



The Guardian

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

www.nmdvs.org

1-(866) 433-8387 toll-free

July, 2017

Management of Angel Fire Vietnam Veterans Memorial Transferred to DVS



Governor Susana Martinez was the featured speaker at a ceremony on July 3 which transferred management of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park in Angel Fire to the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services.

The transfer was based on large part to requests by many members and organizations within the state's veteran community.

"We are incredibly proud of the countless New Mexicans who have answered our nation's call to defend our freedoms – and we will never forget the sacrifices they made for us," said Governor Susana Martinez. "It's an

incredible honor to fulfill this request from our state's veteran community by putting this memorial under the specialized care of our state veterans department."

The Governor said that while the New Mexico State Parks Division has done a great job managing the memorial, the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services has the necessary expertise to manage and safeguard the memorial. Both agencies worked together through the transfer process. Earlier this year, the Governor signed the bill which authorized the transition.

The Memorial was built in 1971 by Victor and Jeanne Westphall after their son, Marine First Lieutenant David Westphall, was one of 16 marines killed on May 22, 1968. They wanted to not only honor their son—but all who served in the war. Situated atop a hill overlooking the picturesque Moreno Valley, the monument was the first major Vietnam War memorial built in the United States. It inspired the creation of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., which opened in 1982.



"The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services has always thought of this as a memorial--and not a park," said DVS Secretary Jack Fox. "State Parks readily agreed with this. We will ensure that it will be managed as a sacred monument to those who sacrificed to serve in the Vietnam War."

The Westphall Foundation donated the memorial to the state in 2005, where it became New Mexico's 33rd state park. Volunteers from the David Westphall Veterans Foundation, as they've done since the monument was initially built, will continue to assist with upkeep.



LEFT PHOTO: State Parks Director Christy Tafoya (far left) looks on as Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Division (EMNRD) Secretary Ken McQueen presents a symbolic Vietnam Veterans Memorial Key to Governor Susana Martinez.



RIGHT PHOTO: Governor Martinez then presented the key to New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) Secretary Jack Fox to symbolize the official transfer of the Memorial from State Parks/EMNRD to DVS.



Immediately after the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Transfer Ceremony, the crowd gathered in front of the adjacent “Huey” helicopter monument for a post-restoration re-dedication ceremony and blessing. **(above two photos)**

State Representative Bob Wooley (R-Roswell), who sits on the David Westphall Foundation board, wanted to thank the many volunteers who worked on restoring the 53-year old helicopter. Last October, it was transported via truck to Roswell, where AerSale Aviation and Dean Baldwin Painting led the restoration process.

The Huey, nicknamed *Viking Surprise*, was donated by the New Mexico Army National Guard to the Westphall Foundation in 1999. It survived 135 bullet holes during the Vietnam War while serving extensively in various roles. After the war, it was assigned to the Arizona National Guard before the New Mexico National Guard took possession in 1991.

“This is a powerfully emotional symbol to Vietnam War veterans,” said Vietnam War veteran Dick Dickerson, who was a former crew chief of the helicopter itself and served as the Master of Ceremonies for the rededication. “It flew a lot of us in and out of danger. It saved a lot of lives along the way. To see her in pristine condition again means the world to me and my fellow Vietnam veterans. It really does.”

State Veterans Home Now Under DVS Management



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services is now the state agency in charge of operating the State Veterans Home in Truth or Consequences.

The change became official on July 1 as the result of legislation passed earlier this year in the 2017 state legislative session and signed into law by Governor Susana Martinez transferring operational responsibility of the home from the Department of Health. The move is designed to streamline operations of the 145-bed facility and enhance the care of residents 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.

The transition also brings New Mexico in line with the model used by most states in the nation of management of state veterans' homes by state veterans' departments instead of by state health departments. An official Transfer Ceremony is planned for the fall. Details will be made available in future editions of *The Guardian*.

Tribal Vietnam-Era Veterans Honored at Ohkay Owingeh Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony

More than 100 Vietnam War-era veterans and family members of deceased Vietnam War-era veterans from the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Region were honored on June 14 at a 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony at the Ohkay Owingeh Hotel and Casino.

The ceremony, presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and the hotel, was presented as part of an ongoing nationwide initiative launched by the Department of Defense (DoD) in 2008 urging states to honor America's Vietnam War veterans. A year later, this effort was extended through 2025. The NMDVS has been designated by the DoD as the official "lead" in the commemoration effort in New Mexico.



