



California LEGIONNAIRE

INSIDE



WWII vets get VA healthcare, p.5



Photos from DEC, p.7

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Legionnaires affected by storms can get assistance

By Christian Southards
Staff Writer

During December and January, virtually all of California was repeatedly hit by severe storms bringing unusually heavy rainfall and strong winds.

As much as 90 percent of all Californians were under a flood watch early January.

Nearly two dozen people have been killed in storm-related incidents and damages are already racking up in the tens of millions around the state, especially as the risk for mudslides and sinkholes continues to rise.

While major road closures and evacuation

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SAVING A VETERANS HOME

By Kevin Stonestreet
District 25 Commander

If you have ever found yourself driving on Interstate 15 from San Bernardino to Las Vegas, you have driven by this post. Kind of. With only 55 members on their books for the 2021-2022 membership year, and no physical post to call home, most would consider this a small post. However, when

posts are small they are generally mighty.

For their general meetings, they can be found in comfortable chairs at the local golf course restaurant. Inside those meetings are 55 of the most driven members one could hope to find in an American Legion.

Despite having so few members, their general meetings are well attended. After requesting

they be able to host a District meeting, their very next general meeting was attended by over 20 members, almost half of their membership. The topic of discussion was a chili competition at a nearby business named Dempsey's Pub, to be held on Nov. 5. While at the Department Convention, the Post Commander

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Do you have a purpose, a 'reason for being?'

By Jared Morgan
Editor

As we move into spring, it's important to take stock of the things that matter most to us and to renew our efforts to support those causes. For many veterans and their families, one of the most important organizations in their lives is The American Legion.

Founded in 1919, The American Legion is the largest veterans nonprofit in the United States, with close to 2 million members. The organization's strength rests in its size and its ability to lobby Congress on the issues most important to veterans and their families.

That means you are what makes this organization strong and relevant.

With more of our World War II and Korean War veterans passing on to Post Everlasting, it's more important than ever that every member work to recruit other veterans they know into The American Legion.

Anyone having served a day of federal active duty since Dec. 7, 1941, is eligible for membership in the

American Legion.

Every member is a recruiter, and each member is an ambassador to this organization. When I joined The American Legion in 2014, I decided I would use my knowledge and skills in media and

One of the most important factors in the success of a transitioning veteran is finding purpose.

communications to help this organization grow and continue to succeed for the next 100 years. When people out in the community see me in my Legion cap, I want them to know what The

American Legion is and what we're about. This is my "why."

Transitioning veterans

It's why I'm working on developing a program for veterans transitioning from military to civilian life. In my opinion, one of the most important factors in the success of a transitioning veteran is finding purpose. As humans, we all need a reason to "be," a purpose in life that helps us fit into society.

I'm on a team at the University of Southern California working on a federal grant for an education program geared toward transitioning

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Veterans get free lifetime pass to all national parks

By Makenna Uriarte
Communications
Coordinator

The VA just announced that The National Park Service is now offering an Interagency Military Lifetime Pass, which waives entrance fees to national parks for current military service members and their

dependents, Veterans, and Gold Star Families.

Eligible persons include someone who has served in the United States Armed Forces with one of the following valid forms of identification:

- Department of Defense Identification Card
- Veteran Health

Identification Card (VHIC)

- Veteran ID Card
- Veterans designation on a state-issued U.S. driver's license or identification card

This pass can be acquired in person at various federal recreation sites, or online at the USGS Store for a processing fee of \$10.

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VA addresses concerns it will be bogged down by PACT Act claims

By **Christian Southards**
Staff Writer

As of December, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is processing claims authorized by the Honoring Our PACT Act for terminally ill veterans, allowing them to access benefits early.

The development preceded the VA's ongoing PACT Act Week, which aims to educate and assist veterans and families eager to apply for toxic exposure benefits.

A full list of events, including those in California, can be accessed online.

The PACT Act, passed

in summer, grants veterans sweeping benefits for ailments now assumed to be caused by toxic exposure during their military service.

The American Legion estimates that over three million veterans will benefit from the legislation; in many cases, the benefits may be life saving.

The VA will begin processing PACT Act claims for non-terminally ill veterans on Jan. 1, 2023.

