



Department of California
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Anita Biggs, Chairman

BULLETIN 2
SEPTEMBER 2011



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

Volunteers Wanted!

The call has been made by our National organization as well as our Department President Linda to increase awareness of the plight of our state's veterans, especially homeless veterans who need our full attention and support. This year during our Wild West Shows and attached to this bulletin, you will find an application you can provide to anyone interested in volunteering at a VA facility. Our voluntary service has been the support base that many veterans can truly say helped them along the way. Without the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary, many services would not be as available to our nation's veterans. Volunteers are specifically needed for:

Field and Home Service – Field service is providing service to veterans outside a VAMC. You must complete the **Field Service Orientation Course**. It is important that these volunteers keep track of their hours, records and money spent. **Home service** includes time spent sewing, knitting, cooking, shopping for materials and supplies, and other services performed by the volunteer **IN HER OWN HOME**. Hospital Gift Shop items made at home is classified as Home Service.

Speaking of service to veterans, there has been drastic budget cuts made by California state legislature that is threatening the Veterans Homes in Fresno and Redding. We need a **CALL TO ARMS BY OUR BUFFALO SOLDIERS!** We must fight against these absurd cuts that will leave many more veterans homeless. The state of California should be fighting against homelessness, not add to the suffering our veterans are enduring. This Chairman, in conjunction with our Legislative Chairman, Pilar Reyes are encouraging you to fight with your voice, your typing skills and your pens to support the passing of AB 1422. AB 1422 seeks to RESTORE the funding for the Fresno and Redding veterans homes. There was a \$20 million reduction in funding for these vet homes and because of this cut, these homes will now remain unoccupied and unequipped for 9-12 months. To support the bill, we need your help by writing letters to our liaison, Pete Conaty and Associates for Governmental Advocacy at Sacramento and the letter

will be hand delivered to the appropriate Capitol offices. For those willing to support, Chairman Pilar has a template support letter that anyone can use in writing the letter, once we receive the template it will be made available to you. Be sure that the letter is signed and contains your printed name and full address.

The R2R – Ride to Recovery –Golden State Challenge: San Francisco to Los Angeles is right around the corner. Your support is requested and badly needed to help these brave veterans complete this arduous bike ride. Some of these vets have missing limbs and other catastrophic illnesses, so it is in ours and their best interest that we remain part of the **CALVARY** to help welcome these riders as they navigate this great state. The route should be posted on the website so you can decide where you can help out. We want a sea of volunteers at the beginning of the ride at **San Francisco October 2, 2011** and end at the **Santa Monica Pier on Saturday October 8, 2011** waving flags to congratulate these riders for completing the ride. There will be celebrities, concert and plenty of fun for everyone. Please make it a commitment to attend, support, uplift and celebrate these veterans as they successfully overcome the injuries caused by combat. The American Legion Auxiliary volunteers are a major part of their success! See you there!

The National Creative Arts Festival will take place in Fayetteville, Arkansas October 17 – 23, 2011. The key purpose of the National Veterans Creative Arts competition and Festival is to recognize Veterans for their creative accomplishments and to educate and demonstrate to communities throughout the country the therapeutic benefits of the arts. The American Legion Auxiliary is a co-sponsor of this event which will once again be televised on PBS during Veterans' Day weekend. Your donations are necessary to meet the annual fundraising goal. For more information go to www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov.

HELP US, HELP OUR OWN! Of course our own Department VA&R fund needs donations. When your Unit prepares your budget this year, perhaps you can increase your donation by at least \$1.00 per Unit member. Through our voluntary service, ALA Unit members' contributions assist with Temporary Financial Service, homeless veterans, Veterans medical centers (VAMC) Veterans' Homes, Patients Remembrance and more. We are so good at helping other's causes; we need to help our own organization's causes. Donations are down, we are all feeling the squeeze of these bad economic times, but just imagine being a homeless or unemployed veteran; they need our help now more than ever. Remember we were organized over 90 years ago to assist during a critical time in our history; the time is now for us to honor the service of our veterans by re-affirming our commitment. Your donations can go a long way to help many veterans. Thank you for your time, donations and service!

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