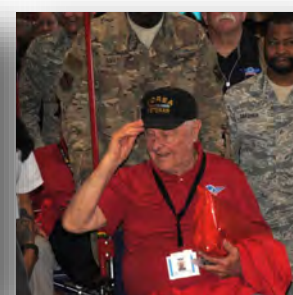




# The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services



## ***2020 Annual Report***





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# THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

New Mexico has a long and proud military legacy dating back to before it became the nation's 47<sup>th</sup> state on January 6, 1912. From pre-colonial farmers, ranchers, and citizens banding together to defend against settlers...through the creation of militias for the New Mexico Territory...through the Battle of Glorieta during the Civil War, when these militias helped union forces turn back the westward advancement of the Confederacy...through playing a major role in Teddy Roosevelt's *Rough Riders* in the Spanish-American War... on through World War I...through the actions of World War II's Navajo Code Talkers...the brave men of the 200th and 515th Coastal Artillery Unit who endured the infamous *Bataan Death March*...through the wars in Korea, Vietnam...and up through current Middle East crisis, New Mexicans have served with honor and distinction at one of the highest rates of service of any state in our nation.

In 2004, after finally recognizing this long history of service by its citizens, the New Mexico State Legislature passed the *Veterans Service Department Act* to elevate the long-standing New Mexico Veterans Commission to a cabinet-level agency, the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, to provide our state's veterans a direct voice within the executive branch of state government. The agency is led by a Cabinet Secretary, who is appointed by and reports directly to the Governor.

## DVS Mission Statement

To provide the highest quality service and advocacy for New Mexico's veterans and their families.

## DVS Vision

To be recognized as a premier agency that anticipates and meets the changing needs of New Mexico's veterans and their families by investing for tomorrow—and delivering today.

## DVS Core Values (C.A.R.E.S)

### **Commitment**

DVS is committed to the agency's mandate—the very reason of its existence—of serving our state's veterans and their families.

### **Accountability**

DVS will hold the agency's employees to the highest standards expected of a premier professional service organization.

### **Respect**

DVS will treat every veteran, regardless of their rank while they were in military service, with the respect and gratitude they have earned for sacrificing to serve and protect our country.

### **Empathy**

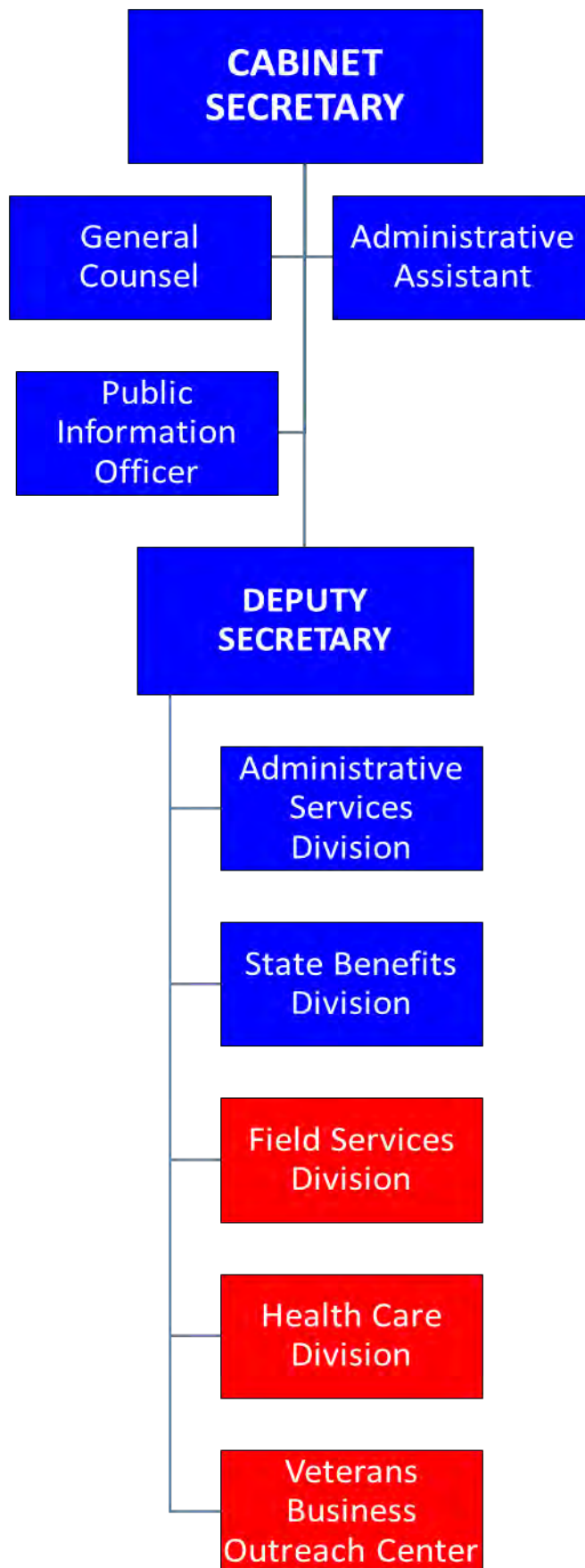
DVS staff are all veterans, are closely related to a veteran, or strongly support those who have served in the military—and therefore understand and have a strong compassion for all veterans and their families.

### **Stewardship**

DVS staff will ensure responsible stewardship of the human, financial, and informational programs and resources entrusted to us. We will improve performance through the use of innovative technologies, evidence-based practices, and sound business principles.