However, as reported by ABC, U.S. House Veterans Affairs Committee members, including Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., who introduced the bill in 2020, have expressed



doubts about the VA's ability to handle the unprecedented surge in benefits claims.

Earlier this month, the VA issued a press release in hopes of easing worries about delays.

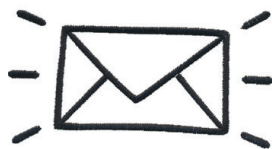
The VA is filling many positions specifically to process toxic exposure benefits claims.

Speaking on the hiring effort, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said,

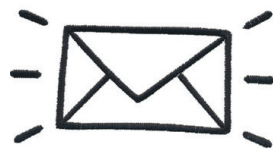
“there are millions of veterans and survivors who are eligible for new benefits and health care as a result of the PACT Act, and we won't rest until every one of them gets what they deserve. That means aggressively hiring new VA team members to make sure we're able to process claims and deliver care to veterans as quickly and effectively as possible.”

He says, “there's no better mission than serving veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors — and we encourage folks to apply to join our team today.”

As of early December, an estimated 175,000 toxic exposure benefits claims have been filed since the PACT Act was signed by President Joe Biden.



Letters to the Editor



As a veteran and daughter of a ww2 veteran I am wondering if you think they will ever include females in the sons of the American legion or maybe call the group children of veterans or sons and daughters of the American Legion.

Just a thought.
—Patricia Murphy

More info about coed Boys State. Confusing.
—Jeff McKendry

I would like to say to all my Veteran Brothers and Sisters Actives or Retired Happy New Year and stay safe in all your travels. God Bless.

—Donald Ladnier

I would like to read more extensive coverage regarding the VA West Los Angeles' program to provide same day beds, and defiers to find more long time housing for homeless vets.

Thank you,
—Les Benedict

I would like to read about how our state of California can better serve our disabled veterans. Our governor wants to mimic Texas and their laws, well how about the property tax benefits or tax break for disabled veterans? While California has 3 pages in the books about how a

100% disabled veteran gets a property tax break, the state of Texas has 3/4 page describing how every disabled veteran, regardless of % of disability, gets some sort of or property tax break up to and including 100% property tax free. I believe this to be a worthy cause and a benefit for

our disabled veterans all around. Would be nice if a congressman would return my call regarding this very topic that they could champion on our veteran's behalf.

Respectfully,
—Evert Wells

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POST 855 RAISES OVER \$11K FOR VETERANS HOME

From HOME page 1

George Butterfield won a big screen TV at an opportunity drawing in one of the hospitality rooms. This TV would become part of another opportunity drawing at their fundraiser, alongside over 60 other opportunities from a wide range of small businesses and local residents.

Aside from the opportunity drawings, a cornhole tournament brought in some funseekers that somehow managed to drop their bags in 20 MPH sustained winds with lots of sun. The front parking lot of Dempsey's Pub was a classic car show. On one side was a food vendor

where fresh cooked tacos, hamburgers and hotdogs were on the menu, and on another a military swag "bizarre" run by a retired Army Command Sergeant Major. A live band was on stage playing the hits, and there was even a photo booth with props on their shaded patio where college football was being broadcasted. Legionnaire officers and volunteers teamed up to make all of this happen, each tasked out with a specific goal: Have fun, get it done.

Inside were 15 crockpots of varying chilis made by those willing to wear their heart on their sleeves and give us their best. Also inside was a Christmas

tree. Typically, I like to believe that Christmas comes after Thanksgiving and we shouldn't get ahead of ourselves.

The exception confirmed the rule here where on this Christmas tree was a series of cards where veterans living in the Veterans Home of California – Barstow filled out a wishlist for Christmas.

The purchaser of the wishlist would essentially adopt a veteran and give \$40 towards their wishlist as that is all the more the veterans would ask for.

Every single veteran residing at the Veterans Home of California – Barstow, in which 103 veterans currently reside,

was adopted. Every. Single. Veteran.

For a bit of backstory, this very same veterans home was slated for closure in May of 2020 as part of Governor Gavin Newsom's revised budget. However, through a loud public outcry of support for those that served our great country with honor, the plan was turned around. Now, in a grand display of Veterans Assistance and Rehabilitation, the home is open, visitation is welcomed, and they are currently hiring staff.

