CACVSO President Message

Hello everyone. I am excited to announce that I was able to attend the NACVSO conference in San Antonio Texas on the Riverwalk. What a beautiful place. The training was excellent and very informative and cannot wait to share with you what I learned.

If you can attend, I would strongly encourage it whether it be in person or virtually, it is a good way to network with other states.

The conference was attended by myself, Marvin King, 1st Vice President and Yuba-Sutter VSO, David West, Nevada County VSO, Travis McLain, Napa County VSR. The virtual participants were San Francisco Elvie Flaviano and El Dorado Terry Thomas.

David West also attended the CVA training taught by our own training consultants Katrina Eagle and Jim Ragdona.

Congratulations is in order for David. He was also was selected for the National training team.

As I am writing this I am looking forward to a momentous conference and the 75th anniversary banquet that has been long time coming. I can not wait to see you all in San Luis Obispo.
We are already getting a lot of questions about the pending PACT Act legislation. All indications are that the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (referred to as the PACT Act) will be signed into law in the near future. While this is great news for Veterans and their families, a change in law of this magnitude will create new challenges. As CVSOs, you'll be on the front lines in terms of managing your clients' expectations.

While we’re not sure exactly what the final version of the PACT Act will look like, here are 5 likely areas that your clients will be asking you about:

• The 23 new presumptions for burn pit and toxic exposure-related diseases will be phased in between now and October 1, 2025. Three of the conditions on the list – asthma, sinusitis and rhinitis – were already presumptive since January 2021, but the PACT Act will remove the ten-year from discharge limitation. It’s important to remind Veterans about the phase-in period because VA will not be reviewing or working these claims immediately after the legislation is signed into law.

• Expanded access to health care will be phased in between October 1, 2022, and October 1, 2032, depending on when the Veteran served.

• Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Guam, American Samoa, and the Johnston Atoll will be conceded locations for herbicide (Agent Orange) exposure beginning October 1, 2022, for all Veterans. **The current version of the PACT Act legislation does NOT contain an earlier effective date provision like there was for Blue Water Navy – except for DIC recipients.** So, be sure to keep open any pending claims or appeals you have for the above locations so that you will be able to argue for an earlier effective date based on direct service connection. We anticipate that there will be a great deal of disappointment among Veterans because the House version of the PACT Act did include an effective date provision similar to the Blue Water Navy law, but it appears that in the current version it will only apply to DIC recipients.
• VA will finally be adding hypertension to the herbicide (Agent Orange) exposure presumptive list – but this provision will not go into effect until October 1, 2026. It appears that there will be no provision for an earlier effective date, and it is unclear whether Nehmer will apply.

• Once the law goes into effect, VA will need to hire thousands more claims processors and health care staff. This will be a significant challenge and we expect that processing times will slow down considerably. Both Acting USB Tom Murphy and BVA Chairman Cheryl Mason were very candid when they spoke at the June 2022 NACVSO conference about this challenge. VBA has been losing staff at an unprecedented rate and BVA has suffered a great number of VLJs who retired in 2021 and or will retire in 2022-2023. It will be important to let your claimants know that they can expect much longer wait times for the foreseeable future, especially for appeals pending at the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (unless the appeal has been advanced on a docket).

In closing, there is no doubt that the PACT Act will create and generate tremendous benefits and compensation for Veterans and claimants. But given the magnitude of this pending law, it is going to take time for Veterans and claimants to actually receive their compensation and, or healthcare. More than ever, it is important to be candid and forthcoming about what your clients can expect, and when. Please feel free to reach out to us if you have questions about this legislation’s current status, even after it is signed into law as we will be closely watching how VA proceeds to implement its many provisions.

Happy Summer to everyone and Happy Father’s Day to all the Dads in CACVSO! We look forward to seeing everyone next week at the June 2022 Conference in San Luis Obispo!

Katrina Eagle and Jim Radogna, CACVSO Education Consultants

Secretary Corner

Contact your secretary when you have office and/or staff changes at secretary@cacvso.org
• There are 2.25 persons per square mile, making this one of the most sparsely populated counties in California. The county is very diverse geographically.

• The northwestern edge of the county is dominated by the Medicine Lake Highlands, the largest shield volcano on the U.S. West Coast. The Lava Beds National Monument lies partly within the northwest corner of the county. Also along the western edge of the county is the massive Glass Mountain lava flow. The southwestern corner of the county is a unique ecosystem of isolated hardwoods (oaks) and volcanic mountains with intermountain river valleys.

