

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2**

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Adopted in Assembly August 28, 1997

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*Chief Clerk of the Assembly*

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Adopted in Senate August 12, 1997

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*Secretary of the Senate*

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This resolution was received by the Secretary of  
State this\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1997,  
at \_\_\_o'clock \_\_M.

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*Deputy Secretary of State*

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## RESOLUTION CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

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

## LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

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

This measure would memorialize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the 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.

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

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

WHEREAS, The California Department of Veterans Affairs provides services to California veterans and their dependents, including the operation of the California Veterans' Home in Yountville, that provides medical care, rehabilitation services, and residential services to more than 1,125 veterans; and

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

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

WHEREAS, Four years later, the Veterans' Home Association was incorporated under GAR auspices and for \$17,500 purchased the property consisting of 910 acres in



the town of Yountville in Napa County, on which the home and California Veterans' Cemetery is now situated; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, According to figures provided in 1996 by the California Department of Veterans Affairs, American participation and casualties from these wars were estimated as follows: Mexican War (1846–48) 79,000 participants, 13,000 deaths in service; Indian Wars (1817–98) 106,000 participants, 1,000 deaths in service; U.S. Civil War (1861–65) 2,213,000 Union participants, 364,000 Union deaths in service, 1,000,000 Confederate participants, 134,000 Confederate deaths in service; Spanish-American War (1898–1902) 392,000 participants, 11,000 deaths in service; World War I (1917–18) (4,744,000) participants, 116,000 deaths in service; and World War II (1940–45) 16,535,000 participants, 406,000 deaths in service; and

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

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

WHEREAS, Among notable veterans buried at Yountville is Kit Carson, thought to be the son of the



famous frontier pathfinder Kit Carson; and Leah McKenzie, possibly the only woman buried at the Veterans' Cemetery, and Lt. Col. James Jerome Lyon, considered the "Father of the Veterans' Home"; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, The Veterans' Home Cemetery in Yountville is maintained by the Grounds Maintenance Department of the Veterans' Home, and includes one full-time groundskeeper support personnel who works under the general direction of the supervising



groundskeeper; as well as various volunteers, and occasionally convicts or persons under court order doing community service; and

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, The perimeter fence requires repairs or replacement; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, The California Veterans' Cemetery is under the management and control of the California Department of Veteran Affairs and, is subject to the policies adopted by the California Veterans Board and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and is managed by the Administrator of the Veterans' Home of California, Yountville; and



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

*Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring,* That the Legislature of the State of California respectfully memorializes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and, the Administrator of the Veterans' Home of California, Yountville, to take every action necessary to ensure that satisfactory remedial repairs are made in accordance with the proper maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery ground, as well as the upkeep, repair, and beautification of the graves and grave headstones; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit a copy of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.



Attest:

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*Secretary of State*

