



FEBRUARY 2025

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Frederick Douglass



Abraham Lincoln

Here are some ways to celebrate Black History Month:

### Visit a museum

The Association of African American Museums (AAAM) has a directory of museums that focuses on African American history. You can also check out the virtual programming at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture.

### Attend a virtual event

The Library of Congress and other national organizations offer virtual panels, live streams, and digital exhibits.

### Donate to a charity

You can support Black organizations and charities that advance Black rights and equal justice.

### Celebrate with food

You can connect with family by sharing food and drinks from Black cultures. You can also treat your employees to lunch from a Black-owned restaurant.

### Attend a local event

In Los Angeles, you can celebrate at the Battleship IOWA, where the Gravely Celebration Experience is held each year. The event features a panel discussion and a Q&A session with local high school students.

### Celebrate the community

The 2025 theme for Black History Month is “African Americans and Labor”. You can celebrate by participating in Open Arms Food Pantry and Resource Center's 9th Annual Black History Month festival taking place on February 23rd 2025 in Los Angeles at West LA's Pan Pacific Park .

Black History Month — which began in 1926 as Negro History Week — is in February because it coincides with the birthdays of two important figures in the abolitionist movement: President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

February 12 is the birth date of Lincoln, who signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, freeing enslaved people in the Confederate states.

February 14 is the birth date that abolitionist, and orator Frederick Douglass chose for himself after escaping slavery in 1838.

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## EXPO 2025 UPDATE



The latest Veterans Expo planning and networking meeting was held on January 14th. There were several new organizations whose representatives attended. Current status of the event was pinpointed as well as what needs to be accomplished over the next 30-45 days to stay on track.

Some results:

### **Exhibitors:**

Currently, we have 23 exhibitors signed up including two who will have outside displays/vans. There's still space for an additional 12 to 15 applicants. Several organizations and individuals have expressed interest, but have yet to complete their required paperwork. If you want to be considered for a booth, you must complete paperwork no later than March 1st. If in doubt as to whether we have your application, contact Deanna at [readback.veap@gmail.com](mailto:readback.veap@gmail.com). We also have about 5-6 that we consider "must have" exhibitors who have yet to be in touch, and will be following up on those in the next 30 days. We are thinking of **Loma Linda VA, DMV, Riverside County Veterans Services, Reaching New Heights, Riverside County of Aging and Social Security**. An application form is attached to this ReadBack.

### **Funding:**

Currently we have a good deal of the funding needed already committed to support the event and need sponsorships to cover the remainder. Sponsorships can come in the form of labor, in-kind, monetary or other meeting of need, and in any amount and will be acknowledged on the event programs and at the event. Items such as "pipe and drape", printing, VIP reception and individual booths are areas where we can use your support. Please consider helping out in any way/amount that you can.

### **Program:**

The program committee has identified one worthy veteran to honor at the event and is in the process of identifying two Marines from 29 Palms Marine

Base. We are still looking for that second local veteran to honor. Need the individual's name with bio and photo. Focus not only on their military duty, but also community service.

The organizers are in the process of identifying a list of VIP guests to be invited and welcome your thoughts/input. We love to match our VIPs with Desert Hot Springs Public Safety cadets as escorts. It has become a wonderful opportunity for the young cadets to get some real world mentoring.

### **Volunteers:**

We also discussed the roles of our volunteers. Coachella Valley Rescue Mission provides a team of volunteers that are critical to our success as well as assistance in implementing the lunch for the event. Additional volunteers are needed to help in the days before and during the event to assist with a number of taskings. To help, please contact Bill majorbill1@aol.com.

See attached flyer to participate in the Gallery of Heroes.

There will be two more planning and networking meetings before the Expo: February 18th and March 11th at 1PM, at the Cathedral City Corps of The Salvation Army located at 30-400 Landau Blvd next to Veterans Village. Hope to see you there. More info? Bill Young at majorbill1@aol.com





VEAP AND THE SALVATION ARMY WISH YOU...





## MELTDOWN and The Rest of the Story

By now you know about the Pennsylvania nuclear mishap which took place March 28, 1979.

This relates to another.

The atomic reactor has gone out of control.

No one at the installation ever thought it would come to this, and as far as I know nothing quite like it has ever happened before - but the worst has happened.

Meltdown.

There is a meltdown of the reactor core.

This much is certain: The core must be disassembled before more radiation escapes, and since the task is beyond the capability of the most sophisticated robot, *somebody* has got to get down there and do it by hand!

No one will volunteer, so someone has been chosen. **He is THE REST OF THE STORY.**

He is a twenty-six-year-old lieutenant in the United States Navy.

Qualifications: He is highly trained in reactor technology and nuclear physics. He was among the nuclear technicians who aided General Electric workers in the construction of a prototype plant near Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory. He has worked with and at Atomic Energy Commission headquarters in Washington, has high security clearance status.

He is being flown to the meltdown site.

When he gets there, he will study an exact duplicate of the reactor which has already been constructed nearby.

Working with a team of technicians, he will rehearse each tedious step of the dismantling procedure. Television cameras will monitor the moment-by-moment condition of the real reactor.

And then, accompanied by two other technicians from the team, wearing radiation-resistant clothing and armed only with the tools in his hands, he will witness a sight no man has ever seen before; a melted-down atomic reactor core.

The disassembly will be carried out in stages, each a minute and thirty seconds in duration.

