getting emergency help during mental health crises, provided department officials can keep up with the demand.

On April 6, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said department leaders have been increasing staff and prepping for increased caseloads in anticipation of the new 988 dialing code.

Individuals in some

areas can already use the service, but it is set to go into effect nationwide by July 16.

Similar to the 911 dialing code, which puts callers in direct contact with local emergency response officials, the 988 code will allow individuals to instantly connect with the National Suicide Prevention Line.

Veterans who call will be transferred to VA's Veterans Crisis Line to speak with counselors who have military-specific experience and access to other veteran support resources. Currently, about one-third of all calls to the national crisis line are transferred to the VA call center.

The new three-digit code has been in the

works for the last two years. McDonough told members of the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday that his department expects call volume to jump over the next year from about 700,000 to as high as 1.7 million, as individuals can more easily access the service.

"We began hiring up for this effort last year," he said. "We need to increase our full-time workforce by about 460 people ... but we have the money and the ability and the authority to get that done."

The new number won't stop individuals from accessing help if they dial the direct number for the National Suicide Prevention Line (800-273-8255)

or if they visit the Veterans Crisis Line's online chat and text options.

But federal officials are hopeful the 988 number will be easier to remember

and provide an even faster response for individuals in need of mental health intervention.

Read more at Militarytimes.com



The Veteran's Crisis Line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (Zachary Hada/Air Force)



VA CLAIMS BACKLOG IMPROVES, BUT STILL SITS FAR ABOVE PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

By Military Times

After a spike in backlog numbers in recent years, Veterans Affairs officials have seen a steady decrease in the number of overdue disability claims in their benefits system over the last

five months, officials said in March.

But they still expect it will take a while before the case numbers return to pre-pandemic levels.

As of March, the number of first-time claims that were considered backlogged

— pending for more than four months — was about 244,000.

That's down about 8% from October 2021, when the figure reached about 264,000.

Veterans who file a disability claim can receive

payouts backdated to their date of initial filing, meaning that the slower processing times do not technically cost veterans any of their disability payouts.

However, the backlog means more veterans are delayed in getting those payouts to start, in some cases leaving veterans' finances in disarray for months longer than they anticipated.

The claims backlog became a national scandal in 2013 when the total reached more than 610,000 cases, as a flood of new claims related to new presumptive conditions linked to Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam overwhelmed the system.

In ensuing years, department officials digitized their records and claims system

and hired more staffers to bring down those totals. As of early 2020, the backlog figure hovered around 70,000 cases.

But delays in medical exams and issues with accessing military medical records related to the coronavirus pandemic led to a significant increase in processing time for new claims.

When additional Agent Orange presumptives and new burn pit illness claims were added last year, the backlog total grew even higher.

Department staffers have processed more than 760,000 cases since Oct. 1, the largest workload in VA history at this point in the fiscal year.

Read more at [Militarytimes.com](https://militarytimes.com)

HOW COMPANIES SEEK OUT VETERANS FOR EMPLOYMENT

By Military Times

From service jobs to executive positions, there is no shortage of opportunities for those who want lucrative and meaningful work. So, how are companies filling these positions and finding the best candidates?

Some companies are looking to those leaving military service to fill their ranks, offering support, accolades and transition programs to veterans—who they know bring unique skills and talents to their teams.

And there are also non-profit organizations who help facilitate matching veterans and servicemen and women with employers.

Many companies make a point to not only hire veterans but actively seek them out for positions.

And nonprofits like Helping our Heroes, FourBlock and the Honor Foundation work with veterans and retired servicemen and women on interview skills, resumes and job placements. The American Legion also has resources for job-seeking veterans and their families.

Companies say veterans

are great hires: They have leadership experience; they are calm under pressure and they come with a ready-to-work ethic. Veterans are also easily trained and adaptable, valuing teamwork.

"The military is people-focused," said Mike Abrams, founder and president of FourBlock, and a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps reserves. "You get great experience there."

And veterans appreciate working in a company whose culture mirrors the service, focused on teamwork, leadership and support.

"Hilton has done an amazing job in recognizing that military service members have valuable experience that can be adapted into many roles after their time in service," said Bryan Estrella, 29, who works as a Revenue Specialist at Hilton Revenue Management Consolidated Center.

Here's a look at how a couple companies hire veterans, as well as some of the work being done by nonprofits to help veterans find the right fit in the civilian world.

Hilton has a long history



of supporting the military — in fact, founder Conrad Hilton served in the U.S. Army during WWI.

The company launched Operation: Opportunity in 2013 and has since hired more than 35,000 veterans and military spouses.

Hilton has also created a military-friendly culture, said Melissa Stirling, who is the senior director for Military Programs for the company and runs Operation: Opportunity.

"It is a tried-and-true focus for us," Stirling said.

"And our commitment is as strong as ever. It's not an initiative. It's who we are."

Estrella said his time in the military helped him become more resilient and adaptable, and Hilton's training and pro-military culture — especially when working around his National Guard schedule — means he can have success on both fronts.

Fellow Hilton employee Ted Peterson, 46, of Texas agrees.

He is an analyst for the company and was a former

Air Force recruiter.

He said the company's commitment to family and work life balance eased the transition.

"Hilton...actively encourages its team members to spend time with our significant others and to be present at home and at work," Peterson said. "In my opinion, what sets Hilton apart from most organizations is their belief that team members are its greatest asset. That creates an environment for us to flourish both at work and home."

Veterans affairs eyes relaxed hiring rules as staff turnover slowly worsens

By **Military Times**

Turnover rates among Veterans Affairs staffers have risen slightly in recent years, and officials worry that could increase dramatically if Congress doesn't help ease the burden of bringing new candidates into the department's workforce.

"We are continuing to see a bit of concern," said Jessica Bonjorni, chief of the Veterans Health Administration's human capital management office, during a hearing on department staffing issues before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on March 17.

"Normally at this time in the fiscal year we would

have seen growth in our workforce of about 1.5 to 2%. But right now, we're flat. And so we are trending behind because it's becoming more difficult to find people out there for certain occupations."

The department employs more than 400,000 employees across its health care, benefits and memorial services operations.

In a typical year, about 9.6% of that workforce — around 40,000 individuals — leaves due to retirement, firings or leaving for new jobs elsewhere.

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic that figure has risen slightly, putting several thousand more positions in flux, VA management officials said.



(Photo: San Diego Union Tribune)

While officials emphasized to lawmakers that the issue isn't a major problem yet, they also said they want to find fixes before it becomes one.

Bonjorni said some of

the problems stem not from any VA-specific issues but instead from shortages across the U.S. for in-demand specialties.

"Nursing turnover is one area ... where we're seeing

increasing turnover," she told lawmakers. "Medical technologists and health techs, we're having some challenges there too."

Read more at [Militarytimes.com](https://www.militarytimes.com)

Dozens of VA medical centers slated for closure



Palo Alto Livermore VAMC in California (Photo: VA)

By **Military Times**

Thirty-five Veterans Affairs Medical Centers in 21 different states would be closed or completely reconstructed under a nearly \$2 trillion infrastructure overhaul unveiled by department leadership

on March 14.

In addition, 14 new major VA hospitals would be built along with 140 multi-specialty community-based outpatient clinics. The plan in total would add 80 new medical buildings to the department's existing inventory of more than

1,200 across the country.

The proposals represent a massive restructuring of VA's footprint in America in coming years and could impact millions of veterans seeking medical care and hundreds of thousands of VA employees.

But, the plan must also

get approval from both an independent commission of veterans advocates and Congress before moving ahead, leaving any potential changes years away.

Ahead of the plan's release, VA Secretary Denis McDonough touted the changes as a critical

rethinking of where VA facilities are located and how the department delivers care to veterans.

