



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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Gov. Martinez Gives Eulogy at *Forgotten Heroes Funeral* for 22 Unclaimed Deceased Veterans



Governor Susana Martinez delivered the Eulogy at a special *Forgotten Heroes Funeral* on November 9 at the Santa Fe National Cemetery for the cremated remains of twenty-two military veterans whose bodies, upon their deaths, were unclaimed by family members.

The twenty-one men and one woman were given a formal military funeral in accordance with the Forgotten Heroes Burial Program, a collaborative effort between the state and all thirty-three counties in New Mexico to ensure that any honorably-discharged deceased veteran whose body goes unclaimed receives a military funeral at the Santa Fe National Cemetery—with the people of

New Mexico legally recognized as the family of record.

The Governor was joined by New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services Secretary Jack Fox and New Mexico National Guard Deputy Adjutant General Ken Nava in paying tribute to whom she called "these true heroes, for their service and sacrifice for our country."

"It pains me that—although these men served with honor—no family members are present to bid them goodbye today. But we are all here, standing together as one big New Mexican family, to provide them with the "Final Salute" which they have earned," said the Governor. "May their souls now finally and forever rest in peace."

General Nava read aloud the names of the following twenty-one veterans whose last known address was Bernalillo COUNTY: USA SP4 Johnnie T. Bailey, USN SR Raymond Guy Beasley, USMC Pvt William Burns Calhoun, USA SGT Ronald Keith Cannon, USA (rank unknown) Alfredo Chavez Amezcuita, USN RD2 Lawrence Eaton, USA PFC Herman Pete Gonzales, USA PVT Juan Ricardo Hilton, USN SA Glenn Charles Holmes, USA SGT Paul Hubbard, USAF S1 Robert Lee Lincoln, USN (rank unknown) Patrick Marsh, USAF Sgt Ronald McIlvoy, USAF A1C Alexander Wilbert McNeal, USMC Pvt Owen Norten, USMC Cpl Norman E. Shepardson, USA (rank unknown) Milton Smith, USAF/USN (ranks unknown) Ronald Thomas Swafford, USN PO2 Jeffery Walter, and USA SPC Donna J. Norton Church.



(continued)

Also interred was USMC Pvt Louis Meshekey from Taos County, and USA veteran Stanley Phillips from Doña Ana County.

The funeral featured a Flag-Fold Ceremony and 21-Rifle Volley performed by a multi-branch United States Armed Forces Honor Guard. A rendition of Taps was performed by Victor Perry of the Santa Fe Concert Band. General Nava presented the folded American Flag used in the service to Governor Martinez, who accepted it on behalf of the citizens of New Mexico.

The Forgotten Heroes Burial Program was the first state-led collaborative effort in the nation to ensure that unclaimed deceased honorably-discharged veterans receive a military funeral.



LEFT PHOTO: *Members of the American Legion Riders and Patriot Guard Riders escorted the hearse containing the cremated remains of 22 deceased veterans from Daniels Funeral Home in Albuquerque to the Santa Fe National Cemetery.*

RIGHT PHOTO: *Ed "Road Warrior" Kriner was among the members from the two service organizations who then carried the 22 urns from the casket to the funeral site upon arrival at the cemetery.*



LEFT PHOTO: *Flanked by members of a Multi-Branch Military Honor Guard, New Mexico Deputy Adjutant General Ken Nava salutes the Flag and urns containing the unclaimed cremated remains of twenty-two veterans who were laid to rest with full military honors at the Forgotten Heroes Funeral on November 9 at the Santa Fe National Cemetery.*

RIGHT PHOTO: *New Mexico Deputy Adjutant General Ken Nava presents the folded American Flag used in the Flag-Fold ceremony to Governor Susana Martinez. Flanking the Governor are (from her left to right) Santa Fe National Cemetery Director Susan Parks, New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox, and New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Andrew Welch.*

NMDVS Secretary Fox Presents Certificate of Appreciation to Daniels Funeral Home



New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox (*far left*) and State Cemetery Program Director Tom Wagner (*far right*) presented Certificates of Appreciation and *Veterans Coins* to Daniels Family Funeral Services Vice President of New Mexico Operations Mark Schalz (*2nd from left*) and Location Manager Joan Stasi (*3rd from left*) for **the funeral home's role in the November 10 Forgotten Heroes Funeral**

Secretary Fox thanked Daniels Family Funeral Services for donating the urns and use of the hearse to transport and lay to rest the unclaimed cremated remains of the 22 veterans. He also thanked the funeral home for working with law enforcement to ensure the smooth transport of the cremains from the facility in Albuquerque to the Santa Fe National Cemetery.

Bataan Death March Survivor/Former Taos Pueblo Governor Tony Reyna Passes Away

Former two-term Taos Pueblo Governor and Bataan Death March Survivor Tony Reyna passed away in his sleep at his Taos Pueblo home on December 4. He was 100 years old—the oldest remaining Bataan Death March survivor in New Mexico.

Mr. Reyna was one of 1,800 members of the New Mexico National Guard/s 200th and 515th Coast Artillery Units who, while in the middle of a year-long anti-aircraft training exercise in the Philippines, were suddenly thrust into World War II when Japan attacked the Philippines on December 8, 1941. He and the other New Mexico Guardsmen were among 75,000 American and Filipino soldiers captured by Japanese forces on the Bataan Peninsula. The prisoners were made to march roughly 70 miles to be transported to a prison camp where those who survived spent the next 3 1/2 years. The soldiers were subjected to harsh treatment by their captures during the march and while imprisoned. A little more than 900 of the New Mexicans were alive when Japan surrendered to end the war on August 2, 1945.



Tony Reyna

February 1, 1916-December 4, 2016

After the war, Mr. Reyna returned to New Mexico after the war and started a family...and Tony Reyna's Indian Shop in Taos Pueblo in 1950, which in recent years has been run by his son Tony. Mr. Reyna also served two-year terms as Taos Pueblo Governor in 1982 and then again in 1992.

Mr. Reyna was buried with full military honors in the Taos Pueblo Cemetery. With his passing, there are now only 12 surviving 200th/515th unit members.

NMDVS Secretary Fox Helps Lay Wreaths at “*Wreaths Across America*” Ceremony in SFE



New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services Secretary Jack Fox was among the guest speakers at the 2017 Wreaths Across America Christmas tribute at the Santa Fe National Cemetery on December 17.

The ceremony coincided with noon (EDT) ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.—along with ceremonies at all 147 national cemeteries, hundreds private and public cemeteries, and at national cemeteries in 24 other countries.

“Today is a day to remember that the military service of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and Coast Guard service members who are no longer with us is not forgotten this Christmas season,” said Secretary Fox. “Today is a day to remember that Americans are able to safely and freely celebrate the Christmas season...to spend time with family and loved ones....because of the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces.”

Following the ceremony at the Santa Fe National Cemetery, Secretary Fox joined the crowd to place more than 1,000 special Christmas Wreaths at selected gravesites. The wreaths were pre-purchased by family members and friends of deceased veterans—and also by ordinary citizens wishing to honor the service of deceased veterans during the Christmas holiday season.

