



The Guardian

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services

July-August, 2016

Vietnam Veterans Honored in Santa Fe at Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration

Vietnam War-era veterans were honored on June 18 at a special 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony in Santa Fe at the Santa Fe Veterans Memorial.

The ceremony was part of an ongoing nationwide initiative issued by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in 2008 urging states to honor America's Vietnam War veterans, and to commemorate the pending 50th anniversary of our country's involvement in the war. Though America's involvement began in an advisory capacity as early as the late-1950's, most historians point to 1965 as the start of America's involvement in the war, when American troops began deploying to Vietnam. A 2012 Presidential Proclamation extended the commemoration through Veterans Day, 2025. The ceremony was hosted through a collaborative effort by the New Mexico Department of Veterans'



Services, the City of Santa Fe Veterans Advisory Board, the American Legion Riders Chapter 26, the Santa Fe National Cemetery, the Santa Fe Vet Center, the New Mexico State Council of the Vietnam Veterans of America, and Vietnam Veterans of America Northern New Mexico Chapter 996.

"During the Vietnam War, our returning service members were greeted with silence—or worse yet, with anger--by a public not supportive of our service members serving in a war which sharply divided our country," said New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services Deputy Secretary Alan Martinez in his Welcome Address (*photo below, at podium in center*). **"But history now shows us that these men and women served with honor, dignity, and bravery when our nation came calling for their service. Today, we say 'Welcome Home—and thank you for your service and sacrifice.'"**

Similar thanks and praise were echoed in remarks by Santa Fe Mayor Javier Gonzales, New Mexico State Representative and Vietnam War Veteran Bob Wooley (R-Roswell) and

former VA Deputy Assistant Secretary of Intergovernmental Affairs and ex-New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services Secretary John Garcia—who is also a Vietnam War veteran.

(continued)



VA data indicates more than nine million Americans served in the military during the Vietnam War. The initiative recognizes all who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War era. It makes no distinction between veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or were stationed elsewhere during the Vietnam War era. All answered the call of duty.

More than 58,000 Americans were killed in action—including 398 from New Mexico.

After the ceremony, Vietnam War-era veterans in attendance were presented by the New Mexico **Department of Veterans' Services with a certificate of appreciation for their service during the war**—and also with a special 50th Anniversary Commemorative Pin.

Similar commemoration ceremonies will be presented throughout the state in the coming years in an effort to reach out to as many Vietnam War-era veterans as possible.



Santa Fe Mayor Javier Gonzales was among the speakers who thanked Vietnam War veterans in attendance for their service. The mayor spoke about how he remembered cousins and family friends who went off to the war as teenagers...and came back as changed men—a change he said he didn't fully understand until much later.



New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Deputy Secretary Alan Martinez (at right) presents Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemorative pins and certificates of appreciation to Keynote Speaker John Garcia (at left) and Guest Speaker State Representative Bob Wooley (R-Roswell) (center). Mr. Garcia and Rep. Wooley are Vietnam War Army veterans.



After the ceremony, New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Executive Assistant to the Secretary Melissa Castañeda (left photo) and NMDVS Cemetery Program Director Tom Wagner (right photo) were among the NMDVS staff presenting special 50th Anniversary commemorative pins and Certificates of Appreciation to Vietnam War-era veterans.



Women Veterans Program Division Created at NM Department of Veterans Services



Melanie Suazo
**NMDVS Women Veterans
Program Coordinator**

Governor Susana Martinez launched an initiative to improve access to services and benefits for women veterans in New Mexico. The Governor also announced that Melanie Suazo, a retired New Mexico Army National Guard non-commissioned officer, will lead the effort.

“New Mexicans have always stood ready to answer the call to serve our state and nation in the U.S. Armed Forces,” Governor Martinez said. “Ms. Suazo is a decorated former soldier who knows firsthand the challenges facing our women veterans, and she is well prepared to lead the charge in connecting more of them with the services, benefits, and resources they’ve earned for themselves and their families through their service.”

Through this initiative, Ms. Suazo will serve as women veterans program coordinator at the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, where she will lead the effort to specifically target more New Mexico women veterans with services, benefits, and other resources, such as health care, job training, education, and others.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, women represent the fastest growing segment of the veteran population nationwide, with more than 2 million women veterans throughout the country. There are nearly 17,000 women veterans in New Mexico alone.