"We will be shifting toward new infrastructure or different infrastructure that accounts for how healthcare has changed, matches the needs of that market, and strengthens our research and education missions," he said. "Most of all, we'll ensure that veterans who live in [any] location have access to the world-class care they need when they need it."

Congress mandated a reassessment of VA's nationwide infrastructure in 2018 as part of a review styled after the military base closing rounds of the 1980s and 1990s.

Under the plan suggested by McDonough, 17 medical centers in twelve states would be completely closed. They include the VAMC Livermore Division in Palo Alto.

Read about the other facilities scheduled for closure at [Militarytimes.com](https://www.militarytimes.com).

THE JACK RYAN CAREER PATH: How Veterans Can Join The CIA

By **Military Times**

In the Tom Clancy universe, Jack Ryan is a mild-mannered history teacher and former Marine whose military skill set combined with history and economics degrees lead him to a career as an analyst at the CIA.

Jack Ryan may be fiction — especially considering he eventually ends up as president — but an economics expert or a veteran with a strong knowledge of military strategy can be just as valuable a part of the intelligence team as an

operative.

CIA recruits can range from those with a high school diploma or a GED to a PhD.

A former enlisted recruit with six years of service can be as viable as a candidate with a doctorate in cybersecurity.

Candidates sought by the agency have earned degrees that range from engineering, economics, psychology, and technology and from law school to war college.

Most important to those transitioning from service, CIA places a high value on the skills, dedication,

and unique perspectives former military members bring to their mission. Veterans play a vital role in all departments of its diverse workforce.

The agency encourages former military — who understand the importance of OPSEC — to apply and offers specific benefits tailored to veterans who chose to join.

For example, current openings, such as paramilitary officer, are paying hiring bonuses up to 25% of base pay.

Read more at Militarytimes.com.



John Krasinski at the season-two premiere of "Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan" on Oct. 29 in New York. (Photo: Getty Images)

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We both want to reach more veterans, right? Advertise in the California Legionnaire and let's reach more veterans together. Your advertising dollars will help us expand to reach more of California's almost 2 million veterans. Prefer a tax-deductible sponsor highlight? We'd love to highlight your company or brand as a proud sponsor in these pages. Email editor@caLegion.org



Chad Robichaux

Tango Alpha Lima: Helping his fellow veterans face PTSD

By **The American Legion National HQ**

This week's Tango Alpha Lima podcast welcomes back co-host Jeff Daly, who discusses his temporary absence from the podcast.

Daly had a minor stroke. He talked about the recovery process and how the Legion Family's support helped him during that process.

Daly and co-host Ashley Gorbulja-Maldonado also interviewed Chad Robichaux, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who founded the faith-based Mighty Oaks Foundation to help veterans struggling with PTSD.

Robichaux shared his own story of PTSD, which nearly led to his divorce and suicide.

"Like many veterans, I didn't get the help I needed because I didn't want to look weak by asking for help to my peers. I didn't want to go to mental health and lose my clearance ... so I didn't get the help I needed," Robichaux recalled. "And I began

to spiral and things got worse, and came home and was diagnosed with PTSD and couldn't deploy anymore."

Robichaux talked about the panic attacks and shame that led him deep into isolation and to consider suicide.

He credited his wife asking him how he could quit on his marriage with preventing him from taking his life.

He is also the author of seven books, most recently "Fight For Us," which uses lessons Robichaux and his wife, Kathy, learned while saving their own marriage.

This episode is among more than 110 Tango Alpha Lima podcast for veterans, servicemembers and others.

All episodes are available in both audio and video formats here. You can also download episodes on iTunes, Stitcher or other major podcast-hosting sites. The video version is available for viewing at the Legion's YouTube channel: youtube.com/c/americanlegionHQ



ALCOHOL SERVER TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

By Kimberly Blakeley

Beginning in July 2022, any ABC licensee who has an “ABC On-Premises License” will need to have their staff (alcohol servers and managers of alcohol servers) trained and certified in RBS within sixty (60) days of the date of initial employment.

This includes but not limited to restaurants, bars,

fast casual dining, tasting rooms (including off-sale locations), hotels, and stadiums.

Once the server has successfully completed the training and exam, their online certification is valid for 3 years. Certification must be renewed prior to its expiration.

The “serving alcoholic beverages for consumption” means

performing any of the following actions by an alcohol server as an employee or contractor of an ABC on-premises licensee when interacting with a patron of the ABC licensed premises:

- Checking patron identification;
- Taking patron alcoholic beverage orders;
- Pouring alcoholic beverages for patrons; or

Delivering alcoholic beverages to patrons.

1ST STEP

All servers and managers attending a training session MUST register at the RBS Portal: <https://abcbiz.abc.ca.gov>.

Once you complete your account, you will receive a Server ID number.

This ID number is needed from each server/manager to register for a training session. There will be a \$3 registration fee online.

2ND STEP

I will need the following information from each server/manager in your group when you register and schedule a training session; Server ID number, Legal name as on DL or ID, DOB, email address. After training I will email a study guide to each server/manager attending training to use while taking the online exam.

3RD STEP

Within 24 hours after the training session, server/manager may log into RBS Portal to take the ABC online exam.

The exam fee is \$3. There are 50 random questions based on the five training topics; CCR Title 4 §§162-166. You must receive at least 70% (35) of questions on exam correctly to be issued a certificate.

Servers will have 30 days from their completion of an RBS training course or three attempts to pass the exam.

Schedule your group training session today.

Combine with neighboring businesses to complete an on-site group training!

Only accepting business checks and/or exact cash for training (sorry no credit card). For scheduling a training questions contact Kimberly Blakeley: Alcoholservertraining@yahoo.com



White House spending plan could boost Department of Veterans Affairs budget

By Military Times

Veterans Affairs programs would see a 31% increase in funding under the White House budget plan for fiscal 2023 released on Monday, pushing the department’s spending total above \$300 billion for the first time.

The department has seen steady increases annually

as multiple administrations have sought to increase medical care and support services for veterans.

Even with that history, however, the fiscal 2023 request represents a major new influx of money for the department, already one of the most expensive in the federal government.

Only the Departments of Defense (\$773 billion) and Health and Human

Services (\$138 billion) would see more discretionary funding in the plan than VA (\$135 billion).

In 2001, the entire VA budget — including both discretionary program spending and mandatory benefits payouts — amounted to about \$45 billion.

The 2023 White House budget request is three times that just for the

program spending, not including the mandatory section of the department’s budget.

Lawmakers will spend the next several months debating and dissecting the White House spending outline, likely making numerous changes before a final compromise budget is reached.

Read more at Militarytimes.com



Members:
Sign up for American Legion Department of California email updates to receive training, membership info and other important updates.

bit.ly/calegion-emails

LONG BEACH GRAND PRIX

The American Legion's new NASCAR marketing team vehicle was set up inside the Long Beach Convention Center.

Photos by Historian Fred Shacklett and Membership Director Jeff Daly





U.S. Army veterans Christopher Loverro, left, and Juan Rodriguez unload supplies.

HUMANITARIAN WORK IN UKRAINE

From page 1

Rodriguez — I saw that he was working at the border providing safe passage to refugees wanting to relocate and so I contacted him,” Loverro said. “I linked up with him, bought a plane ticket and came out.”

Loverro carries with him a strong sense of service. That same mindset compelled him decades ago to become a police officer and also pushed him to volunteer to fight in Afghanistan after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

“You know, for payback,” he explained of his reasoning years ago.

“At the time, I was a Berkeley police officer and my reserve unit got mobilized and attached to the 2nd Infantry Division out of Fort Lewis, Washington,” Loverro said. “We were with the first Stryker brigade that was ever stood up and we actually got sent to Iraq instead.”