In total, the small 55-member post of Silver Lakes Post 855 of The American Legion Department of California was

able to donate \$11,279, all of which will go directly to the Veterans. In addition to the fundraising, there was also a membership drive in which this post signed up 3 new members pushing them past their membership target for the fiscal year.

With all that said, Post 855 is not done.

Planning for a golf tournament scheduled for July 2nd of 2023 has already begun with the proceeds going straight into their community, specifically youth sports.

On top of all that, since their chili cook off, they have even recruited yet another 3 veterans to join our great organization.

12 veterans-related bills passed by House

By Christian Southards
Staff Writer

The U.S. House of Representatives passed 12 veterans bills on Nov. 17. Most of the bills designated new names for VA medical facilities, including an outpatient clinic in French Camp, Calif.

However, several of the bills aim to improve veterans' quality of life.

First, the VA Infrastructure Powers Exceptional Research, or VIPER Act, among other minor clerical changes, is no longer required to follow

parameters outlined in the Paperwork Reduction Act.

The VIPER Act was introduced by House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano, D-Calif., in Oct. 2021 before it was passed earlier this year.

The act authorizes the VA to conduct research on a variety of care-related topics, including improving technologies used in the treatment of veterans.

It is currently unclear how the Paperwork Reduction Act affected the VA's ability to carry out provisions outlined in the

VIPER Act.

Next, the Improving Oversight of the Veterans Community Care Providers Act of 2022, which improves the VA's ability to identify healthcare providers that do not meet the standards of the Veterans Community Care program, has been reworded to give the VA more time to create a plan once the act is made into law.

Originally, the act required the VA to submit a plan to Congress no later than Dec. 31, 2022.

The Veterans Community Care program has

previously fallen under scrutiny for slow scheduling and poor quality of care in some U.S. counties, particularly in more rural areas.

Last, the Strengthening VA Cybersecurity Act of 2022 and Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Reform Act of 2021 have both been amended with minor clerical changes. Both acts address cybersecurity and aging technology concerns regarding IT systems employed by the VA Veterans Health Administration.

The former has been



sent back to the House for further changes while the latter is awaiting a vote in the Senate.

The VA has faced scrutiny in recent years for a number of data leaks that exposed veterans private information.



Visitors gather at the WWII Memorial in Washington. (Edwin L. Wriston/Army National Guard)

All WWII vets to get VA medical benefits under budget bill

By **Leo Shane III**
Military Times

All living World War II veterans are eligible for Veterans Affairs medical services and nursing home care under language included in the federal budget bill approved by lawmakers in December.

The provision is one of numerous changes to VA policies included in the \$1.7 trillion omnibus appropriations bill, which also includes \$303 billion for the department's operations in fiscal 2023.

Others include the establishment of a "Buddy Check Week" by VA to promote peer wellness checks for suicide prevention; expansion of student loan repayment programs for department mental health providers; and

mandated new research on secondary post-traumatic stress issues for military spouses and children.

VA officials estimate about 167,000 WWII-era veterans are still living in America today.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that expansion of health and medical care to all World War II veterans could impact about 40,000 currently excluded from VA services.

For now, eligibility is based on service connected conditions and financial status, as it is for veterans of other eras.

But advocates have argued that given the WWII generation's advanced age and critical service to the country, all of those veterans should have the option of using

the full slate of VA medical care.

"These men and women responded to an existential threat and were deemed the 'Greatest Generation,' largely because of their service," American Legion National Commander Vincent "Jim" Troiola said in a statement.

The Legion has been pushing for the expansion of care eligibility since 2017.

Troiola said the move is needed to provide "benefits that they have absolutely earned."

Congress in the past has expanded similar benefits for some World War I veterans.

The last living American WWI veteran passed away in 2011.

Read more at militarytimes.com

Relief for California storm victims

From **STORMS page 1**

orders made last month had been lifted, the state braced again for another storm system that made landfall, lasting through another weekend.

In light of the hazardous weather, the California American Legion says that Legionnaires displaced by the storms can seek assistance from The American Legion's National Emergency Fund, or NEF.