“I’m proud to have the opportunity to continue to serve our state and country by working to connect more women veterans with services and resources through the Governor’s initiative,” Ms. Suazo said. “Women veterans have a unique set of challenges in areas like health, education, career and professional matters, and others, and I’m looking forward to helping to make life better for my fellow women veterans in New Mexico.”

Ms. Suazo retired from the New Mexico Army National Guard as a Sergeant Major in June of 2015 following a distinguished 27-year career. She served as the senior non-commissioned officer for personnel, and served around the country and the world—including during the Persian Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom. She is a strategic studies graduate of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. **Ms. Suazo’s military decorations include the Legion of Merit, New Mexico Distinguished Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, and others.**

“We’re proud to welcome such a distinguished soldier and leader to our team,” said New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Cabinet Secretary Jack R. Fox. “Our veterans deserve our continued thanks and support, and Ms. Suazo will be a great asset to our team in improving outreach and services to our women veterans.”

Melanie is based in the NMDVS Santa Fe Office of the Secretary. She can be contacted at melanie.suazo@state.nm.us or (505) 827-6370.

NMDVS Hires Director for Ft. Stanton State Veterans Cemetery



Larry Holt

*Ft. Stanton State Veterans
Cemetery Director*

Larry Holt has been named as the Director of the new Ft. Stanton State Veterans Cemetery. He is currently working with the State Cemetery Program Director Tom Wagner to oversee the construction of the new cemetery, which is scheduled to open on Memorial Day, 2017.

(see construction pictures below)

Once the new cemetery opens, Mr. Holt will manage the scheduling of burials for deceased veterans and their eligible spouses, as well as assist veterans and their families with gathering the required documentation needed to determine burial eligibility at the cemetery or any other state or national cemetery. Mr. Holt will also assist with the ordering of **veterans' headstone markers, and will coordinate requests for military honors burials.**

"We are very fortunate to have Larry join us as we move forward towards the opening our state's first state veterans cemetery," said NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox. "He brings tremendous knowledge of the

veterans burial process to our agency. He is the perfect person to help us manage the cemetery at Ft. Stanton."

Prior to coming to the NMDVS, Mr. Holt performed many of these and other administrative and operational duties as the supervisor at the old Ft. Stanton Historical Merchant Marine Cemetery. He served sixteen years with the New Mexico Army National Guard and the United States Army Reserve—rising to the rank of Air Defense Artillery Second Lieutenant from the NMANG OCS Academy. Mr. Holt **also served in "Duster" Anti-Aircraft Batteries, as a Company Training Officer in a Basic Training Battalion, as a USAR School Instructor for its Branch Officer Basic Course, and in supply and Air Defense Artillery units. Mr. Holt was Honorably Discharged as a Captain from the US Army Reserves.**



Memorial Day Observed in Ceremonies Throughout New Mexico



New Mexicans gathered at events throughout the state over the weekend of May 28-30—Memorial Day Weekend--to honor the men and women who lost their lives while serving in combat.

New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services Secretary Jack Fox was the Guest Speaker at the annual Memorial Day Ceremony in Albuquerque at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial. (*left photo*).

Secretary Fox told the large crowd in attendance about the importance of always remembering the ultimate sacrifice paid by those who have lost their lives serving and defending America.

"They have guaranteed our freedom. It is now our responsibility to make sure that these warriors did not die in vain," said Secretary Fox. "We must honor them by making sure that we continue moving forward and continue the building of our great country."

The theme was echoed by the Secretary when he read the official Memorial Day Proclamation issued by Governor Susana Martinez--who was attending the annual Memorial Day ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park in Angel Fire.

"Whereas Memorial Day provides Americans the opportunity to honor those who gave their lives to guarantee the freedom and liberty we enjoy as Americans...now, therefore, I, Susana Martinez, Governor of the state of New Mexico, do hereby proclaim May 30, 2016, as Memorial Day throughout the state of New Mexico," read the Secretary. "I urge all citizens to offer a moment of silence in gratitude and remembrance of the men and women who have made this ultimate sacrifice."

LTC Larry Blair (USA-Retired) presents a memorial brick to Joyce Montoya and her son Kevin during the Memorial Day Ceremony in Albuquerque at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial.

The brick bears the etched name of Montoya's other son, U.S. Army SFC Matthew McClintock, who was killed in action on January 5 in Afghanistan. The Albuquerque native and member of the elite Green Beret unit was deployed with the Washington National Guard on his third tour of duty. The brick will be placed on one of the pathways at the memorial which is lined with bricks bearing the names of other fallen service members.





Thirteen young men and three young women were sworn into military service towards the end of the Memorial Day Ceremony in Albuquerque at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial.

