



# THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 257 & AUXILIARY LAGUNA WOODS



February 2015

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## COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

**SERVICE** We all know what it means to serve. Whether you were drafted or volunteered, our time in the military was time we spent serving our nation, our branch of service, our command, and our shipmates, comrades at arms, and sometimes the populations of places and countries where we were stationed or visited.

Nor does service end when we separate from our military branch. Many of the volunteer organizations in our communities are staffed with former military, it's what we do.

The American Legion has many charities, and volunteer services that we provide to our communities and the comrades at arms that the rest of society overlooks or doesn't understand.

**Which brings us to your service in our Post.**

We are **not** just a club that holds a monthly dinner and entertainment meeting, there are many activities and events that we support or initiate here in Laguna Woods.

Our participation in these events, and our monthly meetings would not happen without the service provided by your comrades who volunteer to make up your board and participate in the various committees we have.

We have a need for **more volunteers.**

Sam Higa, our Finance Officer, and Historian (and a couple of other things) has put together a list of officers we need to keep our Post vibrant and supportive of you and the community.

Please give it a look, and, if you are able, volunteer to fill one of them, and join the team that makes Post 257 The Friendliest Post In California.

*Mike Thayer*

540-9784 [libertycard@gmail.com](mailto:libertycard@gmail.com)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 26—Legion Dinner  
Mar 4-- Veterans Outreach  
Mar 5-- Legion Board Meeting  
Mar 8-- VA Hospital  
Mar 12—Auxiliary Meeting  
-- Polly's  
Mar 26—Legion Dinner  
Apr 1-- Veterans Outreach  
Apr 2-- Legion Board Meeting  
Apr 9—Auxiliary Meeting  
-- Polly's  
Apr 12—VA Hospital  
Apr 23—Legion Dinner

## DINNER

**February 26<sup>th</sup> Thursday** Doors open at 4:45 pm Ceremony begins 5:30 pm  
Meal served at immediately after ceremony Location: Clubhouse #1 Main Dining Room Beef Stroganoff with steamed rice, mixed vegetables and Carrot Cake Cost \$13.00 per person **RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED** For reservations, *call*

Ken Sigmund (949) 455-0608

The program features Precious Jade.

Post web site at [AL257.org/](http://AL257.org/)



**Jerry Anderson, Sam Higa,  
Jim Shafer & Vince Howley  
Visit the Mary Fay Pendleton School in  
December 2014**



**Sound Elements our  
January 2015 Entertainment**

### **AUXILIARY PRESIDENT**



We visited the VA on the second Sunday and gave the Veterans afghans, books, personal care items. The Auxiliary is happy to welcome new members Margaret Masterson, Del Self, Teresa Stewart and Leann

Stone. Our next meeting will be on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

*Vanda Bresnan* 581-6287 [vanda@cox.net](mailto:vanda@cox.net)

### **NEEDED FOR POST**

It is that time of the year when we need fresh blood to keep our Post going, so it is time to step up and volunteer!!

- |                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander | Historian        |
| Polly's Event Coordinator      | Color Guard Mbrs |
| Greeters                       | Veteran Outreach |
| Newsletter Editor              |                  |
| Adjutant                       |                  |
| Finance Officer                |                  |

### **2<sup>nd</sup> VICE COMMANDER**

*John Draper*



Precious Jade is our February Entertainer who has performed in the Village on numerous occasions plus graciously sang for the Veterans at the

VA Medical Center on one of our Bingo nights, she was well received.

Precious Jade has performed in front of thousands of cheering fans in her own shows in Texas, Branson, MO., Festus, MO., South Carolina and Wisconsin. She also has appeared as the opening act for the Glen Campbell Concert in Singapore.

Precious Jade has the experience! She has appeared with Big Bands, Broadway Venues, Country & Gospel Shows and as a Solo Act.

### **SERVICE OFFICER QUOTES**

By Mike Evans

Are you one of our Post 257 members who have neglected to request your entitled benefits from the VA (Veteran's Administration)?

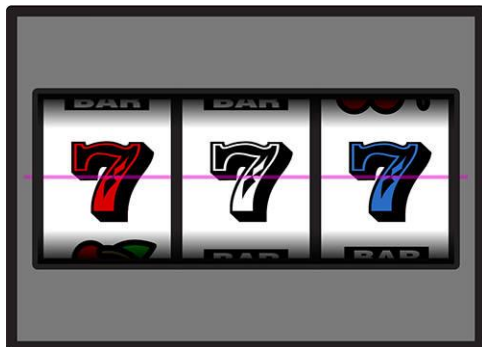
Is it because of the fear of the hassle getting communication, or making proper connections? Or is it the many times that you were never called back after you left your phone number they requested? Is it because the questions on the application were so confusing and lengthy that you didn't answer them all, causing an unnecessary delay? Well, now, on March 2015 all this will change! VA is turning over a new leaf. They already want to see applicants, members of their Health Plan, members of the WWII generation and all following Vets who have suffered long enough. They want to do what they should have done months or years ago. It wasn't entirely their fault, applicants doodled. They will be using one standard application form for all disability claims. It will be easy to read, easy to understand. The question on the form will sound like your friend is asking you to join him/her for dinner. This new VA's process will have a creation of an "intent to file" a claim, giving the applicant time to hunt, gather

