

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 14, 1997

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1997–98 REGULAR SESSION

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 2**

**Introduced by Assembly Member Floyd**

January 8, 1997

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2—Relative to the California Veterans' Cemetery at Yountville.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 2, as amended, Floyd. Relative to maintenance and repair of the California Veterans' Cemetery at Yountville.

This measure would memorialize the ~~Director of the California Department~~ *Secretary* of Veterans Affairs and the ~~Commandant~~ *Administrator* of the Veterans' Home of California, Yountville, to take every action necessary to ensure satisfactory remedial repairs and maintenance of the cemetery grounds, as well as the upkeep, repair, and beautification of the cemetery and gravesites.

Fiscal committee: yes.

1 WHEREAS, It is estimated that 3.3 million veterans (10  
2 percent of the nation's veterans) live in the State of  
3 California; and

4 WHEREAS, Providing adequate care of our veterans  
5 should be the concern of all Americans; and

6 WHEREAS, The California Department of Veterans  
7 Affairs provides services to California veterans and their  
8 dependents, including the operation of the California

1 Veterans' Home in Yountville, that provides medical  
2 care, rehabilitation services, and residential services to  
3 more than 1,125 veterans; and

4 WHEREAS, The purpose of the Veterans' Home has  
5 been to provide a community of services for ill and  
6 disabled California veterans that will improve overall  
7 health, reduce the incidence and severity of disabilities,  
8 and increase social interaction in an environment that  
9 promotes self-reliance and self-worth; and

10 WHEREAS, The Veterans' Home of California was  
11 conceived in 1877 by Lincoln Post No. 1, of the Grand  
12 Army of the Republic, in San Francisco; and

13 WHEREAS, Four years later, the Veterans' Home  
14 Association was incorporated under GAR auspices and for  
15 \$17,500 purchased the property consisting of 910 acres in  
16 the town of Yountville in Napa County, on which the  
17 home and California Veterans' Cemetery is now situated;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, A headquarters building was erected in  
20 1883 and on April 1, 1884, the Veterans' Home and  
21 cemetery was formally opened; and

22 WHEREAS, By 1897, the Yountville Home had grown  
23 to such proportions that the Veterans' Home Association  
24 decided that the home could be operated more efficiently  
25 by the State of California, and deeded the entire property  
26 as a gift; and

27 WHEREAS, The Veterans' Home Cemetery is located  
28 on 10 acres of oak-covered rolling hills on the northwest  
29 corner of the Yountville Veterans' Home and includes  
30 gravesites from the United States Civil War, Indian War,  
31 Mexican War, Spanish-American War, World War I, and  
32 World War II; and

33 WHEREAS, According to figures provided in 1996 by  
34 the California Department of Veterans Affairs, American  
35 participation and casualties from these wars were  
36 estimated as follows: Mexican War (1846-48) 79,000  
37 participants, 13,000 deaths in service; Indian Wars  
38 ~~(1861-98)~~-(1817-98) 106,000 participants, 1,000 deaths in  
39 service; U.S. Civil War (1861-65) 2,213,000 Union  
40 participants, 364,000 Union deaths in service, 1,000,000



1 Confederate participants, 134,000 Confederate deaths in  
2 service; Spanish-American War (1898–1902) 392,000  
3 participants, 11,000 deaths in service; World War I  
4 (1917–18) ~~392,000~~ (4,744,000) participants, 116,000 deaths  
5 in service; and World War II (1940–45) 16,535,000  
6 participants, 406,000 deaths in service; and

7 WHEREAS, The original cemetery site was abandoned  
8 in 1893 and relocated because it had been located in a  
9 depression where the graves would fill with water during  
10 the rainy season; and

11 WHEREAS, First to be buried in the present site was  
12 John C. Wood, one of the first 14 veterans to enter the  
13 home when it opened in 1884; and

14 WHEREAS, Among notable veterans buried at  
15 Yountville is Kit Carson, thought to be the son of the  
16 famous frontier pathfinder Kit Carson; and Leah  
17 McKenzie, possibly the only woman buried at the  
18 Veterans' Cemetery, and Lt. Col. James Jerome Lyon,  
19 considered the "Father of the Veterans' Home"; and

20 WHEREAS, Among the distinguished veterans buried  
21 are three Medal of Honor recipients: Joseph Leonard  
22 (U.S. Army), John Moriarty (U.S. Cavalry), and Julius  
23 Strickoffer (U.S. Cavalry); two from the Indian Wars in  
24 which 428 Medals of Honor were awarded, and one from  
25 the Philippine-Samoa Insurrection (1899–1913) in which  
26 91 Medals of Honor were awarded; and

