



The Guardian

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

www.nmdvs.org

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Proposal Introduced to Transfer Management of State Vietnam Veterans Memorial from EMNRD to NMDVS



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and the State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) hosted a town hall meeting in Angel Fire on January 12 to present a proposed transition of the management of the Vietnam Veterans State Memorial.

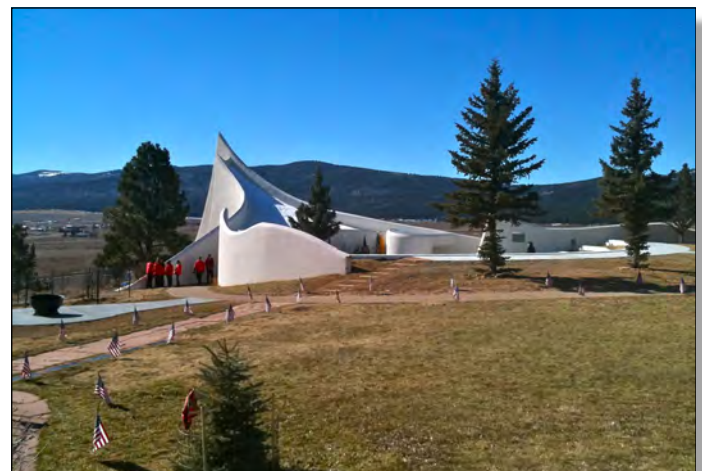
The proposal, which must be approved during the 2017 New Mexico legislative session currently underway at the State Capitol--would transfer management of the memorial from the State Parks Division to DVS.

"The Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park in Angel Fire is more than a state park. It is a sacred place to the men and women who have served our country during the Vietnam War," said NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox during his remarks at the meeting (*left photo*). "It would bring management of this special monument under the state agency which is solely dedicated to serving and honoring the legacy of sacrifice and service for our country by our veterans."

All resources associated for operating and maintaining the Memorial will be transferred to DVS.

"State Parks has done a tremendous job in operating this beautiful facility," said Secretary Fox. "But veterans have always viewed it as a stand-alone memorial rather than a park. We are grateful that EMNRD feels the same way and is graciously agreeing to this proposed transition of managing the memorial."

The park was our nation's first state monument created to honor the more than nine million American service members who served in the United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War era—including 2.7 million who saw combat action in Vietnam.



Like the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire pays tribute to the 58,200 American service members killed in action or are still listed as Missing in Action. There is a special emphasis at the Angel Fire memorial monument on the 398 New Mexicans killed or are still listed as missing in action. (*lower-left photo*).

Proposal Introduced to Transfer Management of State Veterans Home from NMDOH to NMDVS

The New Mexico Departments of Veterans Services (NMDVS) and Health (NMDOH) have proposed a transition of management of the State Veterans Home in Truth or Consequences from the NMDOH to the NMDVS.

The proposal, according to the two department cabinet secretaries, would better align state and federal veterans resources to serve the home's residents.

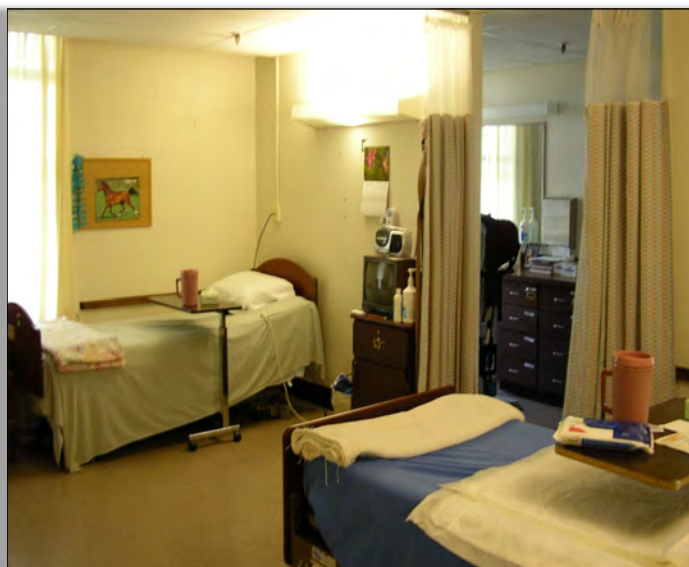
In a joint news release, NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox and NMDOH Secretary Lynn Gallagher said the existing excellent care veterans receive at the state veterans' home would be further enhanced by allowing the NMDVS to utilize its connections with the VA Health Care System, the VA regional benefits office, and other organizations that serve veterans.



According to NMDVS Secretary Fox, the move would also bring New Mexico in line with the model used by most states in the nation—managing state veterans' homes by state veterans' departments instead of state health departments.

