

Volume 1, Issue 1

Newsletter Date

09/20/2014

September 2014

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Coalition of Veterans Organizations

CVO

*Leave No
Veteran Behind*

TOWN HALL MEETING

Sponsored by
The Coalition Of Veterans Organizations

The Coalition of Veterans Organizations (CVO) will sponsor a Town Hall Meeting on Saturday, September 20th from 10 AM to 12:30 PM at the Montford Point Marine Association, 7011 S Vincennes in Chicago. We have invited several elected representatives to attend, including Senator Mark Kirk, Rep. Bobby Rush, Rep. Danny Davis, Rep. Tammy Duckworth, Rep. Robin Kelly, Rep. Mike Quigley and Alderman Roderick Sawyer. We will be discussing the current crisis at the VA, the investigation of the Crisis Hot Line instigated by CVO and the need for these representatives to carry out the CVO Veterans Program in order to solve the problems of the VA.

Be sure to come out! Coffee and Donuts will be served.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2014 • 10 AM
MONTFORD POINT MARINE ASSOCIATION
7011 S VINCENNES • CHICAGO, IL 60621

Coalition of Veterans Organizations

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Veteran Behind*

www.coalitionofvets.org • facebook.com/coalitionofveterans



CVO's table at the VFW 311 Veteran Outreach



Veterans Affairs bus at Veteran Outreach



The 24th Infantry Regiment Combat Team Association

The "Deuce Four" consisted of the 77th Combat Engineer Company, the 159th Field Artillery, the 12th Military Police, the 24th Medical Company and the 291st Band, which was incorporated into front line units once they arrive in Korea, such was the demands for riflemen.

On the weekend of July 16, 2014, the 24th Infantry Regiment Combat Team Association will convene in Augusta, Georgia for their 28th Annual reunion. The 24th Infantry RCT was the U.S. Army's last all Black Combat Unit, which was deactivated on October 1, 1951 after 83 years (1868 to 1951) of continuous service.

The unit's last 14 months were served during the first months of the Korean war. before being deactivated, the unit lost over 900 killed in action (KIA) out of a force of 3,000. This does not count the wounded and missing in action.

The 24th Infantry RCT was one of the most decorated combat units to have fought in the war. The unit won the first victory of the war in a town called Yechon, located in the Pusan perimeter.

Transforming Trauma

CVO member Steve Nelson represents Veterans For Peace. He is a U. S. Army Vietnam veteran who experienced the deaths of American and Vietnamese people in 1968 and 1969. He and an Iraq War veteran who was severely injured from an IED are part of a veterans' group called Transforming Trauma. They shared their stories of healing during meetings with young people in Englewood.

What they found in learning about each other was common shared life experiences. Violence is the same whether in the streets of Chicago, the desert of Iraq, or the jungle in Vietnam. We all feel fear, anger, pain, and despair. Most importantly, we must help each other.

Everyone told their stories, encouraged each other, and recognized that recovery and healing often take years. The goal of finding one's own peace is worth the effort. These young people have lost so many friends and family members to gun violence. They deserve all the best we can provide.

The CVO Table at the Englewood High School



CAPS: CHICAGO'S ALTERNATIVE POLICING STRATEGY By Larry Nazimek

There are various ways in which we can get involved in the fight for our neighborhoods. One can join a community based organization, that is, if there happens to be one in your neighborhood. If there isn't one, you can try to organize one, but that can be difficult. You will need to attract others who want to get involved, and once you get going, you will need to build the group and earn the respect of the police and city officials.

Fortunately, if you live in Chicago, there is already a structure in place where you can get involved through Chicago's Community Policing Program: CAPS. The City is broken down into Police Districts, and these districts are further broken down into sectors, which are further broken down into beats, with police officers assigned to each beat. The size and shape vary, depending on the population density and crime rate. The 25th (Grand Central) District, for example, has three sectors: 10, 20, and 30. Each sector consists of 5 beats. Beat 2524 (bounded by Diversey, Central Park, Fullerton, and Kilbourn), for example, is in the District's 20 sector, and "2524" appears on the placard on top of that Beat's car.

Beat meetings had been monthly, but when former Supt. Jody Weis cut back on the number of police officers assigned to the Community Policing Offices (the offices that deal with the public and run the CAPS Program), the frequency of most beat meetings was cut back to bi-monthly.

These meetings are attended by (at least) an officer from the district's Community Policing Office and the on-duty Beat Officers. In addition, there are often representatives of the aldermen and city agencies. Citizens attend these meetings to discuss crime issues. They may report on an issue, such as a location from which drugs are being sold, only to find that the officers are already aware of it, but may need additional information from the citizens, such as where the drugs are being stashed or when they are being sold. The police can't do the job alone; they need the assistance of the citizens, their "eyes and ears." We provide the intelligence. This is the direct opposite of the "don't snitch" policy that exists in failed neighborhoods.

At these meetings, citizens get to know one another and strategize. Block clubs are often formed. A citizen is designated as the "Beat Facilitator," who is tasked with running the beat meetings. Other citizens may volunteer for various duties. Depending on the number and dedication of the citizens, marches, positive loitering, or other tactics may be carried out. Training is available.