• After Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, the region of current Modoc County was placed within jurisdiction of Shasta County, California, and Siskiyou County was, in turn, generated from Shasta County in 1852.

• In 1864, the Klamath, Modoc and Yahooskin band of the Shoshone signed a treaty ceding lands in both Oregon and California, and the tribes were collocated on the Klamath Reservation. The Modoc War or Lava Beds War of 1872-73 brought nationwide attention to the Modoc. From strong defensive positions in the lava tubes, 52 Modoc warriors held off hundreds of US Army forces, who called in artillery to help. More Army troops were called in to lay siege to Captain Jack's Stronghold. More than 150 Modoc were transported to Indian Territory as prisoners of war. The area has since been designated the Lava Beds National Monument.

• Settlement of the county began in earnest in the 1870s, with the timber, gold, agriculture, and railroad industries bringing most of the settlers into the area.

• DID YOU KNOW........

• During World War II, the US government developed several thousand acres just south of Newell as a Japanese American internment camp. Tule Lake War Relocation Center was the site of temporary exile for thousands of Japanese-American citizens, who lost most of their businesses and properties where they had formerly lived in coastal areas. A historical marker marks the site along California State Route 139 in Newell.

• Tule Lake was the largest of the "segregation camps." On November 8, 2005, the camp was designated a National Historic Landmark. In December 2008 President George W. Bush designated it one of nine sites to be part of the new World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, now the Tule Lake National Monument.
Training / Conferences

Cal Vet CVSO Training

Phase 1  
June 27th – July 1st

Phase 2  
August 4th – August 5th

Please feel free to reach out to  
Jennifer.Hubbard-Beath@calvet.ca.gov

CACVSO Conferences 2022-2023

Fall October 16-22, 2022  
NEVADA

Winter February 19-24, 2022  
SACRAMENTO

Summer June 2023  
YUBA-SUTTER

Fall Conference October 2023  
(Zoom)
In Remembrance

Andrew Vierra was a friend and colleague in Real Estate/Mortgages. I worked with him when he first became a lender. Hard to say if I’ve met a more genuine, humble, honest, kind and amazing man. It’s devastating to know he was struggling with so much and felt unable to reach out to anyone for help as he so generously gave.

PRAYER—there are no good words when someone who was deeply valued and loved and appreciated and enjoyed as a person decides to suddenly exit. Many of us are grieving the loss of Andrew Vierra.

Toast to my friend Andrew Vierra tonight. He was genuine, smart, passionate and so easy to talk to. I always left conversations with him encouraged and feeling better about myself. That’s a true gift for someone to have and he had it in spades. Having spent much of his life in advertising he gave me advice and support often and I felt he truly actually wanted to see me succeed. I really hope he knew how much that meant to me.

I know you were passionate about your clients. I know you cared deeply for everyone around you. My heart and my love go out to every life you touched that is now missing you. I find solace knowing you have found comfort and peace.

Colleague, mastermind partner, confidant, impromptu therapist and REALLY, Good friend.

RIP Andrew Vierra You were such an amazing person and friend and such a gift to our Veterans. You will be missed by many.

So sad to hear of the passing of Andrew Vierra. He was my friend, mentor and a pillar of the VA Lending community in CA. He dedicated his professional life to helping veterans use their earned VA Home Loan Benefit.

You hid it well friend. I wish I would have known to read between the lines. To look deeper into your eyes. I wish I would have known last week that we would not have him with us today.

I am so sad. I will miss him dearly

Andrew Vierra was not an ordinary person. Far from it. He was extraordinary!

Andrew was a very giving person and very passionate about service and helping others who needed it the most. One of my fondest memories with Andrew was when he asked me to speak to his rotary group a few years back and I got the opportunity to meet a few of the veterans he had helped secure loans for. Pretty awesome day. Andrew’s impact in their lives was special and significant.

As most happy days end I woke to devastating news that a dear friend made a choice he cannot take back. A peer in my industry, a father, a genuine amazing man and friend to all. He always had a smile on his face and kind words from his heart. Shocked is an understatement.

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Andrew Vierra

“The song is ended, but the melody lingers on.”

- Irving Berlin
We are proud to be voted another year as, BEST VETERAN SUPPORT ORGANIZATION of San Luis Obispo.

Thank you to our Veteran Community and those who support our efforts.