



The Guardian

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

www.nmdvs.org

1-(866) 433-8387 toll-free

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Tribute to Vietnam War Fallen Heroes Exhibit Unveiled in Santa Fe



More than one hundred Vietnam War veterans, family members, friends, and family members of Vietnam War veterans killed in action attended the unveiling of a *Tribute to New Mexico's Fallen Vietnam War Heroes* display today inside the Bataan Memorial Building in downtown Santa Fe.

The display honors the 398 New Mexicans killed in action during the Vietnam War. The photos are featured in four large frames in the main hallway leading to the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS), which hosted the ceremony.

Shortly before the photo tribute was unveiled, NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox reminded everyone that even though the war may have been unpopular with many here at home, the fallen soldiers nevertheless answered the call to arms when our country came calling for their service.

"I want everyone to know...these young men did not die in vain. They died while serving our country with honor and distinction," said an emotional Secretary Fox, a former Deputy Adjutant General in the New Mexico Army National Guard who was on active-duty status during the war. "They died while fighting an evil force. It is therefore up to us here today...and our future generations...to make sure that their ultimate sacrifice will never be forgotten."



58,200 American service members lost their lives in combat during the Vietnam War.

The photos of the fallen 398 New Mexicans were collected by the Vietnam Veterans of America/Northern New Mexico Chapter 996. In 2009, the non-profit service organization took the lead in New Mexico when the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) launched a nationwide *Call For Photos* Project to gather photos of all American service members killed in action in the Vietnam War.

Four years later, New Mexico became the first state to collect photos of all of its Vietnam War KIA's. The VVMF, which operates the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial Monument/Wall in Washington, D.C., will feature all collected photos in a digital display at a national Vietnam Veterans Memorial Museum to be built next to the national Memorial Wall.

Vietnam War-Era Veterans Honored at Special Ceremony in Artesia



Southeastern New Mexican Vietnam War-era veterans were honored on April 28 at a 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony in Artesia. More than 150 Vietnam War-era veterans and family members of deceased Vietnam War-era veterans attended the ceremony, which was presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) and the city of Artesia--along with assistance from the New Mexico State Council of the Vietnam Veterans of America, the New Mexico VA Health Care System, the Las Cruces Vet Center, and the Santa Fe National Cemetery.

The ceremony 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.

"During the Vietnam War, our returning service members were greeted with silence — or worse yet, by a public not supportive of our service members serving in a war which sharply divided our country," said NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox in his Welcome Address. "But history now shows us 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.'"



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 in the military 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.

NMDVS to Host Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony in Ohkay Owingeh

A 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony is scheduled for June 14 in Ohkay Owingeh at 11 a.m. at the Ohkay Casino & Resort, located at State Highway 68-219.

Ohkay Owingeh is partnering with the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) to honor America's Vietnam War-era veterans from the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council region (the pueblos of Nambe, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Pojoaque, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Taos, and Tesuque). For more information, contact Ohkay Owingeh Tribal Veteran Representative Michael Montoya at michael.montoya@ohkay.org or (505) 927-0731; or Josetta Rodriguez from the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services at josetta.rodriguez@state.nm.us.

Bataan Remembrance Day Observed in New Mexico

The 75th anniversary of the infamous Bataan Death March of World War II was observed at ceremonies in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Grants last month.

On April 9, the New Mexico National Guard held its annual Santa Fe tribute at the Eternal Flame Monument in front of the Bataan Memorial Building. Members of the New Mexico National Guard Color Guard lowered the American Flag—and raised a white “surrender flag” to commemorate the day 75 years ago—April 9, 1942--when Allied forces surrendered to Japan on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines. On that date, U.S. General Edward King ordered his troops to surrender to the much larger and better-equipped Japanese force. More than 75,000 Allied soldiers were taken prisoner, including 1,800 members of the New Mexico National Guard—which had been six months into a training exercise when Japan attacked.



Among those in attendance at the April 9 Bataan Remembrance Day Ceremony in Santa Fe were the following Defenders of Bataan:

(front row/upper left corner, in blue cap) **Atilano David, Filipino Scout, 33rd Infantry Regiment**; **Bill Overmier, B Battery, 200th Coast Artillery** (front row/center, in tan cap & jacket); **Trinidad Martinez, A Battery, 200th Coast Artillery/Anti-Aircraft** (front row/center, in dark jacket and blanket on lap); **Valdemar DeHerrera, A Battery, 515th Coast Artillery/Anti-Aircraft** (front row/2nd from right); and **Rosenaldo Lovato, A Battery, 200th Coast Artillery/Anti-Aircraft** (front row/far right)

The prisoners were then forced to march sixty torture-filled miles to prison camps. Many died or were executed along the way. Those that survived the march, which became known as the *Bataan Death March*, then endured 3-1/2 years of brutal imprisonment. Less than half of the New Mexicans were alive by the time Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945—thus ending World War II.

