

# SOUND OFF!



BULLETIN

THE NEWSLETTER OF VETERANS UNITED FOR TRUTH, INC.

#35

“VETERANS STANDING UP FOR EACH OTHER”

25 DECEMBER 2009

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The following letter to the editor is forwarded to you in its entirety as the clearest explanation of the outrage being perpetrated on veterans through the wholesale give-away of West Los Angeles Veterans Center property to the “special people” of Brentwood/Westwood. This is a national veteran’s home and they are turning it into a private playground for the wealthy. Please forward this to your Congressperson.

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## **THANKS FOR YOUR STORY, BUT THE LETTER WAS INSULTING**

Letters to the Editor @ 8:00 AM December 24, 2009

From Robert L. Rosebrock

*[Editor's Note: Veterans seeking to preserve the property of the National Veterans Home exclusively for veterans, have been engaged in a long-running dispute with a Brentwood homeowners group, the Veterans Park Conservancy. Robert L. Rosebrock, a contributor to this newspaper, is a leader of the veterans. Mr. Rosebrock, a Vietnam era veteran, has written a letter to the Los Angeles Times regarding a recent court victory for veterans and a letter from Frank E. Rabb, vice president of the rival Veterans Park Conservancy.]*

Dear Editor:

First, thanks to the Times for publishing Bob Pool's Dec. 14 article about the U.S. government dropping its charges against Veterans who were legally and rightfully defending our sacred land, and our subsequent defense by the American Civil Liberties Union.

### **U.S. Drops Lawsuit Against Protesting Veterans**

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-flag14-2009dec14,0,333237.story>

Secondly, the Times should not print false and inflammatory letters by individuals who are ill-informed and self-serving. Frank E. Raab sheds not one iota of truth in his letter to you, and his subsequent insults require a public apology via the Times that printed his outrageous and misleading letter.

Rabb states: “*One doesn't need military experience to be offended by the Civil Liberties Union's defense of a few disgruntled vets flying the American flag upside down as some distorted form of protest against construction of a public park on the Department of Veterans Affairs' Brentwood property.*”

Obviously this man has absolutely no clue about the U.S. Constitution-First Amendment Rights and the U.S. Flag Code, Section 176 – Respect for Flag, (a) The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.

Make no mistake; Veterans' sacred property is in extreme danger, as are the lives of 20,000 homeless Veterans in Los Angeles.

Rabb and his land-grabbing buddies operate under the guise of “Veterans Park Conservancy,” which is not a Veterans organization by any stretch but a very wealthy homeowner group. They have essentially confiscated Veterans land for a self-serving public park to enhance the property values of their neighboring communities. This land was deeded 121 years ago “to be permanently maintained as a National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.” There should never be

a homeless Veteran in L.A. as this is the rightful "Home," so deeded in 1888 and preceded by an Act of Congress of 1887.

Rabb's false accusation of "some distorted form of protest" only underscores how biased and uninformed this man really is. And to attack the ACLU for defending our Constitutional and Flag Code Rights is simply disgraceful. The Times should not print such distortion of public law and those who are abiding by it, and those who are defending them when our federal government violates their rights.

Rabb and his wealthy and powerful gang have no respect for law. They do not abide or conform to the Deed of 1888, the Congressional Act of 1887, the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Flag Code. They think that because of their wealth and power, they can dictate and interpret their own laws to for self-serving benefits. Our military has gone to war to stop such dictatorial regimes. Fellow Veterans are prepared to go to war to defend our sacred land from this "domestic enemy."

Rabb states: *"This unacceptable behavior is even more repulsive when conducted by veterans. As a vet myself, I know all too well the sacrifices our servicemen and women have made to protect our freedom to wave the flag. Seeing these sacrifices devalued in this way is an offense to every American, and I am ashamed of our government for allowing it."*

Unacceptable behavior? What gall. Rabb and his VPC cohorts have taken control of a billion-dollar parcel of Veterans land by using their wealth and power to essentially steal it from Veterans, rent-free, while Veterans health care services go under-funded. What's really repulsive is that he claims to be a "vet" and is vice-president of this land-grabbing anti-Veteran group of homeowners. Thanks for his service to our country, but no thanks to his disservice to America's Veterans.

