



The Guardian

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

www.nmdvs.org

1-(866) 433-8387 toll-free

August , 2019

DVS Names New Women Veterans Program Manager



Tracie Brasier
*DVS Women Veterans
Program Manager*

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) has named Tracie Brasier as its Women Veterans Program Manager.

She comes to the agency directly after retiring from the New Mexico Air National Guard and Active Guard Reserves (AGR) as a Senior Master Sergeant with 23 years of wide-ranging aircraft maintenance experience and special duty assignments in recruiting and retention.

As the New Mexico Air National Guard transitioned from a fighter mission to the 58 Special Operations Wing under the Total Force Integration (TFI) Program, Ms. Brasier continued her Engine Quality Assurance career under the 150 Special Operation Wing (SOW) and its new complement of CV-22 Osprey, C-130 Talon, King, and C-130J, Air Education Command (AETC) aircraft. In 2013, she was promoted to Propulsion Flight Chief and assigned to Queen Bee, servicing UH-1N-T400, UH-60-T700 and C-130-T56 engine/props in support of 12 bases and 6 MAJCOMs around the world.

Her leadership experience and attention to detail is what made Ms. Brasier stand out from a strong field of candidates applying for the vacant DVS position, said DVS Secretary Judy Griego.

“Tracie demonstrated a strong work ethic and strong sense of teamwork throughout her career with the Air Guard,” said Secretary Griego, who while serving as Brigadier General in the Air Guard often crossed paths with Sr. Master Sgt. Brasier. “She will really help DVS improve our outreach and service to women veterans in New Mexico.”

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), women are the fastest-growing segment in the military. There more than 1.8 million women veterans in America—about 9.5% of the total veteran population of more than 19.9 million. As recently as twenty years ago, women made up less than 5% of our nation’s veteran population. According to the VA, there are 16,540 women veterans—nearly 11% of the state’s overall veteran population.

“I am honored to be the Women Veterans’ Program Manager, and am committed to reaching out to women veterans throughout New Mexico to increase their awareness of their state and federal benefits,” said Ms. Brasier. “I will advocate for changes needed to recognize the unique challenges facing women accessing the benefits, programs, and services they have EARNED through their service and sacrifice to our country. “

Women veterans needing help with their federal VA or state benefits needs can contact Tracie at tracie.brasier2@state.nm.us or (505) 383-2431.

DVS Farmington Office Moves to New Location



Beverly Charley
*DVS-based Farmington
Veterans Service Officer*

The DVS Farmington/Four Corners office has moved to a new location.

DVS Veterans Service Officer Beverly Charley is now located on the campus of San Juan College—located at 4601 College Blvd.—in the Veterans Center, Room 1715B. As with all thirteen DVS field offices statewide, walk-ins are welcome—but veterans needing assistance with

federal VA or state veterans benefits are encouraged to schedule an appointment by contacting Ms. Charley at beverly.charley@state.nm.us or (505) 327-2861.



Ms. Charley is also the agency's Native American Tribal Liaison. Veterans anywhere on Navajo nation land can also contact her for benefits assistance.

DVS to Make Benefits Outreach Stops at Senior Centers in Bernalillo & Sandoval Counties

DVS will visit senior centers in Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties in the coming months to help veterans with their federal VA or state veterans benefits needs.

Veterans are encouraged to bring copies of their DD-214 separation papers to facilitate any immediate filings which could begin. Veterans can also file for lost/misplaced DD-214's. DVS Veterans Service Officers and other staff will be at the following locations from 10am-4pm:

Cuba Senior Center (Aug. 8; Dec. 12)
16 W. Cordova St. #A

Placitas Senior Center (Sep. 9)
41 Camino de las Huertas

Bernalillo Senior Center (Oct. 10)
801 Rotary Park Rd.

Corrales Senior Center (Nov. 14)
320 Corrales Rd.

For more information, contact DVS Event Coordinator Joseph Dorn at (505) 383-2414 or JosephM.dorn@state.nm.us

Downtown Albuquerque Outreach Stop

DVS VSO's and staff will also make an outreach stop at the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Government Center in downtown Albuquerque:

1 Civic Plaza NW
Sep. 18
10am-4pm

DVS to Resume Southern NM Outreach Visits



Outreach visits to Truth or Consequences/the State Veterans Home, Chaparral, Anthony, and Deming were temporarily stopped due to a Las Cruces-based Veterans Service Officer (VSO) position vacancy. DVS is expected to announce in the coming weeks the filling of this critical vacant position. Outreach to these communities will begin once the new VSO settles into the office. In the meantime, veterans in the area needing assistance with their federal VA or state veterans benefits can contact existing Las Cruces VSO Larry Ramos at lazaro.ramos@state.nm.us or (575) 524-6124.

