

## Newsletter for SGT Michael A. DiRaimondo Chapter 750 Military Order of the Purple Heart

[moph-chapter-750.com](http://moph-chapter-750.com)



### From the Commander

#### September Meeting

The meeting will be in Santa Barbara at the Veterans Memorial Building on West Cabrillo Boulevard at the beach: 112 W Cabrillo Boulevard (at Chapala Street); Santa Barbara CA 93101; Tele. (805) 568-0020. Park on W. Mason Street one block above Cabrillo; walk through a small park toward the beach. The Ladies will provide a light meal and drinks. If you have questions call me at 805 565 3759.

#### Unit 750 MOPH Auxiliary

Save the date: Department CA announced that mid-term conference will be at the Four Points Sheraton in Bakersfield, CA on October 9 and 10, 2018. Information to follow on website.

National Leadership will be holding monthly online video/teleconferences for information, instruction, questions, etc. Please let me know if you are interested in joining the teleconferences and I will forward notices of meetings/call instructions.

Our September meeting will be in Santa Barbara. We'll be discussing fundraising and support for Veteran's Day activities and Chapter 750's Thanksgiving basket program. Potluck dinner follows with our Patriots – we need volunteers. Will you be attending? Be kind and let us know in advance that you will be there and whether you can help with food. Thank you for all you do in supporting our Patriots and caring for all Veterans. Questions or ideas you'd like to share – call or email me at 805-565-3759 or [ms@west.net](mailto:ms@west.net). Sally Irving, Unit 750 President.

#### A Friend Has Left Us

Carl Lanterman passed away on July 5, 2018. The service was held at the Thousand Oaks Elks Lodge on July 22.

#### August Outing at The Murphy Auto Museum

Great fun, great success. About eleven of us spent a morning looking at 1950's campers, multiple year's models of pick-up trucks, race cars, luxury cars. Then we had a great lunch. All thanks to Patriot Jon Williams. Thank you Jon, where're we going next?

**New Benefits in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act of 2019**

Space-available travel on DoD aircraft for veterans with service-connected disabilities rated as permanent and total. Veterans who are service-connected permanent and total are eligible to fly on military aircraft, space permitting. Check on availability.

Extension of certain morale, welfare, and recreation privileges to certain veterans and their caregivers. Beginning in January 2020, service-connected disabled veterans and their caregivers will be eligible to use base commissary stores and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities. You will need an I.D. card for this.

Improvements to the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). TAP prepares transitioning service members for civilian life. This provision includes mandatory instruction on preparation for civilian employment, VA benefits, and transition assistance. It also allows for transitioning service members to elect two days of specific training of their choice.

Study on availability of long-term care options for veterans from VA. The study will focus on long-term care options from the VA for veterans with combat related disabilities. This is at the research stage.

**Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act**

The VA appeals process is going through its biggest change since the 1980s. Congress passed the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act. This act takes apart the current appeal system and replaces it with a new process aimed to improve the experience for all involved in the process.

What stays the same and what is changing: There will still be a rating decision after every claim is filed. A claimant will still have the opportunity to have a more seasoned adjudicator review the decision in the regional office. The claimant can still appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. What's gone? State of the case, gone. VA Form 9, gone. Reopened claims? Not anymore. The need for new and material evidence, gone. Decision Review Officer (DRO) decision, gone. What is replacing these? Supplemental claims, relevant evidence, higher level review, the Notice of Disagreement (NOD form VA Form 21-0958) filed with the Board of Veterans' Appeals. The middleman is gone.

In the current system, when a veteran is dissatisfied with a decision and wants to preserve the date of the claim, he has only one route: file a NOD. Forgot to file a necessary document? File a NOD. Missing evidence? The VA made a mistake? File a NOD.

When a veteran files a new claim, the VA will issue a rating decision that must contain the following: what issues were decided, summary of evidence considered by the VA, summary of applicable laws and regulations, identification of findings favorable to the claimant, explanation of why claim was denied, explanation of how to get evidence used in making the decision, and identification of criteria that must be satisfied to grant service

connection or the next higher level of compensation. After this rating decision, you have one year to act. You are to appeal for a higher review at the regional office (RO), file new evidence or file a NOD to go to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

**Higher Level Review:** You have one year from the initial claim to seek this route. This lane allows for a quality check on the original opinion while still at the VA regional office. Now, you cannot submit additional evidence or request a hearing here. The review does not give weight to the prior decision. If the decision is favorable, your original claim date is preserved. If it is unfavorable, you have an option to file a supplemental claim or to file a NOD to appeal to the board.