The fund provides up to \$3,000 for relief to individuals or up to \$10,000 for American Legion Posts and can cover costs such as temporary

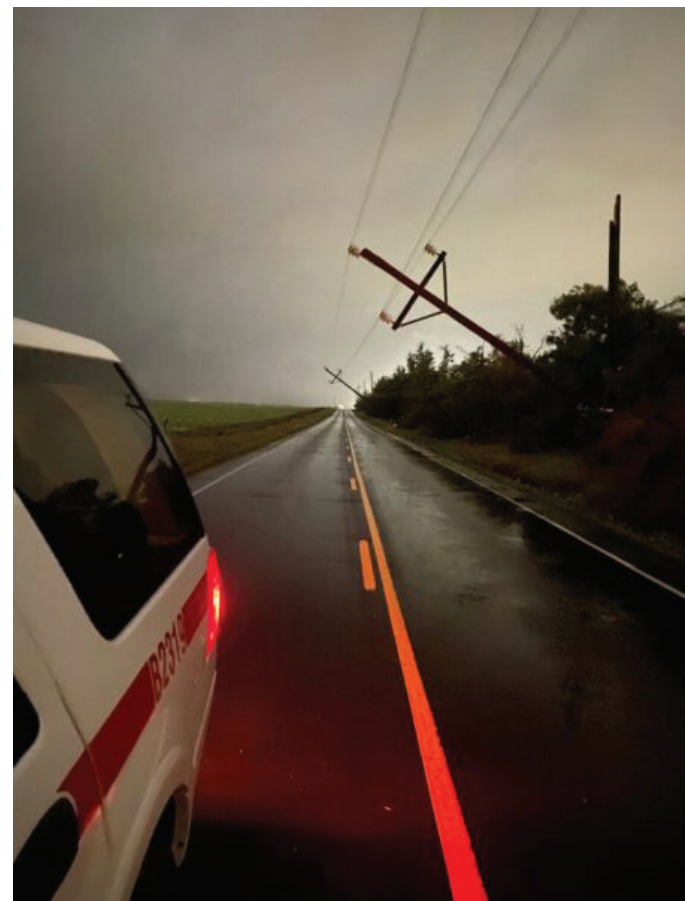
housing, food, clothing, and other emergency-related expenses.

The full eligibility requirements for NEF applications can be found here and applicants can listen here for assistance filing a request.

Since its inception in 1989, the NEF has provided over \$8 million in relief to Legionnaires weathering natural disasters.

Most recently, California veterans affected by the Creek Wildfire were able to apply for assistance.

Legion.org/emergency/apply



■ **California American Legion College**

■ **Spring 2023 Course** Apply: caLegion.org/calc-application

■ **March 17, 18 & 19** Application deadline: **March 1**

■ **Hollywood Post 43** Prerequisite: Basic training: Legion.org/alei

A LOVE. A WAR. A CITIZEN.



Felix and Marguerite Lovera



By Patrick Lundquist
Post 111 Member

I served in Vietnam for 1 ½ years and then, as a civilian contractor, worked for the Army in Vietnam for another ten months, but this story idea is not about me, it is about my grandparents.

They both served in France during WWI and were married over there.

My grandmother was a “Hello Girl” phone operator.

She was buried in the Golden Gate Cemetery and her headstone only gave her information as “WIFE OF...” She died in 1959, and at that time the “Hello Girls” were considered an auxiliary rather than a unit in the Army.

During Jimmy Carter’s presidency the “Hello Girls” were recognized

as being a part of the US Army. In 2018, I came into possession of my Grandmother’s records and not long after began a letter writing campaign to have her headstone corrected.

At first I got pushback and was told that anything over 50 years old was considered historical and could not be changed.

My response, “How can it be historical, if the facts have been omitted?” I’m not sure if my impeccable logic resulted in the change of mind, or all the letters to Congressman and Senators, but Mission Accomplished.

To the best of my knowledge this is the only headstone in a Veteran’s Cemetery giving recognition to a “Hello Girl.”

Sadly, my grandmother, never received a full

military funeral, just a quiet headstone change.

I wrote up my grandparent’s story:

What drives people to join the military? Patriotism? Poverty? Fear? Honor? Glory? Citizenship? The draft? Love? The reasons are many and, in many cases, more than one reason applies.

This is the true story of Marguerite Martin and Felix Lovera, two young lovers who served in the United States Army in France during WWI.

In 1914 Felix was out delivering bread with his horse drawn cart.