Other Memorial Day Ceremonies in New Mexico

Albuquerque-Mt. Calvary Cemetery



LEFT PHOTO: A flower and an American flag adorn a headstone of a fallen service member at the Mt. Calvary Cemetery in Albuquerque. Many of the headstones were similarly decorated by volunteers at the cemetery, which was the site **(RIGHT PHOTO)** of an annual Memorial Day ceremony. (Left photo courtesy of Nick Layman/New Mexico Valor Project; Right photo courtesy of Robert Delgado/Mt. Calvary Cemetery)

Angel Fire



Governor Susana Martinez was the Keynote Speaker at the annual Memorial Day ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park in Angel Fire. The Governor offered her deepest gratitude to the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield in service to our country. (Photo courtesy: MSG Douglas Mallary/NM Army National Guard.



At the annual Memorial Day ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park in Angel Fire, American Gold Star Mothers members Becky Christmas (seated, left) and Carol Harris (seated, right) presented Vietnam War veteran Luis Lopez with a quilt made by Blue Star Mothers of America member Jan Jacobs. The gesture was a thank you to Luis for his volunteer work at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire. (Photo courtesy: Becky Christmas/American Gold Star Mothers, Inc./New Mexico Chapter)

Carlsbad



New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services Veterans Service Officer Dagmar Youngberg (left photo) had the privilege and honor of participating in the city of Carlsbad's annual Memorial Day parade. In addition to honoring fallen war heroes, Ms. Youngberg--a member of American Legion Post 7 --was joined in the parade by other women members of her post and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8703 to help spread the word to other women veterans about the benefits of women joining the two organizations. (Photos courtesy of Ralph Jennings)

Farmington



LEFT PHOTO: NMDVS Deputy Secretary Alan Martinez (seated, left) and NMDVS Farmington-based Veterans Service Officer Beverly Charley (seated, right) were among the special guests at the 5th Annual “Healing Fields” Memorial Day Ceremony in Farmington. Deputy Secretary Martinez was the Guest Speaker.

RIGHT PHOTO: Korean War veteran Henry Frink, Jr., received four service medals at a special presentation by U.S. Congressman Ben Lujan (D-New Mexico) (**kneeling**). Mr. Frink received the Korean Service Medal, United Nations Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and a Good Conduct Medal. (photo courtesy: New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services Farmington Veterans Service Officer Beverly Charley)

Ft. Stanton



American Flags were placed on the gravesites at the Ft. Stanton Merchant Marine and Veterans Cemetery in time for the annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the historic site. New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Tom Wagner was among the speakers at the annual ceremony. He assured the crowd that the construction process is going smoothly at the site of the new state veterans cemetery—being built on land adjacent to the existing cemetery. Construction is scheduled to be finished by Memorial Day next year. (Photos courtesy of Larry Holt)

Gallup



Memorial Day was observed in the city of Gallup with the city's annual Memorial Day parade (left photo)--and a ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park (right photo), where Medal of Honor Recipient/ Korean War veteran/hometown hero Hiroshi Miyamura was the guest speaker. (Photos courtesy of Ryan Hudgeons)

Grants



The city of Grants observed Memorial Day at its Fifth Annual "Field of Honor" Memorial Day Weekend observance at Fire & Ice Park. Members of American Legion Post 80 laid out more than 700 flags at the park in remembrance of our nation's fallen combat armed forces personnel. (Photo courtesy of Aaron Dean)

Las Cruces



203 candles were lit at the fifth annual Memorial Day Candlelight Ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park in Las Cruces. The solemn ceremony took place at the park's Veterans Wall, which includes the names of the 8,188 veterans who have entered military service in Doña Ana County. The candles represent the 203 armed forces members from Doña Ana County who are listed on the wall as killed in action during World I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Global War on Terror. (Photos courtesy of Deb Archuleta Postier)

Los Alamos



In Los Alamos, the Los Alamos High School JROTC Color Guard had the honor of Posting the Colors and firing the Three Volley Salute at the town's annual Memorial Day Observance Ceremony at the Guaje Pines Cemetery—where 354 veterans have been laid to rest.