New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services Deputy Secretary Alan Martinez had the honor of reading the official Bataan Remembrance Day Proclamation issued by Governor Susana Martinez, who was unable to attend due to a previously scheduled commitment.

“I hereby proclaim today as Bataan Remembrance Day throughout the state in honor of the brave New Mexicans who suffered in the name of freedom,” read Deputy Secretary Martinez. “America will forever remember these Heroes of Bataan. We will always be in awe of how they relied on their extraordinary strength and spirit to survive—enduring tremendous suffering so that we would remain free.”

NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox was the featured speaker at the Las Cruces ceremony. He echoed the

Governor's sentiments, praising the Defenders of Bataan as “true American heroes...in every sense of the word...whose sacrifice paved the way for freedom not only for America, but for the Philippines...and all of Asia.”

Monument Honoring American Military Families to be Dedicated in Santa Fe



The Museum of the American Military Family invites the public to a dedication of a monument honoring American military families on May 13 at 1pm in Santa Fe at the New Mexico National Guard Museum (formerly the Bataan Memorial Museum), located at 1050 Old Pecos Trail.

The memorial is a small house, designed by Museum of the Military Family Executive Director Dr. Circe Olson Woessner. It is dedicated to mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, spouses, and others who have loved and supported a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. Through each of five windows, visitors can view displays depicting the life of a military family—offering a glimpse into the lives of a typical military family.

“I don’t know if there are any other memorials dedicated to the military family,” said Dr. Woessner. “I am grateful that the National Guard leadership recognizes the family as an essential component of military service.”

For more information, contact Dr. Woessner at (505) 504-6830.

NMDVS Roswell, Alamogordo Offices to Temporarily Operate Under Limited Hours

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services offices in Roswell and Alamogordo will be temporarily operating on a limited-hours schedule due to the retirements of its Veterans Service Officers in those communities.

Roswell Office (1600 SE Main St.)

Beginning May 17, the Roswell office will only be open on Wednesdays from 10am-3pm. Veterans Service Officers from the NMDVS offices in Carlsbad and Hobbs will alternate in traveling every Wednesday to assist veterans in the Roswell office, located at 1600 SE Main Street, with filing for their VA or state veterans’ benefits.

As with all seventeen NMDVS field offices statewide, walk-ins are welcome—but anyone needing assistance is urged to schedule an appointment by contacting either NMDVS Carlsbad-based Veterans Service Officer Dagmar Youngberg at dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us or (575) 885-4939, or NMDVS Hobbs-based Veterans Service Officer Dalton Boyd at Dalton-boyd@state.nm.us or (575) 397-5290.

NMDVS Roswell-based Veterans Service Officer Richard Moncrief retired on May 1 after serving twelve-years with the agency.

Prior to coming to the NMDVS, Mr. Moncrief served 23-years as a U.S. Air Force aviation mechanic during the Vietnam War—as well as in Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, and Alaska. He then worked for another twelve years as a civilian aviation mechanic, and also taught an Airframe & Power Plant Maintenance course at Eastern New Mexico University.



Richard Moncrief
Retired NMDVS Roswell VSO

Alamogordo Office (411 Tenth St. #107)

In Alamogordo, starting May 24, the office will only be open on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 10am-3pm. A Veterans Service Officer from the NMDVS Las Cruces office will travel every second and fourth Wednesday to assist veterans in the Alamogordo office, located at 411 10th Street/Suite 107. Anyone needing assistance is urged to schedule an appointment by contacting NMDVS Las Cruces Veterans Service Officer James Turner at jr.turner@state.nm.us or (575) 524-6220, or George Vargas at george.vargas@state.nm.us or (575) 524-6124.



Anthony Woodards
Retired NMDVS Alamogordo VSO

NMDVS Alamogordo-based Veterans Service Officer Anthony “Tony” Woodards also retired on May 1 after a thirteen-year career with the agency. Prior to coming to the NMDVS, Mr. Woodards worked for six years with the New Mexico Department of Children, Youth & Families Juvenile Probation and Parole Division. Before this, he served 23 years with the U. S. Air Force—where he was stationed for more than 18 years at several USAF bases in Germany before retiring in 1994 as a Master Sergeant.

NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox praised Mr. Moncrief and Mr. Woodards for their dedication to helping veterans with filing for their VA and state veterans’ benefits.

“The filing process can be difficult and time-consuming, but Richard and Tony have done an outstanding job of helping veterans navigate this process,” said Secretary Fox. “They’ve really made a difference in improving many lives in their communities, and I will be forever grateful to them for this. I wish them nothing but the best in their retirement. They will always be a part of the DVS family.”

NMDVS Hosts Native American Veterans Service Officer Training Conference

Representatives from New Mexico’s pueblos and tribal communities attended a Native American Veterans Service Officer Training Conference the week of May 1-5 in Albuquerque hosted by the New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services (NMDVS).

Staff from the VA and the NMDVS trained the tribal representatives to help with filing claims for VA and state veterans’ benefits. The goal, said NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox, is to serve Native-American communities far from NMDVS offices. A secondary benefit, he added, is to make the process easier.

“Many feel more comfortable talking with someone familiar with their own language and customs,” said Secretary Fox. “So we invited VA training officials to train representatives from tribal communities, because we want more Native American veterans to get the veterans’ benefits they’ve earned through their military service.”

The attendees received certificates of completion ([above](#)) at the end of the conference.



NMDVS, CNM Co-Host Veterans Resource Center Summit



Nearly three dozen colleges, universities, and veterans service organizations attended the 2017 Veterans Resource Center Summit hosted by the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) and Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) on April 6 in Albuquerque.

The summit provided an opportunity for representatives from the colleges and universities to share their experiences with having on-campus Veterans Resource Centers—which many campuses nationwide are now establishing as a place where student veterans can socialize, study, or receive academic counseling.

For some attendees, it was an opportunity to learn how to establish or expand existing veterans resource centers. For others, it was a chance to learn about new programs and ways to improve existing centers.

New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox and New Mexico Higher Education Department Secretary Dr. Barbara Damron welcomed attendees to the summit, and thanked them for helping student veterans. Both secretaries pledged to continue working with each other to help veterans better integrate into college life and achieve their academic goals.

NMDVS, ENMU Host Veterans Benefits Outreach

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) assisted Eastern New Mexico University with hosting a Veterans Benefits and Resources Outreach on May 2 in Portales the ENMU Campus Union Ballroom.

NMDVS Rural Veterans Coordination Program/SE Region Coordinator Jim Cassidy (*at right, in black shirt*) was among the representatives from 45 agencies which were available to provide information about VA health benefits, VA and state veterans' benefits, education benefits, employment assistance, and other benefits and resources available for veterans.

"I'd like to thank Eastern New Mexico University President Steven Gamble and his staff for hosting this outreach, and inviting us to be a part of it," said NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox. "We and the other agencies were able to answer a lot of questions from veterans and student-veterans in the Portales area. We hope to partner again in future outreaches in order to reach out to even more veterans."



NMDVS to Host State Veterans Benefits Outreach at Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center



Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) will make a state veterans benefits outreach stop on May 23 at the Albuquerque Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center, located at 1501 San Pedro Blvd. SE.

New Mexico VA Health Care System employees, veterans, or national guard/reserve personnel with appointments at the VA hospital that day are invited to stop by NMDVS tables from 10am-2pm in the hospital's mail building lobby to learn about state veterans' benefits.

NMDVS representatives will have information about the veterans' state property tax exemption, disabled veteran

property tax waivers, veterans' license plates, disabled veteran park & museum passes, veterans hunting & fishing licenses, and many other state veterans' benefits. Information can also be obtained about VA health benefits, VA disability ratings, VA pensions & compensation, and small business help for entrepreneurial-minded veterans. Please bring a copy of your DD-214 military separation papers in order to help expedite any filing assistance processes. Spouses, family members, and caretakers are also encouraged to visit on behalf of veterans needing assistance.

NMDVS to Host Valencia County Metro Public Safety & Recruitment Day



More than three dozen local, state, and federal public safety and law enforcement agencies are scheduled to be represented by crews and equipment at the *2017 Valencia County Metro Public Safety/Recruitment Day* on May 13 in Los Lunas.

The free event is presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services and the Village of Los Lunas to provide a chance for the public to meet law enforcement and military personnel--and learn how they serve and protect the citizens of New Mexico. Numerous law enforcement vehicles, helicopters, rescue and other equipment will be available for viewing or climbing aboard for a "hands on" look. The New Mexico National Guard will also have displays and equipment available for families to inspect or climb aboard. Many of the participating agencies will also be looking to fill job vacancies.