Military & Veterans Day at the State Fair Set for Sep. 10



Military veterans and National Guard/Reserve/active-duty personnel will be admitted free to the New Mexico State Fair for *Military and Veterans Day at the State Fair* on Tuesday, September 10.

This annual day at the state fair in Albuquerque is presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, the New Mexico National Guard, and the New Mexico State Fair to honor and thank the men and women who have served our country as members of the United States Armed Forces.

Veterans, National Guard/Reserve personnel, and retirees must present either a valid Uniformed Services Retiree Identification Card, a veterans-designation driver's license, VA Veterans Health ID Card, or a copy of their DD-214 Separation Papers at the gate in order to obtain the free admission. Active-duty personnel must show a valid Uniformed Services ID card.

Non-veteran/non-military spouses or family members are not eligible for the free admission.

In addition to the numerous rides and attractions at the state fair, there will be dozens of booths, exhibits and information tables along "Main Street" staffed by the New Mexico National Guard, veterans' organizations, and other community service groups.

Highlighting a brief 11am ceremony will be a presentation about the VA Mission Act—the new and improved veterans' community care program which has replaced the *Choice Program* in providing out-of-network VA health care choices for veterans. The ceremony concludes with members from the *American Gold Star Mothers/New Mexico Chapter* reading the names of the 87 New Mexicans killed in action since the Global War on Terror commenced shortly after the 9/11 Terror Attacks in New York and Washington, D.C.

Fairground gates open at 10am. Parking is available at Gates 1 and 8. Parking fees start at \$5.00, with preferred parking available as well. General parking is also available in parking lots off Louisiana and Central Avenues. For more information about *Military & Veterans Day at the New Mexico State Fair*, contact DVS Public Information Officer Ray Seva at ray.seva@state.nm.us or (505) 827-6352.

DVS, VA to Host Northern NM Benefits/Claims Outreach



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and Primary Care Solutions is partnering to present a Veterans Resource Fair and Claims Clinic on August 21 in Taos from 9am-2pm at the *Heroes Hangout* recreation center, located at 1353 Paseo del Pueblo Sur (next to the Taos VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic).

Local service agencies are invited to be a part of this

outreach to veterans and their families and provide information about services and programs for veterans and their families in Taos and the surrounding area. For more information, and for interested agencies to make a reservation, please contact Ashley Lujan at (575) 751-2803, or Lety Cano @ (575) 779-8413.

NMVAHCS Hosts Seventh Annual Community Mental Health Summit



DVS Acting Health Care Director John Griego (*at left in photo, in dark-blue shirt*) and DVS Women Veterans Program Manager Tracie Brasier (*seated next to Mr. Griego*) were among the two dozen attendees for the 7th Annual Community Mental Health Summit presented by the New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) on July 31 in Albuquerque.

The focus of the Summit at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial was “Creating a Community of Hope”—to foster partnerships between veterans service agencies and community partners to improve mental health and

well-being of veterans and their families. DVS pledged to continue its statewide outreach of veterans about the available mental health services available.

“Working together is key to helping veterans get the mental health care they may need. But our state is simply too large, and our veteran population too spread out, for any agency to go it alone.” said DVS Acting Health Care Director Griego. “There are a lot of agencies throughout the state which can work together to provide mental health care service.”

The NMVAHCS has four Vet Centers throughout the state—in Farmington, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces—that are solely dedicated to providing mental health counseling and care. The VA also has fifteen Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC’s) which can refer veterans to other agencies. The Vet Centers and CBOC’s can be found at <https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?STATE=NM&dnum=ALL>:

DVS also has thirteen field offices which can refer veterans. The locations of these field offices can be found on the back two pages of this newsletter.

VBOC to Present Southern NM Small Business Success Seminar for Veterans & Non-Veterans



Registration is open for the *Southern New Mexico Small Business Success Seminar* on August 27-28 in Las Cruces at the DACC Workforce Center/ Room 121, located at 2345 Nevada Avenue.

This is a free two-day business development seminar for any entrepreneurial-minded individual interested in starting their own small business. Military veterans are strongly encouraged to attend.