In that amount of time, the lieutenant will be exposed to; will in fact absorb, the maximum allowable radiation for a human being for an entire year!



## HAILS AND FAREWELLS

Retired Maj. Nancy Leftenant-Colon, the first African American commissioned into the U.S. Army Nurse Corps after it was desegregated in the 1940s, has died at the age of 104. Leftenant-Colon died peacefully at a nursing facility in her hometown of Amityville, N.Y., on Jan. 8, 2025 her nephew, Chris Leftenant, told National Public Radio on Wednesday. “Lefty,” as she was known to many, was lauded for breaking down racial barriers and for her lifelong dedication to preserving the legacy of African American military pioneers. Born on Sept. 29, 1920, near Charleston, S.C., Leftenant-Colon was one of 12 children of James and Eunice Leftenant and the granddaughter of a freed slave, according to her official biography. Her family left the Jim Crow South for Amityville in 1923. After graduating from nursing school in 1941, Leftenant-Colon attempted to join the military but was told Black nurses weren’t allowed. She kept trying, and in January 1945, she was accepted into the Army Nurse Corps as a reservist with the rank of second lieutenant. Black nurses were still prohibited from joining the regular Army at the time. Her first assignment took her to Lowell General Hospital in Fort Devens, Mass., where she treated World War II casualties in the final months of the conflict. President Harry Truman signed an executive order abolishing segregation in the military in 1948. Upon hearing the news, Leftenant-Colon applied for regular Army Nurse Corps status and became the first Black woman integrated into the Corps. She was assigned at the time to the 332nd Station Medical Group at Lockbourne Army Air Base, now Rickenbacker Air Force Base, in Ohio. It was the same base where the Tuskegee Airmen, a group of primarily African American military pilots and service members who fought in World War II, were stationed. Leftenant-Colon chose to transfer to the Air Force when the service split from the Army after the war. She was deployed overseas during the Korean and Vietnam wars. In addition to helping set up field hospitals in war zones, she was a flight nurse on the first medical evacuation flight during the battle of Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam, according to her biography on the Tuskegee Airmen website. Leftenant-Colon’s final assignment was to McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., where she retired as chief nurse in 1965. “This is what I wanted, and this is what I went after,” Leftenant-Colon said of her career in a 2023 interview with CBS.

### **In Memory of, and with Gratitude for her Service**



An undated photo of Nancy Leftenant-Colon, the first African American commissioned into the U.S. Army Nurse Corps after it was desegregated in the 1940s. She died Jan. 8, 2025, at the age of 104. (CAF RISE ABOVE)

## Mr. Willard's Closet...THE NEED

Mr. Willard's Closet started its 3rd year in January. It's open 2 days a month and has been available for more than 50 days and met the needs of veterans primarily as a service to Veterans Village. 2025 marks a cross road for this valuable resource with a number of actions to consider over the next couple of months when determining how and whether to continue.

1. How is it to be funded? It doesn't cost too much since most items come from donations or other thrift shops who we share a reciprocity agreement with. That's a pretty nebulous thing to say, but every day is different, every week is different, every month is different. And, to meet special needs other items are sometimes purchased new. If Salvation Army ends up manning it, the cost for the staff time needs to be factored in.

2. Who will man it during the hours it's open and clean and stock it in between? Currently, Deanna Young does most all this work with a few seasonal and loyal volunteers but the day is approaching when she will not be able to do that. For example. Mr. Willard's will be closed the month of April.

We need a steady and reliable lead and a small group of people to take this on. It is currently stocked based on Deanna's understanding of the needs of the Veterans Village population and others who use the facility, after more than two years of interaction. That includes responding to special needs as they occur.

3. Who will manage it when the above volunteers are not on property at the Salvation Army? Currently the Cathedral City Salvation Army does not have the staff or position allocated to do this. Someone needs to control access and its use during these times.

4. How exactly should Mr. Willard's Closet be advertised and used? Should it be open to all veterans as it is now? Open to just Veterans Village Veterans? Open to Veterans and "selected" other needy individuals as determined by the Salvation Army Corps? Shared with veterans who are known by police and fire organizations? How do we best get the word out to those who need it most so they will take advantage of the services?

These are just a few of the questions that need to be addressed in the next 30-60 days. We welcome our readers' thoughts and comments. [ReadBack.VEAP@gmail.com](mailto:ReadBack.VEAP@gmail.com)



# MILITARY HISTORY



February 2, 1901: The United States Army Nurse Corps is established under the Army Reorganization Act.



February 4, 1945: The Yalta Conference commences. Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin met at Yalta in the Crimea to address the redistribution of power and influence in the post WWII world. Part of the outcome was the division of Germany. Many believe that decisions made at this time in history led to the Cold War.



February 9, 1942: Daylight Savings Time is instituted (WWII played a big role in this decision).



February 14, 1914: Hannah "Nancy" Harkness Love, one of the first female pilots in the U.S. military is born. Google her name and learn her fascinating story.



February 15, 1898: The battleship, USS Maine explodes in Havana, Cuba harbor sinking and killing 260 crew members. Led to Spanish American War famous for Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. The Maine was a 6682-ton second class battleship built in the New York Navy yard and commissioned in 1895.