All Vietnam War-era veterans and family members of deceased Vietnam War-era veterans were presented with a certificate of appreciation for their service during the war, and a special 50th anniversary commemorative pin.

More than nine million Americans served during the Vietnam War. Of the 58,000 Americans killed in battle, 398 of them were from New Mexico. Today, nearly 60,000 Vietnam War veterans live in New Mexico. More than a thousand have been honored since the NMDVS began this commemoration effort last year. Additional ceremonies are planned in other communities in the coming years.



***FREE* SPECIAL PREVIEW SCREENING**



THE VIETNAM WAR

A Film by Ken Burns & Lynn Novick

Wednesday, August 30, 2017 (7pm-9pm)

Lensic Performing Arts Center
211 W. San Francisco Street, Santa Fe, NM

The 60-minute preview will be followed by a discussion with the Editor and New Mexico-resident Paul Barnes—and Gene Grant, host of NEW MEXICO IN FOCUS, KNME's weekly public affairs series.

*****PLEASE NOTE: This one-hour screening has been specially-edited, per Paul's instructions, for this Santa Fe event. It will be unique to New Mexico, and will not be seen anywhere else.**

FREE TICKETS ARE REQUIRED. Doors open at 6:30 pm.
Call (505) 988-1234 or visit www.TicketsSantaFe.org

For more information go to: <http://www.newmexicopbs.org/ken-burns-vietnam/>

The full VIETNAM WAR documentary is a ten part, 18-hour series which will air on KNME-Channel 5 from 7pm-9pm Sunday, Sep. 17 through Thursday, Sep. 21...continuing on Sunday, Sep. 24 – Thursday, Sep. 28 from 7–9 pm...& again from 9-11 pm on Channel 5

DVS Secretary Fox Takes Part in 2017 State/Tribal Leaders Summit



New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox (*far right in photo, seated next to Santa Clara Pueblo Tribal Members Bernardino Chavarria and Lyle Lomayna*) was one of the featured speakers at the 2017 State Tribal Leaders Summit on June 9 at the Buffalo Thunder Resort just north of downtown Santa Fe.

The annual summit hosted by the Department of Indian Affairs is intended to promote dialogue and collaborative government-to-government relationship building among the state's executive branches and tribal leadership.

In his remarks, Secretary Fox outlined a recent agreement DVS made with the Mescalero Apache Tribe to address transportation needs of its veterans: A pledge to bring form a linked network between rural-area transportation agencies and those serving the Albuquerque metro area. Secretary Fox said he wants to make this same pledge to all rural-area veterans—including tribal veterans—to provide better access to the VA medical center in Albuquerque.

He also pledged to increase the training of tribal Veterans Service Officers to help DVS reach out to tribal-area veterans and ensure they receive assistance with filing for their VA and state veterans benefits.

NMDVS, State Fair Officials to Hold Meeting With Organizations Interested in Being Part of 2017 Military & Veterans Day at the State Fair

Veterans' service organizations and community service provider agencies interested in being a part of 2017 *Military & Veterans Appreciation Day at the State Fair* on September 12 are invited to attend a 2pm meeting on Thursday, August 3 at the African American Pavilion on the New Mexico State Fairgrounds in Albuquerque, located at 300 San Pedro Drive NE.

(NOTE: This is a new meeting location. The Pavilion itself is inside the fairgrounds, on Racetrack Avenue. This meeting is not at the African American Performing Arts Center, where it has been traditionally held).

The meeting will be conducted by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services and the New Mexico State Fair—the two agencies, along with the New Mexico Department of Military Affairs—which present this annual tribute at the state fair honoring our military. Prospective participants will be briefed on the rules set by state fair officials which apply to tables, booths, and other displays along “Main Street.” Rules and procedures regarding parking, display set-up and teardown will also be outlined.

There are a limited number of booth/display spaces available. Registration will be on a first-come, first served basis and can be done at this meeting. Registration may also be done at any time after the meeting—but will be subjected to a space available basis. **Registration cannot be done prior to the meeting.** For additional information, contact Josetta Rodriguez at josetta.rodriguez@state.nm.us.

DVS Hosts Women Veterans Expo in Las Vegas (NM)

Forty women veterans—the targeted attendance goal—attended at Women Veterans Expo presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services on June 28 in Las Vegas (NM) at the historic Plaza Hotel.

