

**Kings County
Military and Veterans Coalition
May 10, 2016
Meeting Agenda**

- Introductions

- Previous Issues

- **Veterans Service Office Status** –*Walk-ins are now Monday through Thursday for claims from 8:30 to 5:00 (no new claims processing after 3:30). Appointments are also available.* The office is open for business on Friday too! Support staff can answer many questions without seeing a VSR. Feel free to stop by anytime to ask for assistance. The Kings County Veterans Service Office can complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form for the new California Veteran Designation on your driver's license. We can also issue Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged Veterans!

- **Joe Wright: Retired May 6**

- New Issues

- **Guest Speaker – Kings County Library - Veterans Resource Center – Sherman Lee**
- **2016 21Guns Workout – May 30** - (See attached)
- **Californians Against the Misleading RX Measure** – (See attached)
- **Choice Program Billing Issues** - (See attached)
- **Combat Veterans Get Telephonic Health Care Application Option** - (See attached)
- **Fresno Co Vet Job Fair– May 13** - (See attached)
- **PPP Recognition Day – May 14** - (See attached)
- **Veterans Courts Expansion** – (See attached)
- **Burn Pits** – (See attached)

- Round Table –

- Next Meeting – *June 13, Kings County Admin Multi-Purpose Room*****



WOD with Warriors - 21 Guns - Memorial Day 2016

Purpose: Workout of the Day or WOD with Warriors is a functional fitness tribute workout held twice a year on Veterans and Memorial Day at gyms all throughout the country. WOD with Warriors supports Team Red, White and Blue, whose mission is to enrich the lives of America's veterans by connecting them to their communities through physical and social activity.

Goals

1. To help people remember and observe Memorial Day in a respectful, reflecting, meaningful way.
2. To provide an opportunity for veterans to connect to members of their community through functional fitness.

The WOD - 21 Guns - Memorial Day

A 21 Gun Salute is the Nation's highest display of honor, appropriately reserved for our Fallen troops on Memorial Day. This WOD intends to replicate this, to honor our Nation's Warriors, past, present and future. The 21-minute workout and 21 repetitions signify a 21-gun salute, with an exercise for each of the five Branches of the Military.

21 minute As many rounds as possible (AMRAP)

- 400 meter run*
- 21 pushups
- 21 box jump (24"/20")
- 15 burpees
- 9 Pull-ups

Timeline:

April 11-20 -Gym/Box Owner or Host Location Sign-ups via [online application](#)

April 20 - Shirt Design release and Registration opens via [Crowdrise](#)

May 10 - Suggested Registration Day to ensure delivery of shirt

May 20 - Memorial Day (May 30) - Event Execution

Next Steps:

- Gym/Box Owner or Event Host: [Sign up your location here](#). Event information and digital support package will be provided. Any group of 2 or more can be considered a location.
- Team RWB Leaders - Partner with local gym/box partners or host own event
- Participants: Sign Up, open April 20th, via [WOD with Warrior Crowdrise](#) page. Registration will have three options: (Limited Number of Shirts, will SELL OUT)
 - \$20 - Attending, please send a shirt
 - \$20 - Supporting (can't attend), please send a shirt
 - FREE - Attending, no shirt please

Participants chose the gym/box or event location that they wish to attend. A complete listing of locations, by state and city, times and Team Registration Pages can be found at this [link](#) (Available Apr 20).

CALIFORNIANS AGAINST THE MISLEADING RX MEASURE

For Immediate Release: April 28, 2016

Contact: Kathy Fairbanks, 916-443-0872

California Veterans Organizations Oppose Misleading Pharmaceutical Initiative, Warn It Could Increase Prescription Drug Costs for the VA and Our Nation's Veterans

SACRAMENTO – Today, thirteen California veterans' organizations announced their opposition to the misleading drug contracting initiative on California's November 2016 ballot.

"America's uniformed service members lay their lives on the line to protect our country. In recognition of their service, they are afforded certain unique benefits. This measure ignores their sacrifice. It seeks to extend the special prescription medicine discounts given to veterans to some state purchasing programs. This could increase prescription drug costs for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and ultimately for veterans, retirees and military families," said Nick Guest, State Adjutant/Quartermaster, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of California.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) negotiates special prescription drug discounts with pharmaceutical manufacturers for the benefit of veterans, retirees, active duty military and their families in recognition and appreciation of their dedicated service to our country.

The statewide ballot measure seeks to extend these special VA price considerations to some California state government purchasing programs. However, these special discounts would not be sustainable if applied to additional programs in California or other states. In fact, the VA and the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) have on multiple occasions warned that extending VA pricing to other sizable health care programs could undermine these special price considerations provided to those who serve our country.