February 20, 1942: Naval Officer Edward O'Hare becomes the first American WWII flying ace. O'Hare destroyed 5 Japanese G4M1 Betty bombers. Lt Commander

O'Hare disappeared and was presumed shot down on November 26, 1943 while participating in one of the first nighttime fighter plane launches from an aircraft carrier. In 1944, he was officially declared dead. The airport in Chicago was named after him in 1949. He was also a recipient of the Medal of Honor (posthumously).



February 22, 1942: President Roosevelt tells General MacArthur to leave the Philippines.



February 24, 1991: The Gulf War ground offensive begins. A large coalition of ground forces moved into Iraq as part of Operation Desert Storm.



February 26, 2017: U.S. drone strike kills Osama Bin Laden's son-in-law.



February 28, 1991: Coalition Forces enter Kuwait City, collapsing Iraq resistance. Operation Desert Sabre, a massive allied ground offensive came to an end after Iraq stopped its resistance and President George H. W. Bush declared a cease-fire. On February 24th, coalition forces from 34 countries had begun Desert Sabre which lasted just 4 days. As a part of the peace negotiated between the U.N. and Iraq, Iraq recognized Kuwait's sovereignty and agreed to divest itself of all weapons of mass destruction.





## THE DEPTH OF APPRECIATION

You ought to be in pictures!!

It's an old saying from the movie industry, but a thought for this article.

The Salvation Army's Veterans and Community Expo is unique in their dignified honoring of local veterans, active duty military and their families. The tribute is called the "Gallery of Heroes".

The way this tribute is presented, is as a PowerPoint presentation. At the Salvation Army's VEAP Expo, photos with relevant information are posted for visitors and attendees to see and absorb. By the way...Forest Lawn uses our presentation for some of their military commemorations throughout California.

So...you can participate! Someone you know may have been famous for their military service in some way. Someone else you know may have served without you even knowing it. Here's an example: The staff of ReadBack knew Les O'Neil as a friendly, quiet, but helpful participant in the DAV, and who attended many of the VEAP events. It was only after we persuaded Les to send in his military photo and a brief history of his service, that we discovered that he was one of the last survivors of the ordeal known as the "Chosen Few". (Not familiar with the battle? Come to the Gallery and read about it.) He survived that brutal event and had been greatly honored for service beyond the call of duty. We didn't know before he sent in his materials.

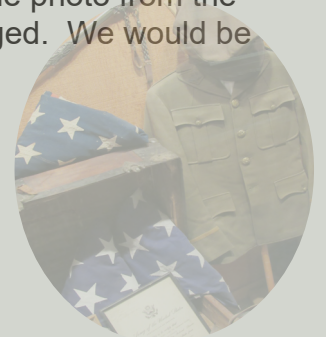
After receiving his photo and bio, we were also surprised to read about the service of one of our own Salvation Army Advisory Board members. It seems that Jack Wood was a submariner. Jack was on the USS Devilfish. Devilfish was the only submarine ever struck by a kamikaze plane...while submerged! When asked, Jack told stories of being on torpedo tube cleaning duty. Jack was small enough to be put into the tube with a rope attached to his ankles. He would climb to the end of the tube, cleaning backward until he was pulled out by his feet.

Amazing discoveries...all through watching the Gallery of Heroes presentation.

Now, we know that not everyone can be a hero or have an amazing story to tell, but the appreciation and respect due to everyone who served should be noted, and that's why we started "Gallery of Heroes".

It's what American's do! Here's where your participation comes in!

Why not take a minute to go through your service photos and send us a copy of your photo or of those who served in your family. Put a small bio with your photo(s) and email the package to [ReadBack.VEAP@gmail.com](mailto:ReadBack.VEAP@gmail.com). Civil war? Yes, we have one photo from the Civil war. Korea? Grenada? Any and all service is respectfully acknowledged. We would be honored to feature your photos too.



## Meltdown and THE REST OF THE STORY

So the economy of time will be paramount. There will be none to spare for fumbling with a bolt or a valve connection, and no room for a mistake - for everyone's sake.

The ultimate fate of this young lieutenant, as a matter of hypotheses, depends on which expert you listen to.

If those who fear the worst are to be believed, then the consequences will far outweigh sickness or sterility, and the price of this mission, for which the lieutenant did not volunteer, will be certain death.

He must live long enough, however, to disassemble the reactor.

And he will succeed.

For the "unimaginable" catastrophe, this then-unprecedented meltdown of an atomic reactor, occurred at a nuclear plant near Chalk River, Canada...seventy four years ago.

The events we've just related took place in 1951. And the hero of that true story, the young Navy lieutenant who led a team of technicians into the yawning mouth of hell, did not die.

He did risk his life, and then he lived to be 100. In fact he became the President of the United States, Jimmy Carter.

Now you know THE REST OF THE STORY.

**ReadBack** commemorates the legacy and service of President Jimmy Carter.



### Jimmy Carter | U.S. Navy Veteran

Carter was the only President who attended the Naval Academy in Annapolis. The third and final Seawolf-class submarine was named USS Jimmy Carter in honor of his service with the Navy as a submarine officer. In 2002, Carter was also awarded a Nobel Peace Prize.

"Hi"  
Notes

*The spiritual definition of service means choosing to do something for someone else (often in secret) without expecting anything else in return. Service involves seeing a need and meeting that need without expecting thanks or any type of reciprocity.*

"A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new." —Albert Einstein



“

Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.

NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF

GRACIOUSQUOTES.COM

**“Love isn’t love till you give it away.”**

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN, “LOVE

ISN’T LOVE”



Fall in love with someone’s spirit and character first, and watch how attractive they become.