The public was then invited to a free hot dog/beans/chips/salsa/apple pie lunch at Elks Lodge #2083. (Photos courtesy of Jim Mariner)

Mescalero



LEFT PHOTO: *On the Mescalero Apache nation, Memorial Day was observed at a special ceremony at the Mescalero Elderly Center. The ceremony began with the Posting of Colors by the American Legion Post 48 Color Guard.*

RIGHT PHOTO: *Mescalero Apache President Danny Breuninger (center/standing at right) and Chief of Staff Danny Duffy (center/to the left of President Breuninger) stand at attention during a performance of an “Honor Song” and “Flag Song” by the Comanche Boys Drum Circle. (Photos courtesy of Kelton Starr)*

Rio Rancho



LEFT PHOTO: *Members of VFS Post 5890 are congratulated by Rio Rancho Mayor Greg Hull (far left) after taking top Float Honors at the city of Rio Rancho’s annual Memorial Day Parade.*

RIGHT PHOTO: *VFW Post 5890 member and Vietnam War veteran Dennis “Sarge” Nicholas poses with the trophy awarded to the post for having the best float. (Photos courtesy of Cynthia Archuleta.)*



Santa Fe



LEFT PHOTO: *Miniature American Flags were placed by dozens of volunteers at many of the gravesites at the Santa Fe National Cemetery in time for the annual Memorial Day Ceremony, (RIGHT PHOTO) which was attended by COL AJ Kessell (USA/Retired) and his granddaughters Ava (left) and Celia. (Left photo courtesy of Rick Carver/Chair, USS Santa Fe Committee; Right photo courtesy of Kirstie Moser)*



New Mexico Air National Guard SMSgt Jay Gorman (far right) paid tribute to America's fallen combat heroes in his Keynote Address at a May 23 Memorial Day ceremony in Santa Fe at the Brookdale Senior Living Community Center. Joining him at the ceremony was (from L to R) his wife SSgt Paula Gorman, daughter AIC Ashley Gorman, and daughter Katelyn. (photo courtesy of NMANG SMSgt Jay Gorman)

Socorro



FROM L to R: In Socorro, New Mexico House of Representatives Speaker Don Tripp, Socorro County Commissioner Juan Gutierrez, and New Mexico Adjutant General BG Andrew Salas attended the annual Memorial Day Ceremony at Isidro Baca Veterans Park. BG Salas gave the Keynote Address at the ceremony. (Photo courtesy of New Mexico Adjutant General BG Andrew Salas)

Southern Ute Indian Reservation



Near Ignacio, Colorado—just across the state line in the Four Corners area—New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Director of Field Operations Ken Adair was among the four speakers at a Memorial Day ceremony presented by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Southern Ute Veterans Association.

FROM L to R: U.S. Navy Veteran Raymond Baker, New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Andrew Welch, New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services Director of Field Operations Ken Adair, and Southwest Native American Veterans Association Chairman Marvin Trujillo. (Photo courtesy of New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Director of Field Operations Ken Adair)

Taos County/Questa



The town of Questa in Taos County observed the 12th annual Healing Field of Honor. One-thousand American Flags were planted in an area off of State Highway 522 as a tribute to the men and women who have lost their lives while serving our country—and to honor the service and sacrifice of all who have served or are currently serving. (Photos courtesy of NMDVS Taos County Veterans Service Officer Michael Pacheco.)

Hundreds of *Run For The Wall* Motorcycle Riders Stop in New Mexico



Riders on the “Central Route” arriving in the Santa Fe area along State Highway 599.

Hundreds of motorcycle riders rumbled through New Mexico from May 19-21 for the annual *Run For the Wall* cross-country ride to Memorial Day Weekend activities in Washington, D.C.

The riders were on their annual tribute to former Prisoners-of-War and American service members still officially listed by the Department of Defense as Missing in Action (MIA).

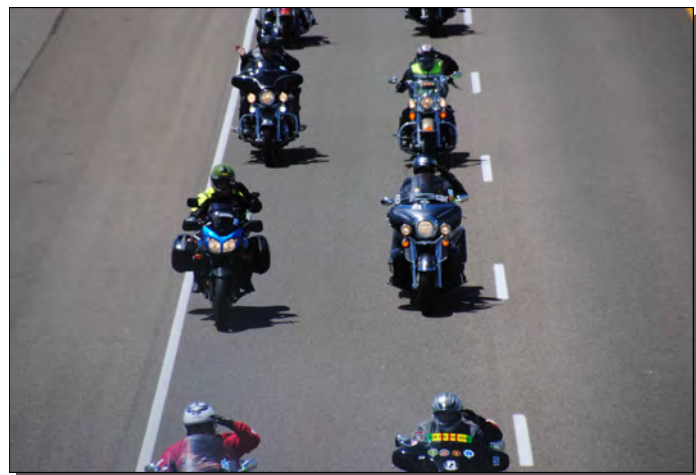
Riders along the Southern Route arrived in Las Cruces via Interstate 10 on May 19—stopping off at a free dinner at the Barnett Harley-Davidson store (food donated by Andale’s Restaurant) before spending the night at various motels. Before departing the next morning, the riders participated in a special

wreath-laying ceremony at the city’s Veterans’ Memorial Park.