Loverro’s Post-9/11 service was his second tour in the Army. He first served as a military policeman and then a civil affairs specialist between 1985 and 1988, according to official records. After that, he was in the California National Guard for about six months in 1991 and the Army Reserve for four years until 2005.

After being activated with the Army Reserve

and spending a year in Iraq from 2003 to 2004, Loverro got out as a staff sergeant. He went back to his police career and became involved in theater a short time later.

“Now I run a theater company in Los Angeles called Warriors for Peace Theater,” Loverro said. “And our mission statement is to use the theater arts to help veterans reintegrate and find healing and catharsis through the arts.”

I wasn’t until 2013 that Loverro joined The American Legion. Hollywood Post 43 was nearby to where he lived at the time and he was looking to renew the sense of community the military gave him.

“One of the things we miss when we get out is that sense of tribe and that culture that we were a part of,” Loverro said. “It’s kind of like an extended family, it’s your extended tribe once you get out, so I think that’s important. Plus, it’s an active Legion. They do a lot of good things.”

For Loverro, doing humanitarian work in Ukraine is all about service over self, something veterans are familiar with.

“And because of our background as veterans, we have certain skills that enable us to navigate war zones,” Loverro said.

Loverro coordinated with different organizations

before ending up with Volunteer Hundred, which sprang forth in 2014 in response to the first Russian invasion of Ukraine and is based in Lviv, one of the more populated cities in western Ukraine with some 721,500 residents.

For the past two months, Lviv had remained relatively safe from the conflict until four missile strikes reportedly hit military installations and an auto repair shop in the northwestern part of the city on April 18. Seven people were reportedly killed and 11 were injured. Hundreds of thousands have sought refuge there since the beginning of the conflict on Feb. 24.

“My primary mission is I’m spending my own money and raising money back home to donate to this organization and a couple others to essentially buy food and medical supplies,” Loverro said.

Donated goods go to a warehouse, where the supplies are organized into categories.

“This corner over here is the children’s corner and it has diapers and baby formula, baby food, and this corner has medical supplies, and this corner has winter clothing, and this corner over here has supplies going to the military,” Loverro said of the organization process.

“Then what we do is



Christopher Loverro, (left, middle) and veterans from Sweden.

organize convoys to go deliver it. We deliver to some of the hardest hit areas, where the need is most desperate,” he added.

Loverro has been on about a dozen convoys during his month-long stay in Ukraine.

Each day before a convoy, the team conducts planning and logistics. They place phone calls, pick up supplies and organize them for distribution.

“Most of that is done on the off days,” Loverro said. “But everything is fluid. We have to deal with multiple vehicles at multiple locations, sometimes crossing the border, constantly getting threat assessments, and tracking the areas that are hardest hit and the most in need of supplies.”

Loverro said he’s formed a tight bond with the group he’s volunteered with over the course of a month.

“The organization ... has taken me in as family,” Loverro said. “I worked with some volunteers from Sweden and they invited me to go visit them at Stockholm.”

Having also served in Iraq and Afghanistan, Loverro said, the Swedes “are here because, like so many U.S. veterans, they want to help.”

One of the regular convoy destinations includes the town of Bucha, located some

326 miles east of Lviv, near the northwestern outskirts of Kyiv city.

With a modest population of almost 37,000, Bucha is one of the hardest hit by Russian aggression, according to some estimations.

When Russian forces pulled back from Bucha and Ukrainian troops moved in, graphic photographs and videos surfaced of alleged war crimes, including bodies that appeared to be those of handcuffed civilians shot at close range.

Ukrainian officials have asked the International Criminal Court to investigate what happened in Bucha, though the Russian government has denied responsibility. The alleged crimes, in addition to the costs of the war itself, have sparked outrage in the European Union and NATO.

According to the UN Human Rights Office, some 5,718 civilian casualties have been recorded in Ukraine, with 2,665 killed and 3,053 injured. Among those casualties are children.

“It’s not just a war between Ukraine and Russia,” Loverro said. “I think it’s something that the whole world needs to stand up to and most of the world is.”

A version of this article first published on *Militarytimes.com*.



Two separate bills in the California Senate aim to provide partial property tax exemptions for disabled veterans. (Photo: Alex Proimos)

California Senate committee advances 2 bills expanding property tax exemptions for disabled veterans

By Christian Southards
Staff Writer

The California Senate Military and Veterans Affairs

Committee approved two separate bills on April 7 that expand property tax exemptions for disabled veterans.

The first, Senate Bill

SB-1073, was introduced by Sen. Shannon Grove, R-Bakersfield, and promises partial property tax exemptions for the principal residence owned by a

partially disabled veteran. Under the current law, only veterans who have lost two or more limbs, are blind, or are fully disabled because of a service-related injury are eligible for property tax reductions.

Under SB-1073, property tax exemptions for disabled veterans would be equal to their disability rating.

For example, a veteran with a disability rating of 50 percent would be eligible for 50 percent of the current property tax exemption for disabled veterans.

Additionally, the California Senate committee advanced Senate Bill SB-1357, which was introduced by Sen. Bob Archuleta, D-Pico Rivera.

This bill would grant veterans who have a 100 percent disability rating a full property tax exemption for their principal residence.

Alternatively, veterans who are fully blind or have lost two or more limbs,

but do not have a 100 percent disability rating would receive a partial property tax exemption.

As it stands now, partial property tax exemptions under SB-1357 are calculated by multiplying the veteran's disability rating percentage by \$700,000.

If, for example, the veteran had a 50 percent disability rating, their exemption would be \$350,000.

Both bills have been resubmitted to the California Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee for further debate.

As they have competing proposals, it is expected that the committee will have to consolidate provisions proposed in both bills before one of the two can advance further in the legislature.

Read a complete overview of veterans bills in the California legislature: calegion.org/california-legislature-overview-2022-over-2-dozen-veterans-bills-introduced

VA secretary promises improvements in medical wait time data

By Military Times

Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough acknowledged that he is "frustrated" with inconsistency in how medical appointment wait time data is calculated and recorded within the department's health care systems, and promised changes on the issue later this year.

During testimony before the House Appropriations Committee last week, McDonough said he is concerned about delivering accurate information on appointment timeliness to veterans as they seek to resume care that was deferred or canceled in recent years.

"If you look at our average wait times across the system, they're good,

but it's a big system and we're coming out of a pandemic," he said. "So I fear that there are outliers where people are waiting too long."

Wait times at VA facilities became a national scandal in 2014 after whistleblowers revealed that officials were manipulating data to cover up long delays in care to meet performance metrics.

During President Donald Trump's administration, the department began posting wait-time data online for all VA hospitals and clinics in an effort to provide more transparency into how long veterans have to wait for routine or specialty appointments (and to argue for broader use of community care options for veterans facing longer



Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough (Photo: VA)

waits).

But in a report released April 7, the VA Inspector General's office said much of that data remains confusing and misleading.

"[The Veterans Health Administration] has sometimes presented wait times with different methodologies, using

inconsistent start dates that affect the overall calculations without clearly and accurately presenting that information to the public," officials wrote.

In response to similar concerns raised by lawmakers, McDonough said that "we have to do a better job with that"

and said he expects an announcement on changes related to the wait time issues in coming months.

"We're working really hard on it because I am frustrated with it myself," he said.

Read more at Militarytimes.com.

Thousands of student veterans can't use GI Bill benefits at this school anymore

By Christian Southards
Staff Writer

The California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education withdrew GI Bill approval for all secondary education programs offered by the University of Arizona Global Campus, formerly known as Ashford University.

The March 30 move was made after the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education rescinded the school's license to operate in the state after repeated civil complaints and citations.