He also said the day-to-day operations at the veteran's home would not be affected by the change in management. Current facility director Colleen Rundell and her entire administrative staff will not only remain, but will become an integral part of the NMDVS.

"We've had an excellent relationship with Colleen ever since she assumed the director's position this past February," Fox said. "We will rely on her existing staff to continue providing the excellent service for the residents and their families—and we look forward to having her leadership for many more years to come."



The proposal must be approved during the 2017 New Mexico legislative session currently underway at the State Capitol.

The New Mexico State Veterans' Home is located on sixteen acres and offers 135 nursing home and ten assisted-living beds. The state-of-the-art facility was established as the state's only state veterans home in 1985.

In May of 2015, the VA awarded a \$17.1 million grant to the facility for the construction of a 59-bed expansion project to include a 39-bed Alzheimer's unit, a 20-bed Skilled Nursing Unit, a new rehabilitation section for inpatient and outpatient services, and a new pool.

NMDVS Staffs Outreach Table at Popular *Not Forgotten Ski Weekend* At Taos Ski Valley



New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Women Veterans Program Coordinator Melanie Suazo (*at left, in left photo*) reached out to women veterans at the fourth annual Not Forgotten Outreach Appreciation Ski Week on January 17 at Taos Ski Valley.

The event--organized by the non-profit organization which serves veterans, their families, and Gold Star families (families who've lost someone in combat)—provides a veteran-oriented skiing opportunity for veterans and their families. Disabled veterans are especially encouraged to attend and take advantage of adaptive ski lessons. Several local business along with Taos Ski Valley provided discounted lodging, ski passes, meals, and other services for the entire week (January 17-22) for the estimated 3,000 skiers and snow boarders (*below photos*).



Angel Fire to Host Angel Fire Winterfest Feb. 9-13

There is still time to pre-register for the 3rd Annual Military Winterfest—a celebration of veterans, active-duty service members, and their families--at Angel Fire Ski Resort from February 9-13. The five-day festival features skiing, snowboarding, tubing, snowshoeing, a daily Twilight Colors Retirement Parade, a *KidFest*, ski/snowboard lessons by veterans, an adaptive athlete program for vets with disabilities, and an Inter-service Fun Race. *Winterfest's* highpoint occurs mid-festival when former U.S. Army Golden Knight & double amputee Dana Bowman skydives to a precision landing while carrying an American flag.

Pre-registration includes VIP access to all outdoor and indoor events, a gift bag, a collectable Military Challenge Coin, 60 percent or more off lift tickets, and 50 percent off equipment rentals and lessons. Reduced rates are available at the Angel Fire Resort. Many restaurants and shops are also giving military discounts to *Winterfest* attendees.

Advanced Online Registration: \$25 individuals, \$35 families (up to 5 dependents, including spouse), and free for 100% Disabled Veterans. Register at <https://mwf2017.eventbrite.com>. More information can be found at <http://veteranswellnessandhealing.org/military-winterfest/>.

NMDVS Staff to Present/Take Part in Outreach Events

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services will be busy hosting or taking part in various outreach events in New Mexico in the coming months.

The outreaches are part of an ongoing effort by the NMDVS to expand its reach throughout the veteran community to inform veterans of the VA or state veterans' benefits they've earned through their military service. The outreaches are also a great opportunity for unregistered veterans to sign up with the VA Health Care System and start receiving VA health care.

Spouses, family members, caretakers, and transitioning active-duty or national guard/reserve personnel are also encouraged to visit. No appointments are necessary. Service will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Veterans are asked to bring a copy of their DD-214 military separation papers in order to help expedite any filing assistance processes. For more information about the outreaches listed below, contact NMDVS Veterans Health Care Specialist Joseph Dorn at josephm.dorn@state.nm.us or (505) 383-2414.

Upcoming NMDVS Veterans Benefits Outreaches/Benefits Fairs

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time</u>
Feb. 7	Moriarty Veterans Benefits Outreach	Moriarty Civic Center	10am-1pm
Feb. 10	Corrales Veterans Outreach	Corrales Senior Center	11am-2pm
Feb. 17	Edgewood PD LEO Veterans Outreach	Edgewood Police Dept.	10am-2pm
Feb. 24	NM VA Hospital Employee Outreach	Raymond G. Murphy VA Hospital (Bldg. 39)	10am-2pm
Mar. 3	Bernalillo Veterans Outreach	Sandoval County Admin Bldg.	1pm-4pm
Mar. 10	Cuba Veterans Outreach	Cuba Senior Center	11am-2pm
Mar. 30	Operation <i>We Care</i>	Western NM Univ. (Deming)	9am-1pm
Apr. 7	Bernalillo Veterans Outreach	Sandoval County Admin Bldg.	1pm-4pm
Apr. 14	Placitas Veterans Outreach	Placitas Community Center	11am-2pm
May 5	Bernalillo Veterans Outreach	Sandoval County Admin Bldg.	1pm-4pm
May 12	Bernalillo Health Fair	Rotary Park (Bernalillo)	10am-2pm
Jun. 2	Bernalillo Veterans Outreach	Sandoval County Admin Bldg.	1pm-4pm
Jun. 9	Jemez Veterans Outreach	Jemez Community Center	11am-2pm

NOTE: Additional outreach events for the year will be added to this schedule and will be listed in upcoming editions of *The Guardian*.