Wreaths Across America began in 1992 when the Worcester Wreath Company in Massachusetts made arrangements to have a surplus of Christmas Wreaths placed on selected gravesites at the Arlington National Cemetery—our nation's largest burial site for deceased veterans.



The action was repeated the following year, and quickly spread to other national and public cemeteries in the coming years. For more information about the *Wreaths Across America* program, go to <http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org>.

Wreaths Also Placed at Ft. Stanton Merchant Marine & Veterans' Cemetery



In Ft. Stanton, volunteers from the nearby Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts joined local citizens and representatives from other local organizations to place wreaths at selected gravesites at the Ft. Stanton Merchant Marine & Military Cemetery. The wreaths were donated by American Legion Post 79 in Ruidoso.

Construction Progressing On Schedule at the New Ft. Stanton State Veterans Cemetery



Meanwhile, construction is proceeding according to schedule for the new Ft. Stanton State Veterans Cemetery, which is being built on land adjacent to the existing Merchant Marine & Military Cemetery.

Groundbreaking began on Veterans Day, 2015. Completion is scheduled for this spring.

When finished, it will be the first of four proposed new state veterans cemetery launched courtesy of Governor Susana **Martinez's State Cemetery Initiative** launched in the spring of 2013.

Earlier this year, the VA granted priority funding status to an application submitted for a state veterans cemetery in Gallup—and initial planning is already underway. **In the next few years, state veterans' cemeteries are also planned for Angel Fire and Carlsbad.**



Governor Martinez Honors Vietnam Veterans at Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration in Moriarty



Governor Susana Martinez led the official welcome of the four-day stop of *The Moving Wall* in New Mexico last month in Moriarty.

The Governor was the featured speaker at a Welcome Ceremony for the wall on October 21 at Moriarty Civic Park, which hosted the traveling half-sized replica of **the National Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Wall in** Washington, D.C. honoring the service of Americans in the Vietnam War. As with the National Wall, the Moving Wall features the names of 58,200 Americans killed in combat or are still listed as Missing in Action—including 398 New Mexicans who lost their lives, and 12 who are officially missing.

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) assisted Sunset Ministries of Moriarty to host the Welcome Ceremony. NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox welcomed the crowd and introduced the Governor as the featured speaker.

"I would like to thank the city of Moriarty and The Moving Wall organization for bringing this very special traveling monument to New Mexico," said Governor Martinez. "This is truly an amazing gift to the people of New Mexico who may not be able to travel to Washington, D.C., to see the actual wall, but who still want to honor the Vietnam War heroes who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country."

The idea of a traveling wall was created by Vietnam War veterans John Devitt and Gerry Haver after they attended the 1982 dedication of the National Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

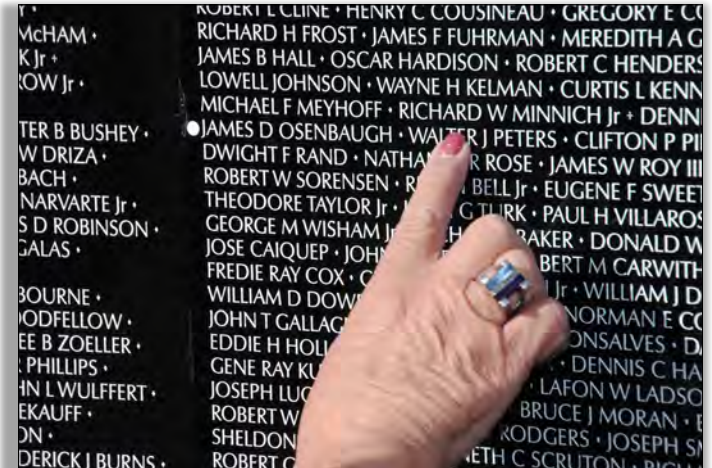


Governor Susana Martinez was the featured speaker at a ceremony welcoming the arrival of "The Moving Wall" to Moriarty on October 21 for a four-day stop at Moriarty Civic Park.



The two vowed to come up with a way to share the powerfully moving experience they felt in the presence of The Wall with, as the Governor mentioned in her remarks, those who do not have the opportunity to travel to our nation's capital.

They enlisted the help of three artists--who were also Vietnam War veterans--to build a half-size replica of The Wall. The first model was finished in October of 1984. A second replica was built shortly after. The two traveling monuments now tour the country every year from April to October.



Vietnam Veterans Honored at 50th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony at State Veterans Home



Resident Vietnam War-era veterans of the State Veterans Home in Truth or Consequences were honored by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) on October 25 at a special 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony.

NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox (*left photo*) and Deputy Secretary Alan Martinez (*below photo*) were joined by several NMDVS staff members to personally thank the 44 resident Vietnam War veterans—each of whom received a Certificate of Appreciation and a 50th Anniversary Commemoration pin.

The ceremony was the third in a planned series of statewide ceremonies presented by the NMDVS as part of a nationwide initiative issued by Secretary of Defense Robert **Gates in 2008 asking states to honor America's Vietnam War veterans**, and to commemorate the pending 50th anniversary of our country's involvement in the war.

Though our country's involvement began in an advisory capacity in the late-1950's, full involvement in the war began in 1965 when the first influx of American ground troops was deployed. A 2012 Presidential Proclamation extended the commemoration through Veterans Day, 2025.



The commemoration make 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 nine million Americans served during the Vietnam War era—including more than three million who served in the southeast Asia region. 58,000 Americans were killed in action—including 398 from New Mexico.

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.



Albuquerque VA Regional Office, NMDVS Host Veterans' Town Hall Meeting in Albuquerque



NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox served as moderator and host for a veterans town hall meeting hosted by the NMDVS and the Albuquerque VA Regional Office on December 19 in Albuquerque.

The Albuquerque VA Regional Office (VARO) and the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services co-hosted a Veterans Benefits Town Hall Meeting in Albuquerque on December 19 at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial.

Acting VA Under Secretary for Benefits Tom Murphy was the featured speaker. He was joined by VA Pacific District Director John Skelly, VARO Director Sammie Quillin, New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Andrew Welch, Santa Fe/Ft. Bayard National Cemeteries Director Susan Parks, and New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox for brief updates on the latest news from their respective departments. The panel also answered questions from the audience.

charge of the VA's Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), which is responsible for the delivery of non-medical benefits programs such as disability compensation, pension and fiduciary benefits, education, home loan guaranty, life insurance, vocational rehab & employment, and transition services.

Leading off the lineup of speakers, Mr. Murphy said one of the most recent projects completed by the VA is the revamping of its phone system—which he said has drastically cut down on the wait time for initial calls to the VBA.

“Our new system has resulted in wait-times for calls into the VAB dropping from an average of six minutes to a minute-and-a-half or less,” said Mr. Murphy. “We’re really proud that veterans now have a quicker response. We understand that there are other delays which may occur once you get into the process. But let me assure you: The VA is also working to cut down on these delays as well.”

