



NEWS RELEASE

Los Angeles Superior Court Public Information Office

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LA SUPERIOR COURT NORTH DISTRICT ANNOUNCES FIRST VETERANS COURT GRADUATION

The Los Angeles Superior Court, North District, is pleased to announce that the Veterans Court presided over by Judge Bernie LaForteza and Judge Christopher G. Estes will celebrate its first graduating class on Thursday, Oct. 15, 2015, at 1:30 p.m. in the Jury Room located on the 1st floor of the Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley Courthouse, at 42011 4th Street West, Lancaster, Ca. 93534.

The Veterans Court is a collaborative effort between the Los Angeles Superior Court, the Greater Los Angeles Area Dept. of Veterans Affairs ("VA"), and other agencies including Los Angeles County's District Attorney, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, Probation Dept. and Dept. of Mental Health. The collaboration focuses on a treatment-based alternative to incarceration for veterans in the community charged with committing crimes linked to issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse or mental health issues resulting from his or her service in the U.S. armed forces. The program is authorized pursuant to Penal Code Section 1170.9 and requires a nexus between the issues that have caused the veteran to intersect with the criminal justice system and their military service.

Each of the 10 graduating veterans has successfully completed a minimum 18-month intensive treatment program (or a 12-month program for veterans convicted of certain misdemeanors). The treatment plan is tailored to the needs of each veteran, and may include residential/outpatient substance abuse treatment, weekly individual and group counseling, mental health services, dual diagnosis treatment, regular drug/alcohol testing, and self-help meetings.

The VA provides services through its facilities including the VA Domiciliary, West Los Angeles VA, Sepulveda VA Clinic, VA Los Angeles Ambulatory Care Center, VA Supportive Housing (VASH), and various Community Vet Centers. The VA also partners with community agencies to fulfill certain treatment goals. Community partners include New Directions, Salvation Army, Social Recovery Model – Bimini Recovery Home, SRO Housing Corp., U.S. Vets, Volunteers of America, the Gary Sinise Foundation and the Weingart Foundation. Ongoing aftercare services are available to all graduates to ensure continued success.

Featured speakers at the graduation will include Col. David F. Radomski (U.S.A.F.), Congressman Steve Knight, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Thomas R. White (retired), and one of the graduating veterans.

Members of the public and the press are invited to attend the graduation ceremony.

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