Families are encouraged to bring the kids from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Los Lunas Sports Complex, located at 1601 Highway 314 SW. For more information, contact New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Health Specialist Joseph Dorn at josephm.dorn@state.nm.us or (505) 383-2414.

VBOC Success Story: One Community Auto LLC



Gary Peterson
*One Community
Auto LLC*

A veteran-owned business which received start-up counseling and assistance from the New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)—the business development division of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services—has been selected as a winner of the 2017 American Small Business Championship.

One Community Auto LLC of Albuquerque was chosen as one of 102 nationwide winners by SCORE—the nation’s largest network of volunteer business mentors which helps small business owners in America--which also collaborated with Sam’s Club for this nationwide contest.

The company was founded by Albuquerque native and retired U.S. Air Force Major Gary Peterson, and was one of only two companies from New Mexico to receive the award. *One Community Auto LLC* assists non-profit organizations by refurbishing their donated used cars and re-selling it for them at its lot not far from Kirtland Air Force Base—where Mr. Peterson was formerly stationed.

Entrants submitted an online application describing the most unique aspect of their small business that has contributed to their success, and how it positively impacts the community. *Nominations* which garnered at least 100 votes were then presented to a judging panel of small business experts to determine the winners. It was this aspect of re-selling on behalf of non-profit organizations which, according to Mr. Peterson, most likely impressed the judges.

“This not only saves the car from the junk yard, it end up also benefitting organizations which help citizens in need here in the community,” said Mr. Peterson. “Other programs send vehicles to auction--but we save the vehicles and give them new life.”

He also thanked the VBOC and other agencies for helping him realize a long-held dream of opening his own company.

“I couldn’t have launched my business without the help of the VBOC, the SBA, SCORE, the New Mexico Small Business Developments Centers, WESST, and other local resources,” said Mr. Peterson. “I had the passion and the drive, but not the business sense. They helped me put my business plan together and then launch and grow *One Community Auto*.”

All 102 winners receive a \$1,000 Sam’s Club gift card, an all-expense-paid trip to a training and networking event, SCORE mentoring, and free publicity throughout the year. *One Community Auto* is now eligible to win one of three \$25,000 grand prizes awards as one of three national Grand Champions this fall.

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 such 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. For more information about the VBOC, contact Rich Coffel at (505) 383-2402 or richardl.coffel@state.nm.us.

Aerospace Contractors Conference in Albuquerque Offers Excellent Business Networking Opportunity



**Professional Aerospace
Contractors Association**
of New Mexico

The Professional Aerospace Contractors Association (PACA) of New Mexico is presenting a *Briefing for Industry* conference on August 14-17 in Albuquerque's Old Town at the Hotel Albuquerque.

The conference is one of the best networking events in the state for anyone involved with the nation's booming aerospace industry—bringing together the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), the Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC), and most federal government organizations in New Mexico for a comprehensive review of new business opportunities for the coming year.

Veteran-owned business owners/contractors and sub-contractors are strongly encouraged to attend this excellent opportunity to gain exceptional insight into the future plans and strategies of all entities gathered. Don't miss this excellent opportunity to meet with industry and government customers face-to-face.

The event typically draws more than 450 industry and Government representatives annually. Information about registration, fees, and PACA membership can be found at <http://pacanm.org/briefing-for-industry/>.

The Hotel Albuquerque and the nearby Hotel Chaco are offering special convention rates (\$91/night for the Hotel Albuquerque; \$175/night for the Hotel Chaco). Reservations must be made by July 23 and must be made directly with each hotel. Mention the "PACA Group Rate" when making reservations.

Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town

800 Rio Grande Blvd. NW

(505) 843-6300

www.hotelabq.com

Hotel Chaco

1972 Bellamah Ave. NW

(505) 246-9989

www.hotelchaco.com

Request for Memorial Day Ceremonies/Events

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services is in the process of compiling a list of Memorial Day Ceremonies. Please Email NMDVS Public Information Officer Ray Seva at ray.seva@state.nm.us any information about Memorial Day/Weekend ceremonies and activities in your area. This information will be forwarded to the statewide media, New Mexico's congressional delegation, and the Governor's Office. Please include the following information in your response:

- City/venue/address of event
- time of event
- nature of event (i.e. parade/ceremony/concert/BBQ, etc.)
- sponsor of event (i.e. VFW/American Legion Chapter, city of Santa Fe, etc.)
- point of contact (POC)/phone number

Thank you very much for your assistance!



