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# Communicator

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The COMMUNICATOR is the official publication of the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO). Opinions expressed are those of contributing writers and do not necessarily reflect opinions or policies of CACVSO officers, members, or the editorial staff. The newsletter reserves the right to edit, amend, or reject any contribution submitted for publication.

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## President's Message

*(Solano CVSO Ted Puntillo, President)*

Happy New year to all.

I hope you had a great Christmas and New Year Holiday. The Governor's Budget came out and all of our subvention funding is in place along with an additional \$35,000.00 to fund our mentor program. At the conference we will be looking for counties who will be willing to be lead counties in the mentor process. That means our organization will be looking for volunteer counties with experienced CVSO's who will be willing to travel to counties with new CVSO's or counties that need help in organizing their offices or just need a helping hand in improving their numbers and service to their veterans. The extra money will be used to pay for travel expenses and lodging, if necessary. The counties would have to be willing to front the travel money and then would collect it back from CalVet in the VSOFF payments.

CalVet has also agreed to start recording the training sessions at the conferences and posting them on a U-tube website so that vet reps that did not go to the training can see it. We are hopeful this will happen at this conference. We have also changed the way we will ask questions and make comments to speakers. Virginia Wimmer suggested this idea and I think it will improve our conferences. We will set up a mic stand and people will have to stand in line at the mic stand to ask questions and make comments. It will be more efficient and will facilitate the filming of the session. It should also preclude the temptation to just yell out questions and comments and should speed up the process.

Cal Vet is still working on getting us access to DPRIS. This should happen by summer and will improve our access to military records. Cal Vet is still trying to get the VA to make bookmarking in VBMS easier for us. More to come on this issue in the future. CACVSO will also start at process of developing a desk manual for CVSO's that will cover everything from how to interview clients to how to submit your semiannual reports.

We will be looking for a committee to help our Executive Director Tom Splitgerber in developing this very important document. Tom has also made great progress on the sponsorships for the NACVSO conference in San Diego in June. He has partnered with San Diego County and there will be some very nice events hopefully at no expense to our organization.

As most of you know, our longtime friend and consultant Norm Gillette has resigned for personal reasons. We are so grateful for his long history of advice and training. He was also a big hit in the hospitality suite. Norm is a party animal and we will miss him. We are still looking for a suitable replacement for him, if that is possible. If anyone has any ideas about trying to replace Norm, let me know. Also please get your reports in on time as there will be sanctions for counties that are late. Thanks.

Ted



# TIME & PLACE COMMITTEE

*(Fresno County C/VS/O Charles Hunnicutt, Chair)*

## Dates & Locations of Upcoming Conferences



**February 26—March 3, 2017**  
*Holiday Inn, Sacramento CA*



**June 11—16, 2017**  
*Town & Country Resort & Convention Ctr.*  
*San Diego, CA*



**October 8—13, 2017**  
*Marriott Convention Center*  
*Riverside, CA*

# NewsLetter DEADLINE

*Last Thursday of the Month  
Unless Notified Otherwise!*

# OUT OF THE NORM IS OUT OF ORDER

*(Permanently)*

It is with mixed feelings that we announce the retirement of our beloved and much appreciated:



## Norman Gillet

Norm (as known by his close friends and acquaintances) will always be remembered as a hardworking, committed, and friendly person. He is a true example to look for and follow. We look forward to have him, at our next CACVSO Conference, so we may join in on personally thanking him (and maybe having somewhat of a retirement party) and to celebrate his end of service with us.

## This Month's Featured County

**Kern County** is a county in the U.S. state of California. As of the 2010 census, the population was 839,631. Its county seat is Bakersfield. Kern County comprises the Bakersfield, CA Metropolitan statistical area. The county spans the southern end of the Central Valley. Covering 8,161.42 square miles (21,138.0 km<sup>2</sup>), it ranges west to the southern slope of the Coast Ranges, and east beyond the southern slope of the eastern Sierra Nevada into the Mojave Desert, at the city of Ridgecrest. Its northernmost city is Delano, and its southern reach expands just beyond Lebec to the Grapevine and the northern tip of the parallel Antelope Valley.



# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE REPORT

*(By Pete Conaty and Dana Nichol, Legislative Advocates)*

## New Legislators

There were 31 people elected to new seats in the California Legislature in November 2016. Some of them were Assemblymembers who moved up to the Senate or returned to the Legislature after a term or two and some are brand new. Listed below are then 21 brand new Senators and Assemblymembers and the counties (or partial counties) they represent. If any of these legislators are from your county, make sure to touch base with them and educate them on what CVSO's do.