NMDVS field officers also make regularly-scheduled outreach visits to communities near their main office. For more information, contact the nearest field office listed on the back pages of this newsletter.

NMDVS Service Officer Discusses Assisting Veterans as a Guest on Santa Fe Radio Show



New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Veterans Service Officer Jeff George (*far left in photo*) was a guest on Santa Fe Radio Station KVSF 101.5's *The Richard Eeds Show* on January 9.

Mr. George was invited to be a guest as part of a twice-monthly segment featuring the Santa Fe Workforce Connection's Eric Lucero (*middle*) to talk about veteran employment assistance. Mr. Lucero said he frequently encounters veterans who are unaware of their veterans' benefits or are not registered with the VA health care system. Mr. George said he frequently sends veterans from his office over to the Workforce Connection if they are seeking employment.

"Our two agencies have an excellent working relationship. We will help veterans with their job search," said Mr. George. "DVS will point you in the right direction if your situation is beyond our scope."

Veterans seeking employment help can go to the workforce connection website at <https://www.jobs.state.nm.us/loginintro.asp?> Veterans needing benefits assistance can find DVS offices on the back two pages of this newsletter.

NMDVS Women Veterans Program Coordinator Highlighted on Another Santa Fe Radio Show

New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Woman Veterans Program Coordinator Melanie Suazo was a guest on KSWV 810AM radio's weekly *Veterans Today With Chris Abeyta* show on January 31 to talk about the agency's effort to help women veterans. She stressed the need for women veterans to file for their state or VA veterans benefits—which she said are often ignored by women who have served in the military.

"For some reason, many women who've served don't see themselves as veterans. That was me, when I retired after serving 27-years in the New Mexico Army National Guard," said the former Sergeant Major. "But I soon realized that, yes...I'm a woman...but I *served*. I served with male soldiers. I'm entitled to their same benefits. All honorably-discharged women are entitled to veterans benefits."

Ms. Suazo pointed out that women are the fastest-growing segment of the military—making up 10% of the active-duty and veteran population

"If you won't do it (file for benefits) for yourself, then do it for your family," said Ms. Suazo. "Do it for them. They deserve these just as much as you do."



Re-Dedication Ceremony for Española Park Named After Fallen Vietnam War Hero



New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Woman Veterans Program Coordinator Melanie Suazo represented the agency at a 50th anniversary rededication ceremony of Valdez Park in Española on January 30.

The park was named after Española High School Class of 1965 graduate Filiberto “Phil” Valdez for his heroic actions on January 29, 1967 in Vietnam. On this date, the U.S. Naval Hospital Corpsman’s unit was flown in by helicopter to a combat zone in support of Marine Company H, Second Battalion.

Upon landing, Valdez’ unit came under heavy sniper fire, and several Marines were wounded. He sprung into action—running across 70-yards of open space to an evacuate and treat an injured marine while being raked by enemy fire. Valdez then rushed back out to treat another injured Marine. Positioning himself to protect this second wounded Marine, Valdez was mortally wounded by enemy sniper fire.

For his heroism, HM Valdez was posthumously advanced in rank to HM Third Class and awarded the Navy Cross—second only to the Medal of Honor in distinction.



Bataan Death March Survivor Alfred Haws Passes Away

Former Bataan Death March Survivor and U.S. Army SSG Alfred A. Haws died on January 13 at the Autumn Blessings Assisted Living Home in Logan. He was 99 years old.

Born in Jefferson, Oklahoma, his family moved to Clovis before he was drafted to serve in World War II. He was among the 1,800 New Mexico National Guardsmen in the Philippines for a training exercise when Japan attacked that country on December 8, 1941. After surviving the Bataan Death March and a year-long imprisonment, Mr. Haws was shipped to Japan, where he was forced to work the next 2-1/2 years in a steel mill.

After Japan’s surrender to end the war, Mr. Haws returned to Clovis and married the former Mary Loyce Moss. The couple soon moved to Montana, where Mr. Haws settled into a life as a long-time farmer and U.S. Forest Service worker. He eventually moved back to New Mexico in 2010 after the death of Mary—settling in Logan to be closer to his daughter DeLoyce.