Northern NM Performing Arts Group Seeking Veteran-Related Written/Musical/Film Submissions



Nat Gold Players is soliciting submissions of 10-minute plays, monologues, poetry, songs, or film shorts written by, for, or about veterans for a special performance during the Las Vegas, New Mexico Heritage Week in early August.

Winning selections will be performed during for a show tentatively entitled *New Mexico Heroes*.

Submissions may be sent as scripts, written documents, audio recordings, or video clips. Please Email to flyingpigs@aol.com or call (505) 429-1481 for instructions or more information.

Deadline for submission is June 12

Although preference will be given to original works by New Mexico veterans, the showcase is open to any writer or performer who has created material that speaks to the real-life issues faced by New Mexico veterans or veterans in general.

Unfortunately, travel or lodging expenses cannot be covered by Nat Gold Players. Any out-of-town creator who wishes to perform his or her own work must be willing and able to bear the expense of travel. If needed, Nat Gold Players will make an effort to find sponsors for specific performers.



National Veterans Wellness Center Offering Free Retreats for Veterans w/Post-Traumatic Stress



The National Veterans Wellness & Healing Center in Angel Fire is offering free retreats for veterans and active duty/Guard/Reserve members who have been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress. Spouses and "significant others" are also invited.

The weeklong retreats offer traditional and non-traditional healing methods. Included throughout the week are Native American healing ceremonies, equine reintegration training, massage, yoga, aromatherapy, acupuncture, art therapy, reiki, along with couples and group counseling sessions. The natural setting of Angel Fire in

the Sangre de Cristo Mountains is the perfect location to bring couples to a place where nature can assist with the healing process. The number of retreat participant couples are kept small—thus, making each experience and tool which you are provided much more intimate.

Lodging and all means are provided; couples need only to arrive at the Center. The retreats are offered on the following dates:

May 17-24

June 7-14

September 17-24

October 15-22

For more information and to download an application, go to www.veteranswellnessandhealing.org

Women Veterans News

NMDVS Presents First in Planned Series of Women Veterans Expos



The first of a planned series of statewide Women Veterans Expos was presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) on May 5 in Espanola.

The thirty-five women veterans who attended the free expo at the Santa Claran Hotel & Casino were able to learn about available VA and state benefits and resources available to them as women veterans. They were also treated to a free continental breakfast, lunch, and free beauty/manicure/massage sessions.

The size of this and future expos, according to NMDVS Women Veterans Program Coordinator Melanie Suazo, was kept small in order to provide a more casual, relaxed, and intimate setting for women veterans to learn about their available benefits.

“We want the women to actively participate and engage in meaningful dialogue with the presenters of the information so that they can really learn and understand what is available for them not only as veterans—but as women veterans,” said Ms. Suazo. “We received overwhelmingly positive reaction—the women veterans really learned a lot of information, and had a great time as well.”

NMDVS Women Veterans Program Coordinator Melanie Suazo (center, holding a Certificate of Authenticity for the flag in the picture) and NMDVS State Approving Agency Director Marilyn Dykman (2nd row/far right) pose for a picture with some of the 35 attendees of the May 5 Women Veterans Expo in Española.

The flag was flown at Camp Lemonniere, the U.S. Naval Expeditionary Base in Djibouti which serves as the primary base of America’s military operations in Africa. It was given to the group Women Veterans of New Mexico and serves as a “Traveling Flag” which the group takes to all of its activities.

The next scheduled Women Veterans Expo is June 28 in Las Vegas, NM. More details will be provided in upcoming news releases, advertising, and in the June edition of *The Guardian*. Additional expos are also being planned for other communities later this year.

NMDVS Women Veterans Program
Melanie Suazo
Program Coordinator

(505) 827-6370
melanieA.suazo@state.nm.us

DoD Releases Annual Report on Women Serving in the U.S. Armed Forces



The U.S. Department of Defense's Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) released its annual report on matters relating to women serving in the Armed Forces of the United States for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016.

DACOWITS provides the Department of Defense (DoD) with advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to the recruitment and retention, treatment, employment, integration and well-being of highly-qualified professional women in the armed forces.

Each December, the committee selects several study topics to examine during the following year. For 2016, DACOWITS studied 14 topics. The committee gathered information from multiple sources in examining these topics; for example, briefings and written responses from the DoD, service-level military representatives, and subject matter experts; data collected from focus groups and interactions with service members during installation visits; and peer-reviewed literature. DACOWITS collected qualitative data during their visits to multiple installations—representing all four DoD Service branches (Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy) and the Coast Guard.