# DVS Organizational Chart

Santa Fe-Based Operations  
Albuquerque-Based Opera-





# Directory of DVS Divisions & Bureaus

## OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY

406 Don Gaspar Ave.  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

### CABINET SECRETARY

- Administrative Assistant
- Legal Counsel
- Public Information Officer  
(for media inquiries)

### Judy M. Griego

Shannon Quintana  
Gabrielle Sanchez-Sandoval  
Ray Seva

**(505) 827-6334**

827-6352

## SANTA FE MAIN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Bataan Memorial Bldg./Main Floor  
407 Galisteo St.

### DEPUTY SECRETARY

**Bryan Osterhage**

**827-6311**

### Administrative Services Division

- Budget Bureau
- State Approving  
Agency Bureau
- Information &  
Technology Services

### Monica Maestas—Acting Director

Monica Maestas—Chief Financial Officer

Marilyn Dykman—Bureau Chief

Terrence Rickard—Chief Information Officer

### State Benefits Division

- Administrative Support
- Cemeteries & Memorial  
Operations Bureau
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial  
in Angel Fire

### Ed Mendez—Director

Silvia Varela—Administrative Assistant

David Walker—Bureau Chief

DB Herbst—Manager

827-6300

827-6309

(575) 377-2293

## ALBUQUERQUE NE HEIGHTS OFFICE

5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE

### Administrative Support

Debi Eaglin—Administrative Assistant

**(505) 383-2400**

### Field Services Division

- 13 Field Offices/  
25 Outreach Offices
- Women Veterans Program

### Larry Campos—Director

(see pages 20-21 for contact information)

Tracie Brasier—Program Manager

383-2431

### Health Care Division

**Jemia Warner—Director**

**383-2408**

### Veterans Business

### Outreach Center

- Veterans Business Regional  
Advisor (southern NM)

Rich Coffel—Director

383-2401

Jim Cassidy

(575) 624-6002

## DVS Cabinet Secretary Judy M. Griego



Retired New Mexico National Guard (NMNG) Brigadier General Judy M. Griego was unanimously confirmed by the New Mexico State Senate on February 6, 2019, as Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS).

Secretary Griego had a distinguished 36-year NMNG career, retiring in August of 2016 at the rank of Brigadier General—the first woman to be promoted to the rank of General in the history of the NMNG. The native of Carnuel in eastern Bernalillo County began her military service in 1979 by enlisting in the New Mexico Air National Guard. She worked her way through the enlisted ranks—attaining the rank of Master Sergeant. In 1991, she was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant upon graduation from the Academy of Military Science at McGhee-Tyson Air Force Base in Knoxville, TN. In 2007, then-Lt. Col. Griego was deployed to Balad Air Base Iraq to serve in key leadership positions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Her rise through the officer ranks culminated with her historic promotion to Brigadier General on December 1, 2011.

Among Secretary Griego's notable career accomplishments was being named Chief of the Joint Staff, and Director of the Joint Staff at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque. In these capacities, she directed, managed and supervised the development, execution and evaluation of programs and policies pertaining to the command, control, and operations at the State Headquarters level. Her expertise in manpower and personnel management accounted for the rapid transformation and re-allocation and training of more than 900 members of the ANG Fighter Wing as the unit transitioned into a Special Operations Wing. The transition was successfully accomplished a year ahead of schedule, while simultaneously increasing its mission capability with the Air Force. Brig. Gen. Griego was also responsible for the training, readiness and performance of the Air National Guard as it served numerous federal and state missions here in New Mexico in support of domestic operations and homeland security—such as the Guard's Sexual Assault Response Prevention Program, Counter Drug Support Program, Officer Force Development, Veterans Transition Assistance Program, and the 64<sup>th</sup> Civil Support Team.

During her military service, Secretary Griego earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Professional Aeronautics and a Master of Science Degree in Aeronautical Sciences from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. She resides in Albuquerque with her husband, retired NMANG State Command Chief David Griego.

## Deputy Secretary Bryan Osterhage

Former U.S. Army Major Bryan Osterhage was appointed DVS Deputy Secretary in September of 2019.

The native of Belleville, Illinois, earned a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology from Truman State University in 2004, and a law degree from the Saint Louis University School of Law. He enlisted in the Army in 2010 as an officer in the Judge Advocate General's Corps—completing his active-duty service in 2019.

During his military service, Deputy Secretary Osterhage was stationed at Fort Bragg, NC, Fort Campbell, KY, Fort Knox, KY, and Fort Belvoir, VA. He was deployed to Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Liberia—earning a Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal during his nine-year Army service.



# DVS Santa Fe-Based Operations



**DVS-Santa Fe Main Administrative Office**  
*Bataan Memorial Bldg.*  
*406 Galisteo Street*  
*First Floor/Room 134*  
*(505) 827-6300*

