



HEROES OF THE
VETERANS RECOGNITION CEREMONY

8th

2015 VETERANS RECOGNITION CEREMONY

Hosted by: Col. Paul Cook (Ret.)

U.S. Congressman
California, 8th District



November 13, 2015

Dear Friends,

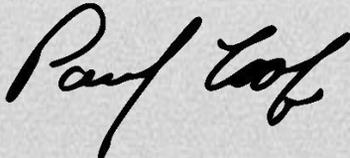
I am honored that you are able to join me in celebrating our second “Heroes of the 8th” Veterans Recognition Ceremony.

The 8th Congressional District of California is home to five military installations and thousands of veterans and service members. It is a place where old-fashioned values are still the backbone of family life and where news often spreads by conversation between neighbors. It is also a place of selfless, inspirational heroes.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War. During this challenging time in our nation’s history, many service members were confronted with public skepticism of their efforts overseas and received considerable backlash upon returning home. As a Vietnam veteran, I take seriously the treatment of all our service members. Our experiences in war and on the battlefield remain unfamiliar to the vast majority of Americans. It’s important that we have an opportunity to come together to reflect on the sacrifices our veterans have made on behalf of our republic. Their sacrifices can never be taken for granted. Many made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of preserving freedom for our nation and freedom around the world. This year’s “Heroes of the 8th” focuses on the contributions of Vietnam veterans from the 8th Congressional District. Tonight we acknowledge and thank in particular this generation of veterans who sacrificed so much.

While tonight’s event focuses on our Vietnam veterans, we honor all of our veterans who throughout our nation’s history have served through military service, in peacetime and in war, and through tireless contributions to their communities. I hope this ceremony not only shines a spotlight on these unsung heroes but also inspires a new generation of heroes to follow in their footsteps.

Semper Fi,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Col. Paul Cook (Ret.)
US Congressman, CA-08



Col. Paul Cook (Ret.)

An infantry officer who served with distinction in the United States Marine Corps, Cook's military career spanned twenty-six years. He entered USMC Officer Candidate School at Quantico, Virginia in March of 1966. After graduating from OCS in May, he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. During his combat tour in Vietnam, Cook was awarded a Bronze Star Medal with the Combat "V" for Valor, and was subsequently awarded two Purple Heart Medals for wounds sustained during combat operations.

In January 1968, Cook was promoted to Captain while assigned as company commander with the infantry training regiment at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Cook was then assigned to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms in 1983 where he served as the Inspector General. In April 1988, Cook was promoted to Colonel and subsequently assigned to the Marine Corps Base at Camp Pendleton. Cook completed his Marine Corps career at Twentynine Palms, CA. On September 30, 1992, he was honorably discharged from service with the US Marine Corps.

After retirement, Cook continued his public service by seeking and winning a seat on the Yucca Valley Town Council, ultimately serving as Mayor. In 2006, Cook won election to represent California's 65th Assembly District, where he served for six years. As Chairman of the Assembly Veterans' Affairs Committee, he was a tireless advocate for veterans and military families.

In November 2012, Cook was elected to serve in the US House of Representatives. He represents California's 8th Congressional District which includes the High Desert communities of San Bernardino County as well as Mono and Inyo counties. Currently, in the 114th Congress, he serves on the House Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Natural Resources committees.

In keeping with his lifelong commitment to education, Cook taught history and political science at Copper Mountain College, California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), and University of California, Riverside (UCR). He holds a master's in political science from UCR and a master's in public administration from CSUSB.

Cook is a member of the Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion. He and his wife Jeanne reside in Yucca Valley.



