

State Headquarters News Update



Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Department of California

Sacramento, California

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Unity thru Service

VFW MOURNS THE LOSS OF SAM GLADDEN, PSC

Past State Commander Sam Gladden served the Department of California as State Commander in 1982-83. Sam passed away February 5, 2008. His services were held February 13, 2008. The Department of California offers sincere condolences and sympathy to Past State President Bonnie Gladden and Sam's family.



URGENT COMMUNITY SERVICE **CALL TO ACTION** **AB 1814**

As part of our community service efforts it is important to realize that we have a responsibility of not only supporting our communities, but supporting the veterans within our communities who may or may not be members of our organization. One of the things I have been working on with John Lowe, Bill Manes and our line officers is a bill that will open the door to the California Department of Veterans Affairs in providing outreach services via contracting with veteran service organizations such as the VFW. We have AB 1814 which was authored and introduced by Assembly Members DeVore and Cook which is designed to remove Section 699.5(b)(2) from the Military and Veterans Code.

Under current law, Military and Veterans code section 699.5(a) allows for the Department of Veterans Affairs to contract with veteran service organizations for outreach services in addition to the work performed by CVSO's. However, in its present form, the law also stipulates that the Department cannot enter into these voluntary contracts until the funding levels contained in section 971.2(d)(2) are met. The actual funding requirements (currently \$5 million) for CVSO's is established by Military and Veterans Code section 971.2(d)(2). Since 699.5(b)(2) was added to the Military and Veterans Code four years ago, the legislature has funded the CVSO's at only \$2.6 to 2.8 million per year, therefore preventing any pursuit of contracting with the VSO's because of the \$5 million threshold. Again, AB 1814 was introduced solely to remove this funding level requirement for contracting and does not remove, or in any way affect, the funding level for CVSO's. Both our state leadership and I feel that AB 1814 is an important measure as it will give the Department of Veterans Affairs the discretion to voluntarily enter into contracts with veteran services organizations and thereby provide another means of outreach to veterans.

In addition to this Bill, we have also gone out and formally opposed the Governor's directed 10% across the board cuts to the CDVA which impacts the CVSO's to the tune of \$260 thousand and allows for beds to go empty at all three of our State Veterans Homes. I am issuing a challenge to every post in this department. Fax or write at least 10 letters supporting AB 1814 and opposing any cuts to your assembly members and senators, provide a copy of those letters to me

prior to the end of March and I will add a weighted additional score to the awards selections for community service as well as ask the Department Commander to assign an addition 20 points to the All State Commander program. Comrades, this is the most important legislation we have ever put out and we need your support in getting it done. Without those letters, we will not get it passed.

Okay, comrades, lets get out there and provide the services to our community and our veterans they deserve. Until our next issue, take care and God bless.

[Bobby Price](#)

Community Service/Outreach Director

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY: [William Manes](#) - Chairman

STATE BUDGET: As previously reported, the Governor declared a fiscal emergency for the State on January 10 and called for a Special Session of the Legislature to deal with it. The Legislature has now passed, and the Governor has signed, a series of bills to provide for spending reductions by the departments of the State Government. Reportedly, these reductions do not add up to the total of the projected deficit for the current fiscal year. However, the bills as passed and signed include language that states that they address the declared emergency. Presumably, this meets the legal requirement that will permit the Legislature to now continue with its normal business.

There were two budget cuts applied to the Department of Veterans Affairs: A total reduction of \$1,729,000 is made in the budget for the State Veterans Homes. This is approximately 7.6 percent of the total General Fund amount which had previously been appropriated for all operations of all the Homes, including the State funds for capital outlay. There is no direction in the language of the new legislation concerning where this cut should be taken. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has previously announced plans to delay admissions to the Homes at Yountville and Chula Vista, and to delay some construction projects. However, the construction of the new Homes at Los Angeles, Lancaster, and Ventura are supposed to proceed on schedule. A reduction of \$30,000 has also been made in the budget for Administrative Support – again without a specification of any particular budget area to which the reduction should be applied.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE BILLS: A large number of bills have now been introduced for the 2008 legislative session, as the Legislators are soon faced with the deadline date of February 22 by which all new bills must have been introduced. So far, compared to previous years, the number of bills related to veteran's affairs is relatively small. The following are a few bills of interest:

AB 1758 Postsecondary Education (National Guard) (Chuck DeVore, Irvine) This bill would establish the California National Guard Education Assistance Program for the purpose of promoting recruitment and retention of members of the Guard. The bill has been referred to the Assembly Committees on Higher Education and Veterans Affairs.

AB 1814 Veterans Claims (Chuck DeVore, Irvine, and Paul Cook, Yucaipa). This bill would remove current restrictions in the Military and Veterans Code concerning the contracting by the Department of Veterans Affairs with the Veteran Service Organizations. The bill has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs. This is a VFW sponsored bill for which we are actively seeking co-authors. The continuing efforts of all Posts are requested to send communications to the Members of the State Legislature in support of this bill.

SB 1222 County Veterans Service Officers: funding (Gil Cedillo, Los Angeles). This bill would modify the standards for state allocation of funding to the Counties for support of the Veterans Service Offices by requiring that the amount of funds be equal to three dollars for every veteran who is a resident of California. The bill would also appropriate funds in this amount for the Fiscal Year 2008-2009. Since the total amount of this appropriation would be approximately \$6.6 million, the possibility of success for this bill during the current state fiscal crisis would appear to be very small. The appropriation for the current fiscal year was \$2.6 million, and the Governor has directed that this amount be reduced by ten percent, or \$260,000, for next year.