Charles F. Glassman

We rise by lifting others.

Robert G. Ingersoll



## Why We Remember THE FOUR CHAPLAINS ON FEBRUARY 3rd

Through the night of **February 2, 1943**, the S.S. Dorchester was traveling from New York to Great Britain. Once a luxury coastal liner, the 5,649-ton vessel had been converted into an Army transport ship, and was crowded to capacity, carrying 902 servicemen, merchant seamen, and civilian workers.

That evening, the captain ordered the men to sleep in their clothing and keep life jackets on. Many soldiers, deep in the ship's hold, disregarded the order because of the engine's heat. Others ignored it because the life jackets were uncomfortable.

On Feb. 3, at 12:55 a.m., a German submarine U-223 spotted the ship and its convoy. They fired a torpedo that would sink the boat in under 30 minutes.

Aboard the Dorchester, panic and chaos had set in. The blast had killed scores of men, and many more were seriously wounded. Loss of power from the blast prevented the crew from sending a radio distress signal, and no rockets or flares were launched to alert the escorts. Many passengers were disoriented in the darkness.

Passengers quickly began to overcrowd lifeboats to the point of capsizing, according to eyewitnesses. Other rafts, tossed into the Atlantic, drifted away before soldiers could get in them.

In the midst of this pandemonium, four Army chaplains joined together to bring faith, and hope to a desperate situation. Those chaplains were Methodist Minister Lt. George L. Fox, Rabbi Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Catholic Priest Lt. John P. Washington, and Dutch Reformed Church Minister Lt. Clark V. Poling.

Quickly and quietly, the four men spread out among the soldiers, working to calm the frightened, tend the wounded and guide the disoriented toward safety.

"Witnesses of that terrible night remember hearing the four men offer prayers for the dying and encouragement for those who would live," remembered Wyatt R. Fox, son of Reverend Fox.

Four Chaplains Stained Glass Rendering at the Pentagon

One witness, Private William B. Bednar, found himself floating in oil-smeared water surrounded by dead bodies and debris. "I could hear men crying,

pleading, praying," Bednar recalls. "I could also hear the chaplains preaching courage. Their voices were the only thing that kept me going."

As the ship sank and most of the remaining passengers were topside, the chaplains opened a storage locker and began distributing life jackets. When there were no more lifejackets in the storage room, the chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men.

"It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven," said John Ladd, another survivor who witnessed this selfless act.

As the ship went down, survivors in nearby rafts could see the four chaplains—arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. Their voices could also be heard offering prayers.

Of the 902 men aboard the S.S. Dorchester, only 230 survived. When the news reached American shores, the nation was stunned by the magnitude of the tragedy and heroic conduct of the four chaplains.

That night Reverend Fox, Rabbi Goode, Reverend Poling and Father Washington became an enduring example of extraordinary faith, courage and selflessness.

Lt. Gen. Brehon B. Somervell, Commanding General of the Army Service Forces posthumously awarded the men the Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart on December 19, 1944 in a ceremony at the post chapel at Fort Myer, VA.

A one-time only posthumous Special Medal for Heroism was authorized by Congress and awarded by President Eisenhower on January 18, 1961. The special medal was intended to have the same weight and importance as the Medal of Honor.

Today, 82 years after the Dorchester sunk beneath the ocean surface, the story of these four men inspire people to serve and support one another regardless of their faith or religious affiliation.





## DISTRICT 4 UPDATE: EXCITING GROWTH AND NEW INITIATIVES IN VETERANS SERVICES

The Riverside County Veterans Services Department is excited to share updates about the ongoing efforts to expand and enhance services for our District 4 veteran community. Our commitment to serving those who served remains stronger than ever as we continue to grow and adapt to meet the unique needs of local veterans.

### Expanding Our Team

We are pleased to announce the recent hiring of a Housing Coordinator, who will focus on supporting efforts to assist homeless veterans in securing stable housing and accessing critical resources. This new role is a significant step forward in addressing homelessness among our veteran population.

Additionally, we are in the process of hiring Community Liaisons who will provide case management support to justice-involved veterans. These liaisons will play a key role in helping veterans navigate the challenges of reintegration and connecting them with services such as mental health care, employment opportunities, and VA claims assistance.

We are also in the hiring phase for our third Veterans Service Representative (VSR) for District 4. Once hired, this representative will undergo comprehensive training and certification through

the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA), a process that takes approximately 7 to 9 months. Our current team includes two representatives, one of whom is still completing training and certification.

### Planning for Growth

To better accommodate the growing demand for services, we are actively searching for a new location for our District 4 branch. A larger and more accessible facility will enable us to serve veterans and their families more effectively while creating a welcoming environment for all.

### Continuing Our Mission

Even as we expand and transition, our dedication to serving veterans remains steadfast. From assisting with VA claims to providing vital resources and support, our team is here to meet the needs of the community.

We thank you for your patience and support as we grow to better serve District 4. These changes are an investment in the future of our veteran community, and we are excited to share more updates as we make progress.

Gregory Coffos, MBA, MOL  
Director of Veterans Services  
RivCo CVSO  
(951)816-5179

## AFA ON THE FLY

Many of our ReadBack readers are already members of AFA Palm Springs Chapter 134 and enjoy all the privileges of membership, but many others have not yet joined. Here is a brief outline of who they are, what they stand for and all the many wonderful opportunities that membership in the local chapter entails.