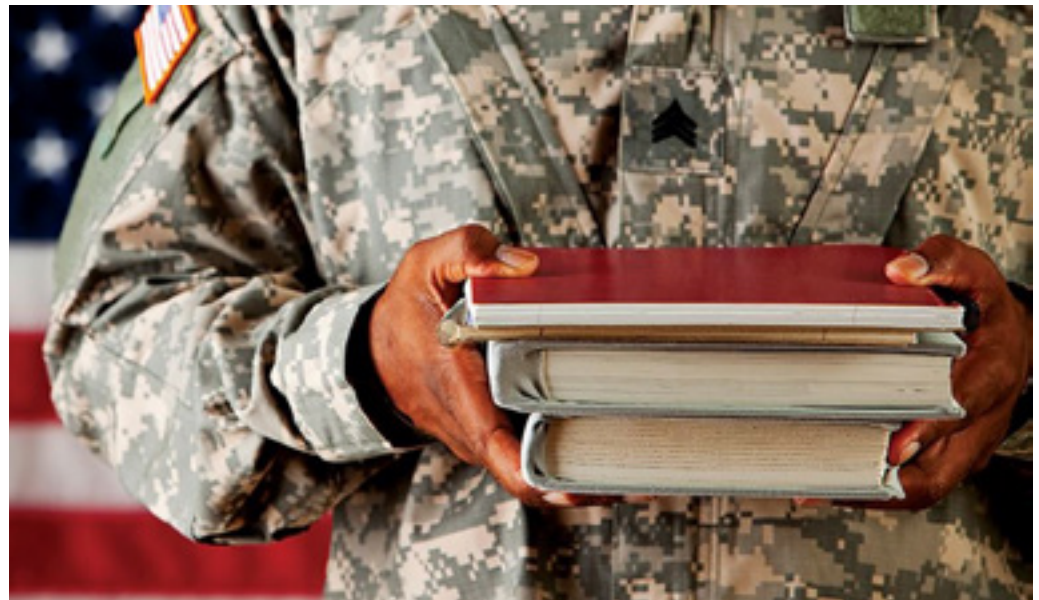
As such, nearly 3,000

veterans are unable to use their G.I. Bill benefits to pay for tuition at the California-based online school after the current term expires.

It is currently unclear whether these students will be able to complete their degrees.

On April 1, veterans service organization Veterans Education Success issued a press release in response, advocating for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to remove the University of Arizona Global Campus from GI Bill eligibility across all states.

This would then clear



the way for the 3,000 veterans to have their spent benefits restored via new provisions established by the Protect the GI Bill Act.

However, the VA says it is not currently considering this action.

But Veterans Education Success says the legal grounds exist for the

university's GI Bill eligibility to be stripped.

Earlier this year, the San Diego Superior Court found that the school had intentionally misled students about accreditation, the cost of tuition, the ability to transfer credits to other educational institutions, and the ability to get

licensed in careers such as teaching, social work, nursing, and more.

The university is currently seeking GI Bill eligibility in Arizona so students can continue using their benefits.

Normally, this process can take several months to several years.

Dinuba unveils its Vietnam Memorial Wall; \$177K raised

By Tamzin Wheatley

The Western Regional Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall Foundation unveiled its memorial wall during a dedication ceremony on April 30. The event was held at the Dinuba Memorial Hall located at 249 S. Alta in Dinuba.

The day had double significance for foundation, as it marked the end of the Vietnam War. It has also been seven years since the initial dedication and placement of the memorial known locally as "The Valley's best kept secret." Some \$177,000 was raised initially so that the wall would remain in the state of California. Once that phase was completed, phase 2 included creating a

concrete foundation for the wall to sit on permanently, installing pathways and beautifying the area. The mission is not complete. An education center and museum, and more work on the grounds surrounding this beautiful memorial are planned.

This all-volunteer crew, which consists of Vietnam veterans, some in their 80s, the veterans families, and local volunteers who feel these vets deserve their recognition and homecoming that was denied them, have worked tirelessly, digging the trenches and literally building this foundation with their own hands. For them, this dedication was a well-deserved pause to say, "look at what a small grass-roots veterans and civilians

co-op can do, look at what we did," not for praise or accolades, but for the 58,318 names inscribed on this memorial.

The Western Regional Vietnam Memorial Wall is located in Dinuba, California. It is dedicated to all who need healing. Due to Covid,

this healing memorial is currently open to the public by request by visiting [Facebook.com/WRVietnamWall](https://www.facebook.com/WRVietnamWall)



State championship baseball tourney to be held at CSU Fresno

By Ed Benes
Chair, California Baseball

Come out to Pete Biden Field for some high quality baseball and competition as the eight best Legion teams in California compete for the title of State Champion and go on to compete at the Regional Tournament in August, and hopefully the National title in Shelby, NC.

This year one team representing each of the 6 Areas, and 2 additional teams will take the field on 22 July to 26 July on the Fresno State ball field.

Teams will be outfitted with uniforms representing each of the six military services, as well as Law Enforcement and the

National Guard. A sumptuous welcome banquet for players, coaches, and families will be served at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District, hosted by Post 147 and District 14 on 21 July.

Funds still need to be raised to meet the budget requirements to hold a quality tournament at a first class venue.

You can help by finding major and minor sponsors, making individual donations to “baseball” to the Department Adjutant, and ensuring that every Post contributes \$100 to help grow Legion Baseball in California.

Major sponsors will be noted prominently in the tournament handout,



together with team information and photographs of the players and coaches.

For assistance with

donations or sponsorship, please contact Judy Leonardi, ALB Spokesperson, at contributions@ald22baseball.org.

ald22baseball.org.

Ed Benes is 2022-23 chair of the California American Legion Baseball Commission.

Behind the Scenes: American Legion Baseball 2022 State Championship

By Judy Leonardi
Spokesperson,
California Baseball

For over four decades, the California American Legion Baseball championship had been held at a small diamond in a very scenic location in northern California. With the drive to grow the program and raise awareness of the benefits and value of youth sports in The American Legion, the state championship tournament in 2021 was held in Clovis, Calif. Six teams from across the Department competed over four days of elite level baseball.

In 2022, the championship will return to the Central Valley where now eight teams from across the state will compete for the title at Fresno State University Bulldog Stadium. Youth baseball teams representing American Legion posts across California will compete in their districts and their area, for the opportunity to travel to

Fresno and compete for the championship.

The teams will be brought together July 22-26 for five great days of baseball. Each team will be provided lodging either at the dormitories at Fresno State University or at local hotels. On the evening that the teams arrive in Fresno, a team meeting with all the coaches and players and American Legion Baseball commissioners will be

held and then followed by a banquet dinner to kick off the championship festivities.

The following morning, there will be an opening ceremony held at the Stadium prior to the first pitch of the tournament. That evening all teams, and their families will be invited to attend a player appreciation event consisting of food and activities for all to enjoy. After

all tournament games have been played, and the champion crowned, a significant measure of thanks will be paid to all of the volunteers who helped make this year’s state championship successful.

In 2021, it was the leadership, enthusiasm, and energy of the legionnaires, auxiliary members, and volunteers from the Blue Star Moms and The Young Marines from District 14

that made all the difference in the world. Their selfless dedication set the tone and established the high watermark for all championships to follow.

You are invited to come out and support this program that provides youth athletes and their families the opportunity to play championship level baseball on an elite collegiate diamond and a glimpse into their athletic future.

American Legion Baseball restarts in Vallejo

By Nestor Aliga
Contributor

CC Sabathia, Bill Buckner, and Tug McGraw were all Major League Baseball stars from Vallejo.

They are just three of the thousand that played American Legion baseball for the Mare Island Navy Yard Post 550 in Vallejo until 1996 when this local favorite stopped. Coincidentally, 1996 was when the Mare Island Naval Shipyard closed after 142

years of “building the best ships and fixing the rest.”