As he pulled up to the orphanage, Marguerite Martin stepped through the gate and asked, “Do you have any bread for me?” Felix responded in

his broken English, “You may have my bread and you can have my cart, you may have my horse and you can have my heart.”

And that is where this love story really began.

They fell in love yet try as he might, Felix could not convince Marguerite to marry.

She refused to marry him until he became a US Citizen. With his illegal entry, how could he ever accomplish that?

A War

And that is how things stood for three long years until America’s entry into the “War to End All Wars.”

Enlisting for the duration during a time of war provided a quick path to citizenship. And so, out of love, on June 6, 1917, two months after the US entered the conflict, Felix enlisted as a sergeant in the Quartermaster Corps...

Read the full story at: calegion.org/a-love-a-war-a-citizen

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SPRING DEC

Photos by Historian Fred Shacklett and District 6 Adjutant Henry Sanchez





GAO: VA Community Care Program Contractors Omitted Claims Data

By Christian Southards
Staff Writer

A Nov. 10 U.S. Government Accountability Office investigation found “potential challenges [for veterans] with scheduling appointments” with Veterans Community Care program providers.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ Veterans Community Care Program, or VCCP, ensures that non-VA medical care providers offer “timely, high-quality care” to

veterans unable to visit VA medical facilities. This includes prompt scheduling defined as within 30 days of first contact.

Two contractors handle five regions outlined by the VCCP: Optum Serve manages the regions to the east; TriWest Healthcare Alliance manages the western region and Alaska. Veterans in rural communities throughout the United States are the primary beneficiaries of the program.

According to the U.S.

Government Accountability Office’s most recent investigation, the two VCCP contractors are supplying the VA with incomplete patient case data leading the VA to incorrectly conclude that the contractors have been meeting program standards. As much as 50 percent of appointments scheduled after 30 days from the point of contact were omitted in performance reports presented to the VA on the grounds that veterans had no

preference for appointment dates.

As part of the investigation, the GAO also conducted a series of 80 undercover calls to VCCP providers throughout the continental United States and found several compounding issues.

Most notably, there aren’t enough VCCP providers to meet appointment demand promptly and the VA lacks sufficient staff to schedule appointments with existing providers. Additionally, the

VA’s provider directory includes outdated contact information for many providers, including many that are no longer part of the program.

The types of care most impacted by scheduling delays included dental care, specialty care, and mental health care. All types of care were impacted by delays.

The investigation findings do not include specific findings on which areas are most impacted by scheduling delays.

Anniversary of the Founding of the U.S. Space Force

By Christian Southards
Staff Writer

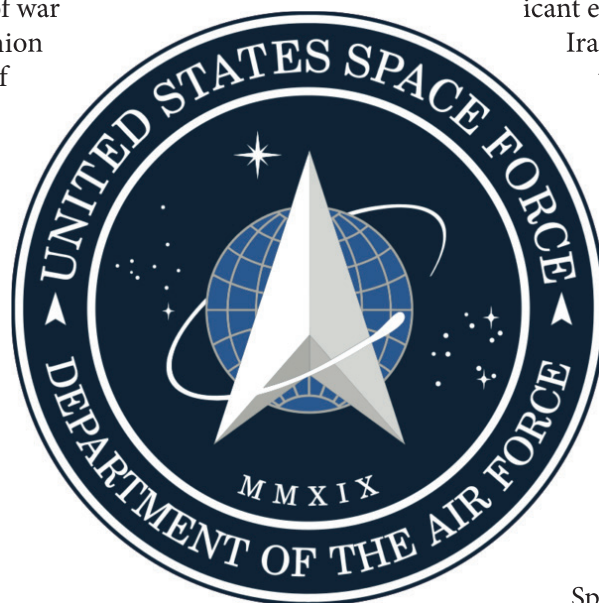
The newest branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, the Space Force celebrates its birthday every Dec. 20.

On Dec. 20, 2019, President Donald Trump signed the 2020 Defense Authorization Bill, establishing the U.S. Space Force as the first new branch of the U.S. Military since the establishment of the U.S. Air Force in 1947.

The Space Force takes over a mission once charged to the U.S. Air Force.

Space emerged as a potential theater of war with the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Cold War.