Based upon the data collected and analyzed, the FY16 annual report includes 14 recommendations and four continuing concerns the committee made to the secretary of defense on the following topics: Mentorship, single-parent waivers, accessions and marketing, the chaplain corps, gender integration, combat gear and equipment, pregnancy and parenthood, physical standards, strategic communications, transition services, and sexual harassment and sexual assault training. The FY16 annual report is available online and includes detailed reasoning supporting each of the recommendations and continuing concerns addressed by the committee. It can be found at <http://dacowits.defense.gov/>

Free Separate Acupuncture Clinics for Women/All Veterans in Santa Fe & Albuquerque

Acupuncturists Without Borders—a registered 501(c)-3 non-profit organization-- is offering free twice-monthly community-style acupuncture sessions for women veterans and their families at an Albuquerque location, and for all veterans and their families at a Santa Fe location.

Women veterans and their families can take advantage of these Stress Relief and Relaxation clinics on the first and third Thursdays each month, from 4:30-6pm, at *The Source*, located at 1111 Carlisle Blvd. SE (between Gibson and Central). For more information, contact Terrie Harris at femaleveterans@acuwithoutborders.org or (505) 266-3878/(505) 577-0016.

All veterans and their families can utilize the clinics on the second and fourth Thursdays each month from 5:15-6:15pm at the Santa Fe Community College Veterans Resource Center, located in the campus main building at 6401 Richards Ave. For more information, contact Greg Scargall at greg.scargall@sfcc.edu or (505) 428-1305.

KNME-TV (PBS) to Air Military/Veteran-Themed Programming in May



KNME-TV, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) station for most of New Mexico, is please to announce the showing of several military and veteran-themed programs for the month of May in honor of Memorial Day...and the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of our country. The following programs can be found on Ch.5.1 & Ch.9.1 (also

seen on Comcast Ch.204 HD). Programs are listed in *chronological* order.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT (2017)

Ch. 5.1 - Sunday, 5/28 at 7:00 pm & again at 9:00 pm

Ch. 9.1 - Monday, 5/29 at 7:00 pm

This annual concert features acclaimed actors Joe Mantegna, Laurence Fishburne and Gary Sinise and an all-star lineup of actors and musicians, along with top pops conductor Jack Everly and the National Symphony Orchestra.



Show segments include a tribute to the last surviving member of the Doolittle Raiders, who flew the daring bombing mission over Japan after Pearl Harbor; the story of the sacrifices made by Captain Luis Avila and his wife, Claudia, as they courageously face life-changing injuries incurred from an IED bomb blast; and the healing journey of a Gold Star family from the Vietnam era who reach out to support grieving families from recent conflicts.

This tribute to our military airs live from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol before an audience of hundreds of thousands, a broadcast audience of millions, and to our troops around the world via American Forces Network.

PBS PREVIEWS: THE VIETNAM WAR

Ch. 5.1 - Sunday, 5/28 at 8:30 pm & again at 11:30 pm; Friday, 6/2 at 10:30 pm; Sunday, 6/18 at 9:30 pm; and Sunday, 6/25 at 11:30 pm

Ch. 9.1 - Monday, 5/29 at 8:30 pm & Tuesday 6/27 at 10:30 pm



This special preview program takes a look at creation of the upcoming series from Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, *The Vietnam War*. Featuring interviews with the filmmakers, behind-the-scenes footage, and exclusive clips from the series, this program will give viewers an advance look at this Fall's most anticipated film.

REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR

Ch. 9.1 - Sunday, 5/28 at 8:00 pm



Narrated by veteran Hollywood actor Tom Selleck, this program chronicles the personal stories of veterans and citizens who witnessed the surprise attack by the Japanese on the American Pacific Fleet on December 7, 1941, launching the United States into World War II.

Using archival footage and photos and graphics, the documentary shows in detail the bombings on Oahu, along with the fiery explosion of the USS Arizona, the sinking of the USS Oklahoma, and the attacks on Hickam Field, as well as on other parts of the island.

Remember Pearl Harbor documents the 75th anniversary, the tragic events and the courageous acts of those who were in or near Pearl Harbor on that day and includes first-person accounts from sailors, airmen, soldiers and civilians, including Lou Conter, USS Arizona; James Downing, USS Virginia; Vernon Carter, US Army Air Corps, Hickam Field; and Barbara Kotinek, who was just six years old at the time and lived within eyesight of Pearl Harbor.