& compile the necessary documentation to support your claim for compensation or service. I'm sure that all of us would like to see VA get speeded up similar to the difference of a thumb drive 3.0 to that of a 2.0. Don't we live in a wonderful Country?

**The Bob Hope USO Orange County Fundraiser** was a huge success. Tickets sold out (over 370) a few days before the rockin' Saturday night event. Over 100 items were donated for our silent auction, including a private box at an Anaheim Ducks game. Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez and many high-ranking military personnel from all branches of service attended. Classic military vehicles marked the entry to the event with full dressed active military members presenting the colors. Bob would have loved it.



**POST 257 MAKES A DONATION TO THE BOB HOPE USO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BOB KURKJIAN**



**WALLY GRAMBERG'S LAUGHLIN TRIP** (3 days, 2 nights) is scheduled for March 31<sup>st</sup>. Call Judy Green for details at (949) 380-2646.

Call Emil Welden (458-3916) to have your personal service (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force or Coast Guard) wood carving made or in loving memory carving (shown below).



## ADJUTANT

Why join the American Legion. You can make a difference.

### *Bits & Pieces of Information*

DD-214 is used to validate the Legion's applicant eligibility. This document provides proof of time in service, branch of service, era of conflict, and time of active duty. The DD-214 is no longer required to be maintained by the Post once viewed by the appointed membership person, generally the Post Adjutant.

If you have misplaced or lost your DD-214, the Government Archives requires a written request. Visit this site for procedural instructions: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/evetrecs-help.html>. If you in a rush, you may prefer a pay service organization; use Google to locate such sites.

### American Legion Renewals.

Post Laguna Woods, 257 renewals are almost complete. Thirty-four (34) members have yet to renew their membership for this fiscal year. Each member is an important part of the American Legion. Renew now! Numbers truly matter when advocating for our veteran's needs.

### This Year's membership

Increase the membership to 4 million veterans. Help find new members; Just ask.

**Clay Hunt bill:** Obama signs Veterans' suicide prevention law

Acknowledging the struggles of the nation's veterans, President Barack Obama signed legislation intended to reduce the high rate (22 suicides per day) of suicide that is claiming the



lives of soldiers and former members of the military by the day.

The law, which had broad support from Republicans and Democrats, requires the Pentagon and Veterans Affairs Department to submit to independent reviews of their suicide prevention programs and make information on suicide prevention more easily available to veterans.

#### **QUARTERMASTER NEEDS MORE STORAGE FOR HANDICAP EQUIPMENT!**

A space in your car port/garage or home.

**Online Prescription Tracker Gives Veterans 24/7 Online Access to Status** - Veterans can now track the status of most of their prescriptions online, thanks to an innovative idea by a Department of Veterans Affairs' employee. The new 24/7 service allows online tracking for most prescriptions mailed from the VA Mail Order Pharmacy. (2/4/15)

**Care and Benefits for Veterans Strengthened by \$169 Billion VA Budget** - The President has proposed a \$168.8 billion budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in fiscal year 2016. The proposed budget will support VA goals to expand access to timely, high quality health care and benefits, continue the transformation of VA into a Veteran-centric department and end homelessness among Veterans. The President has proposed a \$168.8 billion budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in fiscal year 2016. The proposed budget will support VA goals to expand access to timely, high quality health care and benefits, continue the transformation of VA into a Veteran-centric department and end homelessness among Veterans. (2/2/15)

**Department of Veterans Affairs Reaches Historic Breakthrough Agreement** - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert A. McDonald and attorneys representing homeless veterans in Los Angeles announced an agreement that dedicates the West Los Angeles VA campus to serving veterans in need, and commits the department to design a plan to help end homelessness among veterans in Los Angeles

County. The agreement is an important step forward in carrying out President Obama's commitment that no veteran should live on the streets, or forego necessary medical and psychological services. (1/28/15)

**Counting Every Veteran on the Way to Ending Homelessness** - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald is taking a firsthand look at the issue of homelessness among Veterans by participating in this year's Point-in-Time Count in Los Angeles, California. The PIT Count typically takes place in locations around the country during the month of January. (1/28/15)