The Air and Space Forces Association's mission is to promote U.S. and Space Forces as the foundation of a strong National Defense; to honor and support our Airmen, Guardians and their Families and to remember and respect their enduring heritage. AFA does this through education of the public, promoting and advocating for STEM education in our schools and highlighting such issues as cyber-security and air superiority. They support all of our military, past and present, including Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, civilian members and their families and the Civil Air Patrol.

Who can join? Anyone who supports the above mentioned goals and principles. Local membership has members from all branches of the military as well as the National Guard and even non-military members who believe in the mission.

Nation-wide, there are more than 100,000 members. Locally, Chapter 134 meets monthly on the first Thursday of each month at the Palm Springs Air Museum. Meetings cover chapter events and goals and usually includes a special guest speaker talking about their unique and special experiences in the military and beyond. In addition, the chapter has frequent lunch get-togethers at a local restaurant that is a community partner; Roc's Firehouse Grille where members can socialize and share experience in a warm and inviting environment.

Programs? The local chapter has a number of annual events and programs that are worth mentioning. The AFA annual Teacher of the Year Award helps promote STEM in local schools. It's an AFA National level program. This chapter's last two winners have also won at the state level and have gone on to compete at National level. They also sponsor a local Cyber Cup Challenge, another AFA National program. Competition for the most recent cycle was just completed late last year and the awards presentation made at La Quinta High School January 29th. A goal is to have even more schools compete in 2025.

Annually there is a special Holiday Luncheon and several themed trips each year. Last year the Aircraft carrier Midway in San Diego was visited and there are plans for a special trip to the Patton Museum February 19th. See the ReadBack calendar or contact Tony Della-Moretta for more details.

If you are interested in learning more, contact Tony at [tonydm@gmail.com](mailto:tonydm@gmail.com) or just come to one of the monthly meetings. Next one is Thursday February 6th starting at 2PM. Just come to the Palm Springs Air Museum and ask for the AFA meeting. You'll be glad you did.



# Unlock Your Health Through the MHS Nurse Advice Line

by TRICARE Communications

Do you know what to do when you or a family member feels sick, but it's outside of business hours or it's the weekend? Should you go to an urgent care clinic or the emergency room, or wait until your doctor's office is open? Luckily, TRICARE has a service called the Military Health System Nurse Advice Line that can help when you need healthcare guidance.

"The MHS Nurse Advice Line is an excellent resource for TRICARE beneficiaries and their families "Sometimes all you might need is to have a healthcare professional answer a few simple questions to provide you with direction and next steps. By contacting the MHS Nurse Advice Line, you'll have peace of mind."

What's the MHS Nurse Advice Line?

The MHS Nurse Advice Line lets you connect with a registered nurse by phone, chat, or video. It's available 24/7 and free for TRICARE beneficiaries to use. Registered nurses are available to answer your questions and give you advice. They can help when you're feeling sick, worried about what medicine to take for your symptoms, or not sure if you should seek medical care.

Who can use the MHS Nurse Advice Line?

If you live in the U.S. or in a country outside the U.S. with a military hospital or clinic, you can use the MHS Nurse Advice Line. This includes:

- Active duty service members and their family members
- Retirees and their family members

Note: You can use the MHS Nurse Advice Line unless you're enrolled in the US Family Health Plan, which has its own nurse advice line.

It's important that the sponsor's and family members' personal information is up to date in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. Log in via milConnect to check this information.

The MHS Nurse Advice Line can help in many situations. Your nurse can:

Answer your healthcare questions.

Assess your symptoms and give recommendations for the most appropriate steps to take next.

Give instructions to treat minor issues at home.

Help you find the closest urgent care or emergency care facility, if needed.

Help you make an appointment at your military hospital or clinic, if needed.

Give you an online "absence excuse" or "sick slip" when medically appropriate (subject to service command requirements).

Keep in mind that the MHS Nurse Advice Line isn't for emergency situations. Health emergencies are conditions that threaten your life, limb, eyesight, or safety. If you or a family member reasonably believes you're experiencing a health emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. If you're overseas, call your international emergency number.

Visit [MHSNurseAdviceLine.com](https://MHSNurseAdviceLine.com) for web chat and video chat, or dial 1-800-TRICARE (874-2273), option 1



# BITS AND PIECES

“Social Security offers free workshops. Readers can find the workshop schedule at [www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org](http://www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org) under the “Calendar” tab. Using search term “Medicare” will list all workshops for 2025.”

We’ll continue to offer the free retirement planning educational series on Social Security and Medicare, provided in partnership with The Area Agency on Aging Phoenix (Arizona’s State Health Insurance Assistance Program, or SHIP) and hosted by The Phoenix Public Libraries. Click on the link below to register or call the library at 602-262-4636 for a phone-in option.

Register here: <https://calendar.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/calendar/burtonbarr?t=g&q=medicare&cid=-1&cal=-1&inc=0>

President Donald Trump announced that he would appoint **Doug Collins** to lead the Veterans Affairs Department in his new administration.

Collins is a Baptist minister who has served in the Navy and Air Force Reserve

Collins, 58, holds a master’s degree in divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and pastored a church for 11 years. He served as a U.S. Navy chaplain for two years in the late 1980s. After the Sept. 11 attacks, he joined the U.S. Air Force Reserve as a chaplain. Collins deployed to Balad Air Force Base in Iraq for five months in 2008. He remains a colonel in the Air Force Reserve. Collins became a lawyer well into adulthood.