### Senate:

Josh Newman (Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino) – VETERAN US ARMY  
Henry Stern (Los Angeles, Ventura)  
Scott Wiener (San Francisco, San Mateo)

### Assembly:

Dante Acosta (Los Angeles, Ventura)  
Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (Lake, Napa, Colusa, Solano, Sonoma, Yolo)  
Marc Berman (San Mateo, Santa Clara)  
Sabrina Cervantes (Riverside)  
Phillip Chen (Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino)  
Steven Choi (Orange)  
Jordan Cunningham (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara)  
Heath Flora (San Joaquin, Stanislaus)  
Vince Fong (Kern)  
Laura Friedman (Los Angeles)  
Todd Gloria (San Diego)  
Tim Grayson (Contra Costa, Solano)  
Ash Kalra (Santa Clara)  
Kevin Kiley (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento)  
Monique Limon (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura)  
Eloise Reyes (San Bernardino)  
Blanca Rubio (Los Angeles)  
Randy Voepel (Riverside, San Diego) – VETERAN, US NAVY

# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE REPORT

*(By Pete Conaty and Dana Nichol, Legislative Advocates)*

*(Con't)*

## **Legislators who are veterans; California State Legislature 2017-2018**

### **Senator Josh Newman (D-Fullerton)**

Elected in 2016

This is Senator Newman's first term in the Legislature. He is a veteran who served as an officer in the United States Army. His active duty assignments included service in South Korea with a nuclear weapons detachment and conventional artillery units in the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii.

Upon graduation from Yale University, he was commissioned through the US Army Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. In 2012, Newman founded ArmedForce2Workforce, a non-profit organization to assist young veterans in the Orange County and the greater Los Angeles find employment.

Senator Newman is a current member of the Steering Committee for the Orange County Veterans & Military Families Collaborative (OCVMFC) and is the Chair of its Employment Working Group. He also serves as the 1st Vice Chair of the California Democratic Party Veterans Caucus, Chair of its Legislative Committee, and is a co-founder and board member for the Veteran Business Network of Greater Los Angeles.

Senator Newman is a member of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

### **Senator Richard Roth (D-Riverside)**

Elected in 2012

Major General Roth was commissioned in June 1972. He attended Emory University School of Law, graduating with a Juris Doctor degree in 1974. General Roth entered active duty in February 1975 and served with Strategic Air Command and Pacific Air Forces units in Arizona, Okinawa and California. Upon his release from active duty in April 1979, the General transferred to the Air Force Reserve and was assigned as an individual mobilization augmentee with Strategic Air Command bomb and refueling wings from 1979 to 1985. He subsequently served three times as a Staff Judge Advocate at the wing and group levels in Air Force Reserve Command, then served as the mobilization assistant to the Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. He retired in 2007.

# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE REPORT

(By Pete Conaty and Dana Nichol, Legislative Advocates)

(Con't)

## **Assemblyman Bill Brough (R-Dana Point)**

*Elected in 2014*

After high school, Bill Brough enlisted in the U.S. Army serving on active duty from 1986-1990 and was recalled to active duty in support of Desert Shield/Desert Storm in January 1991. Bill was a Cobra Helicopter mechanic and graduated from the U.S. Army Airborne School. His duty stations included Fort Bragg, NC, Hanau, Germany and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Bill graduated from the University of Connecticut after his military service and served as a Presidential Appointee at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in the Bush Administration from January 22, 2001 through November 2004. He is a founding officer of American Legion Post 281 (Laguna Niguel, Dana Point, Laguna Hills and Aliso Viejo) and was elected to the California State Assembly in November 2014 representing the 73<sup>rd</sup> District.

## **Assemblyman Rocky Chavez (R-Oceanside)**

*Elected in 2012*

Colonel Chavez worked his way through California State University in Chico and earned a BA degree. He then served over 28 years as a United States Marine. He was subsequently appointed Chief of Staff for the 4th Marine Division. Upon retirement from the Marine Corps, he went on to spend nearly a decade on the Oceanside City Council. In 2009, Colonel Chavez was appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger as Undersecretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs in Sacramento, later serving as Acting Secretary.