Mr. Murphy also went over the latest data for Fiscal Year 2016. He said the VA paid nearly \$74 billion in compensation to 4.6 million beneficiaries. Nearly 500,000 veterans received \$1.3 billion in pensions. More than 1.3 million claims were completed by the VA over the past fiscal year. And he said 6.1 million veterans are now registered e-Benefits users.



Acting VA Under Secretary for Benefits Tom Murphy was the first speaker at the December 19 Veterans Town Hall Meeting in Albuquerque.

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“We are also proud that it now takes, on average, 112 days for us to complete a veterans’ claim,” said Mr. Murphy. “This is a 236-day reduction from a peak wait-period of 348-days just a few years ago. And we’re still working on reducing the wait period even more.”

Mr. Sammie Quillin, who served 25-years in the U.S. Army, was then introduced as the new Albuquerque Regional VA Office Director. He was appointed in October—**coming from the VA’s Buffalo, New York, Regional Office** where he served as the Veterans Service Center Manager.

“I am really excited to be here in the Land of Enchantment,” said Mr. Quillin. “It’s been a longtime dream of mine to be a regional office director. I am anxious to bring my energy and passion to the veterans of New Mexico. Please know that my office door will always be open if you have any questions about your benefits.”

New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Andrew Welch addressed a recent newspaper story reporting on the low ranking of the Albuquerque Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center.

Mr. Welch stressed that the report was released over the summer, and that the hospital had been in the process of addressing some of the issues and complaints—**and that progress has been made since the report’s release.**

“We are aware of the report and continue to work on correcting things which need to be corrected,” said Mr. Welch. “I want the veterans of New Mexico to know that, as was pointed out in the story, it does not reflect the overall care provided to our veterans. You are still receiving top-notch medical care, and you will continue to do so.”



U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-Albuquerque) (left) issues the Oath of Office to Sammie Quillin, who is the new Albuquerque VA Regional Office Director. The ceremony took place on December 20 at the downtown VA Regional Office.



LEFT PHOTO: *Veterans listen as New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) Director Andrew Welch addresses issues and provided updates on the New Mexico VA Health Care System and the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center.*



RIGHT PHOTO: *Acting VA Under Secretary for Benefits Tom Murphy (center, left) and NMVAHCS Director Andrew Welch (center, right) joined the other town hall panelists to meet with veterans at the conclusion of the December 19 Veterans Town Hall Meeting in Albuquerque.*

New Mexico VA Health Care System Takes Delivery of Five New Transportation Vans



The New Mexico VA Health Care System announced the purchase of five new deluxe transportation vans at **a November 9 quarterly meeting of state veterans' service organizations and community partner representatives** hosted by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services.

The media was invited to the brief ceremony at the Albuquerque Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center—where one of the vans was on display. The vans were part of the initial launch of a new NMVAHCS Veterans Transportation Service to provide free transportation for veterans to and from their home

and the medical center, local **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's), or local Vet Centers.**

Each van is capable of carrying eight passengers, including two full-size motorized wheelchairs. They will be based at the Murphy VA Medical Center to serve the metro area and eastern New Mexico. **Two of the vans will begin serving Gallup and Artesia. The new service supplements an existing veterans' transportation network operating with the help of volunteer drivers through the Disabled American Veterans and other organizations.**

“We believe these new vans will make it easier and more comfortable for our veterans to get the care they need,” said NMVAHCS Director Andrew Welch. “The big difference is these vans are more focused on veterans with mobility issues. One of the things that we find with existing transportation services is that they have some limitations.”

The vans will also play a part in a developing plan coordinated by the VAMC, the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, and local transportation agencies to set up a broader statewide **veterans' transportation network to include local bus services, the Rail Runner commuter train, and other transportation systems.**

This much larger transportation plan was announced at a Veterans Transportation Summit hosted by the NMDVS this summer which was attended by representatives from nearly thirty transportation agencies. Some of the key points addressed were: The need to have agency websites linked to each other, developing a main veterans transportation website, the need to reach out to older veterans—many of whom are not computer-savvy and therefore not able to access websites, pursuing federal transportation grant funds, and developing a committee or board to help oversee the issue of providing transportation for veterans.



“Bringing everyone together is a great start,” said NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox at that summer summit. “We will hold more summits on a regular basis, and move forward with developing a program which we can all use to serve the transportation needs of our veterans in the state.”

Freedom Pass **Replaces Veterans' Rail Pass**

Offering Free Rail Runner Rides for Veterans



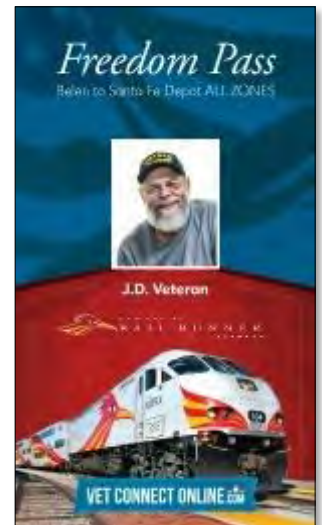
The Rio Metro Regional Transit District is pleased to announce that the Veterans Rail Pass is now being replaced by the *Freedom Pass*. This new pass offers the same free ride aboard the Rail Runner Express Train for veterans—but is a permanent pass which does not **require an annual renewal like the previous veterans' pass.**

The same free connecting bus services by ABQ Ride, Santa Fe Trails, and Rio Metro buses will continue to be honored by the new Freedom Pass. (Just as with the previous pass, however, Dial-a-Ride services in Rio Rancho or Valencia County are not covered by the Freedom Pass.)

Any veteran with a current Veterans Annual Train Pass or a VA Health Card (VHIC) qualifies for the new Freedom Pass. You can take your VHIC or older veterans pass to any of the following locations to pick up your new Freedom Pass: The New Mexico Rail Runner Express Customer Service office at 809 Copper Avenue NW in downtown Albuquerque, the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, Ecomotive Electric Bikes in Santa Fe, the Los Lunas Transportation Center, or participating Native American pueblos.

Veterans needing the VHIC can stop by the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center to register for the card.

For more information about the new Freedom Pass, call the Rio Metro Regional Transit District office toll-free at 1-(866) 795-7245 or go to its website at <http://riometro.org/rider-tools/veterans-pass>.



Toll-Free *VetConnect* Help Line

VetConnect is a toll-free telephone statewide resource for **information about transportation options and other veterans' resources** available for veterans and their families. It was developed in large part by the Rural Veterans Coordination Program (RVCP) of the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services as part of the department's mission to better serve the state's rural-area veterans. The VetConnect toll-free number is 1-(800) 672-7006 24-hours a day/7-days a week/ 365-days a year.

RIGHT PHOTO: Billboards advertising the toll-free VetConnect phone number can now be found on transit system buses in many communities around the state—such as this NMDOT Park & Ride bus.



NMDVS Takes Part in “Stand Down” for Homeless Veterans in Albuquerque



Homeless and near-homeless veterans received free clothing, food and services at “Stand Downs” this fall in seven New Mexico cities.