THE LAST RING HOME

Ch. 9.1 - Sunday, 5/28 at 9:30 pm; Tuesday, 5/30 at 1:30 pm



This is the story of Lt Minter Dial and his 1932 Annapolis Naval Academy ring that miraculously made its way home 17 years after he was killed as a POW of the Japanese in WWII. *The Last Ring Home* is a spellbinding account of one man's obsession with a family mystery, and the product of decades of research and inquiries. It also explores author Minter Dial's pursuit of the true story of his namesake, his late grandfather Lt. Minter Dial, USN, a celebrated war hero whose suffering and trauma nearly buried his memory forever.

INDEPENDENT LENS Farmer / Veteran

Ch. 5.1 - Monday, 5/29 at 9:00 pm

Ch. 9.1 - Thursday, 6/1 at 1:00 pm



Alex Sutton, a veteran coping with PTSD after multiple deployments, hopes that life as a farmer will give him purpose and place to heal.



D-DAY: OVER NORMANDY
Ch. 5.1 - Monday, 5/29 at 10:00 pm
Ch. 9.1 - Tuesday, 5/30 at 12:00 pm



This documentary shows some of the most spectacular scenes of the landing beaches and iconic locations in Normandy, captured by one of France's top aerial drone camera companies, combined with archival footage from June 6, 1944.



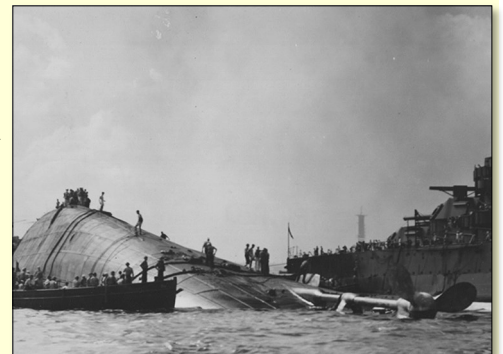
PEARL HARBOR: INTO THE AIZONA
Ch. 9.1 - Monday, 5/29 at 9:00 pm



Join the first expedition to explore inside the USS Arizona since the date that will live in infamy, as state-of-the-art imaging technology reveals the aftermath and incredible story of the Pearl Harbor attack.



PEARL HARBOR - USS OKLAHOMA
-THE FINAL STORY
Ch. 9.1 - Monday, 5/29 at 10:00 pm



Explore what happened to the USS Oklahoma, the only battleship to capsize during the Pearl Harbor attack. Examine new details about what may have caused the ship to overturn, and hear stories from survivors and families of those lost.

VA Implements Digitizing Process of Older Files Which Should Save Claims Times, Taxpayer Money



**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 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently started digitizing older, inactive paper records, which VA officials said will save claims times—and taxpayer dollars through reduced, leased office-space that currently houses these records.

“This is just one of the ways in which we are modernizing our capabilities, not only to be more responsive to Veterans and their families, but also to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars,” said VA Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy.

This new “paper-extraction” process ensures that when a claim is filed, a veteran’s electronic record is already available in the VA’s computer systems, reducing processing time for benefit claims from veterans and their survivors.

In the past, when a veteran filed a new or supplemental claim, if a medical condition had worsened, the retired paper files were boxed and shipped to a central site to scan into the VA’s systems before work would begin on the new claim.

Nearly 2 million inactive files were housed in 33 regional offices across the country before the change. As of April 14, more than 500,000 files have been collected from eight regional offices for scanning. Once the records have been digitized, the VA will archive and store them in less expensive long-term storage for safekeeping.

The agency plans to remove and scan paper claim records from the remaining regional offices by the end of 2018.

“This modernization initiative seeks to eliminate delays caused by shipping and digital conversion,” said Bradley Houston, director of the VA’s Office of Business Process Integration, which oversees the initiative. “It will give claims processors nationwide the ability to instantly access millions of inactive claim records when needed.”

Over the past five years, the VA has made concerted efforts to modernize the way it processes compensation and pension claims. Since 2012, 397 million records — consisting of 2.6 billion images — have been scanned, indexed and uploaded into the agency’s electronic-claims processing system, Veterans Benefits Management System. In fiscal 2016, the VA provided compensation and pension benefits to more than 5.1 million veterans and family members, totaling over \$80 billion.

VA to Begin Offering Mental Health Care to Veterans with “Bad Paper” Discharges

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will begin making mental health care services available to veterans with less-than-honorable discharges who urgently need it.

"We are going to go and start providing mental health care to those with other-than-honorable discharges," said VA Secretary David Shulkin after he testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on planned changes at the VA. "I don't want to wait. We want to start doing that."

Discharges that are other-than-honorable, including a "general" discharge, are known as "bad paper" and can prevent veterans from receiving federal benefits, such as health care, disability payments, education and housing assistance.