Satellite and missile control and defense were critical in maintaining an edge over Soviet forces, but when the Cold War ended, the need to operate in space remained. U.S. dominance in space gave advancing U.S. and



Coalition forces a significant edge against the Iraqi Military during the Persian Gulf War.

As peer nations rose to power and terrorism developed into an ever-present threat at the turn of the century, the need for a dedicated Space Force gained traction in Congress and the Department of

Defense. Nearly 70 years after the Air Force first started exploring the possibility of space serving as an avenue of warfare, the U.S. Space Force was officially chartered.

As military, political, and commercial interest in space continues to grow, the potential for future conflicts in this new theater increases.

The U.S. Space Force stands ready to protect America’s interests in space while assisting all other branches of the U.S. Military to carry out their respective missions.



VSOs TO CONGRESS: FUND THE VA OR PACT ACT BENEFITS MAY NOT REACH VETERANS IN 2023

By **Christian Southards**
Staff Writer

On Dec. 14, six veterans services organizations sent a joint letter to Congress expressing concerns that the VA will not have the funding it needs to execute provisions outlined in the Honoring Our PACT Act if a budget deal for fiscal year 2023 is not reached.

The heads of The American Legion, Disabled

American Veterans, Military Officers Association of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and Wounded Warrior Project all signed the bill, urging Congress to adopt a full appropriation for the VA for fiscal year 2023. The VSOs allege that the existing continuing resolution—originally adopted for fiscal year 2022—will

result in a \$10.7 billion shortfall in funding that is likely to significantly hamper the department's ability to process toxic exposure benefit claims made possible by the PACT Act.

“The urgency of getting this right—and getting it right as soon as possible—should match the urgency of passing the legislation earlier this year. We are indeed grateful for your

action earlier this year, but our job is not done.”

As many as three million veterans are expected to file claims with the VA in the coming months, which is all but certain to create a backlog regardless of the status of the VA's funding. However, the VSOs contend that if Congress fails to provide the VA with adequate funding, the department will be unable to hire and train the

additional staff it will need to process claims.

Earlier this month, the VA announced that it had already begun the hiring process in anticipation of processing claims on Jan. 1, 2023, the earliest that most veterans can file a claim. It is currently unclear if the adoption of another continuing resolution would force the VA to backtrack.

City of Vallejo to Honor Women Veterans

By **Nestor Aliga**
Post 603

On March 18 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Vallejo's Women Veterans will be honored with a short ceremony and presented with various certificates of appreciation at 734 Marin Street in Vallejo.

This event will be the culmination of California Women's Military History Week and it is a collaboration among members of the Manuel L. Quezon Post

603 and the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum—vallejomuseum.net.

There are almost 2 million women Veterans in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and nearly 163,000 women veterans make California their home, according to the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Undeservedly, women Veterans continue to experience lack of recognition

and worse, they face significant barriers and challenges in accessing necessary health care and other services. Also, because they are usually overlooked by everyone, they frequently struggle to even consider themselves as Veterans.

Women Veterans' issues were discussed by VA Director Lourdes Tiglaio and CalVet Deputy Secretary Virginia Wimmer during their Memorial Day

2022 speeches at the Mare Island Naval Cemetery in Vallejo.

For the March 18 event, Vallejo's Women Veterans are also being asked to participate in the “I Am Not Invisible” campaign by doing the Oral History Project - which is a part of the Library of Congress Veterans History Project and the CalVet Women Voices program.

Both projects aim to increase visibility, and

increase awareness and understanding about women Veterans and to open everyone else's eyes to the myriad contributions, needs, and experiences of women who have served in the military.

Vallejo Women Veterans who wish to be presented with Certificates of Appreciation must submit names by March 1 to Nestor.Aliga@Comcast.Net or 707-853-0062.



VA to pay for all emergency mental health care

By **Leo Shane III**
for the NavyTimes

As of Jan. 17, all veterans will be able to access emergency mental health care free of charge at any Veterans Affairs medical facility or outside clinic, regardless of whether they are already enrolled in department health care services.

Department officials announced the new policy as part of nationwide efforts to prevent suicide among veterans.

According to the latest department data, about 17 veterans a day die by suicide.

“Veterans in suicidal crisis can now receive the free, world-class

emergency health care they deserve, no matter where they need it, when they need it, or whether they’re enrolled in VA care,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement. “This expansion of care will save veterans’ lives, and there’s nothing more important than that.”