Alfred A. Haws
Dec. 13, 1917-Jan. 13, 2017

Mr. Haws was buried at the Logan Cemetery. He is survived by a son, two daughters, 10 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, and 16 great-great grandchildren. The passing of Mr. Haws leaves eleven survivors from the original 1,800 New Mexico National Guard Defenders of Bataan.

Veterans, Active-Duty Personnel to be Honored at the 2017 State Legislature



Military Veterans and active-duty personnel will be honored on February 23 at the State Capitol in Santa Fe on Military and Veterans Day at the 2017 Legislature.

There will be informational tables staffed by the New Mexico National Guard, veterans groups, and community service organizations from 8am-1pm in the east and west wings of the Capitol Rotunda.

Every year at this special day during the Legislature, a segment of the military is also highlighted at a 12 p.m. ceremony in the Rotunda. This year's theme, *Women in*

the Military...and Beyond, focuses on the rise in importance of this fastest-growing segment of the active duty and veteran segment of today's military.

The public is invited to join in this special celebration. New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox and New Mexico Adjutant General Andrew Salas are scheduled to lead the tributes to our current and former women warriors at the ceremony. The Keynote Address will be delivered by U.S. Army LTC Alissa McKaig, who is currently a Professor of Military Science for the Army ROTC Program at the University of New Mexico.

Military & Veterans' Day at the Legislature is the annual day during the legislative session presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services and the New Mexico Department of Military Affairs/ New Mexico National Guard to honor active-duty service members and veterans for their sacrifice and service for our country.

In addition to attending the ceremony, veterans and active-duty personnel are also encouraged to meet their local legislators and watch the legislative process in action in the state Senate or House of Representatives chambers. For more information, contact NMDVS State Veterans Benefits Director Dale Movius at dalej.movius@state.nm.us.

Save the Date: March 29 2017 Southwest Veterans Business Conference

Registration will open soon for the 2017 Southwest Veterans Business Conference on March 29 from 8am-3:30pm in Albuquerque at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

This free annual conference is presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Service for military veterans, Guard/Reserve, transitioning active-duty service members, and spouses who would like information on how to start or grow a small business. Pre-registration and more information will soon be available on the New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) website at www.nmvboc.org. A special \$89 rate is now available at the hotel for conference attendees. Please call the hotel at (505) 884-2500 to make reservations or for more lodging information.

Veterans Urged to Apply for State Wildland Firefighter Positions



The Returning Heroes Wildland Firefighter Program is now accepting applications for emergency hire wildland fire crewmembers for the 2017 season. Applications are available through the program's office in Santa Fe. The program is offering several types of wildland fire training—including beginning wildland fire courses for new applicants.

Information about the courses are available at <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/FireMgt/documents/RHPTTraining2016-2017.pdf>

The Returning Heroes Wildland Firefighter Program was created by the State Forestry Division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department to provide military veterans with training and work opportunities to fight wildland fires.

Wildland crewmembers of the Returning Heroes Program are administratively determined firefighters (ADs). This means they are only called upon or hired during an actual wildland emergency. During the fire season (typically early spring through early fall), ADs may be sent throughout New Mexico, or even out of state, to assist on wildland fire emergencies.



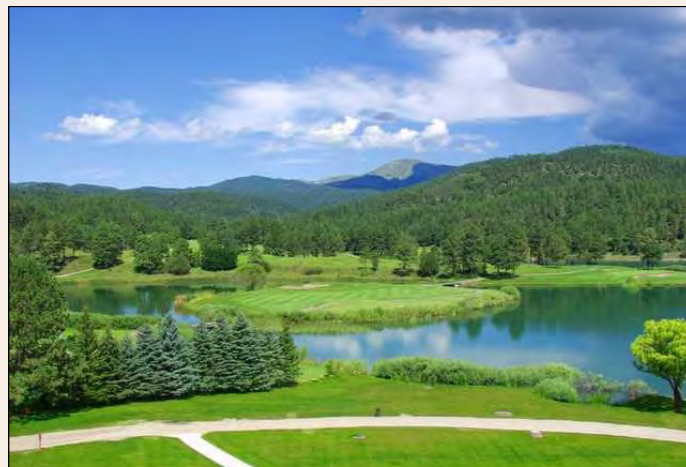
More information can be found at <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/> and clicking on the "Fire Management" tab...and then scrolling to the "Wildland Firefighters and Returning Heroes Program" link at the bottom.

American Legion Post 48 in Mescalero Hosting Benefit Golf Tournament

American Legion Post 48 in Mescalero is hosting a benefit golf tournament on April 22 at the Inn of the Mountain Gods Championship Golf Course.