Lawmakers and veterans advocates have said service members with bad paper were, in many cases, unjustly released from the military because of mental health issues. They estimate 22,000 veterans with mental illnesses have received other-than-honorable discharges since 2009.



The plan was announced in response to a question during the hearing about Secretary Shulkin's plans to prevent veteran suicides. In addition to providing care to veterans with bad paper, the VA secretary also told lawmakers that he wanted to hire approximately 1,000 more mental health care providers.

"Our concern is those are some of the people that right now aren't getting the services and contributing to this unbelievably unacceptable number of veterans suicides," said Secretary Shulkin.

He said he's notifying medical centers about the change and that he'd like to implement a program sometime in the next few months.

Kristofer Goldsmith, president of High Ground Veterans Advocacy, has fought for years for discharge upgrades for veterans with bad paper. After hearing from officials with military review boards during a congressional hearing last week, Goldsmith said the Defense Department "isn't doing anything proactive to help."

Goldsmith, along with the group Vietnam Veterans of America – where he also works, has asked President Donald Trump to pardon all post-9/11 veterans who were administratively separated from the military and did not face a court-martial. The White House said it will study this request.

NMDVS Health/Safety Tip:

Spring: Time to Review Your Home Safety Checklist

With spring comes a feeling of renewal. Families everywhere begin cleaning out their basements and garages. Windows are opened, flowers bloom and the days grow longer thanks in part to Daylight Saving Time, which this year began on March 13.

When you set your clocks forward, the National Safety Council reminds you also to review a safety checklist for your home.



Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms save lives – if they are powered by a fresh battery. You should test them every month to make sure they work and replace the battery at least once a year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. If the alarm makes a "chirping" sound, replace it immediately.

Smoke alarms should be located in every bedroom and in the common areas on each floor of a home. Mount them at least 10 feet from the stove to reduce false alarms, less than 12 inches from the ceiling and away from windows, doors and ducts.

Did you know smoke alarms can be interconnected wirelessly? That means, when one sounds, they all sound. A Consumer Product Safety Commission survey found this is the best way to notify everyone in a home if there is a fire. Be sure to purchase smoke alarms with the label of a reputable testing agency, like Underwriters Laboratories (UL).



Three out of every five home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms, according to NFPA.



Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless gas, and it can kill you. Anything in the home that burns fuel can potentially become a source of carbon monoxide. CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each bedroom and on every level of the home.

The safety tips for CO detectors mirror those of smoke alarms: change the batteries, test them and interconnect them, if possible.

Also, make sure vents for your gas appliances (fireplace, dryer, stove and furnace) are free and clear of snow or debris.





Family Emergency Plan

The National Safety Council recommends every family have an emergency plan in place in the event of a natural disaster or other catastrophic event. Spring is a great time to review that plan with family members to make sure they know what to do.

Have a home and car emergency kit. The Federal Emergency Management Agency says an emergency kit should include one gallon per day of water for each person, at least a three-day supply of food, flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, filter mask, plastic sheeting and duct tape, and medicines. Visit the FEMA website for a complete list.



The emergency plan also should include:

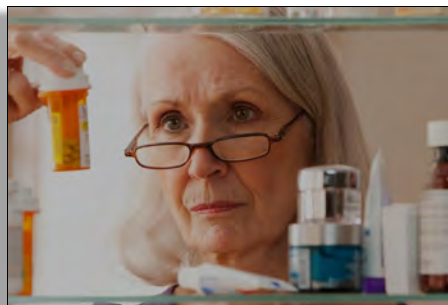
A communications plan to outline how your family members will contact one another if they are not in the same place and where you should meet if it's safe to go outside.

A shelter-in-place plan if outside air is contaminated; FEMA recommends sealing windows, doors and air vents with plastic sheeting. A getaway plan including various routes and destinations in different directions

Discard Expired Medicine

NSC recommends you take unwanted or expired medicines to a prescription drop box or take-back event near you. Serious consequences may result if you take medicine past its expiration date—expired medicine may not be at the strength needed for any medical conditions or emergencies.

The easiest and best way to update your home medicine kit is to make sure you have “fresh” prescription medicines and fresh aspirin/Tylenol/ibuprofen, allergy medicine, cough syrup, or any other over-the-counter medicines you frequently use over the course of a year.



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 make 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	(Silver City Office Outreach) Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	(Taos Office Outreach) 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	(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	(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	(vacant) For assistance, call the NMDVS Carlsbad office at (575) 885-4939
Ruidoso*	SANTA FE	Santa Rosa*
For assistance, call the NMDVS Las Cruces office at (575) 524-6220 or 6124	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