The seminar is presented by the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) New Mexico District Office, the New Mexico Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the New Mexico Veterans Business

Outreach Center (VBOC), SCORE New Mexico, The Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) of New Mexico, the USDA, WESST New Mexico, the Arrowhead Center, and New Mexico State University.

Among the topics to be covered by presenters from the sponsoring agencies are:

- Introduction to Business Ownership
- Basics of Opportunity recognition
- Market Research
- Economics of Small Business Startup
- Picking the Current Legal entity for your Business
- Financing Your Venture
- Next Steps: Introduction to Business Planning
- Moving Forward: Resources to Support Small Businesses

Pre-registration for this free seminar is required and can be done online at <https://nmsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/events/12068>.

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 and their spouses in the southwest and southern Colorado to achieve their small business goals. It was the first state-funded center in the nation created specifically to help veterans and is funded through a grant from the SBA.



Nationwide, veterans own nearly 1 in 10 businesses that generate more than \$1 trillion in sales annually. Each year the SBA helps more than 200,000 veterans, service-disabled veterans and reservists to start or grow their small businesses. The VBOC is located in Albuquerque but provides service free of charge to any veteran. For more information about the VBOC, contact VBOC Director Rich Coffel at richardL.coffel@state.nm.us or (505) 383-2401. Veterans in southern/southeast New Mexico can contact VBOC Veterans Business Advisory Jim Cassidy at jamesM.cassidy@state.nm.us or (575) 624-6002.

American Gold Star Mothers National Convention Ends With Visit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire



Members of the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., toured the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire on July 1—the last day of the group's 2019 national convention held this year in Albuquerque.

The non-profit service organization, which is comprised of mothers of sons or daughters killed while in military service, toured the Memorial built by Albuquerque residents Victor and Jeanne Westphall in 1971 as a memorial to their son, Marine 1st Lt. David Westphall. The 28-year old was one of sixteen Marines from Bravo Company/Third Division who were killed in an ambush by North Vietnamese forces near the North/South Vietnam border on May 22, 1968.

The Monument was dedicated on the third anniversary of his death in 1971. The David Westphall Foundation was created to maintain the facility. In 2005, the Foundation donated the Memorial to the State Parks Division. Management of the Memorial was transferred to DVS in 2017

Memorial Bricks to be Placed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire

Hundreds of memorial bricks bearing the names of fallen military personnel will be installed at an annual Brick Laying Ceremony on August 31 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel fire.

The ceremony begins at 8:45 a.m. with a Blessing of the Bricks for family members and friends wishing to honor deceased active-duty service members or veterans from any war era.

A portion of the ceremony will also be dedicated to members of the New Mexico National Guard.

The ceremony also serves as a reunion for riders of the Run for the Wall motorcycle ride which passes through the Moreno Valley every Spring as part of a cross-country ride to the Memorial Day Weekend ceremonies in our nation's capital.

Currently, more than 3,000 memorial bricks bearing the names of fallen service members and veterans line the sidewalks and pathways at the Angel Fire Memorial. For more information, please contact DVS Public Information Officer Ray Seva at (505) 827-6352 or ray.seva@state.nm.us.

DVS, Vietnam Veterans Organization Sign Agreement to Build Replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall



DVS Secretary Judy Griego signs a Memorandum of Agreement with Vietnam Veterans of America/Northern NM Chapter 996 to build a half-scale replica of the National Vietnam Memorial Wall. Behind her are (L to R) VVA Chapter 996 members Eddie Romero, Chapter President Jake Lopez, members Jerry Martinez, Lisa Lopez, Tom Wagner, and Ken Dettelbach.

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Northern New Mexico Chapter 996 signed a Memorandum of Agreement on July 17 to build a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

Under the agreement, VVA--independent of DVS--will raise the estimated \$300,000 it will cost to build the replica of the national Wall featuring the names of the 58,318 American service members killed in action or listed as missing in action during the Vietnam war. Of that total, 398 are from New Mexico. Once the replica wall is finished, it will be donated to DVS and displayed at its Vietnam Veterans Memorial and State Veterans Cemetery in Angel Fire. Members from the David Westphall Memorial Foundation will also volunteer to help with maintenance and upkeep.

To Make a Donation to VVA Chapter 996

VVA Northern New Mexico Chapter 996 is a Congressionally-chartered 501-(c)19 nonprofit

corporation. Donations to its fundraising to build the replica Wall can be made by going the chapter's website dedicated to the wall effort at www.vietnammemorial.net. Donations are tax-deductible.