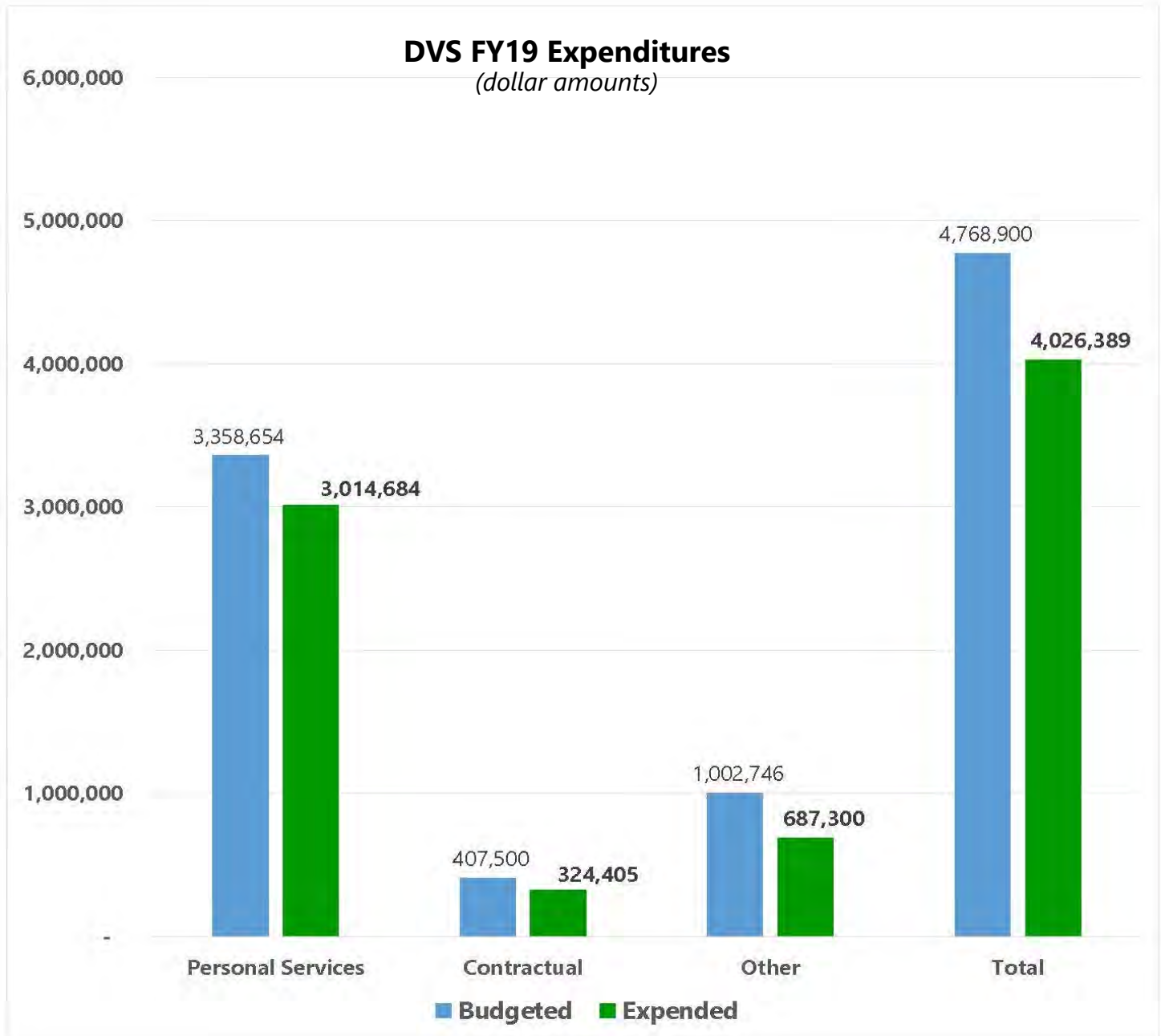
The Administrative Services Division of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services is responsible for overseeing financial and administrative matters of the agency. The division works with the Cabinet Secretary to manage the agency's budget--operating under the parameters set by the state budget passed each year by the state legislature and signed into law by the Governor. In addition, the division oversees all inter and intra-agency administrative, information technology, human resources, supply, safety and other infrastructure matters.



The division is based in the main Santa Fe office in the Bataan Memorial Building, and is under the interim direction of DVS Chief Financial Officer Monica F. Maestas. Monica earned her degree in Finance from New Mexico State University and has worked in several state agencies for eleven years—serving as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Chief Procurement Officer (CPO). Monica can be reached at [MonicaF.Maestas@state.nm.us](mailto:MonicaF.Maestas@state.nm.us) or (505) 827-6303.

**Monica F. Maestas**  
*Chief Financial Officer/  
Acting Administrative Services Division Director*

# DVS Budget Overview



**VA Expenditures in New Mexico**  
**Federal FY18 (Oct. 1, 2017-Sep. 30, 2018) (latest data)**  
**Unique VA Patients: 53,854**

<b><u>Total VA Expenditures</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,545,337,000</u></b>
Compensation & Pension	795,765,000
Medical Care	654,597,000
Education, Vocational Rehab, Employment	66,098,000
Construction	2,910,000
General Operating Expenses	15,967,000
Insurance & Indemnities	10,000,000



## DVS STATE APPROVING AGENCY BUREAU (SAA)

Every state has a State Approving Agency (SAA) responsible for ensuring the quality and integrity of post-secondary education, licensure and vocational training programs for use by a veteran's GI Bill® education benefit.

New Mexico's SAA is managed by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services. The SAA bureau's mission is to promote and safeguard quality education and training for veterans, to ensure greater educational and training opportunities to meet their changing needs, and to protect available GI Bill® education benefit resources by assisting the VA in preventing fraud, waste, and abuse of the GI Bill® education benefit.

With the passage of Public Law 111-377 in August of 2011 and the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010, SAA's nationwide were tasked with supporting the VA in performing Compliance Surveys of approved programs.

The DVS SAA Bureau is thus tasked with reviewing, evaluating, and approving education and training programs—making sure they comply with strict state and federal criteria. The DVS SAA Bureau does this by making on-site supervisory and inspection visits to institutions throughout the state. The bureau also provides technical assistance for interested parties upon request, and is actively engaged in outreach activities throughout New Mexico to promote the GI Bill® education benefit. Though the SAA is under the Santa Fe-based Administrative Services Division, it is based in the DVS Albuquerque Northeast Heights office.

### For Fiscal Year 2019 (Jul. 1, 2018-Jun. 30, 2019)

For the 9th consecutive year, the NM SAA has received the highest rating of "Satisfactory" from the VA.

Number of program and other approvals	3,201
Number of program and other disapprovals	402
Number of compliance surveys	15
Technical Assistance	389
Outreach Events	10
Number of Liaison with Agencies: State, Federal	368



**Marilyn Dykman**  
SAA Bureau Chief

SAA Bureau Chief Marilyn "Mandy" Dykman oversees the DVS SAA program. She is a retired U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Commander who was the U.S. Coast Guard's first Hispanic female helicopter pilot. Prior to this, she piloted a UH1-H helicopter with the U.S. Army's B Company, 58th Aviation Regiment, 6th Cavalry Brigade/Air Combat during Operation Desert Storm. Ms. Dykman can be contacted at (505) 383-2418 or [marilyn.dykman@state.nm.us](mailto:marilyn.dykman@state.nm.us).