Now, thanks to a few committed individuals, the local American Legion baseball program is being re-born in 2022 and they hope to bring back another championship. The Post 550 team previously won the Northern California and placed second in the Department of California tournaments.

George Fuller, the Second Vice Commander of Mare Island Navy Yard Post 550 says that “the

reason for bringing back American Legion Baseball to Vallejo are to help instill a sense of civic pride, offer young men another avenue in which to pursue baseball at a high level, and to hopefully reinvigorate service-related groups which call Vallejo home. Even though this is a team solely sponsored by American Legion Post 550, there will be positive effects on all the other veterans service organizations (VSO) within the Vallejo Vets Building.

VallejoVetsBuilding.org

-- which includes The American Legion Manuel L. Quezon Post 603, Disabled American Veterans Ozie Boler Chapter 21, Filipino-American Retired United States Armed Forces Association, Fleet Reserve Association Branch 8, US Submarine Veterans Mare Island Base, and Veterans of Foreign Wars Carl H. Kreh Post 1123.

With more local exposure to veterans, active military, and family

members, Fuller hopes to reverse the downward trend in VSO memberships. Like national, the local VSOs have lost about 50% of their memberships since 1992 per the annual National Membership Record and legion.org/membership/standings

Fuller is also envisioning that this Post 550 baseball program will have a tremendous impact for the City of Vallejo — to include more tourism

and increased civic pride. Also, he hopes that this will be a catalyst to inspire the renaissance of Vallejo's Little League programs which have dropped from three leagues and over 25 teams a few years ago to one before the pandemic to none today. The void has left local kids with only the option to join the cost-prohibitive traveling teams.

Fuller adds that Post 550 Baseball has settled on a

cost of only \$250 this year to play and their mantra is that no youth will ever be denied the ability to play due to an inability to pay.

Post 550 has plans to sponsor tournaments in Vallejo even though most teams will require food and hotel lodging. Using projections from other cities, the businesses within the city and the immediate area will benefit to the tune of tens of thousands of dollars

per annum just from these tournaments alone.

One of Post 550's lofty goal is for 50% of the kids to eventually be drafted to a minor/major league baseball program or be offered scholarships to play ball at accredited universities.

Fuller adds that, "One thing that will always be Rule Number One with Post 550 baseball is the development of good ball players and more

importantly the development of good young men."

According to legion.org/baseball, American Legion Baseball has more than 3,400 teams and nearly 55,000 youth participate in the program yearly from all 50 states and Canada.

For more information on Post 550 baseball and all California teams, visit legion.org/baseball/teams/2022/ca



Baseball fundraising is off to a great start in 2022

By **Judy Leonardi**
Spokesperson,
California Baseball

In July 2021, the California American Legion state championship baseball tournament was held for the first time in over four decades, in Clovis California.

Over \$50,000 was raised in sponsorships, donations, and fundraising across the Department in support of six teams competing for the state title. In 2022, the field has expanded to an eight-team double elimination tournament to promote growth and competitiveness across the state.

That growth comes with

an increased need to raise additional funding. The 2022 goal in support of the state championship tournament is \$70,000. A significant part of this year's fundraising campaign is a Department-wide post challenge. With 418 American Legion posts in California, the challenge is for each post to donate \$100.

With all posts participating, this would contribute over \$41,000 to the program. California American Legion Baseball kicked off the campaign earlier this year at District 22's meeting, with a contribution of \$2,900 representing all 29 posts in the district. The message of California

American Legion Baseball is a flag carried across the Department at DEC, area, district, and post meetings across the Golden State.

Donate to California American Legion Baseball. The program also enjoys support from the Sons of the American Legion, the American Legion Riders, and VFW districts and posts. A unique dynamic has become a driving factor in the success of this year's fundraising campaign, individual legionnaires, auxiliary members, sons and Riders have personally donated to the program.

Each donation is highlighted on poster boards to illustrate the depth and

breath of support across the department. To date, American Legion Post 20 in Porterville currently leads the donation charge with a contribution of \$1,750. They are closely followed by American Legion Post 43 in Hollywood with a contribution of over \$1,600. American Legion Post 291 in Newport Harbor wants two poster boards at their post to promote donations during events and gatherings from all who visit.

At meetings and events where California American Legion Baseball is presented, those in attendance gather around the poster boards and clearly see the challenge for not just their

post, but for their personal support and its positive impact on behalf of the program.

Legionnaires and all those who support the mission of The American Legion can contribute to the program. We've created easy opportunity for anyone to donate from anywhere in the state using a QRC code.

Whether you are attending a motivating and inspirational presentation on California American Legion Baseball, or simply wish to go online and donate, the QRC code is available to you. Your support of this legacy program is highly encouraged and extremely appreciated.



**DONATE TO
CALIFORNIA
AMERICAN LEGION
BASEBALL**

CALEGION.ORG/BASEBALL





Mike Goble, center, receives a check from Vacaville's American Legion Post 165 members, from left, chaplain Dan Seibert, Cmdr. Michael Terhorst, Vice Cmdr. Leonard Miller and Adjutant Jeff Jewell, Friday, March 25, 2022. (Robinson Kuntz/Daily Republic)

VACAVILLE POST 165 REPLACES FLAGS AT MARINE CORPS MEMORIAL

By The Daily Republic

Editor's note: American Legion Post 165, Vacaville recently contributed \$380 to replace all the flags on Mike Goble's USMC Memorial Flag Hill on I-80 Westbound between Vacaville and Fairfield.

Mike Goble never imagined putting up a couple of flags on a hill in memory and honor of two friends who died in Vietnam would ever become what it has turned out to be.

"It's become a kind of landmark, way bigger than what I ever thought it would be," Goble said about the flags that fly on what is now known as Memorial Hill.

"And it is one of the best views in Solano County," he said.

Read more at dailyrepublic.com



WHAT VETERANS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MILITARY DISCHARGE UPGRADES

By Military Times

You have spent countless years of your life serving your country with honor and distinction, only to find yourself facing a discharge less than fully honorable due to misconduct. Your retirement could be lost, the education benefits you earned are now gone and your entitlement to other Department of Veterans Affairs benefits has been stripped away as well.

The various discharge review boards provide a mechanism to restore your entitlement to those veterans benefits in the form of a discharge upgrade. While the name of the board seems self-explanatory and the process appears straight-forward, it can be very complicated for some.

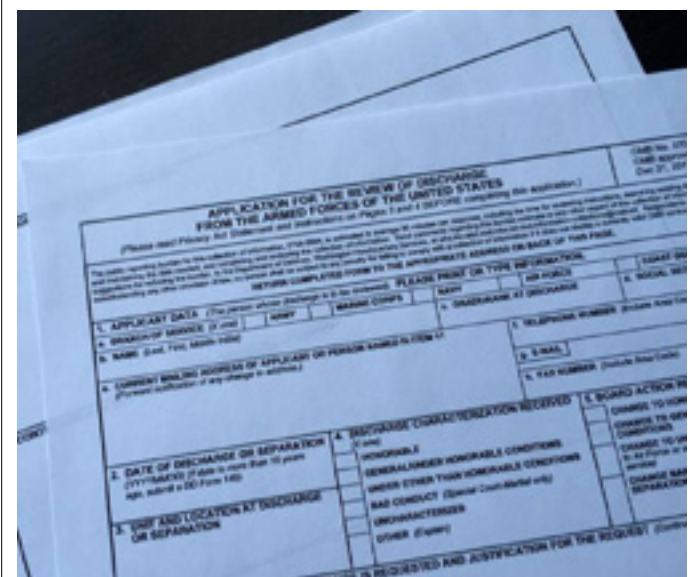
The discharge review boards exist for all branches of the military and have the power to correct inequities or improprieties in military service records. This can mean upgrading a discharge from other than honorable to general under honorable conditions and can result in the restoration of some veterans' benefits administered by the VA. An upgrade from general to honorable would restore a

service member's access to Post 9/11 GI Bill education benefits and allow the service member to take advantage of educational opportunities following service while avoiding the ever-inflating cost of an education.