The largest of the seven stand downs was the two-day 2016 *Project Stand Down & Hand Up* on October 27 and 28 at the Rock at Noon Day in downtown Albuquerque lead by the New Mexico Veterans Integration Center. More than 500 needy veterans were treated to breakfast & a hot lunch served by the New Mexico National Guard. Free clothing, backpacks, shoes and bedding were also available—as were hygiene kits, flu shots, basic medical screening, legal consultation,

haircuts and many other goods and services.

New Mexico Department of Veterans Services staff assisted veterans with filing for their VA and state veterans’ benefits. Representatives from the NMWS offered employment assistance.

Similar stand downs were held in Artesia, Carlsbad, Española, Farmington, Gallup, Santa Fe, and Durango, Colorado which were presented by other state, federal, and local/private agencies.



ABOVE PHOTO—From L to R, at right in black shirts: NMDVS Woman Veterans Program Coordinator Melanie Suazo, NMDVS Veterans Health Care Director Mitchell Lawrence, NMDVS Rural Veterans Coordination Program/NE Region Coordinator John Griego, and NMDVS Rural Veterans Coordination Program Director Ed Mendez offered assistance at the NMDVS table.



LEFT PHOTO— NMDVS Santa Fe-based Veterans Service Officer Jeff George assisted veterans at the December 9 Stand Down for homeless/near-homeless veterans in Española at Northern New Mexico College Gymnasium

Veterans Day Celebrated in Communities Throughout New Mexico



NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox and his wife Marvina were among the special guests at the annual Veterans Day ceremony at American Legion Post 90 in Los Alamos.

Veterans Day was celebrated in ceremonies and events on Friday, November 11—and in some cases, the preceding week or following weekend—in communities throughout New Mexico.

New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox was the featured speaker at the annual Veterans Day ceremony at American Legion Post 90 in Los Alamos.

The Secretary thanked veterans for their service for our country—reminding them that they are a part of a very small group of Americans who have helped shape our country today through their sacrifice and willingness to die for our country in order to protect it. He also **reminded them about the important role our state's earliest veterans have played in our nation's history.**

"I want to point out that New Mexicans served in the Civil War. We sometimes overlook that. Just a few hours from here, in Glorieta--and further south in Valverde, New Mexico—our boys died for this country," said Secretary Fox. **"Our legacy as New Mexicans has been paid in blood as well."**

He asked the general public to also remember the service, sacrifice, and legacy of the men and women who have served in our nation's Armed Forces.

"When you see a soldier, or a sailor, or an airman, or a marine... take a little time to think about who they are, what they were willing to give. This is a great country. It was a country born on the backs of great men and women who were willing to put on a soldier's hat and do the difficult and give all so we could be here today."



Members of the Los Alamos High School JROTC Rifle Squad (LEFT PHOTO) and Color Guard (RIGHT PHOTO) had the honor of presenting The Colors and performing the ceremonial 21-Rifle Volley at the Los Alamos Veterans Day ceremony at VFW Post 90.

Other Veterans Day Ceremonies

Santa Fe-Parade & Ceremony



World War II Navy Veteran Joe Medina (**ABOVE LEFT PHOTO**) was among the more than two dozen participants in the annual Veterans Day Parade (**ABOVE RIGHT PHOTO**) in downtown Santa Fe—which began near Ft. Marcy, proceeded through the Plaza, and ended at the Santa Fe Veterans Memorial adjacent to the Bataan Memorial Building (**BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTO**).



LEFT PHOTO: Crewmembers of the nuclear powered U.S. Navy submarine U.S.S. Santa Fe (SSN-763) attended the Santa Fe Veterans Day ceremony—and were given a hearty round of applause after being acknowledged as special guests.
BELOW PHOTO: The 362-foot long Los Angeles-class attack sub was commissioned in January of 1994 and is homeported in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.



Santa Fe-Sock Drive



The City of Santa Fe Senior Corps Volunteer Programs wrapped up its two-month "9/11 to 11/11 Sock Drive for Veterans in Need. Program volunteers collected 715 pairs of socks, which were then donated to the Santa Fe Vet Center and the Mission VetPossible Stand Down for Homeless/Near-Homeless Veterans on Veterans Day.

(Photo Courtesy of Triston Lovato-Armstrong/City Santa Fe Community Relations Administrator)

Albuquerque-Bullhead Park



Meticulously restored vintage military vehicles along with soldiers representing several wars gathered at USS Bullhead Memorial Park in Albuquerque for the start of the annual Veterans Day Parade sponsored by the Roadrunner Convoy of the New Mexico Vehicle Preservation Association. *(Photo Courtesy of Kelly Hunt/Roadrunner Convoy)*

Albuquerque-Parade



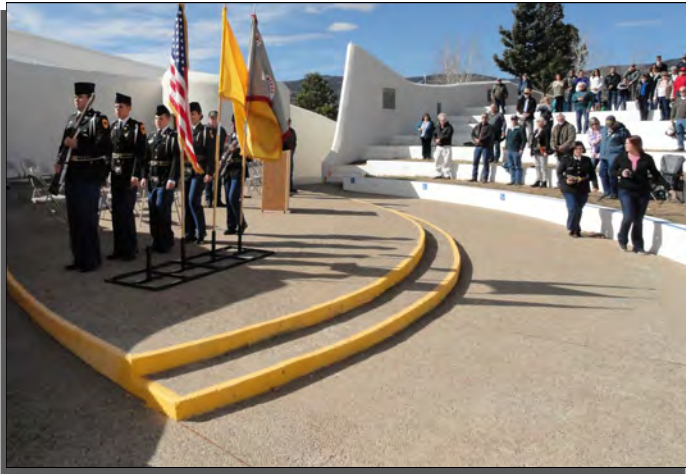
The Vehicles and association members were then joined by other civic groups as they marched from USS Bullhead Memorial Park to the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center...on the way to the parade endpoint at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial. *(Photo Courtesy of Bill Armstrong/Public Information Officer, New Mexico VA Health Care System)*

Albuquerque-Ceremony



For the sixth consecutive year, the Donald & Sally-Alice Thompson Chapter 63 of Veterans for Peace tolled the Armistice Bell at the Annual Veterans Day Ceremony at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial in Albuquerque. The bell was solemnly rung eleven times precisely at 11a.m. Chapter Secretary and National Board Member Monique Salhab. The annual ceremony was once again organized and directed by the United Veterans Council of New Mexico. The 200-pound bell was on loan from the University of NM Alumni Lettermen's Association for the ceremony. *(Photo courtesy of Charles Powell)*

Angel Fire



The New Mexico Military Institute Color Guard had the honor of Posting the Colors at the annual Veterans Day Ceremony in Angel Fire at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park Amphitheater. *(photo courtesy of Naomi Ortega/Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park)*