The expo was structured on a smaller scale to ensure a more intimate and personalized setting for women veterans to learn about VA and state women's health resources, VA and state benefits for all veterans, and additional benefits/resources specifically for women veterans. Free morning coffee/pastries and lunch were also be provided for all attendees—as were free basic beauty salon and other services such as manicures, haircuts/styling, massages, acupuncture, therapeutic essential oils, and more. A nutrition & fitness advisor were on site to provide healthy lifestyle information. More women veterans expos are planned for other communities in the state.



In addition to learning about veterans' benefits, the expo provided a great opportunity for the women to meet fellow women veterans.



DVS Cancel Planned Women Veterans Expos for Silver City and Carlsbad

Due to the unavailability of participating partner agencies, the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services has cancelled scheduled Women Veterans Expos in Silver City (July 28) and Carlsbad (August 10).

“Unfortunately, we could not get guarantees from our partner agencies about their ability to provide presenters or support for these locations, so we reluctantly had to cancel these expos,” said DVS Women Veterans Program Coordinator Melanie Suazo. “We sincerely regret this. But we do have plans for expos in other communities—and women can always contact me at (505) 827-6370 or melanieA.suazo@state.nm.us if they need any help.”

DVS/VBOC Names Veterans Business Advisor

The New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)—the business development division of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services-- has named James Cassidy as its Veterans Business Advisor.

Mr. Cassidy will be based in Roswell to focus on assisting entrepreneurial-minded veterans in southern and southeastern New Mexico and will report to VBOC Director Rich Coffel from the VBOC's main office in Albuquerque.

The move, said NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox, will allow the VBOC to expand its mission of assisting veterans in New Mexico who are looking to start their own small business or expand an existing operation. The Secretary said it will be a seamless transition for Mr. Cassidy, who has been working out of the NMDVS Roswell office as the NMDVS Rural Veterans Coordination Program/Southeast Region Coordinator.

According to NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox, Mr. Cassidy was selected after an intensive search which drew applications from several dozen excellent candidates.



James Cassidy
VBOC Veterans Business Advisor

“Jim has built a stellar reputation throughout southern and southeastern New Mexico as someone who is passionate about helping veterans succeed after their military service,” said Secretary Fox. “His knowledge about and dedication to the job of how we serve veterans will be a tremendous asset for the VBOC as we expand our reach in the region.”

Mr. Cassidy came to the NMDVS two years ago from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, where he served as a Roswell-based Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. Prior to this, he was a DVOP Specialist and a Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) in Clovis.

He is also an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran who retired after 20 years of service with the United States Air Force—having been stationed in bases and TDY around the globe working in aircraft maintenance and logistics. After retirement, Mr. Cassidy continued his aviation career in Roswell as Vice President of Great Southwest Aviation until 2012. During his professional career, Jim earned several degrees in Professional Aeronautics and Aviation Safety.

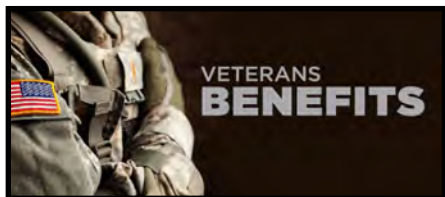
Mr. Cassidy can be reached at jamesM.cassidy@state.nm.us or (505) 228-3024.

The New Mexico Veterans' Business Outreach Center

The New Mexico Veterans' Business Outreach Center (VBOC) was created by the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services to help entrepreneurial-minded veterans start or expand a small business. It was the first state-funded center in the nation created specifically to help veterans and is funded through a grant by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

New Mexico's VBOC is located in Albuquerque but provides service free of charge to any veteran statewide.

DVS to Help Present *Operation Veterans Wellness* in Gallup



Military veterans and their families are encouraged to attend *Operation Veterans Wellness*—a benefits/job recruitment/health fair for veterans—in Gallup on Saturday, July 29, from 10am-Noon at the Rio West Mall, located at 1300 West Interstate 40 Frontage Road.

Operation Veterans Wellness is presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, the New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral Health Services, the Farmington Vet Center, Dine Hooghan Bii Development INC, Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, the city of Gallup, the Rio West Mall, and several Gallup-area veterans and service organizations.