Twelve New Mexicans Still Listed as Vietnam War MIA's

There are twelve New Mexicans still classified by the U.S. Department of Defense as Missing in Action:

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Loss Date</u>
USMC	E5	Corfield, Stan Leroy	Gallup	5/1/67
USA	E7	Davis, Ricardo Gonzales	Carlsbad	3/20/69
USA	E3	Herrera, Frederick D.	Albuquerque	3/25/69
USAF	O3	Lane, Mitchell S.	Albuquerque	1/4/69
USA	O3	Maxwell, Calvin Walter	Eddy	10/10/69
USAF	O5	McIntire, Scott Winston	Albuquerque	12/10/71
USAF	O4	Morrissey, Robert D.	Albuquerque	11/7/72
USAF	O4	Neeld, Bobby G.	Albuquerque	1/4/69
USMC	O4	Oldham, John Sanders	Tinnie	6/11/67
USA	E3	Simpson, Max Coleman	Carlsbad	1/24/67
USA	E3	Trujillo, Robert S.	Santa Fe	1/7/68
USA	W1	Wiseman, Bain Sendell Jr.	Truth or Consequences	12/23/70

First Deceased Veterans Laid to Rest at the Gallup State Veterans Cemetery



The cremated remains of WWII U.S. Navy veteran Richard Vigil and his wife Lucy were interred on July 10 in the Columbarium Wall at the new Gallup State Veterans Cemetery. The Bosque Farms couple, who were married for 72-years, are the first interments at the cemetery, which opened on Memorial Day. Mr. Vigil passed away on June 20; his wife passed away and was cremated a month and a half earlier.

(ABOVE PHOTOS): On July 29, Korean War Air Force veteran Dale Slusser was interred in the first casket burial at the cemetery. Mr. Slusser had passed away on November 29, 2018 and buried on December 5 at the Hillcrest Cemetery in Gallup. Before passing away, he had expressed his wish to be re-interred at the Gallup State Veterans Cemetery once it opened.

Remains of Previously-Unidentified Pearl Harbor Casualty Now Identified; to Be Reburied in Santa Fe



F1C Billy J. Johnson

The remains of a previously-unidentified U.S. Navy sailor who perished in the Pearl Harbor attack have now been identified—and will be re-buried at the Santa Fe National Cemetery on August 19 at 11:15am.

The public is invited to attend this special re-interment for Navy Fireman 1st Class Billy J. Johnson of Caney, Kentucky. F1C Johnson, who spent his teenage years in Chama, NM, was among 429 crewmembers of the *USS Oklahoma* who lost their lives when the battleship was sunk in the December 7, 1941 surprise attack by Japan on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor.

The Department of Defense was only able to identify 35 of the deceased *Oklahoma* crew members. The remaining unidentified remains were buried in group crypts at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific--“The Punchbowl”--in Honolulu. Technological advances enabled investigators to identify Mr. Johnson’s remains four months ago. The Santa Fe reburial is by

request of a nephew in Truth or Consequences--and his two daughters/Mr. Johnson’s great-nieces who live in Albuquerque and Las Cruces.

Military Burial/Honors Training Conference Set for August 23



Honor Guards from throughout the state are encouraged to attend the Tenth Annual Military Honors Burial Training Conference on August 23 at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial, located at 1100 Louisiana Boulevard NE. Registration begins at 8:30am, with the conference begins at 9am.

Honor Guards are all-volunteer units which perform the flag-fold ceremony, 21-Rifle Volley, and a bugle rendition of *Taps* at the funerals of fallen veterans or active-duty military personnel. Honor Guards provide the proper “Final Salute” befitting deceased honorably-discharged men and women who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The conference is presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS), the New Mexico National Guard, and the New Mexico Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) of New Mexico) as a learning and training opportunity for Honor Guards from throughout the state. The Honor Guards will receive instruction and training/coaching from U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force Honor Guards. Individuals or groups interested in forming an all-volunteer Honor Guard are also encouraged to attend to register with DVS.

The highlight of the conference will be an annual performance competition between Honor Guard teams. A free catered lunch will be provided courtesy of the AARP. For more information, contact Deanna Anaya at Deanna.anaya2@state.nm.us or (505) 827-6356.