SAA Program Consultant Katherine "Kathy" Snyder oversees the SAA's vocational training programs. She is a former Florida SAA primary school-certifying official. Ms. Snyder can be reached at (505) 383-2419 or [katherine.snyder@state.nm.us](mailto:katherine.snyder@state.nm.us).



**Katherine Snyder**  
SAA Consultant

# STATE BENEFITS DIVISION

## (State Veterans Benefits & Cemetery/Memorial Operations )



**Ed Mendez**  
State Benefits

DVS State Benefits Division Director Ed Mendez and his staff tirelessly work to ensure New Mexico's veterans and their families are aware of and file for these state benefits. The division encompasses the State Benefits Bureau and the Cemetery & Memorial Operations Bureau. The division strives to identify additional benefits—bringing these to the attention of the cabinet secretary for possible introduction to state legislators for consideration as state law. The division also coordinates with the DVS Field Services Division for outreach stops throughout the state to ensure that information gets out to veterans who may not be aware of their available state benefits.

Mr. Mendez is an Albuquerque native and U.S. Navy veteran who served onboard the USS Duluth (LPD-6) while stationed in San Diego, CA, and on the minesweeper USS Ardent during mine countermeasure operations in the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Storm. Veterans, spouses, widows, or their eligible dependents with questions about New Mexico's state veterans benefits listed in the following pages can contact Mr. Mendez at (505) 827-6300 or [edwardL.mendez@state.nm.us](mailto:edwardL.mendez@state.nm.us).



**Jeff George**  
State Benefits  
Bureau Chief

Assisting Director Mendez is State Benefits Bureau Chief Jeff George, (*left photo*), a former U.S. Army M1A1 Tank Armor Crew Member who was one of DVS' most senior Veterans Service Officers prior to accepting the Bureau Chief position. Mr. George can be contacted at [jeff.george@state.nm.us](mailto:jeff.george@state.nm.us) or (505) 827-6300.

Also assisting Division Director Mendez is Cemeteries & Memorials Bureau Chief David Walker (*right photo*). Mr. Walker is a Vietnam War Navy veteran who supervises the agency's three state veterans cemeteries, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire—and is overseeing development of a fourth state veterans cemetery in Carlsbad. (*more information about the program can be found on page 14*). Mr. Walker can be contacted at [david.walker@state.nm.us](mailto:david.walker@state.nm.us) or (505) 827-6309.



**David Walker**  
Cemeteries/Memorials  
Bureau Chief

## State Benefits Division 2019 End-of-Year Report

(Jan. 1-Dec. 16)

Property Tax Exemption & Waivers	6,482
Game and Fish Licenses	6,360
Phone Calls Received	4,092
Appointments, Walk-Ins (Santa Fe Main Office)	1,938
License Plate Applications	1,584
Museum, Monuments and Parks Pass	1,084
E-Mail Inquiries	978
Outgoing Correspondence	343

## STATE BENEFITS BUREAU

### Veterans Tax Breaks

#### **Veterans Property Tax Exemption**

Any veteran who served a minimum of 90 days consecutive active duty, was honorably discharged, and is a legal resident of New Mexico qualifies for a \$4,000 reduction in the taxable value of their real property for county taxation purposes. This benefit is also available to non-remarried surviving spouses of a veteran who would have otherwise qualified for this benefit.

#### **Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemption**

Any veteran who has been rated 100% service-connected disabled (permanent & total) by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and is a legal resident of New Mexico qualifies for a complete property tax waiver on their primary residence.

#### **Exemption from Excise Taxes on Vehicle Purchases**

Any veteran who has suffered the loss or complete loss of use of one or more limbs due to their military service shall be exempted from excise taxes when purchasing a new vehicle.

#### **Veterans Service Organization Property Tax Exemption**

Any U.S. Congressionally-chartered Veterans service organization is exempt from paying property tax on the property of its facility. Many VSO's—especially those in rural areas of the state—have been devoting much of their fundraising revenue to paying property tax.

### Veterans Education Benefits

#### **Vietnam Veteran Scholarship**

Veterans who have been residents of New Mexico for a minimum of ten years, have served in the Vietnam War, and were issued the Vietnam Campaign or Service Medal are eligible. This scholarship pays full tuition and the costs for all books at any state-funded post-secondary school.

#### **Wartime Veteran Scholarship Fund**

Can be used by any veteran who has served in combat since August 1, 1990, and who has exhausted all available federal G.I. Education Benefits options. Veterans must be residents of New Mexico for at least ten years and have also been awarded a campaign medal. Tuition and fees for books are also capped.

#### **In-State Tuition for Veterans**

Veterans, their spouses and their children no longer have to wait to establish "in-state" residency status when applying for college. Those who wish to use their G.I. Education Benefit Bill can now immediately take advantage of less-expensive "resident" in-state tuition rates at any state funded college, university, vocational school or vocational training program.

#### **World War II and Korean Veterans High School Diploma**

Any veteran who left a New Mexico high school before graduating to serve in World War II or the Korean War will be awarded a valid high school diploma issued from the high school they were attending.

#### **Children of Deceased Veterans Scholarship**

A child between the ages of 16-26 whose veteran parent was killed in action or died as a result of their combat wounds qualifies for a full tuition waiver at any state-funded post-secondary school. A \$150 stipend per semester will also be issued to help pay for books or fees.

## Military Children School Enrollment Priority

Priority enrollment status is automatically assigned to incoming students or the New Mexico schools system whose active-duty, National Guard or Reservist parent is transferred to a New Mexico military facility.