Carlsbad



Tammi Thomas and Debbie Graves visit the gravesite of their brother, U.S. Marine LCpl John Allman, who was among the 241 American service members killed in the October 23, 1983 Beirut barracks terrorist bomb explosion. It was the first time in more than a decade that the two sisters have visited their brother's grave at the Carlsbad Cemetery. Several of his former school classmates (*background*) joined the sisters for the visit. *(photo courtesy of Dagmar Youngberg/NMDVS Carlsbad Veterans Service Officer)*

Española



Veterans of Foreign Wars District 6 Commander Christopher Archuleta served as the Master of Ceremonies at the annual Veterans Day Ceremony in Española at the city's Veterans Memorial Wall. Commander Archuleta, a New Mexico Army National Guard Veteran, served a tour in Iraq as part of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. *(photo courtesy of VFW Post 5610)*

Ft. Bayard



New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Director of Field Operations Ken Adair (*right*) had the honor of speaking the annual Veterans Day ceremony at the Ft. Bayard National Cemetery. Among the other guests were _____ (*left*), and World War II U.S. Army paratrooper Dan McBride (*middle*). The three-time Purple Heart Recipient was a member of the 101st Airborne Division's 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment who saw combat action in both the D-Day Allied invasion of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge. *(Photo Courtesy of Ken Adair)*

Hobbs



The next generation of Veterans?

Members of VFW Post 3274's *Little Patriots* attended the annual Veterans Day Parade and Ceremony in Hobbs. (photo courtesy of Sid Barrett)

Las Vegas



New Mexico Highlands University exercise and Sport Sciences professor Jay Lee, right, and Raymond Sanchez, an ITV engineer with Educational Outreach Services, were honored for their military service during a Veterans Day ceremony at sponsored by the NMHU Alumni Office. Professor Lee served four years of active duty during the Vietnam War as U.S. Marine Corporal. Mr. Sanchez served 21 years with the New Mexico Army National Guard—including service in Afghanistan from 2009-2010. (photo courtesy of Margaret McKinney/Media Relations, New Mexico Highlands University)

Las Cruces



LEFT PHOTO: Members of American Legion Post 10 were among the dozens of veterans and community members taking part in the annual Veterans Day Parade in Las Cruces. (photo courtesy of Roy Martin/Adjutant, American Legion Post 10)



RIGHT PHOTO: Women veterans were honored at Seventh Annual St. Paul's Salute to the Armed Forces celebration on Veterans Day at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Las Cruces. Members from *United Military Women of the South-West* were among the 200 people attending the ceremony—including (from L to R): Carol Gaines/USMC veteran, Elsa Baker/USAF (ret.), Capt Natalia Serrano/New Mexico ANG, Debra Tallent/USN (ret.), and Mary Ancker/USA (ret.). (photo courtesy of Debra Tallent/United Military Women of the SouthWest)

Roswell



LEFT PHOTO: In Roswell, students at Goddard High School invited veterans to attend the school's 10th Annual Veterans Day School Assembly on November 10—which according to school officials has become one of the most popular events of the year. *(Photo Courtesy of Jim Cassidy/NMDVS Rural Veterans Coordination Program SE Region Coordinator)*

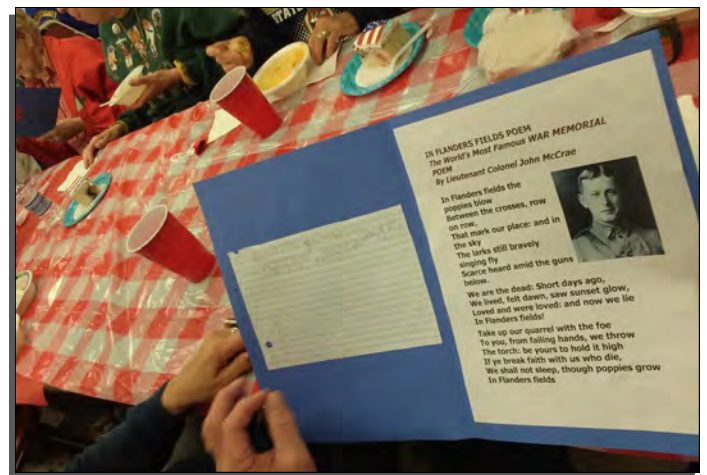
RIGHT PHOTO: At the New Mexico Military Institute, students and invited veterans enjoyed the school's annual Veterans Day Breakfast—which is also one of the most popular events at the institute. *(Photos Courtesy of Jim Cassidy/NMDVS Rural Veterans Coordination Program SE Region Coordinator)*



Ruidoso



LEFT PHOTO: At 11:11am in Ruidoso, an American Flag previously owned by the late former longtime American Legion Post 79 Commander Romeo Klein was raised in a solemn ceremony at the Ruidoso Community Center.



RIGHT PHOTO: Local merchants donated food and funding for a free luncheon inside the community center. Students from Mrs. Rachael Lutterman's Second Grade Class from Sierra Vista Primary School read the classic World War I poem *In Flanders Fields* and several personal handwritten messages of gratitude. *(Photo Courtesy of Judy Sarabia/Ruidoso Community Center Coordinator)*

Taos



LEFT PHOTO: In Taos, VFW Post 3259 Fernandez De Taos & Auxiliary hosted the annual Veterans Day Ceremony in the town plaza. Afterwards, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and the Town of Taos co-hosted a luncheon in the church gymnasium. Several local businesses and individuals paid for or donate the food. *(Photo Courtesy of Bonnie Raymond & Jim Cox)*



RIGHT PHOTO: Members of the AmeriCorps Rocky Mountain Youth Corps teams from Albuquerque and Taos were among the many volunteers who donated their time help with the Veterans Day ceremony. *(Photo Courtesy of Don Peters/ Executive Director, Not Forgotten Outreach)*

Truth or Consequences



At the state veterans home in Truth or Consequences, the Hot Springs High School JROTC Color Guard had the honor of Posting the Colors at the facility's annual Veterans Day Ceremony. The 135-bed facility is the state's only primary veterans residential home and is available for any honorably-discharged veteran or parents of honorably-discharged veterans needing long-term care. *(Photo Courtesy of Carol Wilson/State Veterans Home Admission Coordinator)*

Zuni Pueblo



Members of the Zuni Veterans Association joined other pueblo residents to celebrate Veterans Day on the site of Zuni Veterans Memorial Park, which recently completed the first phase of construction. The park is being built on pueblo land about 40-miles south of Gallup and is scheduled to be finished by mid-2017. *(Photo Courtesy of Zuni Pueblo Governor Val R. Panteah, Sr.)*

Office of NMDVS Santa Fe Veterans Service Officer Moves to New Location



Jeff George
*NMDVS Santa Fe-Based
Veterans Service Officer*

The office of the Santa Fe-based Veterans Service Officer of the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) has moved to a new location.

NMDVS Veterans Service Officer Jeff George's is now located on the second floor of the Santa Fe Workforce Connection building at 301 W. De Vargas Street. As with all sixteen NMDVS 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. George at jeff.george@state.nm.us or (505) 827-7492.

"This new location provides us a better opportunity to serve the veterans and their dependents in the Santa Fe area," said NMDVS Secretary Jack Fox. "It is still centrally located--but offers better parking, and should make for a much better experience for those who need our services."