If there was ever a time in modern-day history when hanging the American flag in the "distress" mode was more appropriate, it is now. The very men and women who have defended the American Flag and our Nation's homeland are now having their own "Home" land stolen away by modern-day robber barons who falsely portray themselves as a "Veterans" organization. Talk about shame; Rabb and his cohorts have no shame. They live in multi-million dollar Beverly Hills and Brentwood mansions while 20,000 Veterans are homeless, even though this is their Home.

Moreover, Rabb and his VPC ilk hoodwinked the VA into donating \$1 million of Veterans healthcare money to build a pretentious wrought iron fence along Wilshire and San Vicente Boulevards on VA property to "beautify the entryway into Brentwood."

Then, they rubbed salt into this nasty wound by plagiarizing and denigrating the Military's time-honored creed of "Duty, Honor, Country." Arrogantly and defiantly, they engraved in stone, on Veterans property, "Beauty, Honor, Country," because it was their mission statement to "beautify the entryway into Brentwood." The slur has been removed. Our next mission is to fully rescind their privileged agreement they have with the VA in taking away Veterans sacred land.

Rabb further misrepresents the truth: *"This fringe group is not representative of mainstream veterans, and it misrepresents VA activity. No one is trying to take the VA property away from vets. To the contrary: The nonprofit Veterans Park Conservancy has successfully fought for years against commercialization of the site, and it is working vigorously to enhance a portion of it with recreational spaces and commemorative tributes to all veterans."*

Fringe group? Check the following partial list of Veteran and political organizations that have Resolutions opposing Veterans Park Conservancy's public park and any other misuse or abuse of Veterans land. We have 70- and 80-year-old World War II and Korean War Veterans, plus many Vietnam War Veterans in their 60's who show up religiously to protest the land grabbing every Sunday afternoon from 1 to 4. This coming Sunday will be our 92nd consecutive Sunday Rally to "Save Our Veterans Land." We have the support of virtually every Veteran organization and independent Veterans.

The American Legion not only has a resolution opposing VPC's public park, but this highly respected Veterans organization sent a letter to VPC chastising them for using their name, and forbids them from using the American Legion in any manner of support. How more disgraceful can that be?

List of supporters who are opposed to VPC's public park and other misuse and abuse of Veterans land:

### Veteran Organizations

American Legion, California Department  
American G I Forum of California  
AMVETS, Department of California  
Veterans Caucus of the California Democratic Party  
National Veterans Coalition  
Los Angeles County Veterans Advisory Commission  
We the Veterans  
The Veterans Revolution  
Veterans United For Truth, Inc  
Gathering of Eagles  
Veterans For Common Sense  
Military Spouses For Change  
Veterans for Peace  
Vietnam Veterans Against the War  
Veterans Today News Network Organization

### Political Organizations

[Executive Board] California Democratic Party  
North Carolina Democratic Party Veterans Caucus  
Los Angeles Democratic Central Committee  
Santa Barbara County Democratic Central Committee  
Progressive Democrats of Los Angeles  
San Fernando Valley Republican Club  
Westside Republicans (Los Angeles)

Following is the list of VPC's supporters, a Who's Who of West L.A. fat-cat homeowner and business groups. They also list the support of powerful politicians to do their bidding. Isn't it curious that they have absolutely no support from any Veterans organizations? It's because this is all about enhancing their own home values at the expense of 20,000 homeless Veterans.

Bel Air Association  
Bel Air Garden Club  
Brentwood Community Council  
Brentwood Residential Neighbors  
Brentwood Homeowners Association  
Brentwood Park Property Association  
Brentwood-San Vicente Design Review Board  
Brentwood School Board of Trustees  
Holmby Westwood Property Association  
Los Angeles Conservancy  
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy  
Brentwood Area Chamber of Commerce  
San Vicente Area Improvement Association  
Upper Mandeville Canyon Association  
West Los Angeles/Brentwood Rotary Club

Westwood Hills Property Owners Association  
Westwood Home Owners Association, Inc.  
Westwood Rotary  
Westwood Village Business Improvement District  
Brentwood Glenn Association  
Brentwood Hills Homeowners Association  
Brentwood Historical Society  
South Brentwood Home Owners Association  
Los Angeles Men's Garden Club  
Los Angeles Conservancy  
Natural History Museum  
Los Angeles Conservancy Corps  
National Park Service. (Participation not proven and illegal if true.)

The Times should not be publishing such an untruthful letter like that of Rabb, who is fully misleading your readers and lying and insulting Veterans who are trying to defend our land from his group. It's important to note that the VPC land grab is not the only parcel of land or building that has been leased out for non-Veteran use.