Forgotten Heroes Funeral Set for September 26

The unclaimed cremated remains of twenty-one military veterans who, upon their deaths, were indigent or whose body went unclaimed by family members, will be laid to rest at a special *Forgotten Heroes Funeral* at 11am on September 26 at the Santa Fe National Cemetery, located in the city's north side at 501 North Guadalupe Street.

Their cremains will be interred with full military honors in accordance with the state's *Forgotten Heroes Burial Program* established by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services--with help from Bernalillo County—to ensure that no veteran will be alone at the end.

The funeral will feature an Honor Guard, Flag Fold presentation, 21-Rifle Volley, and a bugle rendition of *Taps*—elements of a military funeral accorded to any honorably discharged veteran buried in New Mexico. The public is invited to help provide this “Final Salute” for these 21 fallen veterans who have honorably served our country.



Purple Heart Recipients to be Honored at Special Ceremony on August 3



Purple Heart Award recipients will be honored at a special Purple Heart Recognition Ceremony in Santa Fe on Saturday, August 3.

Award recipients, their family members, friends, and the public are invited to attend the 10a.m. ceremony at the Santa Fe Veterans Memorial, located at 407 Galisteo Street (at the northeast corner of the Bataan Memorial Building).

The ceremony is presented by DVS, the New Mexico National Guard, the Department of New Mexico Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Rivera Family Funeral Home, and the City of Santa Fe to honor recipients for their sacrifice in service of our country.

The Purple Heart Award is our nation's oldest combat decoration. It is presented to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy. It is also awarded posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in combat. For more information, contact DVS Public Information Officer Ray Seva at ray.seva@state.nm.us or (505) 827-6352.

Department of New Mexico Military Order of the Purple Heart to Host Golf Tournament Fundraiser

The Department of New Mexico Military Order of the Purple Heart (MoPH) is sponsoring a fundraising golf tournament on Saturday, August 24, at the Paradise Hills Golf Course in Albuquerque.

MoPH is seeking all golfers, corporate sponsors, "hole" sponsors, and any charitable donations to help the organization raise funds to allow it to continue its mission of assisting combat-wounded veterans, veterans in need of housing—and the families of service members who are killed in combat. MoPH brings the families of New Mexico service members killed in action to Albuquerque on Veteran's Day or Memorial Day—paying for the flight, hotel accommodations, and meals. At these ceremonies, the family is presented with a MOPH plaque with their service member's picture in uniform, a handmade patriotic quilt, and a special commemorative engraved brick which is placed at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial in Albuquerque.



Check-in for the tournament begins at 7:30am, with a shotgun start at 9am. All registered golfers get time at the driving range and practice putting greens, carts--and a post-tournament lunch, where awards will be given to closest-to-the-pin and longest-drive contest winners...and a free new car to anyone who scores a Hole-in-One.

All monetary donations are tax deductible. To register for the tournament or to make a contribution, contact Tournament Director Keith Comstock at (505) 270-4689 or pjc26@mac.com.

VA Extends Agent Orange Presumption to “Blue Water” Navy Veterans



**VA Secretary
Robert Wilkie**

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

*The VA has a regional
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
New Mexico VA
Health Care System
website at:
www.albuquerque.va.gov*

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is preparing to process Agent Orange exposure claims for “Blue Water Navy” veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975.

These veterans may be eligible for presumption of herbicide exposure through Public Law 116-23, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which was signed into law June 25, 2019, and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2020. They may also qualify for a presumption of service connection if they have a disease that is recognized as being associated with herbicide exposure.

The bipartisan Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act gives the VA until Jan. 1, 2020, to begin deciding Blue Water Navy related claims. By staying claims decisions until that date, the VA is complying with the law that Congress wrote and passed.

“The VA is dedicated to ensuring that all veterans receive the benefits they have earned,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “We are working to ensure that we have the proper resources in place to meet the needs of our Blue Water veteran community and minimize the impact on all veterans filing for disability compensation.”

Blue Water Navy veterans are encouraged to submit disability compensation claims for conditions presumed to be related to Agent Orange exposure. Veterans over age 85 or with life-threatening illnesses will have priority in claims processing.

Veterans who were previously denied for an Agent Orange-related presumptive condition can file a new claim based on the change in law. Eligible survivors of deceased Blue Water Navy veterans also may benefit from the new law and may file claims for benefits based on the veterans’ service.

The new law affects veterans who served on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia, as defined in Public Law 116-23. An estimated 420,000 to 560,000 Vietnam-era veterans may be considered Blue Water Navy Veterans.