The tax-deductible entry fee is \$75 per player. Golfers can enter their own four-person team or be assigned to a team on the day of the tournament, which begins with a shotgun start at 1pm.

The tournament is open to the public. All proceeds go towards the American Legion Post 48 general fund. For more information or to pre-register, call the Pro Shop at (575) 464-7941.



Inn of the Mountain Gods Championship Golf Course

Unique Transformational Papermaking Project Offered for Women Veterans

Off Center Arts, the Museum of the American Military Family, and the College of Santa Fe are collaborating to present a special papermaking workshop for women veterans. *From Fatigues to Flags* is a transformational papermaking workshop in which combat fatigues are shredded into small strips and then, through a papermaking process, are transformed into paper. The end result are beautiful “Prayer Flags” which will be displayed during the month of April at Off Center Arts. (808 Park Avenue SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102).



No artistic background is necessary. Women veterans are encouraged to bring cotton fatigues and T-shirts worn during their military service. Lunch, papermaking equipment, and all other materials will be provided. Workshops consist of three Sunday sessions, and it is important for participants to attend all three sessions, which will be held at Off Center Arts on the following dates: March 19, 26, and April 2... from 10:30am-4:30pm.

Instructor Claire Lissance has a counseling background and has been a hand papermaker since 1986. Registration will be through the instructor. For more information, contact Ms. Lissance at (505) 450-1357 or cdlune@aol.com. This program is made possible through a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts and the New Mexico Arts Commission.

Got a Veteran-Related Event Coming Up?? Tell Us—We’ll Spread the Word via *The Guardian*

The New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services (NMDVS) is happy to help get the word out through *The Guardian* about upcoming veteran-related events in your community.

Please provide all pertinent information—such as name of event, sponsor/presenter, date, time, venue, admission cost (if any), purpose of event, flyers, news releases, etc.—as well as a phone number or E-mail address of a person to be published as a point-of-contact for further information.

Please E-mail all information to ray.seva@state.nm.us—ensuring that it is sent in a timely manner.

DISCLAIMER:

Publication of an event in *The Guardian* is done solely as a “community service” for New Mexico’s veteran population. Unless stated, the NMDVS does not assume partnerships with organizations—or indicate responsibility of any event sent for publication in *The Guardian*. Responsibility for the purpose or staging of an event lies solely with the source sending event notifications to the NMDVS.

Publication of an event in *The Guardian* does not necessarily reflect an endorsement by the NMDVS or the state of New Mexico. The NMDVS will not publish any event notifications sent without a Point-of-Contact and supporting contact information.

The NMDVS reserves the right to withhold notification of an event.

New Study on Military Sexual Assault Finds Long-Term Consequences for Victims



Victims of military sexual assault experience unique circumstances and require specific treatment compared to civilian sexual trauma victims, according to a new University of Southern California study.

Researchers with the Center for Innovation and Research (CIR) on Veterans & Military Families at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work examined the physical and psychological health, along with risk-taking behaviors, of men and women who had experienced sexual assault in the military.

CIR researchers surveyed more than 2,500 veterans in Southern California and found 4.8 percent of men and 40.6 percent of women reported experiencing military sexual assault. Both male and female veterans that experienced such assault were found to have engaged in more self-reported risk-taking behaviors than those who have not.

The riskiest behaviors for female veterans were tobacco use (39.1 percent), taking unnecessary health risks (21.6 percent) and life risks (20.5 percent). For male veterans, the riskiest behaviors involved tobacco use (56.8 percent), taking unnecessary life risks (40.3 percent) and health risks (21.6 percent). There had been little to no previous research on the connection between military sexual assault and tobacco use for male veterans.

Sara Kintzle, CIR research assistant professor, said the study highlighted that the traumatic experience of sexual assault can create multiple challenges.

“Beyond the possible impact on mental and physical health, this work demonstrated the impact surviving sexual assault can have on your likelihood to engage in risky behaviors, particularly in men,” Kintzle said. “Recognizing and addressing these behaviors as possible threats to well-being should be part of how we deliver specialized treatment to women and men who have experienced sexual assault.”

Published in the October issue of *Traumatology*, the findings are based on surveys CIR conducted as part of its comprehensive veterans’ studies in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. The sample was unique as it was not based on VA patients for data collection, but rather relied on a network of relationships with community-based agencies to reach veterans, an approach different from previous research on the topic.

Male veterans who had experienced military sexual assault were four times more likely to report physical and psychological health issues, compared to male veterans who hadn’t. They were also two to three times more likely to become involved in risk-taking behaviors, like drunk driving. For female veterans, military sexual assault was also significantly related to physical health issues, symptoms of depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Female veteran victims were also about two to four times more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors than female veterans who hadn’t experienced it.