27 WHEREAS, The Medal of Honor, established by Joint  
28 Resolution of Congress, July 12, 1862, is the highest  
29 military award for bravery that can be given to any  
30 individual in the United States. It is awarded in the name  
31 of Congress to a person who, while a member of the  
32 armed forces, distinguishes himself or herself  
33 conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of  
34 his or her own life above and beyond the call of duty while  
35 engaged in an action against any enemy of the United  
36 States; while engaged in military operations involving  
37 conflict with an opposing foreign force; or while serving  
38 with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict  
39 against an opposing armed force in which the United  
40 States is not a belligerent party; and



1 WHEREAS, Burial benefits are provided in any  
2 Veterans Affairs national cemetery with available grave  
3 space to any deceased veteran who was discharged under  
4 conditions other than dishonorable; and

5 WHEREAS, A government headstone or marker is  
6 furnished for any deceased veteran who was similarly  
7 discharged and is interred in a national, state veterans', or  
8 private cemetery. Veterans Affairs also will furnish  
9 markers to veterans' eligible dependents interred in a  
10 national or state veterans' cemetery; and

11 WHEREAS, The Veterans' Home Cemetery in  
12 Yountville is maintained by the Grounds Maintenance  
13 Department of the Veterans' Home, and includes one  
14 full-time groundskeeper support personnel who works  
15 under the general direction of the supervising  
16 groundskeeper; as well as various volunteers, and  
17 occasionally convicts or persons under court order doing  
18 community service; and

19 WHEREAS, According to the California Department  
20 of Veterans Affairs, current fiscal constraints do not allow  
21 for normal maintenance operations at the California  
22 Veterans' Cemetery, and that cemetery maintenance is  
23 currently being accomplished by volunteer labor and  
24 staff overtime costing \$2,000 annually; and

25 WHEREAS, The maintenance and overall care of the  
26 cemetery grounds since its closure in 1953 was reportedly  
27 appropriately provided for, however, recent years have  
28 found a troubling decline in general maintenance and a  
29 deterioration of individual gravesites; and

30 WHEREAS, There is a need to focus the California  
31 Department of Veterans Affairs commitment to the  
32 upkeep and appropriate care of the cemetery, as  
33 mandated by law; and

34 WHEREAS, The lack of repair of the cemetery  
35 sprinkler system, including, but not limited to, broken  
36 pipes, has resulted in the deterioration of the grounds  
37 landscaping; and

38 WHEREAS, The perimeter fence requires repairs or  
39 replacement; and



1 WHEREAS, The deterioration of individual grave  
2 headstones has been reported with damaged headstones  
3 needing replacement and some headstones leaning,  
4 tipped over, or covered with moss, large weeds, and  
5 occasionally fallen trees; and

6 WHEREAS, The asphalt service roads are in poor  
7 condition, and require widening and resurfacing; and

8 WHEREAS, A surface parking area should be provided  
9 for visitors of the cemetery; and

10 WHEREAS, The California Veterans' Cemetery is  
11 under the management and control of the California  
12 Department of Veteran Affairs and, is subject to the  
13 policies adopted by the California Veterans Board and the  
14 ~~Director of the Department~~ *Secretary* of Veterans  
15 Affairs, and is administered by the ~~Commandant,~~  
16 ~~Veterans' Home of California, known as the Manager of~~  
17 ~~the Division of Veterans' Homes; and managed by the~~  
18 ~~Administrator of the Veterans' Home of California,~~  
19 ~~Yountville; and~~

20 WHEREAS, The veterans' cemeteries are established  
21 or organized under the authority of the federal and state  
22 government, and contain known graves of former United  
23 States soldiers, sailors, or marines who were honorably  
24 discharged from the service, therefore it is the  
25 responsibility and obligation of the ~~Commandant~~  
26 ~~Administrator,~~ Veterans' Home of California, who  
27 manages the cemetery, to keep the graves properly  
28 marked and identified, free from weeds and rubbish, in  
29 decent order and repair, and free from defacement or  
30 injury; now, therefore, be it

31 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the*  
32 *Senate thereof concurring,* That the Legislature of the  
33 State of California respectfully memorializes the ~~Director~~  
34 ~~of the California Department~~ *Secretary* of Veterans  
35 Affairs and, the ~~Commandant~~ *Administrator* of the  
36 Veterans' Home of California, Yountville, to take every  
37 action necessary to ensure that satisfactory remedial  
38 repairs are made in accordance with the proper  
39 maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery ground, as well



1 as the upkeep, repair, and beautification of the graves and  
2 grave headstones; and be it further  
3 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly  
4 transmit a copy of this resolution to the author for  
5 appropriate distribution.

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