**Supplemental Claim:** You have one year from the date of your decision to file additional evidence. Under the new law, this is now referred to as a supplemental claim. In this lane, you may submit additional evidence that is new and relevant. Upon receipt of your new evidence, VA will attempt to decide within 125-days. Your effective date, the day from which the VA will pay your benefits, will be the day you file the first claim.

Once the adjudicator decides, you must ask yourself, are you satisfied with this decision? At this point, you get to choose from the three options again: one, as you've already done, you can submit additional evidence within a year and preserve the date of your claim; two, you can request a higher-level review; or three, board review lane.

**Board Review Lane:** This is where you file a NOD and your case moves from the regional office to the Board of Veterans' Appeals. Here, there will be three lanes to choose from: one, fully developed appeal, a claim that is ready for decision by the BVA and there is no further evidence to submit; two, hearing request with the chance to submit additional evidence; or three, request to submit evidence but not hold a hearing. If the decision is favorable, your original claim date is preserved. If it is unfavorable, you have an option to file a supplemental claim within a year, or you can file an appeal to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. You have 120 days to file this appeal.

File an appeal with the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and win, and your original claim date is preserved. If you do not prevail, then you have a year to file a supplemental claim. Should you win after that, you still preserve your original claim date.

### **Boulder Crest Retreat Foundation is Treating Combat Stress**

Boulder Crest is committed to improving the physical, emotional, spiritual, and economic wellbeing of our nation's military, veterans and their family members. Their programs ensure they have the opportunity to live lives of passion, purpose, and service at home.

They exist to solve the mental health crisis and to heal our military members, veterans, and their families dealing with PTSD and combat-related stress, so they can live productive, fulfilling, and service-oriented lives at home. Their mission; To provide free, world class, short-duration, high-impact retreats for combat veterans and their families.

Combat veterans are the strongest among us, and that they only require training to thrive at home. Boulder Crest believes combat-related stress is contagious, therefore, to heal combat veterans, you must focus on the entire family.

Their teams focus on two mission critical programs 1) Family Rest and Reconnection Stays, these are 2-7 night stays for families to rest, reconnect, and recharge in a beautiful setting and enjoy some quality family time together, and 2) the PATHH Suite of Programs which include the warrior, the family, couples, and caregivers.

Their claim to success:

Symptom Reduction

40-60% sustained reduction in PCL (a PTSD tool used by VA and DoD) scores

50% sustained reduction in anxiety and depression

Quality of Life

31% improvement in Couples Satisfaction (Couples Satisfaction Index)

25% reduction in response to stress

Posttraumatic Growth

75% improvement in Psychological, Spiritual/Existential, and Relationship Growth

100% of guests would like to return

99% said the Retreat gave their family with the opportunity to rest and reconnect

51% improvement in which their family was connected upon departing the Retreat.

Family Rest & Reconnection (R&R) Stays: free, 2-7 nights that provide families with the opportunity to rest, reconnect, and recharge. To book these stays:

Boulder Crest Retreat Arizona

Phone: 1-520-455-4668

415 Gardner Canyon Road

Sonoita, Arizona 85637

Boulder Crest Retreat Virginia

Phone: 1-540-554-2727

18370 Bluemont Village Lane

Bluemont, Virginia 2013

Boulder Crest Retreat Arizona is set on 130-acres in the Coronado National Forest, minutes away from Sonoita, and one hour south of Tucson. Boulder Crest Retreat Virginia is set on 37-acres in Bluemont, at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and one-hour west of our nation's capital.

More information: <http://www.bouldercrestretreat.org> - Email:

[info@bouldercrestretreat.org](mailto:info@bouldercrestretreat.org)

**New Reagan Library Exhibit**

Pompeii: The Exhibition. Opens October 6, 2018.

Pre-sale tickets available for purchase.

<https://www.reaganfoundation.org/library-museum/special-exhibits/pompeii/>

[https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/269912/swp\\_0493\\_sm.jpg](https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/269912/swp_0493_sm.jpg)

Pompeii is opening October 6, 2018 at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, features over 150 authentic artifacts on loan from the renowned Naples National Archaeological Museum in Italy. These are not replicas, but rather original, 2,000-year-old objects that were preserved in the ash. These artifacts include wall-sized frescos, marble and bronze sculptures, jewelry, ancient Roman coins, and full body casts of the volcano's victims.

Hat tip to Art Hershey.

**Did You Know?**

The Purple Heart is the oldest award in existence still given to military members.

It is estimated that 1.8-million Purple Hearts have been awarded to date.

**Chap. 750 Next Meeting**

Will be in Santa Barbara at the Veterans Memorial Building.

Monthly meetings generally are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 6:00 P.M.

**Chapter Meeting Schedule for 2018**  
September 13 – October 11 – November 8