There is free parking provided in the building's parking lot, as well as metered parking along Sandoval Street.

The NMDVS State Veterans Benefits and the Finance/Accounting divisions remain in their current location in the Bataan Memorial Building. The NMDVS Office of the Cabinet Secretary also remains at its current location at 406 Don Gaspar Ave.

NMDVS to Begin Guadalupe County Outreach Visits

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (NMDVS) will begin hosting weekly veterans' outreach visits next month at the new Guadalupe County Veterans Memorial & Community Center located at 720 Lake Drive in Santa Rosa.

NMDVS Veterans Service Officers Karen Abeyta and Matt Barela will be joined by NMDVS Rural Veterans Coordination Program Northeast Region Coordinator Sarah Cantu in alternating weekly outreach stops beginning January 11th from 10am-3pm to answer questions about or assist with filing for VA or state veterans' benefits. Veterans are asked to bring a copy of their DD-214 military separation papers in order to help expedite any filing assistance processes. No appointments are necessary. Service will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Below is the schedule:

Matt: Jan. 11th & 25th; Feb. 8th & 22nd; Mar. 8th, & 22nd; April 5th & 19th; May 3rd & 17th & 31st; June 14th & 28th. Matthew.barela@state.nm.us (575) 762-6185

Karen: Jan. 18th; Feb. 1st & 15th; Mar. 1st & 15th & 29th; April 12th & 26th; May 10th & 24th; June 7th & 21st. Karen.abeyta@state.nm.us (575) 474-0068

Sarah: sarah.bustos@state.nm.us (505) 796-2109

NM Veterans Business Center Director Retires

New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) Director Joseph Long has announced his retirement, effective December 23.

Mr. Long has been serving as director since 2011, when he accepted the **position just seven months into his “first” retirement**—as project manager for the U.S. Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, VA.

Tasked with helping entrepreneurial-**minded veterans start or “grow”** a small business, Mr. Long is credited with expanding the role and reach of the VBOC, which was created by the NMDVS through a U.S. Small Business Administration grant in 2010 to provide counseling and assistance for veterans who want to own their own business.

In 2015 (2016 data has not yet been tabulated) the VBOC helped create 16 new veteran-owned businesses. In addition, the center provided 134 private one-on-one business consultations.



Joseph C. Long
*Outgoing Director, NM Veterans
Business Outreach Center*

Mr. Long and his staff were also busy on the road--**presenting 36 “Boots to Business” seminars to help guide 640 transitioning active-duty veterans** at military bases in New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado, and western Texas. In addition, the VBOC presented eight *On the Road/On the Rees* business development workshops attended by more than 200 veterans—and co-sponsored the annual New Mexico Veterans Business Conference attended by 225 veterans.

“Joe and his VBOC staff have been an invaluable resource for veterans who want to realize the American Dream by starting and running their own business,” said New Mexico Department of Veterans Services Secretary Jack Fox. **“Under his leadership, the VBOC has been recognized as the top center in the nation for helping business-minded veterans.”**



A delighted NMVBOC Director Joe Long shows off a fishing pole given to him by VBOC staff at a retirement luncheon for him in Albuquerque on December 6.

This spring, the U.S. Small Business Administration did indeed recognize Mr. Long and his staff as the top VBOC in the nation at its annual Small Business Week Luncheon in Washington, D.C.

As for retirement plans? In a feature story this fall in the Albuquerque Journal, Mr. Long admitted that he **“does not do idle”** particularly well.

“I have just created a new LLC for myself as a consultant, so we’ll see what I do,” he says. **“I don’t see myself sitting down and watching TV or reading a book all the time. Some fishing is definitely in the plans, too.”**

A search for his replacement is currently ongoing.

“Whoever it is will have some really big shoes to fill,” said Secretary Fox. **I really appreciate all Joe has done, and wish him nothing but the best in his well-earned retirement.”**

The NMDVS Women Veterans Program



More women are enlisting in the United States Armed Forces. And unlike the past, women are not simply relegated to desk, hospital, or administrative jobs. Women today are serving as pilots, captains of ships, leaders of units, senior-ranking officers—and other positions which were traditionally only filled by males.

According to data provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), women represent the fastest growing segment of the overall veteran population in our country. The data indicates there are 2,051,484 women veterans in America—about 9.5% of the total veteran population of 21.3 million.

The latest VA data shows there are 17,173 women veterans in New Mexico—an increase of 217 women veterans from last year's total.

As our women warriors retire or fulfill their military commitments, the country must be ready to fulfill its obligation by not only providing them benefits as veterans—but also as *women* veterans coming home to a husband & family, dealing with women's health issues, Military Sexual Trauma, and other issues and concerns unique to women.

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services recognizes this challenge, and has created a Women Veterans Program Division to plan, develop, implement, and coordinate policy and events to help women veterans.

The program's goal is to improve the awareness of women veterans about their eligibility for VA and state veterans' benefits—as well as programs and resources available to women veterans.



Melanie Suazo
NMDVS Women Veterans
Program Coordinator

The program's coordinator assesses the needs of New Mexico women veterans, and makes recommendations to the NMDVS Cabinet Secretary regarding existing benefits and possible future benefit options and related programs.

For more information about the Women Veterans Program and for help with filing for veterans, please contact Women Veterans Program Coordinator Melanie Suazo at melanieA.suazo@state.nm.us or (505) 827-6370.

As part of the department's effort to reach out to women veterans, *The Guardian* will begin featuring a segment dedicated to women veterans—highlighting the latest news and providing information about women veterans' issues.



National Survey Shows Most Female Veterans Feel Their Service **Isn't Adequately Recognized**

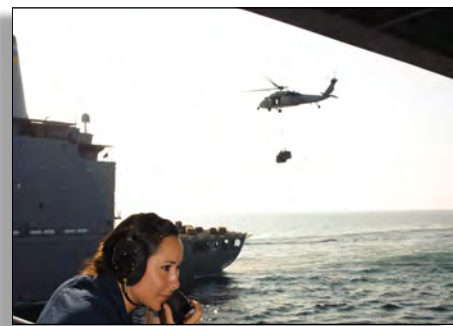


A new survey of female military veterans and service members shows most perceive the public doesn't recognize or value their service the way it does their male counterparts, and their contribution isn't adequately portrayed in the news and entertainment media. The survey, conducted by the advocacy group Service Women's Action Network, includes nearly 1,000 service women and veterans from 49 states representing all states, with both officers and enlisted troops represented.

Nearly three-quarters of respondents, 74 percent, said they believe their service isn't publicly recognized. They said they most wanted the public to know more about their leadership and contributions, their stories and experience, and the challenges they face. About two-thirds, or 68 percent, of respondents said the military was responsible for building this awareness, while more than half, or 57 percent, said they wanted veteran service organizations to tell their story.