This unique fair is great a “one-stop” opportunity for Gallup-area veterans to learn about VA, state, and local veterans’ benefits available for them and their families in western New Mexico. Additionally, many local employers will be on site looking to fill job openings. For basketball enthusiasts, there will also be a 3-on-3 basketball tournament beginning at 10:30am. The day concludes with a special Warrior Gourd Dance from noon-4pm to honor the service and sacrifice of Native-American military veterans.

For more information, contact Robertson Yazzie at (505) 274-1747 or robertson.yazzie@va.gov.

DVS, IHS to Present Benefits Fair for Jicarilla Tribe



NM Dept. of Veterans Services



IHS-Jicarilla Service Unit

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services is also collaborating with the Indian Health Services/ Jicarilla Service Unit to host the *Third Annual Indian Health Service Veterans Benefits Fair* in Dulce on August 22 from 10am-2pm at the Wild Horse Casino Event Center, located at 13603 U.S. Highway 64.

Representatives from Diné Hoghaan Bii Development, Inc., the VA Regional Office, United Health Care, and other service organizations will be there to answer questions or help file for VA and state veterans benefits.

For more information, contact IHS-Jicarilla Service Unit PRC Assistant Kylea Tafoya at (575) 759-7205 or kylea.tafoya@ihs.gov; or NMDVS RVCP Director John Griego at (505) 383-2408 or griegoM.john@state.nm.us.

DVS Grant County Office Moves to New Location



Bradley Brock
*DVS Grant County
Veterans Service Officer*

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Grant County office has moved to a new location. DVS Veterans Service Officer Bradley Brock's office is now located in the Village of Santa Clara at the former National Guard Armory Building, located at 11990 U.S. Highway 180 East. The building was donated to the village last month by the New Mexico National Guard.

As with all sixteen DVS field offices statewide, walk-ins are welcome—but veterans, spouses, or eligible widows of deceased veterans needing assistance with VA or state veterans' benefits are encouraged to schedule an appointment by contacting Mr. Brock at bradleyA.brock@state.nm.us or (575) 912-3166.

"This new location provides us a better opportunity to serve the veterans and their dependents in Grant, Luna, and Hidalgo Counties," said DVS Secretary Jack Fox. "It offers easier access, has plenty of parking, and should make for a better experience for those who need our services."

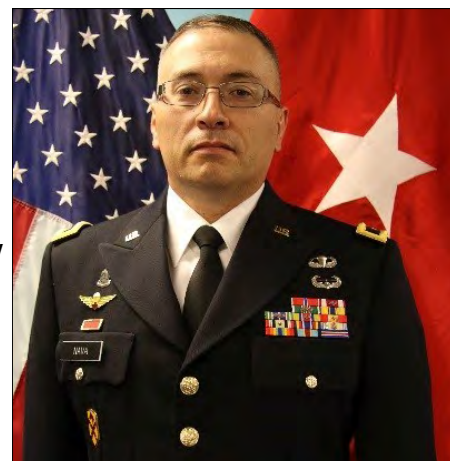
According to the latest data from the VA, approximately 6,400 veterans live in the tri-county area.

NMNG Deputy Adjutant General Ken Nava Appointed to Adjutant General

Governor Susana Martinez has appointed Brigadier General Kenneth Nava as Adjutant General of the New Mexico National Guard. He replaces Brigadier General Andrew Salas, whose five-year term expired and who has moved to a new assignment with the U.S. Air Force.

BG Nava had been serving as the Guard's Deputy Adjutant General. As Adjutant General, he will oversee all Army National Guard matters in New Mexico. In addition, he will serve as the state's principal liaison to senior military officials, various state and federal officials, the legislature, local governments, and community groups.

"I've known Ken since he was a junior officer when I was in the Guard," said New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox, who is a former New Mexico National Guard Deputy Adjutant General. "He is not only an outstanding military man, but an outstanding person who really cares for his fellow soldiers and airmen. He will no doubt be an outstanding Adjutant—and I look forward to continue working with him in his new position."



BG Ken Nava
New Mexico Adjutant General

The Santa Fe native first enlisted with the New Mexico Army National Guard in 1988, serving a mechanic with the 7th Battalion of the 200th Air Defense Artillery. In 1992, he graduated from Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant. Over the course of his military career, BG Nava has commanded units at the battery, battalion and brigade levels—including serving in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

VFW Post 11999 Honored With Prestigious National Award



The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of the United States is proud to announce Sacramento Mountain VFW Post 11999 in Cloudcroft has been selected to receive the prestigious Fred C. Hall Memorial Outstanding Post Special Project Award in recognition of the Post 11999's *Warriors in Transition Project*.