Riders along the Central Route also arrived in New Mexico on May 19 via Interstate 40 and spent the night in Gallup, where they were treated to a free dinner at Red Rock Park courtesy of the city of Gallup. They departed the next morning for Angel Fire and Eagle Nest—stopping for free gas at the Route 66 Casino in Albuquerque, and again for free gas and lunch at the Camel Rock casino north of Santa Fe. The riders then visited the Vietnam Veterans State Memorial Park in Angel Fire before heading to nearby Eagle Nest—where a free dinner was provided by the Eagle Nest Senior Center. They departed and left the state the following morning.

“Midway Route” riders entered New Mexico on May 19—stopping for free gas in Jamestown, and then in Milan for a free lunch provided by Cibola County at Milan Elementary School. Riders then departed for another free fuel stop at the Route 66 Casino before arriving in the late afternoon in Albuquerque—where **two platoons of riders then visited patients and staff at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center’s** Spinal Cord Injury Unit, and the Community Living Center. They spent the night in Albuquerque before departing the following morning along Interstate 40—stopping for a free lunch at the Blue Hole Center courtesy of American Legion Post 36 in Santa Rosa.

The Run for the Wall was started in 1989 by two Vietnam War veterans who wanted to call attention to the tens of thousands of military personnel still **unaccounted for from all of America’s wars.** According to the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), more than 83,000 Americans are still classified as Missing in Action dating back to World War II.



Riders on the “Central Route” arriving in the Santa Fe area along State Highway 599.

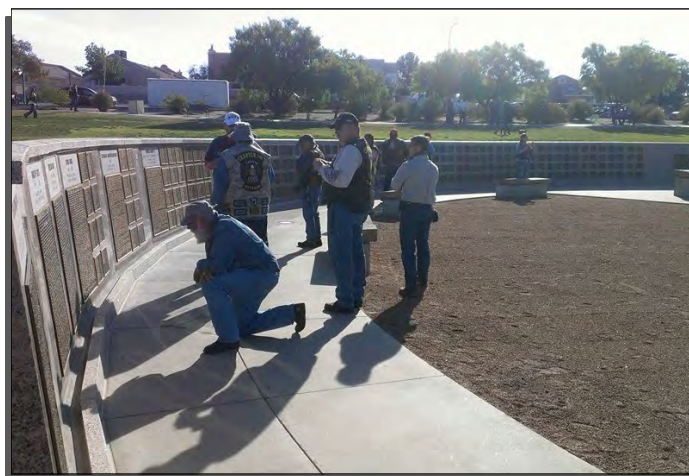


TOP LEFT/TOP RIGHT PHOTOS: *Riders along the Central Route stop for free gas and lunch at the Camel Rock Casino just north of Santa Fe.*



MIDDLE LEFT: *Riders along the Midway Route are honored at a Milan Elementary School Assembly*

MIDDLE RIGHT: *In Santa Rosa, many riders took a dip—some fully clothed—into the world-famous “Blue Hole” reservoir.*



BOTTOM LEFT: *Riders along the Southern Route stop for free gas at the Savoy gas station in Deming.*

BOTTOM RIGHT: *Before leaving Las Cruces, many Southern Route riders paid a visit to Las Cruces Veterans Memorial Park to reflect at the park’s Veterans Memorial Wall—which lists the names of the more than 8,100 men and women from the Las Cruces area who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.*

Northern NM *Honor Flight* Returns from Visit to Washington, D.C.



Twenty World War II and Korean War veterans from northern New Mexico returned to Albuquerque on June 3 from a whirlwind three-day *Northern New Mexico Honor Flight* to our nation's capital to visit the National World War II, Korean War, and other national monuments.

The veterans—accompanied by their volunteer escorts who paid their own way—were treated to a hero's return by a huge crowd of family members, veterans, uniformed active-duty personnel, and the public.

The flight was courtesy of the Honor Flight Network, a national non-profit organization dedicated to honoring

the service of America's veterans. The program utilizes a network of volunteers to transport veterans free of charge—including lodging and meals--to our nation's capital to visit the national memorials dedicated to their particular war era of service. Top priority is given to our nation's senior veterans, and veterans from any era who are terminally ill.