"We don't often get involved in political issues, but we believe we have to weigh-in on this measure because it could have a negative impact on veterans," said Commander Terry McCarty of AMVETS, Department of California. "If this measure were to pass, we believe it could increase costs for the VA and, ultimately, for veterans."

History has shown that when these special price considerations are extended to other government purchases, costs to the VA increase. After enactment of the 1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA), which factored VA pricing into state Medicaid rebate calculations, the GAO found that VA and U.S. Department of Defense prescription drug costs increased by tens of millions of dollars in one year. That requirement was later repealed.

“Veterans are no strangers to taking a stand for what they believe in. We oppose this measure because we believe it will hurt veterans, and we will be working to ensure that California voters understand its negative consequences,” said Steve Mackey, President of Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council. “We urge all California veterans to vote NO on this measure in November.”

Veterans’ organizations that have opposed the Misleading Rx Measure include:

- Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of California
- American Legion, Department of California
- Military Officers Association of America, California Council of Chapters
- AMVETS, Department of California
- Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council
- American GI Forum of California
- Jewish War Veterans of America, Department of California
- Reserve Officer Association, Department of the Golden West
- Fleet Reserve Association, West Coast Region
- Association of the United States Army, Northern California
- Military Order of the Purple Heart, Department of California
- Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter
- Scottish American Military Society

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

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.govFOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 14, 2016

VA Announces Community Care Call Center to Help Veterans with Choice Program Billing Issues

WASHINGTON – Veterans can now work directly with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to resolve debt collection issues resulting from inappropriate or delayed Choice Program billing. In step with MyVA’s efforts to modernize VA’s customer-focused, Veteran-centered services capabilities, a Community Care Call Center has been set up for Veterans experiencing adverse credit reporting or debt collection resulting from inappropriately billed Choice Program claims. Veterans experiencing these problems can call 1-877-881-7618 for assistance.

“As a result of the Veterans Choice Program, community providers have seen thousands of Veterans. We continue to work to make the program more Veteran-friendly,” said Dr. David Shulkin, Under Secretary for Health. “There should be no bureaucratic burden that stands in the way of Veterans getting care.”

The new call center will work to resolve instances of improper Veteran billing and assist community care medical providers with delayed payments. VA staff are also trained and ready to work with the medical providers to expunge adverse credit reporting on Veterans resulting from delayed payments to providers. VA is urging Veterans to continue working with their VA primary care team to obtain necessary health care services regardless of adverse credit reporting or debt collection activity.

VA acknowledges that delayed payments and inappropriately billed claims are unacceptable and have caused stress for Veterans and providers alike. The new call center is the first step in addressing these issues. VA presented [The Plan to Consolidate Community Care](#) in October of 2015 that outlines additional solutions to streamline processes and improve timely provider payment.

For more details about the Veterans Choice Program and VA’s progress, visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact. Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program can call 1-866-606-8198 to find out more about the program, confirm their eligibility and schedule an appointment.

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Combat Veterans Get Telephonic Health Care Application Option

Accelerates Enrollment of Combat Veterans; All Veterans to Get Option on July 5, 2016

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it has amended its enrollment regulations to allow Veterans to complete applications for enrollment in VA health care by telephone without the need for a signed paper application. The change is effective immediately for Combat Veterans and will be effective July 5, 2016, for all Veterans.

This phased implementation accelerates VA's effort to enroll all Combat Veterans with pending applications as part of its ongoing Veterans Enrollment Rework Project. The VA is working to complete the review and rework of all pending health enrollment records for living and deceased Veterans this summer. Veterans can view the amended regulation on the Federal Register website [here](#).

"This improvement to our Veterans' experience is one we can implement now, and it's the right thing to do for Veterans," said VA Deputy Secretary Sloan D. Gibson, "Enrolling all 31,000 Combat Veterans with pending applications is the top priority in our effort to fix our enrollment system. Our analysis of our current application process convinced me we could enroll Veterans more quickly using this method, particularly Combat Veterans and those who are transitioning from active duty to Veteran status," Gibson said.

By adding this telephone application option to VA's regulations, VA will now offer three ways to enroll. This change provides Veterans an even more convenient way to apply for enrollment, in addition to the paper VA Form 10-10 EZ and online enrollment application process. With publication in the Federal Register today, Combat Veterans may now apply by phone. All other Veterans may apply by phone starting on July 5, 2016.

When Veterans choose to enroll, VA offers an enhancement to their enrollment experience through "Welcome to VA" (W2VA). Veterans enrolled since July 1, 2015 have received a personal introduction to VA health care services, programs and resources to help them become more familiar with VA's services. In addition, VA sends each new enrollee an introductory letter and personalized handbook in the mail. W2VA enhances communication by reaching out to newly enrolled Veterans through personal phone calls upon enrollment, providing assistance with health care inquiries and assisting with their initial appointment at their preferred VA healthcare facility.