The VFW's Fred C. Hall award recognizes VFW Posts, County Councils, Districts and Departments for unique and outstanding community service projects. VFW Post 11999 is being recognized for helping service members from the nearby Fort Bliss (Texas) Warrior Transition Battalion and their families to rest and recuperate from their traumas of war in a peaceful, alpine environ-

ment. Since 2011, Post members have generously donated their time and money, working with the local community to ensure visiting service members and their families receive accommodations, meals, and access to activities like fishing, hiking, swimming, and other outdoor recreational entertainment free of charge.

"The healing, relaxation and peace VFW Post 11999 provides to the brave men and women of our Warrior Transition Battalions is extremely important," said VFW National Commander Brian Duffy. "They and their families have already sacrificed so much for our country. This program truly exemplifies the VFW's mission of service to others."

Representatives from the Post will be honored at the 118th VFW National Convention in New Orleans on July 22-26, and will receive a \$10,000 service scholarship for future community projects. They will also receive a plaque congratulating them for this exceptional project.

"Congratulations to the hard-working members of VFW Post 1199," said New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox. "You have made New Mexico proud—not only by earning this award, but with your years of continuous service to all veterans and their families. Well done!"

Have a Veteran-Related Event Coming Up??

The New Mexico **Department** of Veterans' Services (DVS) will help get the word out through *The Guardian* about upcoming veteran-related events in your community. Please provide 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 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:

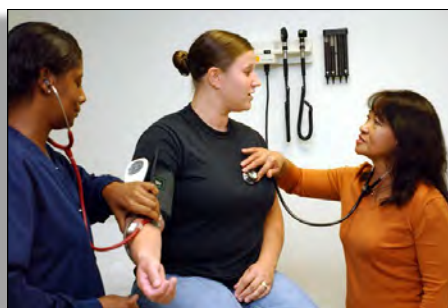
Publication of an event in *The Guardian* is done solely as a "community service" for New Mexico's veteran population. Unless stated, the DVS does not assume partnerships with organizations—or indicate responsibility of any event sent for publication in *The Guardian*. Responsibility for the purpose or staging of an event lies solely with the source sending event notifications to DVS. Publication of an event in *The Guardian* does not necessarily reflect an endorsement by the NMDVS or the state of New Mexico. DVS will not publish any event notifications sent without a Point-of-Contact and supporting contact information. DVS reserves the right to withhold notification of an event.

Women Veteran News



Study Results: Women Veterans Lack Access to Effective Health Care in Civilian Practice

(from the Clinical Advisor/clinicaladvisor.com)



Greater knowledge and expertise are needed among civilian healthcare practices in providing care to women veterans, Lt Col Alicia Rossiter (USAF-ret.; NC, DNP, FNP, PCPNP-BC, FAANP) and colleagues reported at the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) 2017 National Conference.

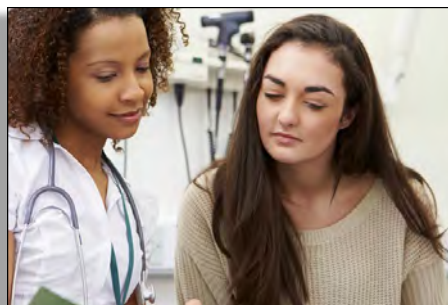
Women are the fastest growing segment of the veteran population—about 1.8 million women are currently serving in the armed forces, and more than 220,000 have deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. A study by

the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) found that women veterans had more visits to primary care and mental health clinics and a higher use of community care outside the VA. Another study found that more than half of clinician respondents were not comfortable in discussing health-related exposures and associated risks experienced by veterans and expressed unfamiliarity with referral and consultation services available to veterans.

“There is a lack of knowledge regarding the military, the military culture, and the effect of military service on the overall mental and physical health of veterans, in particular, women veterans, which leaves veterans at a significant disadvantage in regards to their overall healthcare needs,” stated the researchers. “Women veterans have unique physical and psychological healthcare needs that vary from their male counterparts, and it is important that civilian healthcare providers are educated on the importance of screening women for military service and are aware of the unique healthcare needs of this population.”



Since 2001, more than 2.8 million service members have transitioned out of the military and into civilian life. During the next five years, an additional 1 million are expected to make the same transition.