Besides upgrading a military discharge classification, the boards possess the power to change a service member's reentry code, correct the narrative reason for separation, and even change the separation authority. This could result in a service member becoming eligible to reenlist in the military or avoiding having to explain why their DD-214 lists things like "drug abuse" or "serious misconduct" under the narrative for separation.

A service member has the right to submit a request to the discharge review board so long as the application is made within 15-years from the date of his or her separation from service. The service member is required to complete a DD-Form 293 and it is highly recommended that a comprehensive petition be submitted along with the completed form in order to increase the chances of the board granting relief.

Read more at Militarytimes.com





Newport Harbor Post 291 of Newport Beach, Calif., competes in the 2017 American Legion Color Guard Contest, held on Friday, August 18, 2017 at Reno-Sparks Convention Center in Reno, Nev. (Photo by Lucas Carter/The American Legion)

REGISTER FOR THE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION COLOR GUARD CONTEST

By **Jim Higuera**
National Vice Commander

With our Department Convention just a few months away, now is a good time to consider entering your Post, District, Auxiliary Unit, Sons Squadron, and Rider Chapters in this year's Department Convention Color Guard Contest.

Submit the Color Guard Contest form, which can be found in the main menu under Members > Program Links, then scroll down the Legion Programs section.

This will be our 103rd Department Convention, and we are hoping to get many teams participating. We have opened the competition to our entire American Legion

family, and each winner will receive an engraved plaque, to include a certificate of participation for every team member participating.

The competition is set for 5 p.m. Friday, June 24 and will take place at the Visalia Convention Center. As in the past, each team will go through the inspection process, noting all teams' members are in good standing (membership paid for 2022). Entry forms will be made available via e-mail and the Department website (calegion.org). Deadline for submissions will be June 1, 2022 to Commission Chairman Jim T. Higuera.

Please note: If your team decides to participate in the National Color Guard

competition (applications due July 22), you must compete at the Department level first. This year's National competition will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana. For a fun time at this year's 103rd convention, join us and support your Color Guard Team.

For additional information, please contact your immediate Area Ritual Commission member:

Area 1: E. Paul Ball
ercie.paul@att.net
Area 2: Janet Wilson
pdcmd15@gmail.com
Area 3: Art Cope
cope_art@yahoo.com
Area 4: Jim T. Higuera
jthiguera@yahoo.com
Area 5: Chuck Camarato
ccamarato@yahoo.com
Area 6: JR Duarte
jrduarte22@gmail.com

LEARNING TO SPEAK CIVILIAN IS ABOUT SOFTENING THE EDGES

By **Military Times**

We've all been there before. You arrive in a new place full of people who speak your language — sort of — and are a lot like you, but not quite. They came from different backgrounds, endured different challenges, grew in different directions. So despite all you have in common, you end up talking past each other.

Now: Superimpose military service atop that scenario. Add specific experiences unique to the military, and attitudes and outlooks learned over years of necessity and repetition. And vocabulary: Throw in a lot of words and sayings that resonate with only a certain peer group.

Is it any wonder that service members encountering civilian life for the first time in years — sometimes for the first time in their adult lives — can struggle with communication and mutual understanding with friends, neighbors, colleagues, employers? The language they're speaking — and the identity that is producing it — are similar but, in crucial ways, occasionally different.

"What else produces so many words, acronyms and utterances than fighting wars and preparing to fight wars?" Alan Axelrod wrote in "Whiskey Tango Foxtrot: The Real Language of the Modern American Military," his affectionate 2013 glossary. "Over many years, soldiers, sailors, marines

and airmen have built their own language."

Adapting to civilian language

Shawn McGinley, 56, of Fairfax Station, Va., understands this language well. He retired from the Army as a colonel after serving everywhere from Iraq to Germany to the United States. In 2007, he was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany, for a posting that was the first time he really worked with civilians.

"I realized that the way that I talked to subordinate officers or sergeants, NCOs, it didn't really work with the civilians," McGinley said. "They'd get mad, they'd potentially complain. So I started to change."

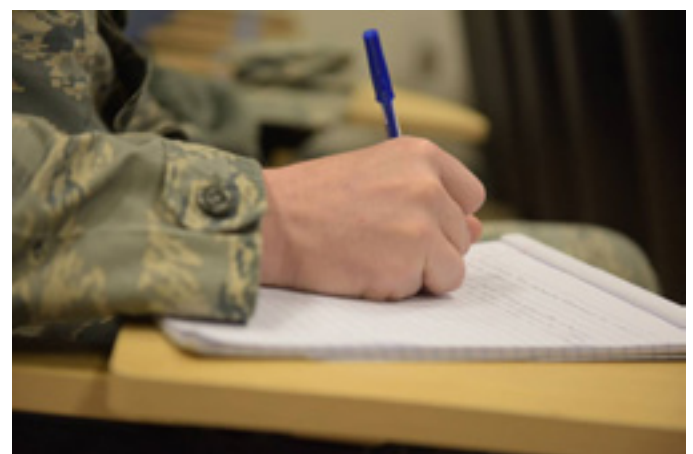
A few years later, in Rock Island, Ill., he found himself in charge of about 1,200 civilians with the Army Corps of Engineers — park rangers, economists and biologists, among others.

"I had this huge civilian workforce. And when I first got there, I was the only military person there. And man, that was a culture shock," McGinley said. "I had to produce, and these guys weren't doing all that well in some of the things they got graded on. So some people got really upset with the way that I initially started communicating."

Eventually, he said, "I was successful in getting to the point but getting there in a nicer way." It was a lesson for him: "You gotta know your audience."

—*Militarytimes.com*

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● ● ● **Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1



Veteran News Briefs

By Nestor Aliga
Contributor

Extend National Cemetery Privileges to Reservists and National Guard

Pete Fosselman of The American Legion Los Angeles Sheriff Star Post 309 faithfully served for 13 years in the military including some state active duty for wildfire suppression.

When he is called to heaven, Pete would like to be buried near his father and other relatives at the Riverside National Cemetery in Southern California.

But tens of thousands, like Pete, who diligently and solely served in the National Guard and/or the Reserve Components, are currently not eligible to be buried in a Veterans Affairs National Cemetery. This is because they do not meet the minimum active duty service requirements such as, served on federal active duty (Title 10), or served full-time on National Guard duty (Title 32), or they are not eligible for reserve retirement (have not received a 20 year letter), or they do not have a service-connected disability, etc.

On March 15, H.R.2471, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, became Public Law No. 117-103.

This omnibus bill includes the "Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act of 2021" (thanks to New Hampshire SEN Shaheen S.2089 and REP Pappas H.R.3944).

Unfortunately, this bill

mostly refers to federal grants to state-owned veterans' cemeteries and it still does not open up national cemeteries to Pete and others in his situation.

Tom Brokaw narrates 'Merrill's Marauders: We Were Expendable'

One of World War II's most heroic and least talked about units will finally receive their Congressional Gold Medal (CGM) and they will be featured in an upcoming documentary.

"We were expendable," said Merrill's Marauder Sam V. Wilson, the retired US Army lieutenant general, who helped start the ultra-secretive Delta Force.

"A plan existed on paper to get us into Burma (now called Myanmar), but no plan existed to get us out."

Then-Army chief of staff Gen. George C. Marshall said the Burma mission "was one of the most difficult of the war ... large numbers of the enemy with few resources was unmatched in any theater."