## Veterans Recognition Benefits

### National Guard and Reserve Defined as Veterans

In New Mexico, veteran status is given to anyone honorably discharged after serving six consecutive years as a member of any national guard or reserve component unit. Veteran status is also given to any commissioned officers of the Public Health Service or the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration who served on active duty in service of the United States.

### Veterans License Plates

Honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible for special veterans license plates—provided they show proof of eligibility. The two plates below are available for a one-time vehicle registration fee. Recipients are responsible for any annual vehicle license fees.



*Armed Forces Veteran (any branch)*



*Woman Veteran (any branch)*

The four special-recognition plates below are available free of charge for any qualified veteran who can provide proof of eligibility:

*Medal of Honor Recipient*



*Purple Heart Recipient*



*Ex-Prisoner of War*



*Pearl Harbor Survivor*



### Disabled Veteran License Plate

For honorably-discharged veterans rated at least 50 percent service-disabled.

## Gold Star Family License Plate

For families with a son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, parent or step-parent killed in combat action. There is a four-plate limit per family. The first plate is free, and fees will be waived for the lifetime of the recipient. The remaining three plates are also free, but recipients are responsible for annual registration fees.





### **Patriot License Plate**

The *Patriot License Plate* can be purchased by any licensed New Mexico driver who wants to recognize the contribution and sacrifice of the men and women who are serving or have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The one-time fee is \$27. (Regular vehicle registration fees still apply.)



### **Special MacArthur Service Medal**

The Special MacArthur Service Medal is issued members of the 200th/51st Coast Artillery Units who were residents of New Mexico at their original time of entry into the U.S. Military and served under General Douglas MacArthur in the Philippine Islands during World War II. The medal is also available to surviving family members of the 200th/51st units

### **Other State Veterans Benefits**

#### **Service Member Child Custody Protection**

Child custody arrangements cannot be modified while a parent is deployed for military service. All child custody issues involving a deployed parent must wait to be resolved until the deployed parent returns to New Mexico.



#### **New Mexico Personnel Office Veterans Hiring Preference**

All veterans honorably discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces or anyone currently serving in the National Guard shall have five (5) points added to their final passing numerical scores on screening examinations performed by the NM State Personnel Office. Veterans honorably discharged with a service connected disability will have ten (10) points added to their final passing numerical score.

#### **5% Procurement Advantage for Veteran-Owned Businesses or Contractors**

The state of New Mexico shall set aside an additional 5% hiring preference for veteran-owned businesses or contractors over the existing 5% preference currently established for locally-owned businesses during the bidding process for state contracts and jobs.



#### **Military Discharge Papers Protection**

Military discharge papers filed with county clerks in the state of New Mexico shall only be made available to the veteran who filed them, the veteran's next-of-kin, or a person designated by a court of law as the veteran's general power-of-attorney.

#### **Deceased Military Person's Disposition Arrangements**

A person designated as the immediate contact on the Department of Defense (DoD) Emergency Data Form of an active-duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces can determine the means of disposition of that deceased Armed Forces member. The designee is authorized to make burial, funeral and disposition arrangements.

## Veterans Free and Reduced-Fee Recreational Benefits

### Veterans Day Recreation and Museum Privileges

Every Veterans Day holiday, any New Mexico resident who was honorably discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces or is currently on active-duty—along with their spouse and children—is entitled to free use of any New Mexico state park. Admission fees will also be waived for campsites, the Museum of New Mexico, the New Mexico Museum of Natural History, and the New Mexico Museum of Space History.

### State Parks Day-Pass and Three Free Camping Nights for Disabled Veterans

Any veteran rated 50% or higher service-connected disabled may obtain an annual free day-use pass and three free nights of camping for personal use only. Qualified veterans can obtain these passes by showing proper identification and proof of disability at any DVS field office.

### Free State Parks Monuments and Museums Pass for Disabled Veterans

Any veteran rated 50% or higher service-connected disabled may obtain a free state monument and museum pass for personal use only. Qualified veterans can obtain this pass by showing proper identification and proof of disability at any DVS field office.

### Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License for Disabled Veterans

Any veteran who is a New Mexico resident and is rated 100% service-connected disabled is eligible for a free lifetime New Mexico small-game hunting and fishing license.

### Reduced-Fee Hunting and Fishing License for Disabled Veterans

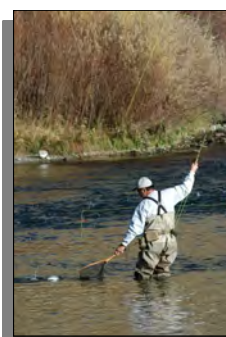
New Mexico's 26,000 service-connected disabled veterans may apply for a reduced fee \$10 small-game & fishing license--no matter *what percentage their disability*.

### Hunting Fee Discount for Non-Resident Disabled Veterans Undergoing Rehabilitation

Hunting licenses for deer, antelope, elk, javelina and turkey may be sold to non-resident disabled U.S. Armed Forces members or veterans at resident license-fee rates if the applicant is undergoing a rehabilitation program utilizing hunting activities supported by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or an authorized nonprofit organization.

### Temporary Hunting and Fishing License for Active-Duty Military Personnel

Any active duty military personnel, National Guard or Reserve member who is a legally domiciled resident of New Mexico can apply for a temporary active duty fishing or small game hunting license. Applicants must show proof of residency and not claim residency elsewhere. Applicants may also apply if they are on active duty outside the state but are currently on leave here in New Mexico for not more than 30 days.



(photos courtesy NM Dept. of Game & Fish)

## DVS STATE CEMETRIES & MEMORIAL OPERATIONS BUREAU

All honorably discharged deceased veterans of the United States Armed Forces are entitled to a military burial—with military honors provided by an Honor Guard. According to the latest VA data, nearly half of New Mexico's 156,595 veterans live beyond the VA's designated 75-mile service-area radius of its two national cemeteries: The Santa Fe National Cemetery in northern New Mexico, and the Ft. Bayard National Cemetery in the southwestern part of the state. DVS introduced the *State Veterans Cemetery Initiative* in 2013 to build cemeteries for these affected veterans and their families. Applications to build four rural-area cemeteries were sent to the VA's *Cemetery Grant Program*, which funds VA-funded-but state-managed veterans cemeteries.