For the hundreds of WWII veterans who have made Honor Flight trips from cities across the nation, it is a powerfully emotional experience. The trips are the first-ever visit to these national memorials dedicated to them and all Americans who have served in our nation's wars. Prior to the launch of the Honor Flight Network in 2005, most WWII veterans believed they would never get to visit these memorial dedicated to them.

The Williamson Foundation of New Mexico partnered with the Honor Flight network to organize the trip. Envoy Air/American Airlines donated a chartered Boeing 737 and flight crew.



NMDVS Events Coordinator Joesetta Rodriguez (above right, in jeans/maroon shirt) gave small New Mexico flags at the Albuquerque Sunport to veterans returning from the Northern New Mexico Honor Flight on June 3.





(all photos courtesy of the Northern New Mexico Honor Flight Program)

Southern NM Honor Flight Seeking Veterans, Volunteers



The Honor Flight of Southern New Mexico is preparing for its ninth annual flight to Washington, D.C. from September 30 to October 2.

Applications are currently being accepted from WWII and Korean War veterans living in southern New Mexico and the El Paso, TX, area. Vietnam War veterans can also send an application—but these are being put on a waiting list, as priority is given to veterans of previous wars. Applications from terminally-ill veterans from any war era will be placed at the top of the list.

The program is also seeking monetary donations from the public, and also volunteer escorts (who must pay their own way) to help these veterans fulfill a lifelong wish to visit the war memorials dedicated to the wars in which they served. For more information, go to the Honor Flight of Southern New Mexico website at www.honorflightnm.org.

NMDVS Las Vegas-Based VSO, RVCP NE Coordinator Invited on *Boss Lift* Flight



On May 20, NMDVS Las Vegas-based Veterans Service Officer Karen Abeyta (*left photo, at left*) assisted with the 720th National Guard and the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) employer\community recognition *Boss Lift* and Luncheon to thank local employers and community members for their support of employees who are Guard or Reserve members.

The employers and community

members were treated to flights aboard a NMNG Black Hawk helicopter (*right photo*). At the luncheon, Ms. Abeyta was then presented with the ESGR *Seven Seals Award* for meritorious leadership and initiative. Joining her aboard one of the helicopter flights was NMDVS Rural Veterans Coordination Program/Northeast Region Coordinator Sarah Bustos (*left photo, in striped shirt*). It was Ms. Bustos' first-ever helicopter flight.



NMVBOC Honored in Washington, D.C. During SBA Small Business Week



LEFT PHOTO: At a breakfast in Albuquerque on May 5, the New Mexico Chapter of the U.S. Small Business Administration celebrated New Mexico's Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) being chosen as the top VBOC in the nation. VBOC Director Joseph Long accepts the NM SBA's award from KOB-TV personality and event Master of Ceremonies Steve Stucker. The VBOC is the veterans business development division of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services.

RIGHT PHOTO: Five days earlier, the VBOC team was honored during the SBA's annual Small Business Week in Washington, D.C. (From left to right: VBOC Veterans Business Advisory Rich Coffel, VBOC Administrative Assistant Danelle Jimenez, National SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet, and Mr. Long.



NMDVS Hosts Summer Benefits & Resources Fairs



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services and the Rural Veterans Coordination Program has been busy presenting benefits & resources fairs this summer—as part of an ongoing joint effort to inform veterans of their available VA, state, and local veterans benefits and resources.

TOP ROW: The June 25 Santa Fe Benefits/Resources Fair at the Genoveva Chavez Community Center.

MIDDLE: *Operation Help Rural Veterans* on July 14 in Elephant Butte at American Legion Post 44.

BOTTOM: The July 23 Benefits/Resources Fair in Roswell, at the New Mexico Military Institute.

A similar event was also presented in Ft. Sumner on May 11. Other benefits fairs are scheduled in Gallup on July 30, and Mescalero on September 24.



70 Years Later, WWII Veteran Finally Takes Part in His High School Graduation Ceremony



Former Fourth Judicial District Court Judge Matias A. Zamora did something on May 27 which he was unable to do seven decades ago: Wear a cap and gown, and walk into the gym with other graduating seniors of Mora High School for a graduation ceremony.

The 89-year old resident of Santa Fe had been on track **to graduate with Mora High School's Class of 1946**. But he was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1945 at the end of his junior year and served as a military police officer in Germany during the latter years of World War II.