The article also detailed the specific ways military culture affects how service members experience sexual assault and how it has the potential to affect them long-term, compared to civilians. Within the military community, the authors wrote, sexual assault represents an especially difficult experience as the victim must often live and work near the perpetrator, sometimes unlike the experience of the civilian victim.

Army Set to Accept First Woman into its Elite 75th Ranger Regiment

(story by Meghann Meyers/Army Times)

A female officer has completed the Army's rigorous selection process for its storied 75th Ranger Regiment and is on her way to joining a unit in the next few months, according to a representative for Army Special Operations Command.



The soon-to-be first female Ranger passed the 75th Ranger Regiment's Ranger Assessment and Selection Program in December, said Lt. Col. Robert Bockholt. This makes the 75th Ranger Regiment the first special operations unit to have a female soldier graduate its selection course, as first reported by Task and Purpose. Air Force Special Operations Command, Marine Corps Special Operations Command and Naval Special Warfare Command -- home of the SEALs -- have not yet gotten a woman through their pipelines.

The Army is withholding all other identifying information to protect her safety, Bockholt said.

"The identity, career fields and backgrounds of our Rangers are not provided in accordance with our current security policy," he said.

Officials are concerned that the public may be able to trace back details like rank, operational background and commissioning source in order to expose special operators in general.

"It's not based solely on them being a female," Bockholt said. "We protect all of our special operations forces."



Becoming a Ranger is different from completing Ranger School, which has seen three female officers graduate. That distinction allows the women to wear the Ranger tab on their uniforms, but they initially returned to jobs in the conventional Army, as do the vast majority of soldiers who complete the course. The first female Ranger passed the three-week long selection course designed for staff sergeants and above, as well as officers. She will wear the legendary Ranger scroll and the distinctive tan beret and when she reports to the regiment.

The minimum requirements include:

- A score of 240 on the Army Physical Fitness Test, with six chin-ups completed.
- A five-mile run in 40 minutes or less.
- A 12-mile ruck march in three hours or less with a 35-pound pack.
- Completion of the Ranger Swim Ability Evaluation.
- A full psychological screening.
- A Commander's Board screening.

She is the first woman to complete RASP but not the first to try it. A female noncommissioned officer made an attempt last June but ultimately washed out. The officer is not due to report to her new unit until this spring, Bockholt said, as she out-processes from her old unit and secures orders and travel arrangements to the new one.

President Trump Nominates Holdover Undersecretary of Health as His Choice for VA Secretary

For more news from the VA and for benefits information, visit
www.va.gov

The VA has a regional Benefits office in Albuquerque.
For more Information:
www.benefits.va.gov/albuquerque

For information about VA health care, visit the website of the New Mexico VA Health Care System at:
www.albuquerque.va.gov



David Shulkin
VA Secretary-Designate

President Donald Trump has nominated David Shulkin as Secretary of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Mr. Shulkin is the current Undersecretary for Health at the VA and has been in that post since July, 2015.

"I'll tell you about David: He's fantastic, he's fantastic," Trump said. "He will do a truly great job. One of the commitments I made is that we are going to straighten out the whole situation for our veterans."

During his tenure, Mr. Shulkin is credited with cutting the number of veterans waiting for urgent care from 57,000 to 600. At the same time, he spearheaded an effort to provide same-day care at all 167 VA medical centers across the country by the end of last year. It's unclear whether he reached that goal.

A board-certified internist and son of a U.S. Army Psychiatrist, Mr. Shulkin previously ran hospitals in New Jersey and New York and has been named as one of the 100 most influential people in American health care by Modern Healthcare.

President Trump promised during his presidential campaign to overhaul the VA so that veterans wouldn't have to wait for care and could choose to get care outside the VA if they wanted. Currently, veterans can do this via the Veterans Choice Program if they can't get a VA appointment within 30 days or within 40 miles of their homes.

Mr. Shulkin is on record as favoring a hybrid model, where the VA provides care that it specializes in—such as treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries and loss of limbs, for example—but discontinuing other services that the private sector may better provide, such as obstetrics and gynecology.

He said he is honored to be chosen, and shares the President's commitment to caring for veterans.

"The president is eager to support the best practices for care and provide our Veterans Affairs' teams with the resources they need to improve health outcomes," he said. "We are both eager to begin reforming the areas in our Veterans Affairs system that need critical attention, and do it in a swift, thoughtful and responsible way."