Citizens whose only previous interaction with the police may have been an unwarranted traffic stop by an irate officer will now look at the police as the ones who are there to work with them in keeping their neighborhoods safe.

It only makes sense that we vets get involved in the fight for our communities. We know how to deal with the enemy, regardless of who that enemy might be. Gang members aren't going to scare us away, although they may have caused many of our neighbors to abandon their neighborhoods and retreat to the suburbs. We don't run away from problems; we confront them. We have the leadership skills and experience in getting things done and cutting through bureaucracy that are often sorely missing from neighborhoods.

To find out more about CAPS: <https://portal.chicagopolice.org/portal/page/portal/ClearPath/Get%20Involved/How%20CAPS%20works/What%20is%20CAPS>. From this site, you can enter your home address to see what district and beat you are in, but even if that function of the page is not working, you can call 311 or any police station for that information. Your district's Community Policing Office will be able to tell you the location and time of your beat's meeting.

Larry E. Nazimek
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Chicago, IL 60647-1131



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Under Secretary for Health
Washington DC 20420

JUL 31 2014

Bruce E. Parry, Ph.D.
Chair, Coalition of Veterans Organizations
1658 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Box 365
Chicago, IL 60647

Dear Dr. Parry:

Thank you for your letter to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding your concerns in ensuring the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) offers appropriate services for Veterans. I am responding on behalf of the Department.

The VCL values the opportunity to review each of the issues you raise, and we appreciate your making us aware of these specific problems. It is important to note that the VCL and its contracted backup centers have a standing agreement to not have answering machines that state someone will respond within 24 to 48 hours. However, the 1-800-273-8255 number is used by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for all of its hotlines, including the VCL. Many crisis lines and hotlines across the United States can be reached using that number, and the VCL uses the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number to serve Veterans because it is the number most used by suicidal callers. Also, when a Veteran does not press "1" as directed, the Veteran's call may go to a local Lifeline service that is not affiliated by contract and service standards with the VCL or its backup centers. Local Lifeline services may use answering machines. It is imperative that Veterans and active duty callers press "1" to reach the VCL. It should be noted, however, through its investigation of a recent call complaint (unrelated to this letter), the VCL found that one of its back-up centers had an active voicemail; this is a direct violation of our agreement with our contracted back-up centers, and the voicemail was discontinued immediately. Veterans were contacted by VCL for follow-up to resolve any outstanding issues related to the voicemail, and a formal process is ongoing to communicate with the contractor to get written confirmation that this problem has been solved and that no other back-up centers have voicemail.

It is not the policy of the VCL to give the phone number to a local VA medical center without offering to assist a Veteran directly. I am not aware of any phone service malfunction that would result in a Veteran's call not being connected to the VCL or a backup center. The Crisis Line responders and assistants are trained in responding to the needs of our Veteran callers and in marshaling resources necessary to meet crises.

I encourage your call testers to provide their phone information and time of calls so that the VCL can research these calls and review the issues you raise in order to ensure continued service to Veterans. VA will employ comprehensive technical testing on the phone routing system and quality monitoring of calls to ensure that the VCL and

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Bruce E. Parry, Ph.D.

its back-up centers are operating according to its policies and procedures; that all technological aspects of the call are in order; and that our Veterans receive the highest quality of service. The VCL appreciates the gravity of every response to Veterans in crisis, and is always willing to review calls or protocol to ensure that we help all Veterans in need. We appreciate your bringing these issues to our attention, and we value your feedback as we continue ongoing improvement to our quality assurance program.

Regarding your recommendations, the VCL does ensure that a live person responds to each call and that if a VCL responder is not immediately available, the call is routed to a backup center where a live person is available. The only way that this would not happen is if a caller does not press "1" to reach the VCL or if the contracted back-up center violates our standing agreement.

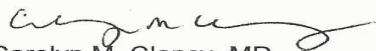
The VCL never records Veterans' calls to ensure that Veteran confidentiality is protected. Veterans must be informed if calls are recorded, and we never want someone who needs help to hang up the phone over concerns of confidentiality or anonymity. However, our staff maintains competency standards and participates in continual training to maintain a high level of service and performance. Call complaints are researched, and when warranted, retraining of staff occurs.

Our crisis responders and call assistants are extensively trained in providing adequate and sensitive information to law enforcement, and have amassed a great deal of experience in emergency dispatch. The VCL continues to train call assistants in sensitivity and emergency dispatch skills.

The VCL employs several responders whose credentials are from pastoral counseling fields. The VCL works to hire the best applicants available from all relevant disciplines. Pastoral counseling is one of the disciplines that is eligible for consideration, along with nursing, social work, psychology, substance abuse counseling, etc.

I appreciate you sharing your concerns. Please know that the VCL responders share your interest in ensuring that Veterans in crisis receive the highest quality care possible.

Sincerely,



Carolyn M. Clancy, MD
Interim Under Secretary for Health

Write for the Newsletter

Send your stories to Kojo Morrow at Kojo@CoalitionofVets.org or Howard Noey at Hnoey@CoalitionofVets.org. Tell us about your Organization or about Yourself! We want your stories and photographs!

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