Download the 2025 Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors handbook online or pick up a printed copy at your local medical center, regional office or Vet Center for free.

<https://news.va.gov/137659/spread-the-word-the-2025-veterans-benefits-guide-is-now-available/>

The top military and veterans issues for states in upcoming legislative sessions include suicide prevention, sustainment of military installations, military spouse employment and family support, National Guard recruitment and justice-connected veterans.

Use this link to what you might see upcoming. <https://www.ncsl.org/state-legislatures-news/details/balancing-state-and-federal-support-for-service-members-and-veterans>

Are you a Veteran who served at least two periods of service? In other words, did you reenlist? If so, there’s a chance that you’re eligible for additional G.I. Bill benefits. To receive an expiration date extension, applications must be submitted by Oct. 1, 2030.

### Do I need to do anything?

Of the 1.04 million Veterans who may potentially be eligible for additional benefits, VA will be able to automatically adjudicate the claims for approximately 660,000 without any further action required on their part. For all remaining Veterans, VA will be reaching out to them directly to encourage them to file a claim.

## Valentine's Day Marriage

*Service Appointments Now Available at the San Bernardino County Clerk's Office on Valentine's Day*


**FEBRUARY 14**

To learn about the San Bernardino County Clerk's marriage services, including hours, times and appointment information please visit: [arc.sbcounty.gov/marriage](http://arc.sbcounty.gov/marriage).

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## FEBRUARY

- 1 - National Freedom Day
- 1 - Presentation: When football went to war. 1PM. Palm Springs Air Museum. 760-778-6262 or palmspringsairmuseum.org
- 3 - Four Chaplains Day
- 4 - Monthly meeting of Chapter 78 of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). 5PM. Denny's at 42445 Washington, Palm Desert. 760-600-0684.
- 4 - Monthly meeting of VFW Post 3699. 6:30PM. American Legion Hall. 44200 Sungold, Indio. Lenny at 760-668-5988.
- 4 - PB&J Day at The Salvation Army. Need volunteers to make 4,000 sandwiches. Kevin at 760/324-2275 (attached flyer)
- 5 - Monthly meeting of American Legion Post 739. 6:30PM. American Legion Hall. 44200 Sungold, Indio. Steve at 760-969-0035.
- 6 - Palm Springs Chapter of the Air and Space Forces Association (AFSA) monthly meeting. 2PM. Palm Springs Air Museum. Guest speaker and presentation. Live and via zoom. Jim McFarlin at mcfarlin.jim@gmail.com or Tony Della-Moretta at tonydm@gmail.com
- 8 - Annual Palm Springs Air Museum Gala. Museum closed all day. Call and learn more. 760-778-6262 or palmspringsairmuseum.org
- 10 - Mr. Willard's Closet. Cathedral City Corps of The Salvation Army located at 30-400 Landau Blvd. 10AM to Noon. Deanna Young at 760-832-2883 or readback.veap@gmail.com
- 14 - **Valentine's Day**
- 15 - Presentation: Bloody Iwo

- Jima ... Iconic battle of WWII Pacific Theater. Dr. Ed Gordon. 1PM. Palm Springs Air Museum. 760-778-6262 or palmspringsairmuseum.org
- 15 - Captain American Fundraiser VSSN Daisy Tate 415/779-8776 (VSSN) (see attached flyer)
- 17 - President's Day ... Fly your flag. 
- 18 - Planning/networking meeting for the 12th Annual Veterans and Community Expo. 1PM. Dick and Beverly Davis Corps of The Salvation Army. 30-400 Landau Blvd, Cathedral City. Open to all. Bill Young at majorbill1@aol.com
- 20 - Veterans Services Zoom Meeting. 9AM. Contact Anita Worthen at abird82@aol.com in advance to get connected.
- 20 - Special AFA trip to the Patton Museum. Details to follow. Tony Della-Moretta at tonydm@gmail.com
- 22 - Presentation: Before 22 - 4th Annual Fishing Tournament, Lake Ca-huilla. Free to Veterans.

## MARCH

- 1 - Canadian Military Tribute at the Palm Springs Air Museum. 1PM. 760-778-6262 or palmspringsairmuseum.org
- 3 - U.S. Navy Reserve Birthday
- 4 - Monthly meeting of Chapter 78 of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). 5PM. Denny's 42445 Washington, Palm Desert. 760-600-0684.
- 4 - Monthly meeting of VFW Post 3699. 6:30PM. American Legion Hall. 44200 Sungold, Indio. Lenny at 760-668-5988.
- 5 - Monthly meeting of American Legion Post 739. 6:30PM. American Legion Hall. 44200 Sungold, Indio. Steve at 760-969-0035.
- 6 - Palm Springs Chapter of the Air and Space Forces Association (AFSA) monthly meeting. 2PM. Palm Springs Air Museum. Guest speaker and presentation. Live and via zoom. Tony Della-Moretta at tonydm@gmail.com
- 8 - Presentation: Sink the Bismarck. Dr. Ed Gordon. 1PM. Palm Springs Air Museum. 760-778-6262 or palmspringsairmuseum.org
- 9 - Daylight Savings Begins
- 10 - Mr. Willard's Closet 10am - noon 760/832-2883
- 11 - Final planning/networking meeting for the 12th Annual Veterans and Community Expo. 1PM.