The Japanese thought that the 3,000 soldiers were a group of 15,000 plus because of the damage and casualties they were able to inflict.

The Merrill's Marauders staged and trained at Camp Stoneman, then a US Army facility in Pittsburg, CA that served as a major staging area for the Pacific Theater of Operations and named after George Stoneman, a cavalry commander during the Civil War and a Governor of California.



Veterans seek to name Navy Ship after Filipino Sailor

Fireman Second Class Telesforo Trinidad is the first and only Filipino American in the U.S. Navy to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor (CMOH). He received this highest military medal for extraordinary heroism when boilers exploded on board the USS San Diego (ACR-6) on January 21, 1915 and he brought two crew members to safety despite receiving burns himself, thus embodying

the naval ethos that prioritizes "ship and shipmate before self."

In 2021, Manuel L. Quezon Post 603 was asked by the USS Telesforo Trinidad Campaign to assist in naming the next guided missile destroyer as "USS Telesforo Trinidad" in honor of this World War I and World War II Veteran and CMOH recipient.

Post 603 then submitted a resolution and are grateful to District 5, Area One,

Department of California, and finally the National Executive Committee for adopting the resolution.

National Commander Paul Dillard also featured Trinidad in the national magazine's March 2022 issue and he wrote the Secretary of the Navy, Carlos Del Toro, to name a ship after Trinidad.

For more information on this USS Telesforo Trinidad campaign, visit USSTTC.org

For many years, the CGM legislation was stalled in Congress because the minimum 66.7% of cosponsors needed in the House (290 out of 435) and the Senate (67 out of 100) were not achieved.

On page 12 of the August 2019 California Legionnaire issue, I mentioned our TEAM effort to get the legislation passed, and thanks to our Department of California's support, Public Law 116-170 was

finally passed in October 2020.

The upcoming documentary, titled "They Volunteered for This: Merrill's Marauders," was narrated by television news icon Tom Brokaw. For more information, visit www.iifoundation.org/?s=marauders and your local Public Broadcasting Service TV station.

June is National PTSD Awareness Month

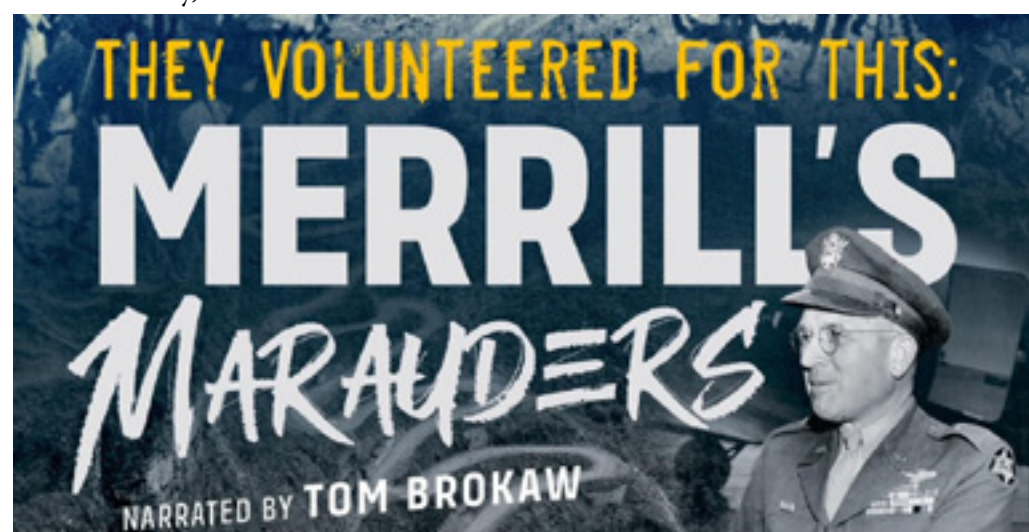
The Veterans Affairs reports that approximately 20%, 12%, and 30% of Service members and Veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the Persian Gulf War, and the Vietnam War, respectively, have had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in a given year.

Many experts urge that as painful as PTSD is, we must continue to discuss it

and to combat it because far too many combat stress injuries remain unreported, undiagnosed, and untreated due to a lack of awareness and because of the persistent stigma associated with mental health conditions which significantly increases the risk of anxiety, depression, homelessness, drug and alcohol related problems, unintentional injuries, and deaths-by-suicide.

We can help increase awareness to the general public by asking local elected officials to adopt a proclamation or resolution; a sample is downloadable from the June 2020 issue of the California Legionnaire and from timesheraldonline.com/2019/06/23/nestor-aliga-ptsd-awareness

Please visit ptsd.va.gov for official VA resources for treating PSTD.





Lt. Geoff Deedrick and Lt. William Ketcham of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department join Ronald Reagan-Palisades Post 283 Commander Jim Cragg following a briefing to the Post membership.

The HOST approach is about transitions into housing, not jail

From HOST page 1

survive on indefinitely so why should they move off the streets?

Eight years ago, LASD changed its approach to reducing homelessness by launching the Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST). It's a co-response model using specially trained deputy sheriffs working together with civilians from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority.

"From its inception, our mission is to enhance public safety and preserve the rights and dignity of people experiencing homelessness," said Lt. Geoff Deedrick, who spoke to the members of the American Legion Ronald Reagan

Palisades Post 283 on March 16. "We've learned that there are windows of opportunity for engaging."

HOST consists of a lieutenant, one sergeant and four deputies.

Each member completes a 32-hour crisis intervention training class, which is led by the two psychologists.

"We partnered with two of the leading psychologists in the department and had them look at some of the things we did and how we could change our methodology to more conform with what our outcome should be," Deedrick explained.

From the start, he said using traditional law enforcement methods when

dealing with the homeless don't work and never did so the whole thrust is breaking the narrative that law enforcement is the problem.

With HOST, the goal is to allow someone to transition off the streets and not into a jail. The team looks carefully at the root cause, and it begins with an identification and an assessment of each person.

"We have 72 hours to make an assessment. And we find out a lot about the people—who their children are, where they went to school, did they play sports, etc. Once we find out that information, we can start figuring out the best solution for each one. A lot of it is family reunification. For

many of them, it's the first time they have been asked these questions," he said.

When the HOST team goes out to do engagement and outreach, a mental health team will go out with the deputies.

"Having our mental health partners on the scene at that moment has proven to be invaluable," he said.

The approach is crisis stabilization and de-escalation. Over the years, HOST deputies have had thousands of conversations with the homeless population and through those conversations they've learned that many people are vulnerable and crying out for help.

While some engage easily, others are scared or reluctant to talk to law enforcement fearing they might end up in jail.

Those early conversations build trust and eventually the homeless person accepts the opportunity to transition off streets knowing that he or she will be provided with safety and security. HOST deputies then collaborate with many outreach organizations to help with the transition, including West Coast Care, St Joseph Center and PATH.

"You need food and water to survive. If you have that, you can live. The next step is safety and security. If you don't have that, your life will suffer," says Deedrick. "And that is what was happening in Venice."

Last summer, LASD sent HOST into Venice to help with encampment cleanups even though it is the City of Los Angeles' jurisdiction.

"If you ask me now, we should have done it three months sooner. And the fact that we were able to accomplish what we did, I'll take any criticism from a council member about allowing conditions like that to happen," Deedrick added.

Versions of the HOST model are currently being used by county sheriff departments in several other regions.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Several veterans from Post 283 asked where they could get involved or volunteer. One is the Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness (PPTFH). Co-president Sharon Kilbride attended the meeting and spoke briefly. She encouraged attendees to visit: www.pptfh.org.

Volunteer opportunities are broken into categories on the site.