“Studies show that less than 20% of veterans are actually seen in the VA healthcare system by providers who are aware of and knowledgeable about their patient's military status and possible service-connected risk factors and exposures,” stated the study authors. “This leaves roughly 80% of veterans, many of whom are women, receiving care in the civilian sector where military status and women veteran-specific healthcare needs are unknown to providers.”

Change-of-Command Leads to Highest Position of Any Female Service Member in Afghanistan



BG Robin I. Fontes

Commander, CSTC-Afghanistan

U.S. Army MG Robin Fontes has assumed the highest position of any female service member in Afghanistan since the war began, taking over command of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan.

"I promise to give you my full support, my best effort, my respect and my loyalty every day," MG Fontes told a crowd at a change-of-command ceremony. She assumes command from outgoing commander MG Richard Kaiser.

The two-star General, a 1986 U.S. Military Academy at West Point graduate, has spent 12 years in the region, serving in Afghanistan multiple times, as well as in India, Pakistan and Tajikistan. She speaks three regional languages.

Army LTG John Nicholson, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, described Fontes as "the most proficient and competent officer" in the field of security assistance within the military. He said he had to fight to get her the position because she was heavily sought after in Washington.

"There is no officer of any service in the United States military that has more experience in this region than Major General Robin Fontes," Nicholson said. "She is the best possible commander for this command. She will take this command to the next level."

In addition to taking control of CSTC-A, Fontes will assume the role of Deputy Chief of Staff, Security Assistance for Resolute Support headquarters. CSTC-A is part of NATO's Resolute Support mission aimed at developing Afghan security forces. It provides resources and training in areas such as management and sustainability.

Before relinquishing command, MG Kaiser, who LTG Nicholson described as "universally respected," told Stars and Stripes that he believed his tenure as CSTC-A commander was productive.

"I always hesitate to use the word success," he said. "We've had many successes, but there are many challenges that remain."

MG Kaiser said establishing Afghanistan's Anti-Corruption Justice Center and implementing measures to identify so-called "ghost soldiers" were among his biggest successes. He said issues regarding gender remain one of the biggest challenges, but he believes progress will be made under MG Fontes.

"I'm confident she'll do a wonderful job," MG Kaiser said.



Army MG Robin L. Fontes (center, at podium) promises her full support after becoming the first female commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan at a ceremony in Kabul on July 15, 2017.

VA Formalizes Expansion of Emergency Mental Health Care to Those With Other-Than-Honorable Discharges



**VA Secretary
David Shulkin**

**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](http://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**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has finalized plans to lay the framework for providing emergency mental health coverage to former service members with other-than-honorable (OTH) administrative discharges.

This is the first time a VA Secretary has implemented an initiative specifically focused on this group of former service members who are in mental health distress.

“Suicide prevention is my top clinical priority,” said Secretary Shulkin, who is also a physician. “We want these former service members to know there is someplace they can turn if they are facing a mental health emergency — whether it means urgent care at a VA emergency department, a Vet Center or through the Veterans Crisis Line.”

Effective July 5, all Veterans Health Administration (VHA) medical centers will be prepared to offer emergency stabilization care for former service members who present at the facility with an emergent mental health need.

Under this initiative, former service members with an OTH administrative discharge may receive care for their mental health emergency for an initial period of up to 90 days, which can include inpatient, residential or outpatient care. During this time, the VHA and the Veterans Benefits Administration will work together to determine if the mental health condition is a result of a service-related injury, making the service member eligible for ongoing coverage for that condition.

Since Secretary Shulkin announced his intent in March to expand VA mental health coverage to service members with OTH administrative discharges, the VA has worked with key internal and external stakeholders, including members of Congress, Veterans Service Organizations and community partners on the issue.

US, Canada Forging Partnership to Address Issues Faced by Both Nations' Veterans



The United States and Canada have formed a partnership to address issues facing veterans in each country—and to find common ground in veterans' care.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary David J. Shulkin and Canada's Minister of Veterans Affairs/Associate Minister of National Defence Kent Hehr joined officials from both nations on June 27-28 at the VA headquarters to discuss how strategic partnerships can help improve benefits and services for Veterans and their families.

"Expanding partnerships — even beyond our geographic boundaries — will allow us to improve our services to our Veterans and their families," Secretary Shulkin said. "Additionally, this new partnership with a key ally will allow us to share best practices in the areas of health care, benefits and other important support programs."