Among other dramatic findings was that 71 percent of those surveyed didn't belong to a veteran service organization, a possible symptom of a perceived disconnect between the male-focused community they offer and the needs of female veterans. One-third of survey respondents said that they actually didn't feel welcome in existing veteran service organizations, and more than half, 51 percent, said they hadn't been informed about membership opportunities for these organizations. But nearly all of those surveyed, or 97 percent, said they would welcome the opportunity to participate in an organization focused specifically on the issues facing female troops and women veterans. The survey also highlighted a broad perception among women who have served that the media and pop culture often got their story wrong.

Two-thirds of respondents, or 68 percent, said media outlets fail to include women in uniform when reporting on war or veterans' issues. Almost the same percentage, or 66 percent, said they don't believe media coverage of service women and women veterans is accurate and balanced. In entertainment, a dramatic 82 percent of service women and female veterans don't believe their depiction in TV and film is accurate and balanced, and 78 percent said the entertainment industry fails to include them when depicting scenes of war or life as a veteran.



Women still in uniform listed gender bias as a top challenge, both in personal life and community. Job and assignment opportunities presented another top personal challenge, they said, while sexual harassment and assault was among the top three community challenges they listed. Veteran respondents said mental health and the difficulty of connecting to a community of other female veterans were among their top personal concerns. This is the first national-scale survey for SWAN focused on identifying challenges facing women who served, the organization's chief executive officer, Judy Patterson said in a statement.

"This data is hugely helpful to SWAN as we set our programmatic and policy agendas in 2017, but it also has significant value to the broader community, as we lack nuanced insights into rapidly growing community of military women," she said. "SWAN will be sharing the full data from this survey with a number of other veterans groups, and will be tailoring our efforts moving forward to ensure that the voices of all of these women are heard and heeded."

A Call to Focus Efforts on the Mental Health of Women Veterans

Story courtesy of the VA's Center for Women Veterans (CWW)

Story author Elisa Borah is an associate research professor in the School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin. She conducts research to improve programs and services for the military, veterans and their families.



The recent election of the highest number of women into the U.S. Senate is a harbinger of change to come in public policy affecting all of us. They will govern alongside one of the largest numbers of women elected to public office, and they will work with an increasing number of female top military leaders in our armed forces.

And with this growing influence of women, we have an opportunity to make significant progress in addressing the mental health problems of our female veterans. Our nation must address the hard realities that

many female veterans struggle with. Of particular concern is the alarming rate of female veteran suicide. According to a recent study by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), since 2001, the age-adjusted rate of suicide among male veterans has increased 30.5 percent. In comparison, the age-adjusted rate of suicide among female veterans has increased 85.2 percent. And among veteran women ages 18 to 29, the risk of suicide is 12 times the rate of non-veteran women.

It is clear that gender-specific interventions are needed to support our female veterans. Our new female leadership in this country must respond to the challenges facing female service members and veterans. One approach is to enact new laws. A bill introduced this year by U.S. Rep. Julia Brownley of California--the Female Veterans Suicide Prevention bill--would require the VA to identify mental health and suicide prevention programs that are most effective for female veterans and disseminate the guidance to providers within the VA. This is a good step. In addition, better access to trauma-focused care is needed because **women's trauma groups at the VA are woefully understaffed and under-funded.**



We also need to better understand how women experience military service. Often, the mental health and substance abuse problems female veterans suffer stem from the trauma of military sexual assault, in addition to the trauma of warfare. In 2014, about 20,300 military service members (approximately 10,600 men and 9,600 women) were sexually assaulted, a rate unchanged from 2010. **And women's experiences are different.** Sixty-two percent of women who reported a sexual assault faced retaliation from superiors and commanders. A third of victims are discharged after reporting, on average within seven months of making a

report. In 2015, of cases (for men and women) where the military could take action, only 20 percent were prosecuted and just 9 percent of offenders were convicted of a sex offense.

(continued on next page)

Women who serve in the military are strong, courageous, trailblazing women. Yet, many don't identify as veterans because they did not serve in combat roles, and/or were socialized to defer to their husbands' or commanders' service as more important than their own. As a result, many don't enroll for well-deserved benefits from the Veterans Health Administration.

Our military can lead the way in how our society supports its families. The military is a mirror of our larger society but also a model for us to follow in pursuit of our best self. One place to start is to ensure gender-specific screening for mental health and substance use problems, as well as gender-focused employment training and education supports during veterans' transition to civilian life. We also must support our service members by recognizing their unique roles as parents and by giving them necessary time for bonding and nurturing with newborns and young children.

As the military and the VA continue to broaden their gender-specific policies in how they support women, they offer all of us a vision for a future in which all people are truly treated equally. With the growing diversity represented in our elected and military leaders, we are prepared to reach our potential more than ever in our history.

Number of Women Veterans in New Mexico: 17,173



Counties With the Most Women Veterans

<u>County</u>	<u>Women Veteran Population</u>
1. Bernalillo	5,873
2. Doña Ana	1,587
3. Sandoval	1,237
4. San Juan	1,107
5. Otero	1,046
6. Santa Fe	1,001
7. Valencia	668
8. Curry	524
9. McKinley	473
10. Chaves	472

“Superwomen’s Group” Formed at Albuquerque Medical Center to Encourage Exercise

Story Provided Courtesy of New Mexico VA Health Care System PIO William Armstrong



In a small gym on the second floor of the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, four women stand in a circle, moving their arms forward and backward as they march in place. This same activity could be happening during a pre-dawn physical training (PT) session on any Army post. But all of these women are veterans and over the age of 65. They are doing PT now because they want to –not because they have to.

The Women’s Wellness Group meets on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and Saturday mornings in the Albuquerque facility’s physical therapy gym. Following their Saturday morning workout, the women go

outdoors for a one-hour walk either on the VA campus or at nearby Bullhead Memorial Park. They’re joined at the gym by a VA physical therapist, a recreational therapist, an occupational therapist or a medical doctor.

The program, informally labeled by its members as the “Superwomen’s Group,” began in June of 2015. Each new member is given a T-shirt, gym bag, and water bottle. The medical doctor in charge of the program is Dr. Janice Kando of the New Mexico VA Health Care System’s Ambulatory Care Service.

“The women who have been participating in the VA women’s wellness program have seen improvement in their strength and stamina, which have been measured by the physical therapists,” said Dr. Kando. “Many have noted that the exercise program has made them more functional at home by improving their balance and strength, which has resulted in fewer falls and the ability to walk longer and faster.”

The group’s minimum age recently was dropped from 65 to 55 in order to encourage more women to participate. Getting up and moving about provides a long list of benefits.

“Regular exercise is important for older adults because it improves strength, balance, and function. It also can improve sleep and mood, and reduce chronic pain,” said Dr. Kando.

Other benefits of regular exercise include improved mobility, reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, reduced cognitive decline, and reduced likelihood of falls and fall-related injuries. Activities for the group may be expanding.

“In the future, we’re hoping to do some hiking events,” said Barb Tremmel, a VA Recreation Therapy Assistant. “And we also hope to plan a zip-lining trip in the near future. We try to get people to come and teach classes, as well. We’re trying to make it an overall wellness kind of group.”