**Heroes of the 8th
Honorees
November 13, 2015**

Roland Atkinson

Yucaipa, CA

U.S. Army &

U.S. Navy

Sergeant



Edward Bates

Yucca Valley, CA

U.S. Marine Corps

Private First Class

Michael Brewer

Apple Valley, CA

U.S. Marine Corps

Corporal



David Bright

Apple Valley, CA

U.S. Marine Corps

Staff Sergeant



Steve Canter

Bishop, CA

Army

Sergeant

Harvey De La Torre

Hesperia, CA

U.S. Marine Corps

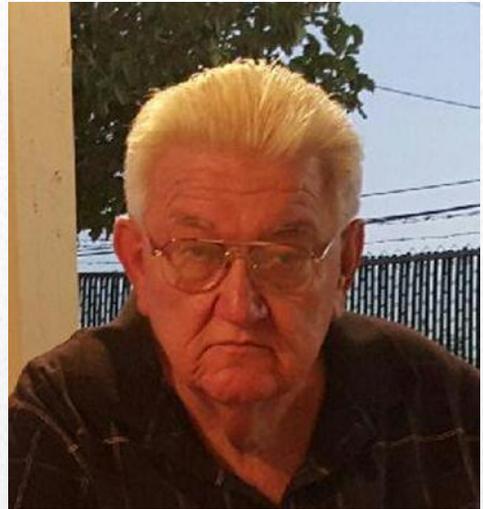
Corporal



Edward Feldstein

Adelanto, CA

U.S. Marine Corps
Lance Corporal



Gary Halbrook

Hesperia, CA

U.S. Marine Corps
Corporal

Albert Hall

Apple Valley, CA

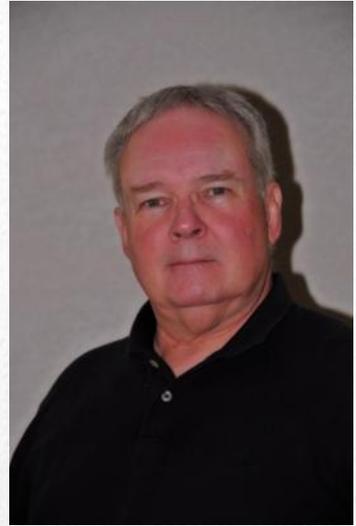
U.S. Marine Corps
Master Sergeant



Glenn Isaacs

Yucca Valley, CA

U.S. Army
Sergeant



Henry Journey

Yucaipa, CA

U.S. Army
Specialist – Grade 5

Thomas La Croix

Helendale, CA

U.S. Marine Corps
Sergeant

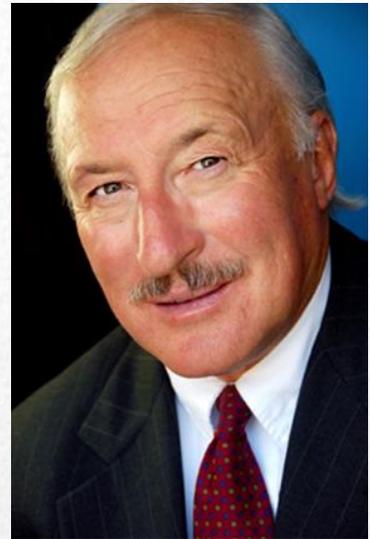


Armand LeSage

Lake Arrowhead, CA

U.S. Army

Sergeant



Tony Marshall

Apple Valley, CA

U.S. Air Force

Lieutenant Colonel

John Moore

Lake Arrowhead, CA

U.S. Air Force

Lieutenant Colonel



Lester Nichols

Apple Valley, CA

U.S. Navy

E-4



Ken Nielsen

Lake Arrowhead, CA

U.S. Air Force

Sergeant

Richard Roxburgh

Victorville, CA

U.S. Marine Corps

Lance Corporal



Paul Sheriff

Apple Valley, CA

U.S. Army
First Sergeant



Denny Shreve

Hesperia, CA

U.S. Air Force
Staff Sergeant

Daniel Stone

Bishop, CA

U.S. Marine Corps
Platoon Sergeant

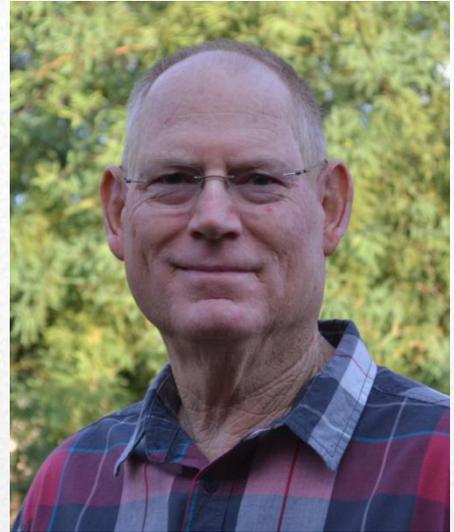


William Thompson

Apple Valley, CA

U.S. Army

Chief Warrant Officer 3



Gerald Wheeler

Victorville, CA

U.S. Marine Corps

Staff Sergeant



Joseph Wiscowiche, Jr.