NMDVS Health/Safety Tip:

10 Safety Tips That Could Save Your Life

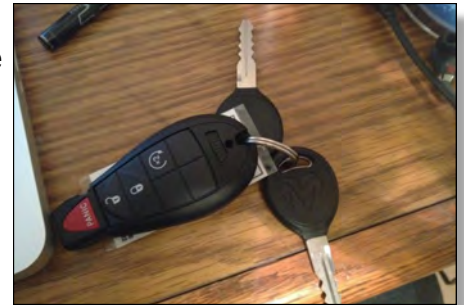
By Joseph Steinberg
CEP, SecureMySocial, Inc.



Joseph Steinberg is a respected cybersecurity expert, executive, and consultant currently serving as C.E.O. of SecureMySocial, a provider of technology to help businesses protect themselves from security risks.

I am often asked for “interesting” physical security advice. I would like to share the following ten tips. Not all apply to everyone or in every situation--but in many cases, they could save your life or the life of someone else whom you love...or protect you from financial ruin.

1. Keep your car keys on your nightstand. If like millions of Americans, your key-fob contains a panic alert button--and your car is in range of your bedroom--pressing the panic button will activate the car's horn and (if applicable) cause the headlights to flash. This could be a lifesaver during a break-in. The blaring horn and/or flashing headlights could scare criminals away, and alert neighbors that an emergency situation is unfolding in our home. The noise and lights could also help responding police to quickly locate your home.



2. Set the home address on your auto's GPS to an address (or fake address) near your home--but not to your actual home address. If someone breaks into your car while you are away from home, you won't be alerting prospective burglars to your address. Of course, your address may appear on paperwork in the car as well--but these papers are less likely to be stolen during a quick break-in. (Ideally, you should keep all registration and insurance forms in a locking compartment).

3. Be careful what you share on social media. Avoid posting “check-in” or status updates to distant locales. You may be letting possible burglars know that your home will be empty and available for a burglary. Wait until you return home from your vacation before posting pictures. Also, avoid posting information about your children's daily schedules—which could alert prospective kidnappers about locations and availability of your child.



4. Lock up any prescription medications in your possession that are likely to be desired by drug addicts. Do not store such drugs in medicine cabinets that are easily accessible by visitors. Leaving such drugs in locations from which they can be stolen can lead to drug-caused problematic situations—and you could be held liable/responsible.



5. If your hotel room door has a peephole without a cover, place a crumpled tissue on your end (interior). Peepholes are not foolproof. There are devices which can allow prospective burglars or “Peeping Toms” from the outside to see what’s inside a room—to see if the room is occupied or to violate your privacy. A simple wadded-up tissue can prevent this.

6. If you receive a call from your credit card company about potential fraud on your account, hang up and call the number printed on the back of your card. It may be redundant, but at least you know you’ll be dealing with a legitimate credit company. If you are in a hotel and get a call about a problem with your credit card, hang up and call back. Again, it may seem like a redundancy. But better to be embarrassed yet safe...than to be a victim of fraud.



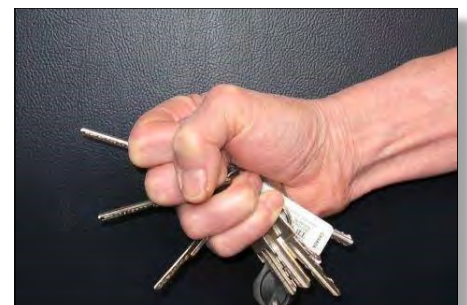
7. Cameras can be recording you anywhere, so shield the numbers when entering alarm codes or PIN’s. In today’s high-tech society, you may be unknowingly videotaped or recorded while punching in security codes, passwords, or PIN’s at ATM’s. Use a free hand, a briefcase, backpack, newspaper or *anything* as a “shield” to block the view of the number pad. Thieves even use illegally installed “skimming cameras” to steal number codes. If you see a suspicious item on you ATM, or if it appears the machine has been tampered with, do not use it. Find another ATM.

8. Never rely on door chain locks for safety. Most hardware-bought chain locks are relatively flimsy and can be easily dislodged by a hard shove of the door. Many can also be easily cut by heavy-duty wire cutters. Install heavy-duty deadbolt locks or other heavy-duty door security locks (call a locksmith or qualified handyman if you don’t feel confident in doing this yourself).



9. Never use a candle for light during a power failure caused by a wind-related condition--such as a hurricane--until after the weather threat has passed. If a window breaks, incoming wind may knock over a candle and spark a rapid-growth fire. Avoid using kerosene, propane, or other gas-powered heaters. In addition to the fire hazard, dangerous and undetectable carbon monoxide fumes can quickly accumulate in your home. Battery-powered light sources are your best bet, as electrical devices may not be useable if the power is knocked out.