A nonprofit outreach, PPTFH commenced operations in 2016. Since then, it has placed 101 homeless people into permanent housing and taken another 159 off the streets, meaning into some form of housing.

"With the large numbers arriving from out of state, we launched 'Project Home Coming' where PPTFH will contact a family member who's willing to accept them and we pay for their travel back home," Kilbride explained, which is an example of "off the streets".

The area PPTFH covers stretches from the border of Santa Monica to Coast Line Drive in Malibu, and they work closely with the Los Angeles Police Department.

PPTFH has seen an alarming number of mentally ill who are also drug addicted, and they are close to hiring a clinic case manager.

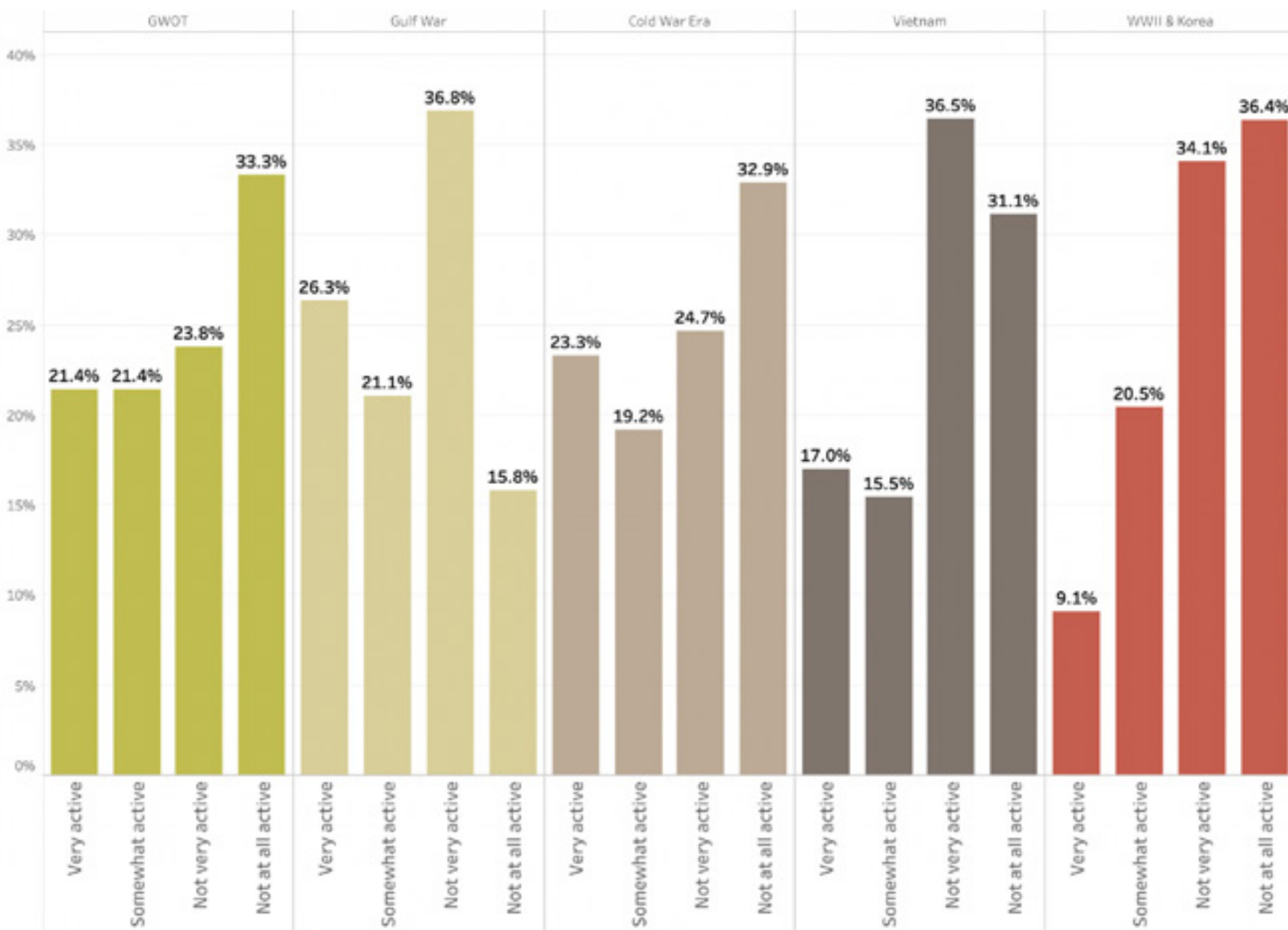
"We really need somebody from the mental health field to get involved."

The position is being funded by a three-year grant.

Despite the challenges, which includes constant fund raising, she says their model is working.

"We have a lot of different communities reaching out to us to mirror our model, such as Malibu, Westwood, Hollywood and Manhattan Beach so we spend a lot of time educating and helping those cities get up and running."

Post 283 is a charter funding partner of the organization.



How to be a more active member of your Legion post

By Jared Morgan
Editor

The American Legion Department of California recently partnered with Victory 360 to conduct a member survey in order to help inform member engagement across the state.

The 17-page findings of that survey can be read online here: bit.ly/2022calegionsurvey

Among the survey findings was post participation. As you can see in the image above (taken from page 6 of the findings), most respondents across war eras are not active at the post level.

While there are many active posts across California, there are likely just as many that are not, which could keep its members from participating. To be clear, there are many reasons why a post's members choose to be inactive. Read the survey results for more on that.

The coronavirus pandemic has certainly hampered many posts' in-person activities, but there are other ways that an American Legion post can engage its members remotely.

A great way to help make your Legion post active is to get involved yourself. Even larger posts struggle to maintain their active communities, with the same 10% of members running for elective office. This can quickly lead to burnout,

so help your post become active by being an active member. This can be as simple as emailing or calling a post officer with suggestions on how to help make that post more active.

Buddy Checks

One of the best ways to connect with other members remotely is to help conduct buddy checks. Checking in on your fellow Legionnaires can help foster a stronger sense of community and more interest in the organization.

This is just one facet of what Membership Director Jeff Daly calls "magnetic membership."

Now is an especially crucial time to check on your fellow veterans to offer assistance. Even if you're not in the leadership at your post, you can contact an officer and volunteer to call a few of your fellow members to see how they're doing.

If a veteran is in need, you may not have all the answers, but you can take notes and report back to an officer who can then follow up.

Sometimes people just need to know they're a part of a community that cares. Others are happy being inactive members and that's OK too.

Attend Online Meetings

Another great way to get involved is to attend your post's online meetings. Because of the pandemic, many posts have opted to conduct their meetings in this fashion.

Attending a meeting is a great way to keep up to date on what your post is doing and it may give you some ideas about how you can get involved.

If you're unable to get online and have a family

member or neighbor (or another Legionnaire) who can help you, please reach out and get that assistance. For more information and other resources, contact an officer at your post or go online to caLegion.org/resource-library.

Create Value

As post leadership holding meetings in person or online, a great way to create value for what may typically be a boring affair is as simple as inviting a guest speaker.

Your guest doesn't have to be a veteran themselves but should be able to speak on topics of interest to your members.

Membership in the American Legion shouldn't only be about getting members to attend post meetings.

It's been said that inviting a veteran to a meeting is a surefire way to get them to NOT join. An active post should host in-person events when safe to do so. They should also organize community service projects and invite veterans to volunteer AFTER the meetings and planning have been completed.

Share Your Story

Were you an inactive member who became involved in your post? What made you want to do so? Are you a post officer who had success getting new members more involved? Is your post active? Are you part of a post that is inactive and needs help? Email editor@caLegion.org or send a letter to Department HQ (See page 2) with "ATTN: California Legionnaire"