Yucaipa, CA

U.S. Air Force

Master Sergeant



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM COL. PAUL COOK (RET.)

H.R. 2385, the Border Jobs for Veterans Act

Congressman Cook voted for H.R. 2385, the Border Jobs for Veterans Act. This bill passed the United States House of Representatives with bipartisan support.

The Border Jobs for Veterans Act requires the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security to identify service members who perform duties that are transferable to the work of Customs and Border Protection Officers. This bill sets up a cooperative program between both departments to actively recruit members of the military who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection Officers.

Cook said, “America is facing a crisis on our southern border. It makes perfect sense to allow some of the service members who defended our country in uniform to continue defending our borders after they leave the service. This bill will not only ensure more jobs for service members transitioning out of the military, but will make sure we have our finest men and women protecting our borders.”

H.R. 675, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost of Living Adjustment Act of 2015

Congressman Cook voted for H.R. 675, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Act of 2015. This bill passed the United States House of Representatives with bipartisan support.

This bill provides a cost-of-living adjustment increase to veterans’ disability compensation rates and other veterans’ benefits for 2016. The increase amount is the same percentage given to Social Security beneficiaries. H.R. 675 also directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make an increase, as of December 1, 2015, for the rates of veterans' disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, clothing allowance for certain disabled veterans, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children.

Cook said, “It’s vital that America keeps its promise to the men and women who put their lives on the line defending America. This bill, which enjoyed bipartisan support, helps ensure that the needs of our veterans and their families are met. I urge my colleagues in the United States Senate to take up this important bill as soon as possible.”

The HIRE Vets Act of 2015 Has Been Introduced

Congressman Cook and Congresswomen Tulsi Gabbard (D- HI), introduced H.R. 3286, the HIRE Vets Act of 2015.

This bipartisan bill would promote private sector recruiting, hiring, and retaining of men and women who served honorably in the U.S. military through a voluntary and efficient program. Specifically, it would create an awards program recognizing the meaningful, verifiable efforts undertaken by employers – both large and small – to hire and retain veterans. Cook and Gabbard designed the program to be self-funded.

Through the U.S. Department of Labor, the HIRE Vets Act would allow businesses to display “HIRE Vets Medallions” on products and marketing materials. These medallions would be awarded as part of a four-tiered system – Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum – associated with specific hiring and retention goals each year.

The program also establishes similar tiered awards for small and mid-sized businesses with less than 500 employees. To ensure proper oversight, the Secretary of Labor would be required to provide Congress with annual reports on the success of the program with regard to veteran employment and retention results.

Congressman Cook said, “The HIRE Vets Act is an opportunity for Americans to see which companies truly live up to the employment promises they make to veterans. Veterans who serve this country honorably shouldn’t struggle to find employment, and this bill creates an innovative system to encourage and recognize employers who make veterans a priority in their hiring practices.”

Congresswomen Gabbard said, “Through their service, veterans develop unique skills, experience, and leadership that make them especially valuable to employers. There are many obstacles veterans face as they transition from military to civilian life, but finding a job should not be one of them. Our legislation will both incentivize employers to hire veterans, and recognize employers that provide a supportive work environment to retain veteran employees.”



MY OFFICE IS HERE TO HELP YOU WITH THE VA

If you can't get an answer from the Veterans' Affairs Administration in a timely fashion, or if you feel you have been treated unfairly, my office may be able to help resolve a problem or get you the information you need. While we cannot guarantee you a favorable outcome, we will do our best to help you receive a fair and timely response to your problem.

All questions and concerns should be directed to my Apple Valley District Office by calling (760) 247-1815 or by visiting Cook.House.Gov.