### Ft. Stanton State Veterans Cemetery

New Mexico's first state veterans cemetery was built in Ft. Stanton in central/eastern Lincoln County. The 14.8-acre, \$5.7 million cemetery opened on Veterans Day, 2017, featuring 510 in-ground crypts, and 140 columbarium and in-ground niches for interment of cremated remains. As of December, 2019, 91 veterans & spouses have been interred at the facility.

### Ft. Stanton Merchant Marine & Military Cemetery (right)

Since 2017, DVS has managed the adjacent Ft. Stanton Merchant Marine & Military Cemetery, which opened in 1899 to bury members of the U.S. Merchant Marines who perished from Tuberculosis while being treated at the adjacent Ft. Stanton Hospital. The cemetery also accepted burials from hospital staff and local-area veterans. More than 1,000 are buried at the old cemetery, which stopped accepting burials in 2014.



### Gallup State Veterans Cemetery

A second facility, the Gallup State Veterans Cemetery (left photo) opened on Memorial Day, 2019. The 20.6-acre, \$6.6 million cemetery has space 443 in-ground crypts, 140 in-ground cremains gravesites, and 400 columbarium niches.

As of December 2019, 29 veterans & spouses have been interred at the cemetery.

### Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery (right photo)

In October of 2018, ground was broken for a third facility, in Angel Fire. The 10.3-acre, \$3.2 million dollar cemetery in the meadow below the Vietnam Veterans Memorial will feature 100 in-ground crypts, 100 in-ground cremains gravesites, and 200 columbarium niches. The targeted opening is Memorial Day, 2020.

### Carlsbad State Veterans Cemetery

This fourth state veterans cemetery is currently in the pre-construction planning phase. DVS anticipates VA funding to be approved in the next 2-3 years.



Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery  
(January 14, 2020)



### **Military Honors Burial Program: *The Final Salute***

There are 33 all-volunteer Honor Guards throughout the state to provide a military funeral and "Final Salute" for deceased honorably discharged veterans.

The DVS Cemeteries & Monuments Bureau oversees the state's *Military Honors Burial Program* which, courtesy of these Honor Guards, provides a burial befitting someone who was honorably discharged from military service.

The Honor Guards are composed of trained uniformed men and women to perform the ceremonial military funeral duties of covering and uncovering of a casket with an American Flag, the folding and presentation of the flag to a widow or family member, a Rifle Volley, and bugle rendition of *Taps*.



This service is provided free to the family of a deceased honorably-discharged veteran. DVS ensures that all units undergo annual training, and are compensated for their duties with a small stipend for each service performed.

It is up to a veterans' family and/or a local funeral home to schedule an Honor Guard at a funeral.

Any veterans' service organization can form an Honor Guard. Please contact the DVS State Cemetery Division for more information.

## **New Mexico's Honor Guards**

### **ACOMA**

American Legion Post 116  
PO Box 116  
Acoma Pueblo, NM 87034  
(505) 362-2868

### **ALAMOGORDO**

Marine Corps League Det. 850  
PO Box 4171  
Alamogordo, NM 88311  
(575) 434-4774

### **ALBUQUERQUE**

American Legion Post 13  
1201 Mountain Road NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
(505) 243-1901

### **ALBUQUERQUE**

American Legion Post 69  
9000 4th St. NW  
Alameda, NM 87114  
(505) 379-1136

### **ALBUQUERQUE**

Marine Corps League Det. 381  
PO Box 81552  
Albuquerque, NM 87198  
(505) 926-0600

### **ALBUQUERQUE**

47<sup>th</sup> NM Regiment Honor Guard  
PO Box 21842  
Albuquerque, NM 87154  
(505) 298-9800

### **ALBUQUERQUE**

Women Veterans of  
New Mexico  
PO Box 36648  
Albuquerque, NM 87176  
(505) 306-3756

### **CAPITAN**

American Legion Post 57  
PO Box 245  
Capitan, NM 88316  
(505) 354-3421

### **CARLSBAD**

Carlsbad Veterans  
Honor Guard  
PO Box 605  
Carlsbad, NM 88220  
(575) 885-4834

*(list continues on next page)*



**CUBA**

American Legion Post 23  
PO Box 1074  
Cuba, NM 87013  
(575) 385-6787

**FARMINGTON**

VFW Post 2182  
5513 Highway 64  
Farmington, NM 87401  
(505) 327-2182

**GRANTS/BLEWATER**

Mt. Taylor TSO DZIL Honor Guard  
PO Box 215  
Blewwater, NM 87005  
(505) 280-5483

**LAS CRUCES**

El Perro Diablo Detachment #478  
PO Box 7322  
Las Cruces, NM 88006  
(575) 523-1236

**PORTALES**

American Legion Post 31  
PO Box 275  
Portales, NM 88130  
(575) 226-0302

**ROSWELL**

Roswell Veterans Honor Guard  
702 Broken Arrow  
Roswell, NM 88201  
(575) 623-8985

**SANTA FE**

VFW Post 2951  
307 Montezuma St.  
Santa Fe, NM 87504  
(505) 983-9045

**SILVER CITY**

American Legion Post 18  
2323 Kimberly Drive  
Silver City, NM 88061  
(575) 338-2460

