

# Veterans Services – July 2022 Report

## Terry Thomas, County Veterans Service Officer

### **1. EDC Veteran Services Updates:**

Our office has been short staff recently due to a covid outbreak that sidelined 4 staff members for a couple of weeks. I would like to thank our remaining staff for doing a good job keeping the office operational while we were short staffed. We will be testing weekly, and we now require all visitors to wear face coverings entering the building until further notice. We should be fully staffed the rest of this week and moving forward.

**i) South Lake Tahoe Mini Stand Down:** Takes place at the American Legion Lodge September 17<sup>th</sup> from 10am – 4pm. Please help get the word out to our Veterans in the South Lake Tahoe area. El Dorado County Veteran Services (EDCVS) will be in attendance providing services as needed for filing disability claims, access to VA Healthcare, information, and updates.

### **2. Claims Updates:**

July 2022 Claim Submissions: 233; 37 more than this past June

Including, but not limited to:

33 Claims for Service-Connected Disability

51 Intent to File

42 Appointments of EDC VSO as Representative for Veterans

21 Statements in support of claim

14 Appeals or Higher Level Review

10 Applications for VA Healthcare

9 Applications for Pension or Survivor Benefits

17 Veteran Status on Driver's License

27 Cal Vet College Fee Waivers

8 Income Verifications

**Total funds awarded to Veterans in July:**

**Retroactive Pay \$66,178.34; \$28,568.43 increase from June 2022**

## **Monthly Payments \$35,036.11; \$23,679.23 increase from June 2022**

Total Phone Calls: 238

Total Scheduled Appointments: 104

Total Walk-In clients seen: 191

### **3. Cal Vet Semi-Annual Audits for 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months of 2022**

- Retroactive Payments \$999,828.99 = \$72,341.57 decrease from same period in 2021
- Monthly Payments \$175,321.71 = \$88,115.23 increase over same period in 2021
- 71 more claims awarded in 2022 than in 2021
- Total Lump Sum \$11,642.00 = \$5,215.89 decrease from same period in 2021
- Total Claims Filed During Same Periods:  
309 in 2021 1Q and 417 2022 1Q = 108 increase of claims filed

### **4. South Lake Tahoe Updates:**

There were 4 veterans/dependents scheduled for appointments in the month of July, slightly down from June of which we had 12.

- Compensation/Pension Claims
- VA Healthcare

#### **South Lake Tahoe Visitors Call Log:**

- 4 calls in July that were tallied the week of July 4<sup>th</sup>

### **5. VA Updates: Continued Expression**

#### **A. Train for a New Job with VRRAP**

If you're a Veteran who lost your job due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VA may have a solution for you. The [Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program \(VRRAP\)](#) offers education and training for a variety of [high-demand jobs](#) so you can get back to work.

Qualifying Veterans can receive up to 12 months of tuition and fees along with a monthly housing allowance.

To be eligible for VRRAP, you must be between 22 and 66 years of age, unemployed due to COVID-19, able to work, and not eligible for education or unemployment benefits.

If you do qualify, apply soon! We'll stop accepting new VRRAP enrollments on December 11, 2022—or when we reach either the funding or participant limit, whichever comes first.

**B. The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics – PACT Act for short – became law on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.**

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.

One of the importance of the PACT Act is the added disabilities for Vietnam Veterans such as:

- High blood pressure (also called hypertension)
- Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)

Also, added 5 locations for Agent Orange Exposure:

- Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from January 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976
- Laos from December 1, 1965, through September 30, 1969
- Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969
- Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa from January 9, 1962, through July 30, 1980
- Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from January 1, 1972, through September 30, 1977

VA Added 3 Locations for Radiation Exposure:

- Cleanup of **Enewetak Atoll**, from January 1, 1977, through December 31, 1980
- Cleanup of the Air Force B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons off the coast of **Palomares, Spain**, from January 17, 1966, through March 31, 1967
- Response to the fire onboard an Air Force B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons near **Thule Air Force Base in Greenland** from January 21, 1968, to September 25, 1968

**6. End of report. Questions?**

**7. Thank you!**