10. If you have car keys, carry them in your hand when walking to your parked car. This reduces the amount of time it takes to get into your car and to start it--reducing your exposure to attack. Protruding keys held in your balled-up fist can also be used as a makeshift defensive weapon in case of an attack.



NMDVS FIELD OFFICES

There New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services field offices throughout the state to assist veterans and their eligible dependents with filing for VA and state veterans' benefits. Each office is managed by a nationally-certified Veterans' Service Officer who is committed to helping fellow veterans with filing for their VA and state veterans' benefits.

Below are the NMDVS field offices (LISTED IN ALL CAPITAL LETTER HEADINGS) and outreach locations (shown in lower-case italicized headings with an asterisk*). Please contact your nearest office to set up an appointment. For additional information, you can also contact NMDVS Field Services Director Ken Adair at (505) 346-3986 or kennethR.adair@state.nm.us.

ALAMOGORDO	ALBUQUERQUE #1	ALBUQUERQUE #2
Tony Woodards 411 10th Street # 107 (575) 437-4635 anthony.woodards@state.nm.us	Theresa Zuni 500 Gold Ave. SW (505) 346-4810 theresa.zuni@state.nm.us	Gordon Schei 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE (505) 383-2404 gordon.schei@state.nm.us
<i>Anthony*</i>	<i>Artesia*</i>	<i>Aztec*</i>
<i>(Las Cruces Office Outreach)</i> George Vargas (575) 524-6124 george.vargas@state.nm.us	<i>(Carlsbad Office Outreach)</i> Dagmar Youngberg (575) 885-4939 dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us	<i>(Farmington Office Outreach)</i> Beverly Charley (505) 327-2861 beverly.charley@state.nm.us
CARLSBAD	<i>Clayton*</i>	CLOVIS
Dagmar Youngberg 101 N. Halagueno (575) 885-4939 dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us	<i>(Raton Office Outreach)</i> Gary Fresquez (575) 445-8282 gary.fresquez@state.nm.us	Matthew Barela 904 W. 6th Street (575) 762-6185 matthew.barela@state.nm.us
<i>Cuba*</i>	<i>Deming*</i>	<i>Española*</i>
<i>(Albuquerque Office Outreach)</i> Gordon Schei (505) 383-2409 gordon.schei@state.nm.us	<i>(Silver City Office Outreach)</i> Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	<i>(Taos Office Outreach)</i> Michael Pacheco (575) 758-9624 michael.pacheco1@state.nm.us
FARMINGTON	GALLUP	GRANTS
Beverly Charley 101 West Animas/Room 104 (505) 327-2861 beverly.charley@state.nm.us	<i>(vacant)</i>	Tyrre Saavedra 515 East High St.. (505) 287-8387 tyrre.saavedra@state.nm.us
HOBBS	<i>Holloman AFB*</i>	LAS CRUCES #1
Dalton Boyd 2120 N. Alto Street (575) 397-5290 dalton.boyd@state.nm.us	<i>(Alamogordo Office Outreach)</i> Tony Woodards (575) 437-4635 anthony.woodards@state.nm.us	J.R. Turner 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6220 jr.turner@state.nm.us

LAS CRUCES #2	LAS VEGAS	Lordsburg*
George Vargas 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6124 george.vargas@state.nm.us	Karen Abeyta 917 Douglas Avenue (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	(Silver City Office Outreach) Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us
Los Lunas*	Mora*	Quemado*
(Albuquerque #1 Office Outreach) Theresa Zuni (505) 346-4810 theresa.zuni@state.nm.us	(Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach) Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	(Silver City Office Outreach) Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us
RATON	Reserve*	ROSWELL
Gary Fresquez 200 N. 3rd St. (575) 445-8282 gary.fresquez@state.nm.us	(Silver City Office Outreach) Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	Richard Moncrief 1600 SE Main St. (575) 624-6086 richard.moncrief@state.nm.us
Ruidoso*	SANTA FE	Santa Rosa*
(Alamogordo Office Outreach) Tony Woodards (575) 437-4635 anthony.woodards@state.nm.us	Jeff George 301 W. De Vargas St./2nd Floor (505) 827-7492 jeff.george@state.nm.us	(Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach) Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us
SILVER CITY	Socorro*	Sunland Park*
Bradley Brock 1211 North Hudson St. (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	(ABQ #1 Office Outreach) Theresa Zuni (505) 841-5346 theresa.zuni@state.nm.us	(Las Cruces Office Outreach) George Vargas (575) 524-6124 george.vargas@state.nm.us
TAOS	Truth or Consequences*	Tucumcari*
Michael Pacheco 120 Civic Plaza (575) 758-9624 michael.pacheco1@state.nm.us	(Las Cruces Office Outreach) JR Turner (575) 524-6220 jr.turner@state.nm.us	(Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach) Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us