- Come and help and share about your organization. Dick and Beverly Davis Corps of The Salvation Army. 30-400 Landau Blvd, Cathedral City. Bill Young at majorbill1@aol.com
- 20 - Veterans Services Zoom Meeting. 9AM. Contact Anita Worthen at abird82@aol.com in advance to get connected.
- 21 - Rosie the Riveter Day
- 22 - Tanks and Rods Car Show, The Patton Museum 9am-3pm see flyer attached.
- 22 - Presentation: Woman Air Force Service Pilots. 1PM. Palm Springs Air Museum. 760-778-6262 or palmspringsairmuseum.org
- 24 - Mr. Willard's Closet 10am-Noon Info 760/32-2883
- 25 - Medal of Honor Day
- 25 - Input for the April VEAP Readback due.
- 27 - Bus trip and facilities tour of 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, at 29 Palms. 8:30AM to 3:30PM (includes lunch). See attached flyer for more details. Terrie Heer at 503-347-7614.
- 27 - Riverside National Cemetery (RNC) Field Day. RNC Amphitheater. 10AM to 3PM. 951-653-8417. Flyer attached
- 29 - Welcome Home: National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Palm Springs Air Museum.







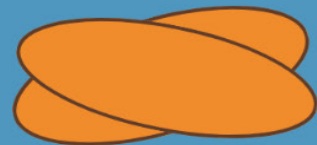
DAVIS  
CENTER



CATHEDRAL CITY CORPS

WE COULD USE YOUR HELP MAKING

4000+ PB & J  
SANDWICHES



Spread the  
love

Come "SPREAD THE  
LOVE" in our  
community!

Help us to make  
more than  
**4000**  
**PB&J Sandwiches**  
for the participants  
of the **Tour de Palm  
Springs**  
biking event.



TOUR DE PALM SPRINGS IN COACHELLA VALLEY

AT THE  
**SALVATION ARMY**  
30-400 LANDAU BLVD  
CATHEDRAL CITY, CA 92234

10 AM - 1 PM  
TUESDAY  
FEB 4TH, 2025

CONTACT KEVIN FOLEY 760-324-2275 EXT. 5743  
OR KEVIN.FOLEY@USW.SALVATIONARMY.ORG



# Mr. Willard's Closet

## FEBRUARY

**10 AM UNTIL NOON**

**MONDAY - February 10  
AND MONDAY - February 24**

**A FREE thrift shop for Veterans  
and their families.**

**The Salvation Army  
30-400 Landau Blvd.  
Cathedral City, CA**

**Information:**

**Deanna Young  
760/832-2883**

**[readback.veap@gmail.com](mailto:readback.veap@gmail.com)**





# Captain America

*Brave New World- Veteran Fundraiser  
Saturday February 15th*



## CAR MEET-UP & MOVIE WATCH

CARS ROLL-UP

REGAL &  
RED ROBIN @  
1045 AM

PARTY IN THE PLAZA

STARTS 1130 AM  
TEMECULA  
PROMENADE

MOVIE WATCH

SHOWINGS  
12:30pm  
2:00 pm 3:30 pm

CELEBRATE OUR SUPERHEROES WITH FUN, FOOD, AND COSPLAY! GET FREE APPETIZERS WITH LUNCH AT CALIFORNIA PIZZA KITCHEN. ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT VSSN VETERANS SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES!







The Salvation Army's Veterans and  
Community Expo  
April 5, 2025  
EXHIBITOR APPLICATION  
(Please Print)



DOING THE MOST GOOD

Attached copy of  
501(c)3 yes no  
Non-Profit? yes no

Organization (Grantee): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Representative(s)** Please Print

This year, only two (2) representatives are permitted for each booth. Please indicate name and contact information for each representative below.

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**All participants must read and sign this event's Liability Waiver (See attachment)**

**Booth (free of charge)**

Number of Booths (premises) requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Inside  Outside  One each

*A Booth is:* One(1) 8' x 8' pipe and drape space, appropriate event signage, one (1) six-foot table and 2 chairs. (Electricity available if needed please check , parking, lunch and beverages.

Booth(s) Assigned \_\_\_\_\_

For additional information, call Deanna Young 760/832-2883

**Please Sign and Mail this Application to:**

Bill Young  
Scan and email to: majorbill1@aol.com  
Or  
44665 Monaco Circle, Palm Desert Ca 92260

**Donations:**

If you desire to donate to the event or the Veteran's Easy Access Program through The Salvation Army, make your donations out to "The Salvation Army", with "VEAP" or "VET EXPO" on the memo line. These donations should be mailed to:

EXPO  
The Salvation Army  
30-400 Landau Blvd.  
Cathedral City, CA 92234

I, the above named Exhibitor, understand that I will only be authorized to place my display materials within the assigned booth(s) as indicated above. Additional materials, displays, exhibits or stand-ups that go beyond the designated booth space must be approved prior to the event and will only be accommodated as possible with approval. Any items placed in the pedestrian right-of-way are my organizations liability and responsibility.

I further understand that any type of sales or collection or solicitation of monies is prohibited at the event. Additionally, I certify that I am insured for liability and have a valid business license or permit to do business (if applicable). Please acknowledge that you have read and understand this agreement with your signature below.