After the war, Mr. Zamora used his G.I. Education Benefit bill to earn a political science degree at New Mexico Highlands University, and then a law degree at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., before serving a long and distinguished legal and academic career. But he never got to take part in the graduation ceremony with his fellow Class of 1946 Mora High School graduates—something which had always bugged him despite his tremendous academic and professional accomplishments.

“This is a long time coming; a dream come true for me,” said Mr. Zamora after finally walking with the 30 graduates of the Class of 2016. “It’s the closing of a circle, and I couldn’t be happier. I feel fulfilled...so very happy!”



NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox had the honor of presenting WWII Veteran Matias Zamora with a copy of his Mora High School Diploma (above left photo) and a New Mexico Veterans Coin (above right photo) at the Mora High School Class of 2016 Graduation Ceremony on May 27.

Jemez Pueblo Receives Donated Van to Help Veterans w/Their Transportation Needs



New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox (*left photo, at podium*) was part of a special “handover” ceremony of a new Ford Transport Van (*left photo, in background*) on July 18 at the Jemez Pueblo Civic Center. The van was donated through the Wounded Warrior Family Support to the pueblo’s Walatowa Veterans Association to help transport veterans to and from the VA hospital or CBOC appointments. During the ceremony, Secretary Fox recognized and then presented an NMDVS New Mexico Veterans Coin to WWII U.S. Army veteran Jerry Fragua (*right photo*), who serves as the association’s Spiritual Advisor.

Veterans, Guard/Reserve Personnel, and Spouses Invited to Attend VA Choice Program & Legal Aid Town Hall Meeting



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) and New Mexico Legal Aid are inviting military veterans, Guard/Reserve personnel, and their spouses to a *VA Choice Program & Legal Aid Town Hall Meeting* in Santa Clara on August 5 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Santa Clara National Guard Armory Classroom, located at 11990 U.S. Highway 180.

NMDVS Health Care Coordinator Mitchell Lawrence will present information and answer questions about the VA Veterans Choice Program which allows eligible veterans to receive health care in their communities rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility.

NM Legal Aid Staff Attorney Thomas Hare will present information and answer questions about *NM Legal Aid*-a statewide legal services program which provides free legal services to low income residents who are eligible under the federal poverty guidelines.

For more information, contact NMDVS Silver City-based Veterans Service Officer Bradley Brock at (575) 538-2377 or bradleya.brock@state.nm.us; or NMDVS Rural Veterans Coordination Program SW Region Coordinator Angelina Trujillo at Angelina.trujillo@state.nm.us or (575) 912-3166.



NMDVS Health/Safety Tip: The Importance of Staying Hydrated



Staying hydrated is important for maintaining good health. Here in New Mexico, our high elevation and 90-100 degree summer temperatures makes it imperative that you take extra steps to maintain proper hydration.

So, whether you live in Jal—at an elevation of 3,071 feet--or in the 10,350-foot Taos Ski Valley, here are some tips and valuable information to help you stay properly hydrated this summer—and year round.

Why is it important to drink enough water?

Water keeps every part of your body working properly. It helps your body flush wastes and stay at the right temperature. It can help prevent kidney stones and constipation.

You lose water throughout the day—through your breath, sweat, urine, and bowel movements. If you live in a hot climate, you lose even more fluid.

You need to replace this lost fluid to stay healthy. If you don't get enough water, you could become dehydrated. If you get very dehydrated, your body no longer has enough fluid to get blood to your organs. This is dangerous.

Do you have to drink only water to stay hydrated?

All liquids help you stay hydrated. Water is usually the best choice, because it's free (if you're drinking tap water) and has no sugar or calories. But most healthy people can get enough fluid through the beverages they consume every day. These can include water, fruit juices, coffee, sodas, iced tea, and other drinks.



Experts say that it's not true that beverages that have caffeine—such as coffee, tea, and cola drinks—always dehydrate you. Healthy people who consume moderate amounts of caffeine don't lose more fluid than people who don't have any caffeine. *(Footnote: A moderate amount of caffeine is about 200 to 300 milligrams a day. That's about two to four 8-ounce cups of coffee.)*

You also get water through food. Some fruits and vegetables contain a lot of water, such as watermelon and lettuce.

How much water do you need to drink every day?