Following is a partial list, and it's time to evict all of them and bring America's Veterans "Home."

- The WLA VAMC entered into a 20-year agreement with Brentwood School, one of the wealthiest private schools in the nation, for 21 acres of Veterans land to build an athletic field that is off limits to Veterans. The sharing agreement expires in 2020.
- The WLA VAMC entered into an agreement with Breitburn Energy. The land use agreement is for drilling oil on Veterans land and the Department of Interior controls the mineral rights agreement.
- The WLA VAMC entered into a 20-year enhanced sharing agreement with Richmark Entertainment Group, Hollywood / New York entertainment business, for the Wadsworth and Brentwood Theaters, the only two theaters at the National Veterans Home. They are no longer available for Veterans use but have become readily available as a "cultural community center" for the wealthy neighboring residents. The agreement expires in December 2025.

- The WLA VAMC entered into a 10-year enhanced sharing agreement with Sodexo Marriott on Building 224 for laundry services for their hotels. The agreement expires in March 2010.
- The WLA VAMC entered into a no-bid, rent-free enhanced sharing agreement with Veterans Park Conservancy, which is not a Veterans organization but a wealthy neighboring homeowners group, for a 16-acre billion-dollar parcel of Veterans land to build a public community park. The agreement was signed on Aug. 24, 2007, and is a 20-year contract with a 10-year option.
- The WLA VAMC entered into a 10-year enhanced sharing agreement with UCLA for a baseball diamond and the agreement expires in 2011.
- The WLA VAMC has entered into a 20-year enhanced sharing agreement with the Salvation Army for Building 212. The agreement expires December 2025.
- The WLA VAMC has entered into a 10-year enhanced sharing agreement with the Salvation Army for building 207. The Agreement expires April 2015.
- The WLA VAMC entered into a 50-year federal lease agreement with New Directions for Building 116. The agreement expires August 2045.
- The WLA VAMC entered into a 5-year memorandum of agreement with a five-year option with New Directions for Building 257. The memorandum of agreement expires February 2012.
- The WLA VAMC is negotiating a 75-year lease on building 209 with a New York-based nonprofit developer (an oxymoron if ever there was one). Mr. Tillman chose Common Ground of New York and McCormack Baron Salazar, a national developer of mixed-income urban neighborhoods, to operate a homeless housing service, with no guarantees that a resident has to be a Veteran.
- The WLA VAMC entered into a 20-year enhanced sharing agreement with Westside Services for parking lots on Veterans land that includes the Brentwood Village lot. The agreement expires in 2020.
- The WLA VAMC entered into a special agreement for Community Soccer Leagues to use MacArthur Field on Veterans land.
- The WLA VAMC recently leased the 25-plus acres of the "Vets Garden" to another "nonprofit" organization, which is the Santa Ana Botanical Garden.
- The WLA VAMC has operated the 12-acre Veterans nine-hole golf course that allows the public to play, and more than \$200,000 allegedly has been stolen/embezzled by the employees working at the course. Now Mr. Tillman is negotiating another enhanced sharing agreement with "nonprofit" organizations. A front-runner claims to be a family member of the original donor of this land in 1888, even though Arcadia de Baker died in 1912, had no children, and left no will.

Compromises at the Highest Levels of Government: The major question amongst fellow Veterans and concerned citizens is where has Congressman Henry Waxman been during all of this land grabbing? He is the elected steward of the largest VA in the nation that is included within his 30th Congressional District, and it is fiduciary responsibility to prevent the abuse and misuse of any Veterans land here, not facilitating it.

When Sue Young, the executive director of Veterans Park Conservancy, was asked by the Brentwood News how she was essentially able to acquire the 16 acres of Veterans land (valued at nearly a billion dollars) for a public park, rent free, she responded: "Because this arrangement was unprecedented, it required lengthy discussions and compromises with the Veterans Administration in Los Angeles and Washington. The agreement also called for approvals at the highest levels, i.e., Secretary Nicholson, and the involvement of the Congressional delegation."

Thanks to the ACLU for stepping up and stopping the U.S. government from trampling on our First Amendment rights in our Constitutional right to protest against the land grabbing. Now, the Times needs to initiate a full investigation into the egregious land grabbing that has been facilitated by those who were entrusted to protect this sacred land and maintain it permanently as a quiet haven for America's Veterans to heal from war.

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