For more information, Veterans can contact the Health Eligibility Center Enrollment and Eligibility Division toll free at 1-855-488-8440.

California Employment Development Department
In partnership with the
Fresno County Veterans Employment Committee
Announce a

2016 Fresno County Veterans Job Fair

*You are invited to attend
A Job and Resource Fair.*

Featuring

Information about veteran
programs and services.

Employers and resources.

Free haircuts.

Refreshments will be provided.

Please Join Us!

Friday, May 13, 2016
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
American Legion Post 509
3509 North First Street
Fresno, CA 93726

For additional information, please call:
Samuel Duran at 559-445-6744.



DE 1396A Rev. 2/04 12

The EDD, an equal opportunity employer/program,
is a partner in this event. Auxiliary aids and services
are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
Requests for services, aids, and/or alternate formats need to
be made prior to the event by calling 559-445-6747 (voice).
TTY users, please call the California Relay Service at 711.

GA 893D

Peacemakers Peacekeepers Protectors Recognition Day

Saturday

May 14, 2016

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Castle Airport
(formerly Castle Air Force Base)
3750 Turbine Drive
Atwater, California

Welcome Home Heroes Foundation
proudly presents a day of honoring
all military service members and first
responders who protect and serve our
communities and country.

Free Admission

12th Annual
Corporal Michael D. Anderson,
Memorial Bike Ride and the
Annual May-Day Memorial Ride
begins at Mitchell's Modesto Harley Davidson
500 North Carpenter Road, Modesto,
kick stands up at 10 a.m.

This free event includes:

- ★ Entertainment
- ★ Food vendors
- ★ Celebrity attendees
- ★ Local dignitaries
- ★ Vintage and military aircraft fly-in
- ★ Military flyover
- ★ Veterans Job Resource Fair
- ★ Veteran Mobile Clinic and mobile
Veteran Center on site (bring DD 214 for servi

Be sure to arrive early for the Opening Ceremony

Presented by:



MERCED
COUNTY

Expand veterans courts statewide

April 10, 2016

Updated 12:00 a.m.

By DEVON MATHIS / Contributing writer

California is home to more than 2 million military veterans – men and women who have put themselves in harm’s way to defend our liberties and keep our state and nation safe.

Tragically, scores of veterans face horrendous trauma upon their return: They are forgotten, ignored or shunned by society. As a result, many veterans get into trouble with the law.

A 2000 Bureau of Justice Statistics report found that 81 percent of justice system-involved veterans had a substance abuse problem prior to incarceration; 35 percent had alcohol dependency, 23 percent were homeless at some point in the prior year and 25 percent were identified as mentally ill. Most heartbreakingly, the U.S. Veterans Administration reports that 22 veterans commit suicide in the United States every day.

Thankfully, through the vision of one dedicated judge, we are seeing a new program and trend that is giving these veterans hope: Veterans’ Treatment Courts. The first was started in 2008 by Judge Robert Russell in Buffalo, N.Y., after he noticed an increase in the number of veterans appearing on his Drug Court and Mental Health Court calendars.

He saw the transformative power of the military camaraderie when veterans on his own staff helped a veteran in his court, but he also realized much more could be done to ensure veterans were connected to benefits and treatment earned through military service.

The veterans’ courts typically involve cooperation and coordination with traditional partners found in Drug and Mental Health Courts and additionally include representatives of the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefit Administration, State Departments of Veterans Affairs, veterans’ centers and service organizations, volunteer veteran mentors, and other key local support groups.

The veterans’ court program offers low-level offenders a combination of therapeutic treatment, social services, and judicial oversight.

Participants meet regularly with their parole officers and attend court hearings to review their progress. If the veteran is on track with the requirements, the emphasis shifts to reintegration into society, including help finding employment and reunifying with their family.

By completing the program, veterans avoid or reduce their prison or jail time, or have their charges reduced or dropped altogether depending on their circumstances; those who fail to complete the program have their cases returned to the regular docket.

Research has shown that veterans' courts are, in fact, working. Nationally, veteran's treatment courts have shown a 98 percent success rate, helping veterans return home.

One of the very first and most successful courts in the nation was started by Orange County Superior Court Judge Wendy Lindley in 2008. In 2015, 16 participants graduated from this court, bringing to 76 the total number of veteran graduates since the program's inception. Participants had a recidivism rate of 10.5 percent, and a total of 19,369 jail and prison bed days were saved, worth \$2,485,235.

Unfortunately, in California, there are only 28 courts equipped to provide such services and alternatives exclusively to our veteran population. This means that veterans in 30 of our 58 counties are left without any form or resources of a veterans' court.