Responsible name: \_\_\_\_\_ please print \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (authorized signer) 3/31/2022

# GALLERY OF HEROES AT THE EXPO

**WE NEED YOU, YOUR FAMILY FRIENDS AND  
ANCESTORS IN THE GALLERY OF HEROES...**

**JUST SHARE A COPY OF THEIR U.S. MILITARY  
PHOTO, OR ANY PHOTO IN UNIFORM, AND A BRIEF  
BIO INCLUDING :**

- ★ **BRANCH OF SERVICE**
- ★ **RANK ATTAINED**
- ★ **DUTY**
- ★ **YEARS ACTIVE**
- ★ **WHATEVER ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE**
- ★ **IF MILITARY HERO IS DECEASED, OR KIA,  
PLEASE SO INDICATE)**

**EMAIL TO: [READBACK.VEAP@GMAIL.COM](mailto:READBACK.VEAP@GMAIL.COM)**

**OR MAIL COPIES TO:**

**GALLERY EDITOR  
44665 MONACO CIRCLE  
PALM DESERT, CA 92260**

**QUESTIONS: DEANNA YOUNG 760/832-2883**

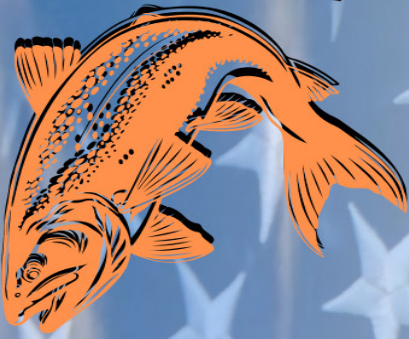
**NOTE: YOUR INFORMATION AND PHOTO(S) MAY BE SHARED  
WITH THIRD PARTY ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS FOREST  
LAWN TO BE USED FOR RESPECTFUL AND HONORING VISUAL  
PRESENTATION THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA.**



**V.E.A.P.**  
VETERANS EASY ACCESS PROGRAM



# 4TH VETERANS FISHING DAY TROUT DERBY



**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2025 | FREE ENTRY**

\$5 cash tournament fee for non-veterans collected at the gates. Proceeds support local veteran groups.

**LAKE CAHUILLA VETERANS REGIONAL PARK  
58075 JEFFERSON ST., LA QUINTA, CA 92253**

Hosted by Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District, the Desert Recreation Foundation and the office of Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez.

**GATES OPEN: 5:30 a.m. | TOURNAMENT: 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.  
CEREMONY: 12:00 p.m.**



FOURTH DISTRICT SUPERVISOR  
**V. MANUEL PEREZ**  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE



SCAN QR CODE TO  
**REGISTER  
ONLINE**

For campground reservations call 1-800-234-7275 or visit RivCoParks.org



# GENERAL PATTON MEMORIAL MUSEUM TANKS AND RODS CAR SHOW


TAKES PLACE IN THE MUSEUM PARKING LOT  
30 MILES EAST OF INDIO OFF I-10



**SATURDAY MARCH 22, 2025**

**9.00 AM - 3.00 PM**

 [WWW.GENERALPATTONMUSEUM.ORG](http://WWW.GENERALPATTONMUSEUM.ORG)

 760-507-4143

 62510 CHIRIACO RD., CHIRIACO SUMMIT,  
CA 92201



## JOIN US!

### Tour Bus Trip and Facility Tour! Marine Corp Air Ground Combat Center Twenty-Nine Palms



The Marine Corp Air Ground Combat Center is the largest Marine Base in the United States, covering more than 998 square miles. The MCAGCC manages the Marine Corp Air Ground Task Force Training Program. Learn about emerging technologies related to combat mission readiness, and much more, during our informative tour!

**Cost:** \$45 per person (includes lunch)  
**Date:** Thursday, March 27, 2025  
**Time:** 08:30am to 3:30pm  
**Location:** Bus departs from the Sam's Club parking lot (Monterey and Dinah Shore) in Palm Desert

**For Reservations:** e-mail Alan Tibbets - [atibbettsry@gmail.com](mailto:atibbettsry@gmail.com)

**For Trip Information:** Call Terrie Heer (503)347-7614





**VA**

Riverside National Cemetery  
Field Day

**MARCH 27, 2025 RNC Amphitheater**

**(951) 653-8417**

**TOPICS & SERVICES**

Prepare Now: VA's End of Life Benefits

Pre-need Eligibility Applications

Memorial Benefits

Survivor's Benefits

RNC Chaplain Caroline Flanders

Healthcare Enrollment

Advanced Healthcare Directives

Palliative & Hospice Care

Veteran Information Booths

Riverside County Veteran Service Officers

**VENDORS/EXHIBITORS NEEDED  
APPLICATIONS BEING TAKEN NOW  
CONTACT FOR INFORMATION**

Jonathan Ramirez Lead Cemetery Admin Specialist  
Riverside National Cemetery  
22495 Van Buren Blvd  
Riverside, CA. 92518

951-653-8417 ex.4802 951-836-1682 Work Cell RNCadmin@va.gov





12th ANNUAL

# VETERANS AND COMMUNITY EXPO

**Saturday, April 5, 2025**

**9am until 2pm**

**The Salvation Army's**

**Davis Center**

**30-400 Landau Blvd.**

**Cathedral City**

**Information: Bill Young**

**760/861-0037**

**majorbill1@aol.com**



**V.E.A.P.**

VETERANS EASY ACCESS PROGRAM

**FREE**