To qualify, under the new law, these Veterans must have a disease associated with herbicide exposure, as listed in 38 Code of Federal Regulations section 3.309(e):

- Agent Orange presumptive conditions are:
- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne or similar acneform disease
- Chronic B-cell leukemias
- Diabetes mellitus Type 2
- Hodgkin lymphoma, formerly known as Hodgkin’s disease
- Ischemic heart disease

(continued)

- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (formerly known as Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma)
- Parkinson's disease
- Peripheral neuropathy, early-onset
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx or trachea)
- Soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma)

For more information about Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam waters (Blue Water Navy Veterans), visit <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/>.

VA Enhances Research and Education Efforts Related to Airborne Hazards and Burn Pit Exposure

The VA recently established the Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence (AHBPCE) as part of its ongoing efforts to improve health care for veterans.

"The VA is addressing veterans concerns about the health effects of airborne hazards and burn pit exposure," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Establishing this program through the center is a testament to that and we will continue to collaborate with outside partners to ensure its ongoing success."

The AHBPCE, located at the New Jersey War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, will specialize in clinical and transitional research related to airborne hazards and burn pit exposure. The new center, which formally began operations in May 2019, will initially focus on:

- Expanding understanding of health outcomes and treatments with intensive clinical research to support veterans that may have been affected by airborne hazards and open burn pits.
- VA providers may consult with the AHBPCE about the assessment and treatment needs of veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare with airborne hazard and burn pit exposure. When appropriate, veterans may be invited for a comprehensive, multi-day health evaluation from a specialized team. Referral is done for complex clinical presentations that are unable to be diagnosed or if a development of a medical management plan is impossible to do locally.
- Veterans receiving VA-authorized care in the community may be referred for consultation or an examination for the same clinical reasons.
- Enhancing training and education initiatives to build and expand a network of specialized clinicians
- Analyzing Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry data to monitor the VA's overall clinical response to exposure concerns

The center will continue to work closely with the Department of Defense and with academic partners. For more information about AHBPCE, please visit:

<https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/WARRELATEDILLNESS/AHBPCE/index.asp>.

DVS FIELD OFFICES

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services has thirteen field offices 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 (VSO)—who are also veterans themselves.

Below are the thirteen DVS field offices and the contact information for each managing VSO—followed on the next page with locations for outreach visits by each VSO. Walk-ins are welcome, but DVS encourages veterans to make an appointment to avoid long wait-times.

ALAMOGORDO	ALBUQUERQUE #1	ALBUQUERQUE #2
Larry Weatherwax 411 10th Street # 107 (575) 437-4635 larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us	Gordon Schei 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE (505) 383-2404 gordon.schei@state.nm.us	Martín Marquez 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE (505) 383-2406 martinM.marquez@state.nm.us
ALBUQUERQUE #3	ALBUQUERQUE #4	CARLSBAD
George Vargas 500 Gold Ave. SW (505) 383-3986 george.vargas@state.nm.us	Jonathan Quintana 500 Gold Ave. SW (505) 346-4810 jonathan.quintana@state.nm.us	Dagmar Youngberg 101 N. Halagueno (575) 885-4939 dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us
CLOVIS	FARMINGTON	GALLUP
Matthew Barela 904 W. 6th Street (575) 762-6185 matthew.barela@state.nm.us	Beverly Charley San Juan College VetCenter Rm.1715B (505) beverly.charley@state.nm.us	Raymie Hurley 908 Buena Vista Ave./Room 1A (505) 863-7457 raymie.hurley@state.nm.us
HOBBS	LAS CRUCES #1	LAS CRUCES #2
Dalton Boyd 2120 N. Alto Street (575) 397-5290 dalton.boyd@state.nm.us	Lazaro "Larry" Ramos 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6124 lazaro.ramos@state.nm.us	<i>Temporarily vacant. Please contact our Las Cruces #1 office for assistance.</i>
LAS VEGAS (NM) #1	LAS VEGAS (NM) #2	ROSWELL
Karen Abeyta 917 Douglas Avenue (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	<i>Temporarily vacant. Please contact our Las Vegas #1 office for assistance.</i>	Danielle Thompson 1600 SE Main St./Suite A (575) 624-6086 danielle.thompson@state.nm.us
SANTA CLARA (Grant County)	SANTA FE	WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM
Chris Teran 11990 U.S. Hwy 180 East (575) 912-3166 chris.teran@state.nm.us	Jeff George 301 W. DeVargas St/Suite 2A (505) 476-7903 jeff.george@state.nm.us	Tracie Brasier Albuquerque/5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE (505) 383-2431 tracie.brasier2@state.nm.us

DVS VSO's also make regularly-scheduled outreach visits to the Navajo Nation (*right*)—and other communities in New Mexico listed on the following page.