A common recommendation is to drink six or eight 8-ounce glasses of water or other fluid every day. But some adults may need more or less, depending on how healthy they are, how much they exercise, and how hot and dry the climate is. You may sometimes need to drink more water than usual if you:

- Exercise intensely, especially in a hot climate.
- **Are sick, such as with the flu, or have a health problem like a urinary tract infection.**
- **Are pregnant or breastfeeding.**

How can you tell if you are drinking enough water?

The easiest way to know if you're drinking enough fluid is to look at the color of your urine. If you're drinking enough water, your urine will be clear or pale yellow. A darker yellow means you aren't drinking enough water.



People who drink enough water also usually have soft bowel movements. Hard bowel movements or constipation can be signs that you aren't getting enough water. If you have any health problems, always talk to your doctor before increasing the amount of water you drink. You may need to limit your fluids if you have certain health concerns, such as kidney problems or heart failure.

It can be dangerous to drink too much water. But it's rare that anyone drinks too much water. The risk is highest for people who do endurance sports, such as running marathons.

Too much water is dangerous because it would dilute the amount of sodium in your body. This imbalance could cause serious problems, such as confusion, seizures, and coma.

Experts advise athletes who do intense activity to drink a sports drink that contains sodium, other electrolytes, and some sugar. Most people don't need sports drinks if they are exercising for less than an hour in moderate temperatures. Plain water is fine. But experts do recommend sports drinks if you're playing sports or doing other intense physical activity for more than an hour.

What are some easy ways to get more water during the day?

- **Drink a glass of water when you get up in the morning, before you have coffee or tea.**
- **Keep a cup or water bottle by your desk at work. Take several sips of water each hour. If you don't have a desk job, carry a container of water with you, and take sips throughout the day.**
- **Take a sip whenever you pass a drinking fountain.**
- **If you get tired of drinking plain water, add a packet of sugarless flavoring to your water. Or put a slice of lemon or lime in plain or sparkling water.**



Is bottled water better than tap water?

No. A lot of plain bottled water is just tap water that has been purified. It's your choice how you want to drink water. If you like bubbly mineral water, drink that. If you like the idea of vitamins and electrolytes in your water, you can find several varieties of enhanced water at the store.

If you don't like the taste of your tap water, or if you just want to be extra careful, you can purify tap water at home. Water filters are available in many stores.

This article was provided by *Healthwise*--a nonprofit organization founded in 1975 with the mission to help people make better health decisions. More information about Healthwise can be found on the Network of Care Portal at:

<http://newmexico.networkofcare.org/veterans/library/article.aspx?hwid=support-abouthw#support-abouthw-about>

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 kenneth.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> (Las Cruces Office Outreach)	<i>Artesia*</i> (Carlsbad Office Outreach)	<i>Aztec*</i> (Farmington Office Outreach)
George Vargas (575) 524-6124 george.vargas@state.nm.us	Dagmar Youngberg (575) 885-4939 dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us	Beverly Charley (505) 327-2861 beverly.charley@state.nm.us
CARLSBAD	Clayton*	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> (Albuquerque Office Outreach)	<i>Deming*</i> (Silver City Office Outreach)	<i>Española*</i> (Taos Office Outreach)
Gordon Schei (505) 383-2409 gordon.schei@state.nm.us	Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	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	Tyrra Saavedra 908 E. Buena Vista Ave. (505) 863-7457 tyrra.saavedra@state.nm.us	Tyrra Saavedra 515 East High St.. (505) 287-8387 tyrra.saavedra@state.nm.us
<i>HOBBS</i>	<i>Holloman AFB*</i>	<i>LAS CRUCES #1</i>
Dalton Boyd 2120 N. Alto Street (575) 397-5290 dalton.boyd@state.nm.us	(Alamogordo Office Outreach) 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
<i>Los Lunas*</i> (Albuquerque #1 Office Outreach)	<i>Mora*</i> (Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach)	<i>Quemado*</i> (Silver City Office Outreach)
Theresa Zuni (505) 346-4810 theresa.zuni@state.nm.us	Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	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
<i>Ruidoso*</i> (Alamogordo Office Outreach)	SANTA FE	<i>Santa Rosa*</i> (Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach)
Tony Woodards (575) 437-4635 anthony.woodards@state.nm.us	Jeff George 406 Don Gaspar Ave. (505) 827-6343 jeff.george@state.nm.us	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	<i>Truth or Consequences*</i> (Las Cruces Office Outreach)	<i>Tucumcari*</i> (Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach)
Michael Pacheco 120 Civic Plaza (575) 758-9624 michael.pacheco1@state.nm.us	JR Turner (575) 524-6220 jr.turner@state.nm.us	Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us