**VA Announces Single Regional Framework under MyVA Initiative** - The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced that it is taking the first steps under the MyVA initiative to realign its many organizational maps into one map with five regions to better serve Veterans. (1/26/15)

**VA Issues Statement on Denver VA Replacement Medical Center** - The Department of Veterans Affairs continues to work to complete the Denver replacement VA Medical Center project without further delay while delivering the best value to taxpayers under current circumstances. The situation in Denver is unacceptable to Veterans, taxpayers and Department leadership. (1/19/15)

## **Patriots on the Plains**

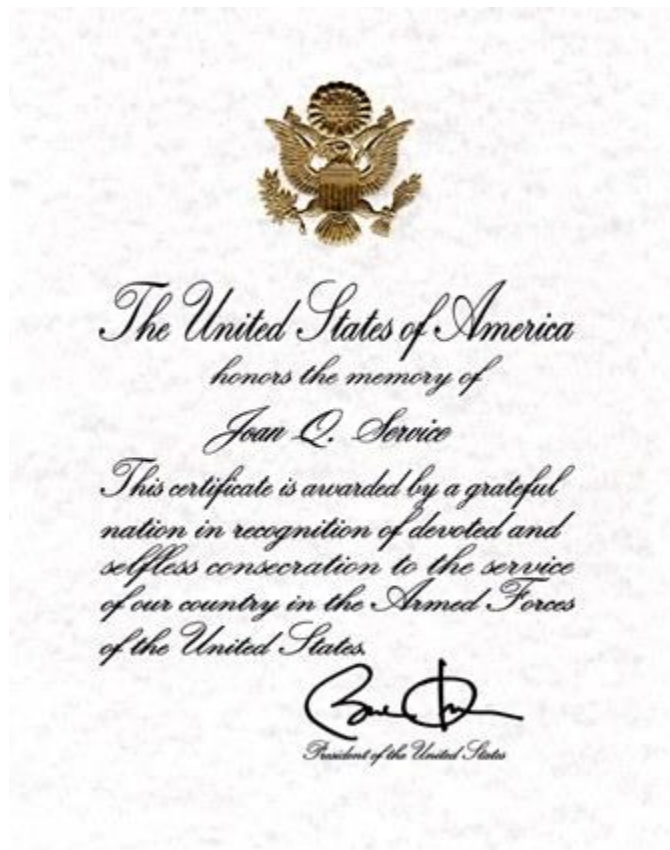
Omaha, Nebraska

August 8 - 12, 2015

The National Veterans Golden Age Games is the premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the United States, and the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. The National Veterans Golden Age Games (NVGAG) is one of the most progressive and adaptive rehabilitative senior sports programs in the world. The Games serve as a qualifying event for competition in the National Senior Games in a number of competitive events. Sports and fitness are vital ingredients of VA's National Rehabilitation Special Events. Physical activity and friendly competition engage the

mind as well as the body, and recreation therapy fills a special need in the lives of older patients at VA health centers across the country. VA research and clinical experience verify that physical activity is particularly important to the health, recovery and overall quality of life for older people. The National Veterans Golden Age Games encourage VA patients over the age of 55 to make physical activity a central part of their lives, and support VA's comprehensive recreation and rehabilitation therapy programs. It is a national showcase for the preventive and therapeutic value of sports, fitness and recreation for all older Americans.

## Presidential Memorial Certificates



A Presidential Memorial Certificate (PMC) is an engraved paper certificate, signed by the current President, to honor the memory of honorably discharged deceased Veterans.

## History

This program was initiated in March 1962 by President John F. Kennedy and has been continued by all subsequent Presidents. Statutory authority for the program is Section 112, Title 38, of the United States Code.

## Administration

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) administers the PMC program by preparing the certificates which bear the current President's signature expressing the country's grateful recognition of the Veteran's service in the United States Armed Forces.

## Eligibility

Eligible recipients include the next of kin and loved ones of honorably discharged deceased Veterans. More than one certificate may be provided.

## Application

Eligible recipients, or someone acting on their behalf, may apply for a PMC in person at any VA regional office or by U.S. mail or toll-free fax. Requests cannot be sent via email. Please be sure to enclose a copy of the Veteran's discharge and death certificate to verify eligibility, as we cannot process any request without proof of honorable military service. Please submit copies only, as we will not return original documents.

[VA Form 40-0247 Application for Presidential Memorial Certificate](#)

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**\*\* ATTENTION \*\***

**Veterans, Spouses & Surviving Spouses**

The Florence Sylvester Memorial Senior Center is now offering free Veterans Service Counseling. Do you have questions or problems pertaining to...

- Benefit Entitlements / Claims
  - VA Health Care
  - Burial Information



**FLORENCE SYLVESTER**  
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