The new policy applies to all veterans with any separation status except a dishonorable discharge, regardless of whether they qualify for other VA medical services.

About 18 million veterans are living in America today, but only about half are currently enrolled in veterans health care through the department.

Since 2019, all VA medical facilities have been required to provide same-day access to emergency mental health care to veterans.

Under the new policy, VA will either waive costs for care or — in cases of visits outside the VA system — provide reimbursements for emergency mental health care. Those costs can include appointment fees, transportation costs and other related follow-up expenses.

The new plan also calls for VA to cover the costs of up to 30 days of inpatient or residential care for treatment of those mental health issues and up to 90 days of outpatient care if veterans are experiencing an acute

suicidal crisis.

The move is based on legislation adopted by Congress nearly two years ago. House Veterans’ Affairs Committee ranking member Mark Takano, D-Calif., who authored the measure, praised the department for its implementation.

“This new benefit removes cost from the equation when veterans are at imminent risk of self-harm and allows them to access lifesaving care when they need it most, regardless of whether the veteran has ever enrolled in or used VA healthcare benefits,” he said in a statement.

“But there is more work to do. As we embark on a new year and a new Congress,

I will continue to prioritize meaningful solutions to help save veterans’ lives.”

Suicide prevention has been a top clinical focus for Congress and the department for more than a decade, but progress on reducing the number of military and veterans suicides has been limited.

Veterans experiencing a mental health emergency can contact the Veteran Crisis Line through 988 or at 1-800-273-8255. Callers should select option 1 for a VA staffer. Veterans, troops or their family members can also text 838255 or visit VeteransCrisisLine.net for assistance.



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

PURPOSE

From PURPOSE page 1

veterans. The program will center around the Japanese concept of ikigai, or “reason for being,” and will select a cohort of transitioning veterans for a series of workshops over several months to help them develop their “why” and their ikigai.

We will also be producing a documentary for distribution and submission to film festivals. If all goes well, this could happen as early as next year.

To affirm my commitment to the program and to enlist the help of The American Legion, I recently wrote a resolution seeking support that will originate with my post, Ronald Reagan-Pacific Palisades Post 283.

The resolution asks the Legion to partner with any ikigai program or expert in the field to help maximize its success.

The concept of ikigai is also translated as “your life’s purpose” or “what makes you wake up in the morning.” The idea is that everyone has an ikigai, something that brings them joy and a sense of fulfillment.

It’s something that you’re passionate about, something that the world needs, something that you’re good at, and something that you can be paid for. Finding your ikigai is considered to be the key to a happy and fulfilling life.

If you find a job doing what you love, you’ll never work a day in your life. You’ve probably heard something like this. Well, that’s what our ikigai program is all about.

Ikigai can be a powerful tool for veterans as they transition out of the military and into civilian life.

For veterans, the transition to civilian life can be

difficult and confusing, but by finding their ikigai, they can navigate this transition with a sense of purpose and direction.

The American Legion’s mission to support veterans and their families through its programs and services aligns well with concepts underlying ikigai.

The Legion’s Four Pillars

Finding your ikigai is like finding your “why.” Why did you join The American Legion? Figuring that out can be as simple as finding something within the organization that interests you.

Whether it’s one of the principles of our four pillars or our programs, you can find something you’re passionate about and support it.

The American Legion operates on four pillars: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation: This pillar focuses on providing assistance and support to veterans in obtaining the benefits they have earned through their military service, including medical care, disability compensation, and education benefits. Additionally, The American Legion also provides counseling and mental health services to veterans, as well as employment resources to help them find jobs after leaving the military.

National Security: This pillar focuses on ensuring that the United States is protected by a strong national defense and that veterans are honored for their service. This includes advocating for a strong national defense, supporting the troops, and promoting the rights and benefits of veterans.

Americanism: This

pillar focuses on promoting American values and preserving the history and traditions of the United States.

The American Legion has various programs in place to promote Americanism, such as the American Legion Baseball, the Boys State and Girls State program, and the Oratorical Contest.

Children and Youth: This pillar focuses on supporting the next generation of Americans by investing in the education and well-being of young people. The American Legion sponsors a variety of youth programs, including scholarships and youth sports programs, that teach American values and promote physical fitness.