Women veterans interested in joining this group can call (505) 265-1711, ext. 4208.

NMDVS Health/Safety Segment: Winter Safety Tips from the American Red Cross

Now that winter is officially here—and as temperatures continue to drop--the American Red Cross offers the following safety tips to prepare for the difficulties presented by the cold weather, and how you can prevent accidents or serious injuries.

IF YOU GET STRANDED WHILE DRIVING

- Before heading out on a vehicle trip—no matter how short it may seem—**it's a good idea to be aware of the forecasted weather or road conditions.** Check with your favorite TV station websites or the National Weather Service for weather conditions.
- Bring a fully-charged smartphone and cigarette-lighter charger & cable for your phone.
- **If you haven't done it yet, stock some extra water bottles, food/ snacks, emergency road flares/reflectors, matches/lighter/flame sticks, flashlights, batteries, and blankets in your vehicle.**
- If you get stuck in the snow while driving, stay with the car. Do not try to walk to safety.
- Tie a brightly colored cloth (preferably red) to the antenna for rescuers to see.
- Start the car and use the heater for about 10 minutes every hour. Keep the exhaust pipe clear so fumes won't back up in the car.
- Leave the overhead light on when the engine is running to help rescuers see the vehicle.
- Keep one window away from the blowing wind slightly open to let in air.



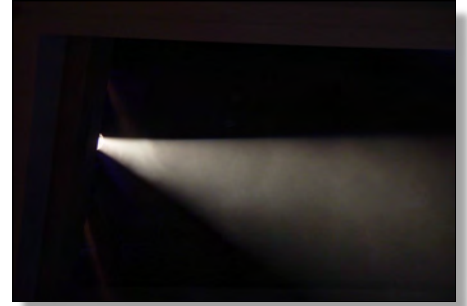
IF YOU VENTURE OUTSIDE



- Wear layered lightweight clothing to keep warm. This works better than a single heavy coat. Gloves (or mittens) and a hat will prevent loss of body heat. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs. Wear waterproof, insulated boots to keep your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow. You should also:
 - Walk carefully on snowy, icy, sidewalks.
 - Be extremely careful when shoveling snow. Take frequent breaks and stay hydrated. Avoid overexertion.
- Understand the hazards of wind chill, which combines the effect of wind and cold temperatures on exposed skin.
- Seek medical attention immediately if you have symptoms of hypothermia, such as confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering.
- Also seek immediate medical attention if you have symptoms of frostbite including numbness, flushed gray, white, blue or yellow skin discoloration, numbness, or waxy feeling skin.

SAFETY AT HOME

- If the power goes out, use flashlights or battery-powered lanterns to provide light. Do not use candles or kerosene lamps for lighting.
- **Make sure you have flashlights & batteries in a place that's readily accessible**—especially in darkness.
- **Don't forget about your pets! Bring them indoors. If that's not possible, provide adequate shelter to keep them warm and make sure they can get to unfrozen water.** Other tips include:
- Prevent frozen pipes. When the weather is very cold outside, open cabinet doors to let warm air circulate around water pipes. Let the cold water slowly drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe - even at a trickle - helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- Keep the thermostat set to a consistent temperature.
- Never use a stove or oven to heat your home.
- Keep a glass or metal fire screen around the fireplace and never leave a fireplace fire unattended.



- **If using a space heater, follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to safely use the heater.** Place it on a level, hard, nonflammable surface. Turn the space heater off when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Keep children and pets away from your space heater. Do not use it to dry wet clothing.
- Use a sturdy fire screen around fireplaces when in use. Burn only wood - never burn paper or pine boughs.

- Use generators correctly —never operate a generator inside your home, including the basement or garage. Do not hook up a generator directly to your home's wiring. The safest thing to do is to connect the equipment you want to power directly to the outlets on the generator.
- Before winter—and throughout the year—check smoke alarms once a month by pressing the test button and replacing batteries as necessary.



- **Don't overload your electrical outlets.**



- Have a heating professional thoroughly inspect your furnace and ducting system—especially if you have an older-**model furnace and can't** remember the last time you had your system checked. Instances of carbon monoxide poisoning rise dramatically during the winter months.
- Learn more about carbon monoxide poisoning—the silent killer—and how to prevent, recognize, and treat it.

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) 383-2415 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>	<i>Artesia*</i>	<i>Aztec*</i>
<i>(Las Cruces Office Outreach)</i> George Vargas (575) 524-6124 george.vargas@state.nm.us	<i>(Carlsbad Office Outreach)</i> Dagmar Youngberg (575) 885-4939 dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us	<i>(Farmington Office Outreach)</i> Beverly Charley (505) 327-2861 beverly.charley@state.nm.us
CARLSBAD	<i>Clayton*</i>	CLOVIS
Dagmar Youngberg 101 N. Halagueno (575) 885-4939 dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us	<i>(Raton Office Outreach)</i> Gary Fresquez (575) 445-8282 gary.fresquez@state.nm.us	Matthew Barela 904 W. 6th Street (575) 762-6185 matthew.barela@state.nm.us
<i>Cuba*</i>	<i>Deming*</i>	<i>Española*</i>
<i>(Albuquerque Office Outreach)</i> Gordon Schei (505) 383-2409 gordon.schei@state.nm.us	<i>(Silver City Office Outreach)</i> Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	<i>(Taos Office Outreach)</i> Michael Pacheco (575) 758-9624 michael.pacheco1@state.nm.us
FARMINGTON	GALLUP	GRANTS
Beverly Charley 101 West Animas/Room 104 (505) 327-2861 beverly.charley@state.nm.us	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
HOBBS	<i>Holloman AFB*</i>	LAS CRUCES #1
Dalton Boyd 2120 N. Alto Street (575) 397-5290 dalton.boyd@state.nm.us	<i>(Alamogordo Office Outreach)</i> Tony Woodards (575) 437-4635 anthony.woodards@state.nm.us	J.R. Turner 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6220 jr.turner@state.nm.us

LAS CRUCES #2	LAS VEGAS	Lordsburg*
George Vargas 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6124 george.vargas@state.nm.us	Karen Abeyta 917 Douglas Avenue (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	(Silver City Office Outreach) Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us
Los Lunas*	Mora*	Quemado*
(Albuquerque #1 Office Outreach) Theresa Zuni (505) 346-4810 theresa.zuni@state.nm.us	(Las Vegas, NM Office Outreach) Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	(Silver City Office Outreach) Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us
RATON	Reserve*	ROSWELL
Gary Fresquez 200 N. 3rd St. (575) 445-8282 gary.fresquez@state.nm.us	(Silver City Office Outreach) Bradley Brock (575) 538-2377 bradleya.brock@state.nm.us	Richard Moncrief 1600 SE Main St. (575) 624-6086 richard.moncrief@state.nm.us
Ruidoso*	SANTA FE	Santa Rosa*
(Alamogordo Office Outreach) Tony Woodards (575) 437-4635 anthony.woodards@state.nm.us	Jeff George 301 W. DeVargas 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