



**Department of California
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Anita Biggs, Chairman**

**BULLETIN 3
OCTOBER 2011**



***"Buffalo Soldiers", motto: "Ready and Forward".
"We Can, We Will"***

October for Veterans! Ride 2 Recovery and National Creative Arts Festival! Have you made your Donation or offered your assistance? MAKE EVERY DAY VETERANS' DAY!

Hats Off! ***We Can*** make a difference; ***We Will*** provide excellent service to our Veterans. We are ***Ready*** to move ***Forward*** for our Veterans! This year as with every year since 1919, we are prepared to assist our nation's veterans. As we prepare for Veterans' Day November 11th, now is the time to assess the needs of the veterans in your community, your Post, your VAMC and Veterans Homes. Veterans' Day is a great opportunity to Honor the Service of all veterans. There are still far too many homeless veterans, underemployed veterans and veterans with families that are having a rough time. One of the highlights at the National Convention was the video of the Unit that supplied **BUDDY BASKETS** to welcome homeless veterans and families to their new home. This is something all Units can do, donate household items and basic necessities; such as paper towels, toilet paper, light bulbs, window cleaner, etc. These items can be placed in a laundry basket or wastebasket, wrapped with a bow and presented to the veteran. This is especially a great gift for those veterans who have recently found housing after being homeless or veterans just returning from combat. Your Unit can make this a special project for Veterans' Day or during VA&R month of December.

Your donations are especially needed for **Gift Shop/Patient Remembrance** - Christmas Gift Shops and Patient Remembrance is provided for only mental, pulmonary, nursing home, orthopedic, and other long term patients in VA Medical Centers. This fund has been declining lately, but the need is still great. Our Hospital Representatives are working very hard to provide gifts to these patients during the holiday season. Please increase your donations to the facility assigned in your District or near your Unit. Make sure you earmark your funds and put GS/PR in the memo section of your check. All funds must go through the Department office for distribution. Some VA Medical Centers receive more assistance than others, so check out the wish lists on our Department website at www.calegionaux.org. These needs lists provide Unit members and outside donors specific information on what the veterans actually want and/or need. If you do not have access to the website, contact any of the Hospital Representatives or your District Chairman to see what the need is in their facility.

FIELD SERVICE ORIENTATION!

This Chairman will offer the Field Service Orientation course at this year's Midyear meeting (DEC) for all members who are interested. The course will be held at 10:00 am Friday, January 13, 2012 at the Courtyard Marriott. Details and more information will be provided in a future bulletin and flyer. The annual meeting of Hospital Reps and Deps will follow this training at 11:30 with a working luncheon.

ALL MEMBERS; please keep accurate records of your hours and activities with veterans and report this information to your Hospital Representative, Unit or District Chairman. Our contributions and hours go under-reported every year and since the tax laws have changed for non-profits, this information is vital to our organization. We **ARE** doing the volunteer service and performing many hours of service while providing goods to veterans, in Posts, their homes, convalescent homes, homeless shelters, senior citizen centers and VA medical centers or Veterans homes. Make sure you **COUNT**; the hours, the money and the value of the goods for the veterans sake.

DISTRICT CHAIRMEN; please send me a midyear written report, either by e-mail or regular mail detailing the VA&R activities of your Units no later than December 16, 2011. Don't forget to include Veterans' Day activities and any planned Christmas projects.

Anita Biggs, Chairman
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RESOURCES FOR VETERANS' DAY

1. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers provided through the Auxiliary
2. VA&R Guide (formerly Guide for Volunteers) provided through the Auxiliary contains Field Service orientation course.
3. Gulf War Benefits and Programs, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Vietnam Veterans Guide to Agent Orange Benefits, What to do before a Veteran dies, Women Veterans- Identifying Risk, Services and Prevention: brochures available through The American Legion
4. [America's Veterans Video](#)
Designed for students and educators. It helps to answer the question, "What does Veteran's Day mean to you?" After viewing this video, students will be able describe who veterans are, what they have done, and why they should be honored.
5. www.letssaythanks.com
Pick out a thank you card and it will be sent to a soldier currently serving in Iraq. You can't pick out who gets it, but it will go to some member of the armed services. It only takes a second and wouldn't it be wonderful if they received a bunch of these.
6. Websites: Department: www.calegionaux.org - National: www.alaforveterans.org
7. TAL Websites: Department: www.calegion.org – National: www.legion.org

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

1. VA Medical Center (VAMC) & Outpatient Facilities

We need more volunteers to fill our vital role at these facilities so the program administrators can concentrate of delivering their core services.

2. Field and Home Service

Field Service volunteers provide service to veterans outside a VAMC. Home Service Volunteers do projects from home. Both maintain their own recordkeeping and dollars spent.

3. National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF)

Promote annual competitions through recreation therapy and raise awareness of the creative achievements of our veterans. We are a national sponsor and our donations are vital to this program's success.

4. Homeless Veterans Initiatives

Let's end veteran homelessness in our lifetime! This can be done by working with the VA Homeless Veterans Program, The American Legion and National Coalition of Homeless Veterans.

5. Welcome Home Celebrations

Provide assistance to your local VAMC to support our returning service personnel and their families. Work with your VAMC, they are mandated to sponsor Welcome Home Celebrations in their facilities and community

6. Fisher House

We must continue to support this important staple for military families with donations and volunteers.

7. Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services National Advisory Committee (VAVS)

Our engagement with the National VAVS committee will allow a better representation and influence on behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary. Communication is the key between the National and Department Hospital Representatives and Deputies

8. Support American Legion Programs

Stay aware of The American Legion's legislative efforts whose main focus is to transition active duty service members to civilian life while maintaining the highest quality of life.

9. National Recognition Programs

The week of FEBRUARY 14TH, we salute hospitalized veterans. Make it SPECIAL!

10. National Volunteer Month (April)

This is a great time to recognize and celebrate the important work volunteers do every day on behalf of veterans