**ESPAÑOLA**

American Legion Post 17  
PO Box 1273  
Española, NM 87532  
(505) 753-6712

**FRUITLAND**

Upper Fruitland Chapter  
PO Box 1257  
Fruitland, NM 87416  
(505) 960-5032

**HOBBS**

Lea County Marine Corps League  
PO Box 862  
Hobbs, NM 88240  
(575) 399-9307

**LAS VEGAS**

Vietnam Veterans of Northern NM  
Chapter 1063 Honor Guard  
PO Box 3211  
Las Vegas, NM 87701

**RATON**

VFW Post 1793  
PO Box 716  
Raton, NM 87740  
(575) 445-3318

**SANTA CRUZ**

DAV/Luchetti Castner Chapter 13  
PO Box 1759 Santa Cruz, NM  
87567

**SHIPROCK**

VFW Post 9517  
PO Box 2506  
Shiprock, NM 87420  
(505) 327-2182

**SOCORRO**

DAV Chapter 24  
PO Box 1584  
Socorro, NM 87801  
(575) 418-7513

**ESTANCIA**

American Legion Post 22  
PO Box 656  
Estancia, NM 87016  
(505) 384-3096

**GRANTS**

VFW Post 3221  
202 Davis Street  
Grants, NM 87020  
(505) 287-2328

**ISLETA PUEBLO**

Isleta Pueblo Veterans Association  
PO Box 338  
Isleta, NM 87002  
(505) 514-7332

**MORA**

VFW Post 1131  
PO Box 0555  
Mora, NM 87732  
(575) 387-2618

**RIO RANCHO**

Marine Corps League Det. 1316  
PO Box 44304  
Rio Rancho, NM 87174  
(505) 892-5618

**SANTA FE**

American Legion Post 1  
1601 Berry Ave.  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 469-6270

**SILVER CITY**

Marine Corps League Det. 1328  
PO Box 2251  
Silver City, NM 88062  
(575) 574-0361

**TAOS**

VFW Post 3259  
523 Upper Ranchitos Road  
Taos, NM 87571  
(575) 779-7850



## The Forgotten Heroes Funeral Program

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services' *Forgotten Heroes Funeral Program* ensures that—in the event no family member comes forward to claim the body of a veteran upon death—the unclaimed deceased veteran is provided with a military funeral at the Santa Fe National Cemetery.

The program was developed in 2009 through a collaborated effort between DVS, Bernalillo County, and the State Office of the Medical Investigator to provide military funerals for unclaimed deceased Bernalillo County veterans whose cremated remains had been kept in possession by local funeral homes. DVS and Bernalillo county expressed a desire to provide a funeral befitting someone who had sacrificed to serve our country as a member of the United States Armed Forces. The concept was introduced to all 33 counties in New Mexico.

The *Forgotten Heroes Program* designates the state as the family of record of any verified veteran whose body goes unclaimed upon death. Verification of an honorable discharge from the United States Armed Forces is done by county officials and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

After an unclaimed deceased veteran is cremated, DVS takes possession of the cremains and contacts the Santa Fe National Cemetery and an Honor Guard to provide a military funeral. The public is invited to serve as "family"—with the Governor delivering the Eulogy—providing the farewell and final salute these veterans have earned through their service to our country. For more information, please contact DVS Cemetery & Monuments Bureau Manager David Walker at [david.walker@state.nm.us](mailto:david.walker@state.nm.us) or (505) 827-6309.



*Photos are from the September 26, 2019 Forgotten Heroes Funeral, where the unclaimed cremated remains of 22 deceased veterans were laid to rest with military honors at the Santa Fe National Cemetery. More information about this special funeral can be found on page 49.*







### Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire was the first major Vietnam War memorial in the United States. It is located off U.S. Highway 64 in Angel Fire (Colfax County) in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains on the Enchanted Circle Scenic Byway of northeastern New Mexico.

The Memorial was built by Victor and Jeanne Westphall, the grief-stricken parents of Marine 1st Lt. David Westphall of Albuquerque who was among sixteen Marines killed in an ambush on their unit on May 22, 1968 in Vietnam.

The Westphalls used their son's insurance policy money to build a 32-acre Memorial to not only honor their son, but also all Americans who served during the war. It was dedicated in 1971—on the three-year anniversary of David's death. The Monument received national attention and is credited for inspiring the creation of the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. in 1982. Five years later, the Westphall Memorial was recognized by Congress as a memorial of national significance. In 2004, the David Westphall Foundation donated the Memorial to the New Mexico State Parks Division—becoming the state's 33rd state park.



On July 3, 2017, the Memorial was transferred to DVS, which in seeking the transfer argued that it was not a park. The state parks division readily agreed with the DVS position that "the Memorial is not a place for families to picnic or hike. It is hallowed ground for visitors to reflect upon and honor the service and sacrifice of American service members during the Vietnam War. It is especially sacred for family and friends of the 58,200 who lost their lives—398 of whom were from New Mexico."

### 2019 Visitor Count

61,084 people from around the world visited the DVS Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire in 2019. Among the notable events: 400 riders stopped to visit while on the annual *Run For The Wall* cross-country ride (see page 39), an additional 447 for the annual local *Marines Motorcycle Group* and *Beds 4 Kids* rides... 1,367 on Memorial Day alone...694 on Veterans Day, 374 for the annual Flag Retirement Ceremony (page 42), 1,871 for the annual Memorial Brick Installation Ceremony (page 46)



# DVS Albuquerque-Based Operations



**DVS-Albuquerque NE Heights Office**  
*5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE*  
*2nd Floor*  
*(505) 383-2400*



# FIELD SERVICES DIVISION



**Larry Campos**  
Field Services  
Division Director

DVS has thirteen field offices to assist veterans and their eligible dependents with filing for federal VA and state veterans benefits. Each office is managed by a nationally certified Veterans Service Officer (VSO)—who are also veterans themselves.