## **Assemblywoman Susan Talamantes-Eggman (D-Stockton)**

*Elected in 2012*

After graduating from high school, Susan Eggman served four years as a medic in the U.S. Army. She then attended California State University, Stanislaus, where she earned a B.A. in psychology and a master's in social work. Susan worked as a mental health provider and a medical social worker, before receiving her Ph.D. from Portland State University. Ms. Eggman most recently served on the Stockton City Council. While there, she successfully lobbied the federal Veterans Administration to build their new facility in San Joaquin County.

# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE REPORT

(By Pete Conaty and Dana Nichol, Legislative Advocates)

(Con't)

## **Assemblyman Devon Mathis (R-Visalia)**

*Elected in 2014*

After graduating from Reedley High School in 2001, Devon joined the California National Guard where he served as Sergeant for nearly 10 years, including 2 combat tours to Iraq, with the 1114th Transportation Company.

He was awarded a Purple Heart during his second tour in Iraq, when he sustained major injuries from a road side bomb attack in 2008. After returning home, Mathis went through extensive VA therapy. This road to recovery prepared him for a return to civilian life and to his college success.

In 2009, while attending at Porterville City College Devon served as the Veterans Club President. He completed his studies in counseling and graduated with an AA in Social Science in 2011.

He graduated from Fresno State University, he changed majors to Public Administration. Devon received a BA in Public Administration and graduating as the President of the Veterans Fraternity.

## **Assemblywoman Melissa Melendez (R-Lake Elsinore)**

*Elected in 2012*

Melissa Melendez entered the United States Navy upon graduating high school. She attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., where she spent a year and a half in a Russian language course, becoming a fluent Russian speaker. She then became one of the first women approved by the U.S. Navy to fly aboard an Orion EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft overseas, conducting intelligence-gathering operations in partnership with our allies. She served as a Russian translator for ten years during the Cold War, as well as during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. While serving in the Navy full-time, Melissa also attended college and received her BA in History and Political Studies from Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii. After the Navy, she then formed her own successful transcription company, contracting with the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy. Her husband is a Navy veteran, having served 10 years on active duty as a journalist and public affairs officer. Ms. Melendez is a member of the American Legion.

# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE REPORT

(By Pete Conaty and Dana Nichol, Legislative Advocates)

## **Assemblyman Randy Voepel (R –Santee)**

*Elected in November 2016*

Randy Voepel enlisted in the U.S Navy in 1969 and separated in 1978. Voepel served tour of duty in Vietnam, from 1969 to 1970 and again in 1972. After the navy he for worked in the insurance industry 39 years. He served as the Senate City Commander Mayer for 16 years. Randy is a member of the American Legion and the VFW.

## **SENATE AND ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Members of the Senate and Assembly Committees on Veterans Affairs have been named:

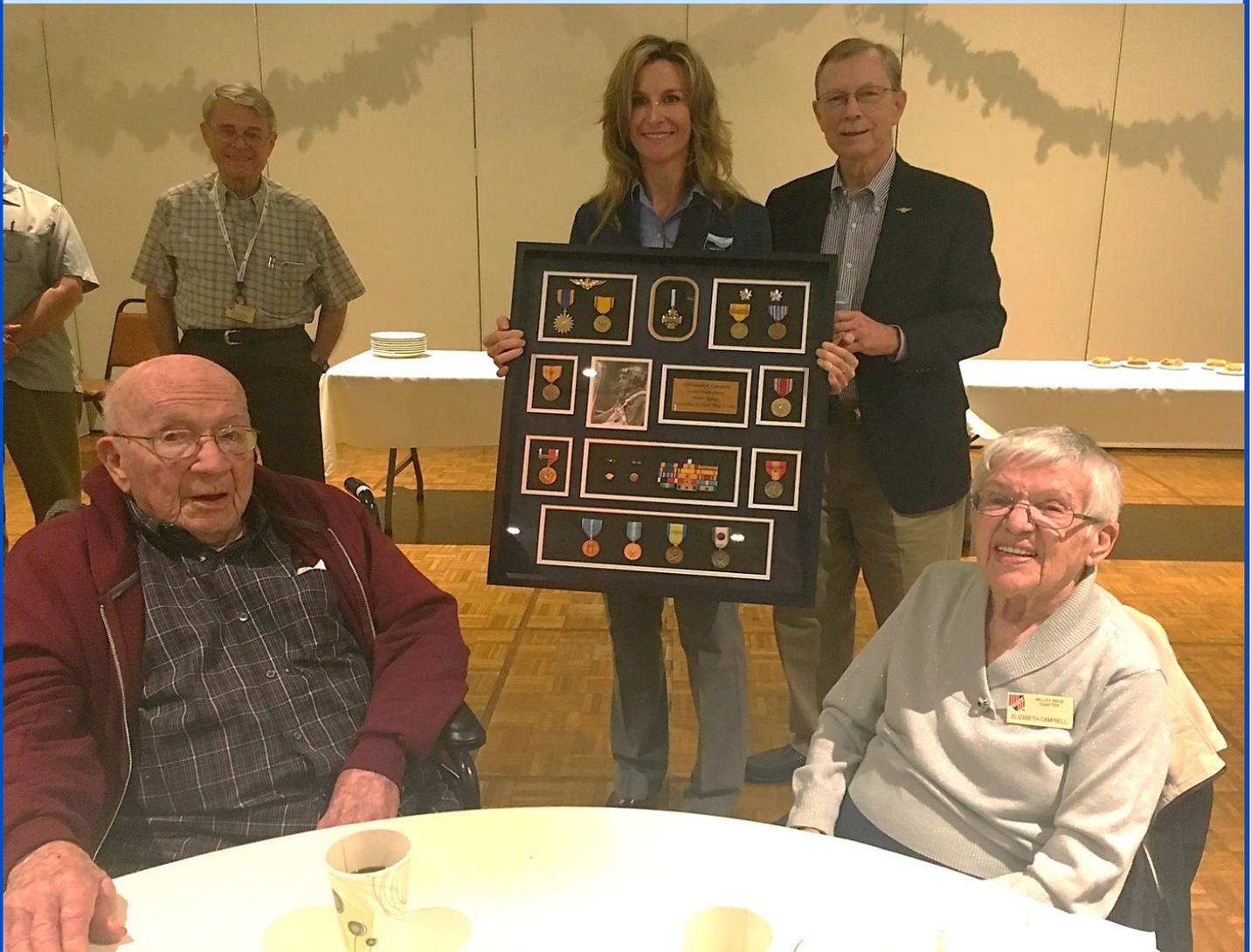
### **Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs**

Josh Newman (D-Fullerton) – Chair  
Jim Nielsen (R-Gerber) – Vice Chair  
Bill Dodd (D-Napa)  
Ben Hueso (D-San Diego)  
Janet Nguyen (R-Garden Grove)  
Richard Roth (D-Riverside)  
Scott Wilk (R-Santa Clarita)

### **Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs**

Jaqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks) – Chair  
Rocky Chavez (R-Ocenaside) – Vice Chair  
Tom Daly (D-Anaheim)  
Jim Frazier (D-Oakley)  
Todd Gloria (D-San Diego)  
Devon Mathis (R-Visalia)  
Al Muratsushi (D-Torrance)  
Sharon Quirk-Silva (D-Buena Park)  
Rudy Salas (D-Bakersfield)  
Randy Voepel (R-Santee)

## Amazing Opportunity to meet the last surviving veteran of the Battle of Midway!



**Robert (RK) Campbell, CDR, USN** – Last month a very special presentation took place during our luncheon to one of our members – RK Campbell. RK won numerous awards during his military career (1934-64), including the Navy Cross during World War II. Unfortunately, his awards were stolen some twenty years ago. Larry Wahl, Butte County Supervisor and Vietnam Veteran decided to get them replaced and requested the help of Hannah Williamson at the County Veterans Service Office in Chico. Together they were able to put together a beautiful display of the lost awards and make the presentation to RK (who turns 100 this coming August). RK flew missions off the USS Hornet and the USS Enterprise searching and bombing Japanese targets in the Pacific. He also provided reconnaissance for Lt Col Doolittle and his Raiders for the bombing of Japan early in the war. We are thankful for RK's service to our country and rejoice with him in receiving this most deserved display of awards. *Pictured left to right: Robert Campbell, Hannah Williamson, Larry Wahl, Elizabeth Campbell.*

# Congratulations

RON PAUL, VSR

MARIN COUNTY



(By: Sean Stephens, Marin County CVSO)

Mr. Paul recently passed his certification test with CalVet which will allow him to start filing claims on behalf of veterans with the Department of Veterans Affairs. He will also continue to support the Public Assistance office by processing Medi-Cal and CalFresh renewals as well as new Intake interviews for veteran clients only. We are very excited for Ron and the asset he has become to the office!