Programs and Services

One of the benefits of joining The American Legion is access to a wide range of programs and services, designed to support veterans and their families in a variety of ways. These programs include assistance with VA benefits, counseling and mental health services, employment resources, and more. Additionally, members of The American Legion also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of recreational and social activities.

In the Department of California, we spend more than a half a million dollars annually for our Department Service Officer Division made up of six offices across California, staffed with six veteran service officers, who are charged with helping veterans file for education and medical benefits. Getting services from the VA can be a confusing process and our service officers are there to help. Visit caLegion.org/donate to learn more.

The Legion Family

For those interested in becoming more deeply involved in this organization, The American Legion also offers membership in its Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Riders programs.

The American Legion Auxiliary is an independent organization that supports The American Legion.

The Sons of the American Legion is open to male descendants of veterans who are eligible for membership in The American Legion, living or not.

The American Legion Auxiliary is open to male or female descendants of veterans, as well as spouses of veterans.

The American Legion Riders is open to members of The American Legion, Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion.

Each of these groups offers its own unique opportunities for service and camaraderie, but not always independently of one another. It’s one big Legion Family.

The Sons of the American Legion’s (SAL) purpose is to honor the service and sacrifice of these veterans by promoting patriotism, good citizenship and a strong national security.

The organization carries out its mission through a variety of programs and activities, including community service, patriotic education and support for veterans and their families.

Like the SAL, The American Legion Auxiliary’s (ALA) aim is to promote patriotism, good citizenship and support for veterans and their families.

The ALA also focuses on helping military families, supporting youth programs and serving their communities.

The American Legion Riders (ALR) is a group

Finding Your ikigai

Even if you’re not a “transitioning” veteran, try it. To develop your ikigai, ask yourself these questions:

- ◊ What am I passionate about?
- ◊ What am I good at?
- ◊ What does the world need?
- ◊ What can I be paid for?

If you’d like to share your ikigai, email editor@caLegion.org or call (310) 750-9782 to leave a voice message.

Be sure to include your name and city. Alternatively, email or call and let me know why you joined The American Legion. I’d love to know.

of motorcycle enthusiasts who promote motorcycle safety and American patriotism. The Riders participate in various patriotic events and causes that support veterans and their families. They also support local and national charities.

Scholarships and Community Service

The American Legion also provides various scholarship opportunities to members and their families, providing financial assistance to pursue higher education. This is a great way for veterans and their family members to better themselves and secure their future.

The American Legion is also heavily involved in community service and volunteer work. Members have the opportunity to participate in volunteer events such as veteran support, disaster relief and supporting local schools and charities. This allows veterans to continue their service to the community, even after leaving active duty.

Building the largest supportive housing community



community of more than 3,000 Veterans and their families.

TVC is proud to share that, starting in January 2023, it will begin welcoming its first Veterans to their new homes.

Some highlights from their work thus far:

By the end of this year, 617 new units within eight separate projects on the North Campus will be completed, started, or fully financed.

Building 207 will be completed by Q1 2023 – the first of more than 20 planned Veteran housing buildings to open on the North Campus.

It will house formerly homeless and at-risk senior Veterans in 60 units, and provide a wide range of amenities.

Building 404 was the first to close financing on the North Campus this past November.

The \$50-million project will deliver 73 supportive homes for Veterans transitioning from homelessness.

This unprecedented

project to renovate the historic North Campus requires more than \$1.1 billion in funding.

With support from stakeholders, TVC has already raised more than \$500 million, nearly half of its goal.

This has been made possible through public-private partnerships with Veterans, stakeholders, the Department of Veterans Affairs, elected officials, philanthropy, and business and community leaders are all working together to tackle our homelessness crisis.



Sign up for American Legion Department of California email updates:
bit.ly/calegion-emails

The Veterans Collective

It has been a busy year for The Veterans Collective. Its work is well underway to transform the historic West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs

North Campus into the country's largest supportive housing community for homeless and at-risk Veterans.

As 2022 comes to a close, the group wanted

to offer an update on the progress made and share what's to come in 2023.

Once complete, the 70+ acre North Campus will feature upwards of 1,700 units of housing and a



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Email editor@caLegion.org to see your ad printed in the paper.