*Pueblos & Navajo Nation**

(Gallup/Farmington Offices Outreach)

Raymie Hurley / Beverly Charley

(505) 863-7457 / (505) 327-2861

raymie.hurley@state.nm.us

beverly.charley@state.nm.us

<i>Angel Fire*</i>	<i>Anthony*</i>	<i>Artesia*</i>
<i>(Las Vegas Office Outreach)</i> Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Cruces Office Outreach)</i> Lazaro "Larry" Ramos (575) 524-6124 lazaro.ramos@state.nm.us	<i>(Carlsbad Office Outreach)</i> Dagmar Youngberg (575) 885-4939 dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us
<i>Aztec*</i>	<i>Chaparral*</i>	<i>Cuba*</i>
<i>(Farmington Office Outreach)</i> Beverly Charley (505) 327-2861 beverly.charley@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Cruces Office Outreach)</i> Lazaro "Larry" Ramos (575) 524-6124 lazaro.ramos@state.nm.us	<i>(Albuquerque Office Outreach)</i> Gordon Schei (505) 383-2404 gordon.schei@state.nm.us
<i>Deming*</i>	<i>Española*</i>	<i>Grants*</i>
<i>(Santa Clara Office Outreach)</i> Chris Teran (575) 912-3166 chris.teran@state.nm.us	<i>(Santa Fe Office Outreach)</i> Jeff George (505) 476-7903 jeff.george@state.nm.us	<i>(Gallup Office Outreach)</i> Raymie Hurley (505) 863-7457 raymie.hurley@state.nm.us
<i>Holloman AFB*</i>	<i>Los Alamos*</i>	<i>Lordsburg*</i>
<i>(Alamogordo Office Outreach)</i> Larry Weatherwax (575) 437-4635 larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us	<i>(Santa Fe Office Outreach)</i> Jeff George (505) 476-7903 jeff.george@state.nm.us	<i>(Santa Clara Office Outreach)</i> Chris Teran (575) 912-3166 chris.teran@state.nm.us
<i>Mescalero*</i>	<i>Mora*</i>	<i>Pueblos Tribal Liaison*</i>
<i>(Alamogordo Office Outreach)</i> Larry Weatherwax (575) 437-4635 larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Vegas Office Outreach)</i> Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	<i>(Farmington Office Outreach)</i> Beverly Charley (505) 327-2861 beverly.charley@state.nm.us
<i>Quemado*</i>	<i>Reserve*</i>	<i>Raton*</i>
<i>(Gallup Office Outreach)</i> Raymie Hurley (505) 863-7457 raymie.hurley@state.nm.us	<i>(Santa Clara Office Outreach)</i> Chris Teran (575) 912-3166 chris.teran@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Vegas Office Outreach)</i> Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us
<i>Ruidoso*</i>	<i>Santa Rosa*</i>	<i>*Socorro</i>
<i>(Roswell Office Outreach)</i> Danielle Thompson (575) 624-6086 danielle.thompson@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Vegas Office Outreach)</i> Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	<i>(ABQ Office Outreach)</i> George Vargas (505) 346-3986 george.vargas@state.nm.us
<i>Sunland Park*</i>	<i>Taos*</i>	<i>Truth or Consequences*</i>
<i>(Las Cruces Office Outreach)</i> Lazaro "Larry" Ramos (575) 524-6124 lazaro.ramos@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Vegas Office Outreach)</i> Karen Abeyta (505) 454-0068 karen.abeyta@state.nm.us	<i>Will resume once the Las Cruces #2 vacancy is filled</i>
<i>Tucumcari*</i>	<i>White Sands Missile Range*</i>	<i>Zuni*</i>
<i>(Clovis Office Outreach)</i> Matt Barela (575) 762-6185 matthew.barela@state.nm.us	<i>(Las Cruces Office Outreach)</i> Lazaro "Larry" Ramos (575) 524-6124 lazaro.ramos@state.nm.us	<i>(Gallup Office Outreach)</i> Raymie Hurley (505) 863-7457 raymie.hurley@state.nm.us