Here in the Marin County Veterans Service Office, we have been able to help so many more veterans—in more ways than just VA benefits - especially those finding themselves in immediate dire straits.

Below is a great example of how the new Vet Rep. / Medi-Cal / CalFresh Hybrid position is working out:

The son of a veteran we have been dealing with since early 2012 came into the Veteran's Service Office today through a round-about sort of way to get assistance. Due to the father being a veteran, he was referred from the Public Assistance branch at 120 N. Redwood Drive to Ron Paul, our hybrid Veterans Service Representative / Eligibility Worker. During the appointment, Ron was able to process his father as an intake for Long Term Care Medi-Cal. Due to Ron's experience with the Long Term Care caseload within the Specialized Medi-Cal Unit at 120, he was also able to provide insight on how Long Term Care Medi-Cal works, the process of applying, the requirements for approval as well as to highlight areas of concern based on information provided by the son that will need to be addressed prior to approval.

Additionally, because of Ron's Hybrid role, he was able to take into account the client's award for Aid and Attendance from 2012 and properly apply the income to the client's Medi-Cal budget. His ability to access and apply his knowledge of both the VA and Medi-Cal regulations was instrumental in easing this entire process for the veteran's son.

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

## **VA Names New Director for Sacramento Valley National Cemetery (SVNC)**

[DIXON, CA] – The Department of Veterans Affairs has named Michael H. Henshaw as the new Director of Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon, CA. He reports for duty on Tuesday, January 17th. In his new post, he is responsible for all burial, maintenance, and administrative operations of the 561-acre cemetery.

Henshaw replaces Cynthia Nunez who retired on January 2, 2017 after more than thirty years with the National Cemetery Administration. As only the cemetery's third Director since its dedication in April 2007, Mr. Henshaw will oversee the care and maintenance of over 24,000 grave sites and nearly 4,000 burials each year.

After graduating the National Cemetery Administration's year-long Cemetery Director Intern Course in 2013, he has held assignments as the Director of Camp Butler National Cemetery in Illinois, Dayton National Cemetery in Ohio, and Chattanooga National Cemetery in Tennessee. He was also assigned to the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Office of Field Programs in Washington, D.C. as a Program Analyst from July 2015 until March, 2016.

Before joining the Department of Veterans Affairs, he served as the Operations Officer for the Joint Mortuary Affairs Center at Ft. Lee, VA, where he deployed to Haiti as the DOD liaison to the Departments of State and Health and Human Services, where he led the search, recovery, identification and repatriation effort for all American citizens killed during the January 2010 earthquake. He subsequently served as the Emergency Management Officer for the Navy in Naples, Italy.

Mr. Henshaw retired from the U.S. Army in 2009 after 25 years of service, where he served as a mortuary affairs non-commissioned officer in charge of missing in action (MIA) search and recovery teams responsible for locating, recovering and repatriating the remains of U.S. Service Members missing overseas from World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam War. He also served as the operations officer for the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command detachments in Vientiane, Laos and Hanoi, Vietnam, and as the logistics advisor and senior team sergeant in the Chosin Reservoir area in North Korea.

Mr. Henshaw led one of only two U.S. forensics teams deployed to recover and identify the remains of all American citizens killed during the 2004 South Asia Tsunami. He is a Veteran of both Operations Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm. His last combat assignment was 2007-2008 as a military advisor on a specialized 11-man team embedded with an Iraqi Army Infantry Battalion at Combat Outpost Scorpion in Mosul Iraq.

Mr. Henshaw was awarded two Bronze Star Medals for combat operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom. His other awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal, the Air Assault Badge, Combat Action Badge and numerous awards and campaign medals.

Sacramento Valley National Cemetery has over 28,000 burials since the interment of its first Veteran, a World War II Marine veteran who sold the land to the VA for the cemetery.

For more information about Sacramento Valley National Cemetery, please contact the cemetery at 707-693-2460.

# DATES OF INTEREST

## JANUARY 2017

- 1 New Years Day
- 10 Save the Eagles Day
- 11 Amelia Earhart Day
- 16 Martin Luther King Jr.

## FEBRUARY 2017

- 1 National Freedom Day
- 2 Ground Hog Day
- 4 Rosa Parks Day
- 8 Boy Scout Day
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 20 Presidents Day



**Freedom  
isn't Free**



**Support  
Our Troops**

