



American Legion War Memorial Commission and American Legion District 8

September 5, 2011

The San Francisco Veterans Resource Center

401 Van Ness Avenue, room 205, San Francisco, CA 94104

American Legion District 8 and the American Legion War Memorial Commission recently established the San Francisco Veterans Resource Center (VRC), a facility created to *provide all veterans with the necessary resources to successfully transition into civilian life*. This Center is supported by the coalition of the American Legion District 8 (San Francisco), the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the local organization of American Veterans (AMVETS), the Bay Area Veterans Alliance (a coalition of veterans on our Bay Area college campuses), the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the local Veterans for Peace organization.

Funded by **Mr. Craig Newmark**, Founder of Craigslist, and a number of philanthropic veterans, this facility provides resources, including brand new personal computers, for veterans who need assistance processing for their earned benefits and also for preparing for employment interviews and seeking job opportunities. The VRC project has been named in honor of Mr. Newmark for his significant contribution which was essential to the creation of the VRC.



Mr. Craig Newmark honored for his great support and contribution to the VRC.

Mr. Joseph Cantanucci, Partner, of the San Francisco Mass Mutual office donated over \$15,000 worth of office furniture to the American Legion and the VRC. Mr. Cantanucci has also directed his human resources office to offer jobs to our local veterans this year.

Mr. James Bartha, US Army Corps of Engineers, and a veteran donated 12 new lap top computers for the VRC.



New Lap top computers in the Veteran Resource Center



Lance Frederick, VA Center



Bruce Goodnight, EDD



Eddie Ramirez, Ft Miley VA Hospital



Michael Blecker, Swords to Plowshares

Local veterans service organizations (VSO) will provide the claims processing assistance, referrals for medical treatments when combat stress (PTS) and/or brain injury (TBI) is detected or reported, and job/career advice and training classes. These Bay Area VSOs include the San Francisco County Veterans Service Office, the State of California's Employment and Education Department (EDD), the VA Training Center, the non-profit Swords to Plowshares, and other local VSOs will find the VRC to be a convenient central location for providing services to our veterans. Due to their limited conferencing space, the VSOs plan to use the VRC for group briefings and training. This is an initial step to centralize providing services to our veterans who must now bounce around the City to get all the benefits and services they have earned in their service to their Country.

Classes are also planned for briefing employers on the benefits of hiring veterans, including tax credits for hiring veterans both for a short term and long term positions. Hiring a disabled veteran can provide a tax credit of up to \$9,500 for the employer.

Stephanie Smitherum, Project Manager, Wells Fargo Bank has offered classes to veterans on personal finance management.

Mrs. Kim Luk, a local attorney has volunteered her professional services to brief veterans on their legal rights.



Randolph Martinez



James L. Small

Mr. Randolph Martinez, Mr. Michael Smith and Mr. James L. Small are three young veterans who have served in Iraq/Afghanistan and were hired to manage the VRC. These veterans are experienced in managing VRCs and also have technical networking training.

On Monday, August 15, 2011 the grand opening, ribbon cutting ceremony was held in the Veterans Memorial Building, 401 Van Ness Avenue, room 205 in San Francisco.



Board of Supervisors President David Chiu voices his strong support for veterans.

The President of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors **Mr. David Chiu**, a San Francisco Mayoral candidate, attended this celebration and expressed his strong personal support for all our veterans and noted that the VRC is a very important step in San Francisco's commitment to taking care of our returning veterans.



Trustee Michael Myatt (Major General, USMC retired)

Major General Michael Myatt (USMC retired) attended the VRC grand opening and stated that the VRC was the most productive project of the American Legion in his many years as a Trustee with the San Francisco Board of Trustees.



The officers and ladies of Cathay Post supporting the VRC grand opening.

Post 384 **Commander Ron Lee, Vice Commander David Y. Wong** and **3rd Vice Commander Nelson Lum** provided vital support for this grand opening event. The Post's Support group ladies including, **Sandy Au, Emily Onglatco, Tina Mak, Kim Leong, and Christy Dong** insured that all attendees were well fed and they stayed to clean up afterwards. **Thank you ladies.**

On Tuesday, August 30, 2011 the VRC was used to brief veterans on several job opportunities for veterans with Bauer IT, firm with several quality jobs paying \$50,000 a year. More than 30 local veterans attended and qualified candidates may be hired for these valuable positions. **Mr. Jarom Vahai**, an 8 year Iraqi disabled veteran provided these job leads and we applaud Jarom for his proactive efforts to contact major American businesses to hire veterans. He is also in contact with Tesla motors, Clear-Wall corporation (a green jobs company) and Cisco Systems which has indicated they will try to hire 1,000 veterans nationwide.

On September 23, 2011 AmVets Post 34 Commander Helen Wong advised that the AmVets Career Center Headquarters had approved her request to open a veterans career center in San Francisco. Wong suggested that the San Francisco AmVets Career Center be merged or combined with the VRC to provide a centralized location to provide job/career services to our local veterans.

AmVets will be providing up to 300 online training programs that will provide education on using computers and software, business skills development, technical skills development, health and safety training and certification for a number of careers including internet webmaster, human resource career, Microsoft technical skills, project management skills, Cisco technical training, Oracle technical training, Red Hat technical training, and network/security training. Commander Wong is traveling on 12 Oct 2011 to AmVets career training headquarters to learn about managing the AmVet Career Centers.

It is the mission of the VRC to provide all the resources necessary to help our veterans transition successfully back into civilian life. The American Legion does not provide services or jobs to veterans. We provide a quality facility for competent VSOs and other organizations to provide claims and employment advice and service to our veterans.

Contributions to the Veterans Resource Center may be made to American Legion District 8 (a 501C(19) non-profit veterans organization) or to Veterans for Peace (a 501C3 organization)

with your donation noted for the Veterans Resource Center. Both of these organizations are located at 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Our Thanks to **Mr. Frank Jang** for providing photographic coverage of this event.

Thank you for caring about our veterans,

Roger S. Dong, ALWMC VRC Project Manager