SB 1229 Vehicles: special license plates: disabled veterans (Abel Maldonado, San Luis Obispo). This bill would provide for the issuance of special license plates for a veteran who has a service-connected disability rated as permanent and total by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The plates would be inscribed with the words "Disabled Veteran" but would not have the international disabled person "wheelchair" symbol and vehicles with these plates would not

receive any special parking privileges that apply to persons who are eligible to display that symbol or placard. It should be noted that these plates would be issued under a section of the state code that governs the issuance of environmental license plates. There is a fee of \$40 charged for the initial application, and \$30 a year for renewal, which raises funds for programs to improve the environment. I think there should probably be an amendment to this bill to waive these fees if the license plates are to be considered as a benefit to the disabled veterans.

Complete information on all state legislation involving veteran's issues is available at the website: <http://www.califveterans.com>.

2008 LEGISLATIVE DAY – SACRAMENTO, CA:

We would like to extend an invitation for you to join us at our annual 2008 "Legislative Day." This is an opportunity for our members to meet their elected officials and to promote the issues we feel are important to the veterans' community.

This year we will be honoring State Senator Lou Correa of the 34th District and Assemblyman Chuck DeVore of the 30th District as our Legislators of the Year. We will also be conducting a legislative workshop on the do's and don'ts in speaking to legislators as well as updating our members on our VFWCA Political Action Committee.

Our legislative seminar will be held at 9:00 am Tuesday, March 25, 2008 at the Sutter Club, 1220 ninth Street, Sacramento, California, followed by a luncheon at 12:00 pm honoring our legislators of the year. We hope that you will be able to join us for this occasion. Please call our Department Headquarters office at (916) 449-8850 and let us know if you will be able to attend. If you have any questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to call. We look forward to seeing you at our Legislative Day event.

88th ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION:

The 88th Annual State Convention will be held June 20-25, 2008 in Ontario, California. Please check our Department website for up to date information and reservation forms. We will be using the Doubletree Hotel, any questions, issues and/or concerns should be addressed to the Convention Chairman Judge Brown, PSC. He can be reached by phone at (209) 358-2898 or by email judgebrown@comcast.net

APPOINTMENTS:

State Commander David B. Norris has appointed Dean J. Lee as the State Assistant Adjutant for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of California 2007/08. Dean will begin working in the Department Headquarters office on Monday, March 3, 2008; his primary duties shall include assisting the State Adjutant in administering the Department Headquarters office in the areas of National and Department programs and to coordinate with the Districts and the Posts to ensure completion of required reports.

Dean has over 36 years of experience in the business management industry, specifically managing restaurants from fine dining to casual atmospheres. In addition, Dean is also an Executive Committee Member of the Board of Directors of Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association (APAPA). Dean served with the United States Army as a Military Policeman from March 1968 through Jan 1971 and earned his eligibility to the VFW while serving in Vietnam from August 1968 to August 1969.

Dean's VFW service includes appointments as National Assistant Inspector General in 2003/04 and again in 2007/08, State Assistant Inspector North in 2007/08 and a member of the State Board Trustees during the same time. He has served as the District 17 Inspector from 2006 to 2008. Dean has also earned All American and All State honors as the District 17 Commander in 2005/06 and was appointed the State JROTC Advisor from 2003 to 2005. Dean has served twice as an All State Post Commander and is currently serving as Post Quartermaster for Post 8358 in Sacramento.

Let's welcome Dean Lee to the Department office!

SAVE THE DATE!!!!
WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS

March 30, 2008, 1- 5 p.m.

Exact location to be announced week of March 10.

This event will take place in Whittier.

Vendors, artists, information providers are welcome.

For further information please call

Jose Ramos, (562) 696-3965 or visit www.whvvd.org

Please help us spread the word to give our

Vietnam Veterans a big

WELCOME HOME!!!

COMMANDER DAVE NORRIS' ITINERARY

NEED A IDENTIFICATION CARD

March

- 1-5 Washington Conference
- 14-16 District 14 Official Visit
- 23 Easter
- 28-30 District 22 Official visit

April

- 25-27 District 23 Official visit
- 27-29 Nisei Reunion, Sands Hotel, Reno Nevada

May

- 4-11 Unavailable
- 16-18 District 8 Official Visit

June

- 6-8 District 4 Mass Installation
- 20-26 State Convention, Ontario, CA

Military ID (New/Replacement) cards are available at Camp Roberts, Hwy 101, Bldg 303 San Miguel, CA 93451 - (805) 238 8574, ask for Jeani

Open: Mon-Fri, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm and Saturdays by appointment. For appointments, please call.

The ID card center is for service members, dependents, retirees and individuals who are eligible for the government identification. It is free of charge for those entitled to receive the DOD compliant ID card. This card allows beneficiaries to receive their Tricare, Post Exchange, Commissary privileges and more. Retirees welcomed!

Postal Service Offers First-Time Military Discount for New, Large Flat-Rate Box

If you are planning to send goodies to our troops, please note the following prices which reflect the March 3rd price discount. The new Priority Mail Large Flat-Rate Box (12" x 12" x 5 1/2" or 800 cubic inches) will be available in Post Offices nationwide beginning March 3. If your post office does not have these new boxes, please call (800) 610-8734. Some of the new boxes are co-branded with the logo of America Supports You, which is a Department of Defense program that connects citizens offering support to the military and their families.

Priority Mail Large Flat-Rate Box Prices

Domestic Shipping - \$12.95, Military Shipping - APO/FPO Addresses - \$10.95

International Shipping* Canada and Mexico - \$29.95, Other Countries - \$49.95

*20-pound weight limit - For further information please visit www.usps.com

Department Web Page – Just a quick reminder to visit the Department web page at <http://www.vfwca.org> – your place for the latest news, program information, post and district tools/resources from the State Headquarters. Check it out today!