The two-day U.S.-Canadian VA meeting focused on issues affecting Veterans from both nations, such as easing service members' transition to civilian life, preventing homelessness among the Veteran community and mental-health support.



"Improving benefits and services for Veterans and their families are among the highest priorities for both our countries," Minister Hehr said. "In order to achieve these goals, we must continue to reach out and consult with those we serve, to ensure we are putting resources in the areas where they are most needed. However, we should not limit ourselves with respect to where we seek out new ideas. We must also take every opportunity to learn from those outside our respective borders who are wrestling with similar challenges."

Veterans Affairs officials from both countries agreed that the meeting was a good first step toward mutual collaboration between allied nations as they seek opportunities to continue supporting Veterans and their families.

The Department of Veterans Affairs runs programs benefiting more than 9 million Veterans and their family members. It offers education opportunities and rehabilitation services and provides compensation payments for disabilities or death related to military service, home loan guaranties, pensions, burials, and health care that includes the services of nursing homes, clinics, and medical centers.

The Canadian Department of Veterans Affairs focus is the well-being of Veterans and their families. The department supports and cares for Canada's Veterans and other eligible clients by ensuring they receive needed benefits and services to which they are entitled in a timely fashion.

The programs and services provide for hardships arising from disabilities and lost economic opportunities, health and social services, professional legal assistance, and recognition of the achievements and sacrifices of Canadians in times of war, military conflict and peace.

NMDVS Health/Safety Tip: Take Precautions for Summertime Activities

(courtesy of Blue Cross/Blue Shield)



Summer is a great time for being active. Even if you live where it gets hot or humid, there are ways you can stay in shape year-round. But make sure to take precautions when you are active outside.

Be safe in the heat

If the temperature is lower than 80°F (27°C), you usually can be active outside without taking extra precautions. It depends on how active you already are and how used to hot weather you are. But anytime you exercise, it's a good idea to take these normal precautions:

Drink plenty of water. This is very important when it's hot out and when you do intense exercise.

Don't exercise as hard when it's hot. Take rest breaks. Exercise more slowly than usual or for a shorter time. Stay in the shade when you can.

Avoid exercising during the hottest times of the day. Wear light-colored, breathable clothes.

Watch for signs of heat exhaustion, such as nausea, dizziness, cramps, and headache. If you notice any signs, stop your activity right away, cool off, and drink fluids.



When the temperature gets above 80°F, consider the heat and the humidity. Both can put you at risk for heat-related illness. The hotter or more humid it is, the higher your risk. For example, if the humidity is 60% (moderate).

Be careful when you exercise in temperatures of 80°F to 85°F. Find shade, take regular breaks, and drink plenty of fluids. Experts advise being extremely careful between about 85°F and 91°F. Conditions are considered extremely dangerous at temperatures over 91°F.

When it is more humid, you should be careful at even lower temperatures. Higher humidity can make it feel hotter, since your body cannot cool off as well by sweating. This puts you at a greater risk for illness. For more information, see the website www.nws.noaa.gov and search for "heat index."



Older adults and children are at a higher risk for heat-related illness and should be extra cautious. Remind children to drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after activity.

If you are overweight, have health problems, take medicines, or use alcohol, you may be at a higher risk for heat-related illness. You may also have trouble if you're not used to exercising in warmer weather. In hot weather, drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after activity. Water or sports drinks are best. This helps to prevent dehydration and heat-related illness.

Water is all you need if you are exercising for less than an hour. For longer exercise periods, sports drinks contain carbohydrate and minerals called electrolytes that may help your endurance and keep you from getting muscle cramps.

Call or other emergency services immediately if you have stopped sweating or have other signs of heatstroke, such as a fast heart rate, passing out, high body temperature, feeling confused, or having no energy. Heatstroke is very dangerous.

Outdoors

When it's hot or humid, be active during the cooler times of day. Find shaded areas, like parks with big trees, and drink plenty of fluids. You have less chance of getting too hot if you do lighter exercise, like walking. Be sure to wear sunscreen.

Take morning or evening walks. Walking the dog or walking with a partner helps you make it part of your routine.



Go for a bike ride. Find shaded areas, and ride during cooler times of day.

Go swimming on hot days. This is a healthy family activity for summer.

Do light yard work or gardening. You'll burn calories while you keep the yard looking good.