That is why I realized we cannot ignore and underserve our veterans any longer, and why I am encouraging my colleagues in the Legislature and Gov. Jerry Brown to support my Assembly Bill 1672. It will commission a one-year study by the Judicial Council of California to look at the potential impact of expanding veterans' courts across all of the Golden State.

This study will also assess the utility of a community court serving in place of a veterans' court and evaluate the feasibility of using technology, such as video conferencing, to allow counties without these courts to utilize counties with them. With the use of technology, veterans can reach out to neighboring counties with veterans' courts without being forced to make long commutes.

I am also very proud to have as the sponsor of AB1672, philanthropist B. Wayne Hughes Jr., founder of Sky Rose Ranch in San Miguel, which has provided rehabilitation services to hundreds of returning soldiers diagnosed with PTSD. Mr. Hughes has generously agreed to fund half of the study that would be commissioned through this legislation, another sterling example of his passion and commitment to helping these brave but struggling Americans and ensuring a more reasonable, responsible solution to our impacted correctional system.

Our men and women in uniform lay their lives on the line to make sure we have a brighter tomorrow. We owe it to them to give them that very same degree of hope when they come home.

Devon Mathis, R-Tulare, represents the 26th state Assembly District.

Were you exposed to burn pits while deployed?

By Hans Petersen

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Did you serve in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn, Djibouti, Africa, Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm or the Southeast Asia theater of operations after August, 1990?

Do you think you may have been exposed to burn pits and other airborne hazards?

Some Veterans have reported respiratory symptoms and health conditions that may be related to exposure to burn pits. The long-term health effects of exposure to burn pits and other airborne hazards are not fully understood. In an effort to better understand these health effects, VA has launched the [Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp) (<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp>) for Veterans and Servicemembers.

“While nearly 61,000 Veterans and Servicemembers have joined the Burn Pit Registry since its launch nearly two years ago, this is only a small fraction of the estimated 3 million individuals who may be eligible to join this registry,” said Dr. Stephen Hunt, National Director of VA’s Post-Deployment Integrated Care Initiative. “I encourage as many eligible individuals as possible to sign up for the Burn Pit Registry.”

“It provides Veterans long term follow up for any conditions they have or could emerge down the road.”

Since the early 1980s, Dr. Hunt has conducted registry exams for the Agent Orange, Former POW, Gulf War, Ionizing Radiation, and the Airborne Hazards and the Open Burn Pit Registries. According to Dr. Hunt, the Burn Pit Registry will help Veterans in a number of ways.

The Registry gives participants an opportunity to document any concerns they may have about deployment-related exposures and provides an opportunity to obtain a [free health evaluation](#) by a VA or DoD provider. The evaluation can identify and document any problems potentially related to the exposures and ensure ongoing follow up for any existing health conditions or any additional conditions that could emerge down the road.

One challenge when addressing environmental exposures is that we don’t always know what the long-term health effects of those exposures may be or when those health concerns might arise. Some exposures don’t lead to any long-term problems. Others, however, may have long-term or downstream health effects that aren’t identifiable early on. Through the registry, if health conditions related to exposures do emerge months or years later, we will be able to identify them

more quickly and to make sure that Veterans get the health care that they need in a timely manner.

A common misunderstanding about the registry is that participation is required to obtain disability compensation benefits. This is not true. The burn pit registry and all other VA registries are unrelated to the disability compensation rating process. While a Registry note in your medical record summarizing your exposure concerns and related medical treatment may serve as evidence to support a claim, it is not a necessary document or step in the claims process.

The registry is open to anyone who served in:

- Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn
- Djibouti, Africa on or after Sept. 11, 2001
- Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm
- Southeast Asia theater of operations on or after Aug. 2, 1990

Interested Veterans and Servicemembers can learn more about the registry in this short [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37i6MDt6PII&feature=youtu.be) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37i6MDt6PII&feature=youtu.be>) or [sign up](https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home) at <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home>. “Ultimately, our goal in VA is to have 22 million healthy Veterans using VA services and resources as needed to ensure that they enjoy the most meaningful, satisfying, and productive lives possible,” said Hunt.

“The Burn Pit Registry is a nice way for Veterans to get their foot in the door at the VA and to explore the services, benefits and resources available to them through VA health care.”

The Burn Pit Registry is one more reflection of how far VA has come. It is a measure of how much progress we’ve made in taking care of individuals with deployment-related exposure concerns, and in taking care of Veterans in general.

Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn Djibouti, Africa on or after Sept. 11, 2001 Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm Southeast Asia theater of operations on or after Aug. 2, 1990.

SOURCE: VHA News Release, 15 March 2016,
<http://www.va.gov/HEALTH/NewsFeatures/2016/March/Were-you-exposed-to-burn-pits-while-deployed.asp>