Wash your car. This gets you outside and helps you burn calories. Give yourself a splash to stay cool.

Indoors

Go for walks at the mall. Use a phone app or a pedometer to count your steps. You can set walking goals to help you stay motivated.

Use light weights or stretch bands at home. You'll stay fit while you watch TV or listen to music. Lift cans of food if you don't want to buy weights.



Use an online exercise video or a smartphone app. You can stay in shape while you stay cool indoors.

Go dancing or take dance lessons. Or just turn on some music and dance in your living room. This gets you moving so you burn calories.

Do indoor housework like dusting, vacuuming, or washing the windows. This helps you stay active while you keep your home looking good.

On trips, stay at hotels with fitness centers or swimming pools. Make time for a workout. Take a jump rope to use in your room.

Join a gym or health club. You can take classes or use machines, like treadmills, stair-climbers, or stationary bikes. Many cities have community centers that offer affordable fitness classes. If you have health problems, ask your doctor before you use machines or take classes.

Join sports programs in your community or at work. Many cities offer indoor sports like basketball, volleyball, and soccer.

NMDVS FIELD OFFICES

There are 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 their veterans benefits needs

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.

ALAMOGORDO	ALBUQUERQUE #1	ALBUQUERQUE #2
(vacant) For assistance, call the NMDVS Las Cruces office at (575) 524-6220 or 6124	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>
(Las Cruces Office Outreach) George Vargas (575) 524-6124 george.vargas@state.nm.us	(Carlsbad Office Outreach) Dagmar Youngberg (575) 885-4939 dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us	(Farmington Office Outreach) 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	(Raton Office Outreach) 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>
(Albuquerque Office Outreach) Gordon Schei (505) 383-2409 gordon.schei@state.nm.us	(Santa Clara Office Outreach) Bradley Brock (575) 912-3166 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	Temporarily halted due to Taos office vacancy. For assistance, call the DVS main office toll-free @ 1-(866) 433-8387
FARMINGTON	GALLUP	GRANTS
Beverly Charley 101 West Animas/Room 104 (505) 327-2861 beverly.charley@state.nm.us	(vacant) For assistance, call the NMDVS Grants office at (505) 287-8387	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	For assistance, call the NMDVS Las Cruces office at (575) 524-6220 or 6124	J.R. Turner 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6220 jr.turner@state.nm.us

LAS CRUCES #2	LAS VEGAS (NM)	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	<i>(Santa Clara Office Outreach)</i> Bradley Brock (575) 912-3166 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us
<i>Los Lunas*</i>	<i>Mora*</i>	<i>Quemado*</i>
<i>(Albuquerque #1 Office Outreach)</i> Theresa Zuni (505) 346-4810 theresa.zuni@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach)</i> Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	<i>(Santa Clara Office Outreach)</i> Bradley Brock (575) 912-3166 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us
RATON	Reserve*	ROSWELL
Gary Fresquez 200 N. 3rd St. (575) 445-8282 gary.fresquez@state.nm.us	<i>(Santa Clara Office Outreach)</i> Bradley Brock (575) 912-3166 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	<i>(vacant)</i> <i>For assistance, call the</i> <i>NMDVS Carlsbad office at</i> <i>(575) 885-4939</i>
<i>Ruidoso*</i>	SANTA CLARA (Grant County)	<i>Santa Rosa*</i>
<i>For assistance, call the</i> <i>NMDVS Las Cruces office at</i> <i>(575) 524-6220 or 6124</i>	Bradley Brock 11990 U.S. Hwy 180 East (575) 912-3166 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach)</i> Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us
SANTA FE	Socorro*	Sunland Park*
Jeff George 1209 Camino Carlos Rey/Rm 2134 (505) 476-7903 jeff.george@state.nm.us	<i>(ABQ #1 Office Outreach)</i> Theresa Zuni (505) 841-5346 theresa.zuni@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Cruces Office Outreach)</i> George Vargas (575) 524-6124 george.vargas@state.nm.us
TAOS	<i>Truth or Consequences*</i>	<i>Tucumcari*</i>
<i>(vacant)</i> <i>For assistance, call the NMDVS</i> <i>Las Vegas office at (505) 454-0068</i> <i>or Raton at (575) 445-8282</i>	<i>(Las Cruces Office Outreach)</i> JR Turner (575) 524-6220 jr.turner@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach)</i> Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us