Walk-ins are welcome, but DVS encourages veterans to make an appointment to avoid long wait-times. Field Services Division Director Larry Campos (*right*) is a retired Army Major with a long post-service history of serving veterans—which includes serving as a Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER), and the State Veterans Coordinator at the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions. Larry can be contacted at (505) 383-2417 or [larry.campos@state.nm.us](mailto:larry.campos@state.nm.us).

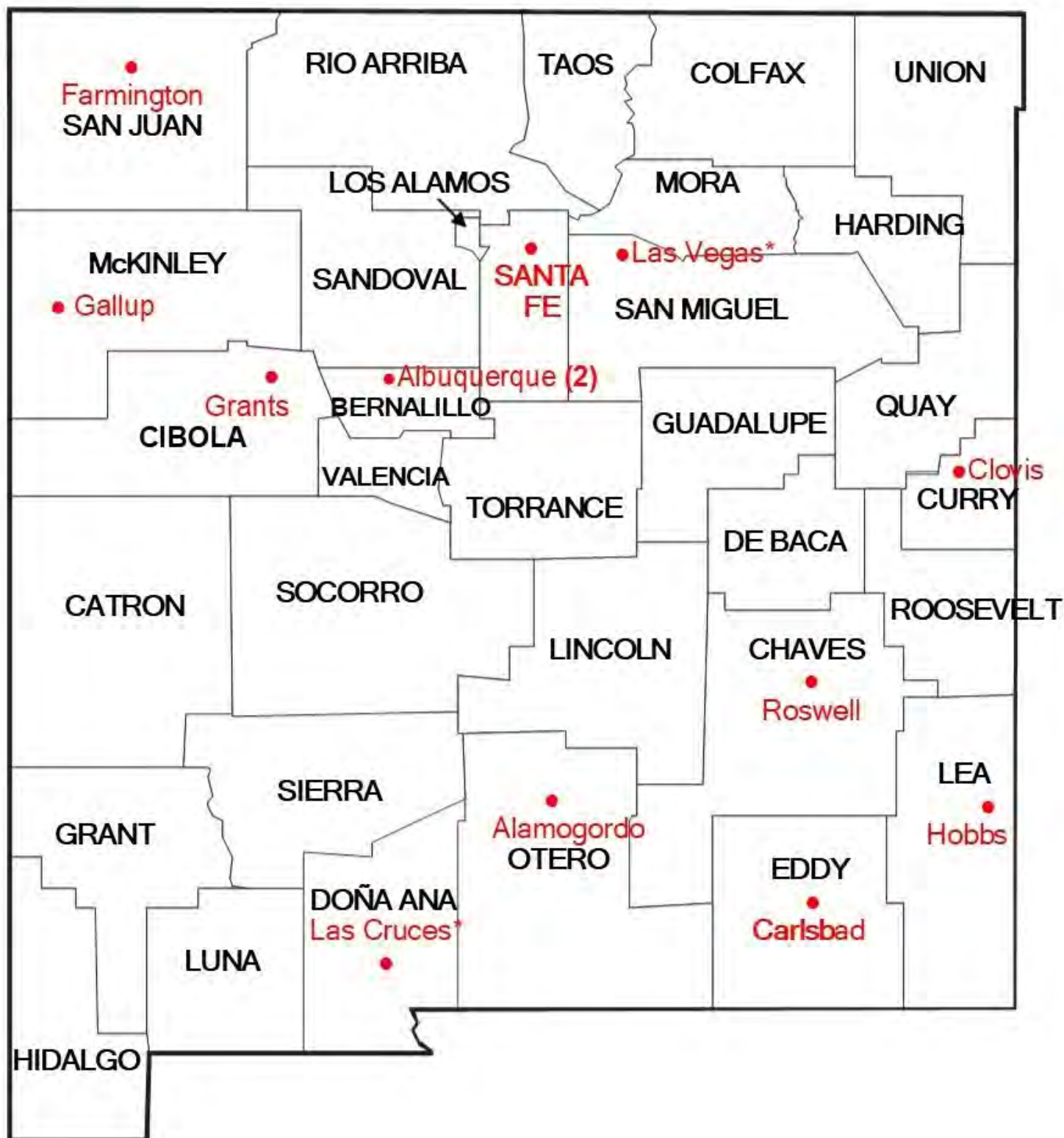
<b>ALAMOGORDO</b>	<b>ALBUQUERQUE #1</b>	<b>ALBUQUERQUE #2</b>
<b>Larry Weatherwax</b> 411 10th Street # 107 (575) 437-4635 <a href="mailto:larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us">larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us</a>	<b>Karen Abeyta</b> 500 Gold Ave. SW (505) 346-3986 <a href="mailto:karen.abeyta@state.nm.us">karen.abeyta@state.nm.us</a>	<b>Gordon Schei</b> 500 Gold Ave. SW (505) 346-4810 <a href="mailto:gordon.schei@state.nm.us">gordon.schei@state.nm.us</a>
<b>ALBUQUERQUE #3</b>	<b>ALBUQUERQUE #4</b>	<b>CARLSBAD</b>
<b>Martín Marquez</b> 5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE (505) 383-2406 <a href="mailto:martinM.marquez@state.nm.us">martinM.marquez@state.nm.us</a>	5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE <i>Temporarily vacant.</i> <i>Please contact Albuquerque #3 for assistance.</i>	<b>Dagmar Youngberg</b> 101 N. Halagueno (575) 885-4939 <a href="mailto:dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us">dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us</a>
<b>CLOVIS</b>	<b>FARMINGTON</b>	<b>GALLUP</b>
<b>Matthew Barela</b> 904 W. Sixth Street (575) 287-8387 <a href="mailto:matthew.barela@state.nm.us">matthew.barela@state.nm.us</a>	<b>Beverly Charley</b> San Juan College Vet Center (505) 327-2861 <a href="mailto:beverly.charley@state.nm.us">beverly.charley@state.nm.us</a>	<b>Raymie Hurley</b> 908 Buena Vista Ave./Room 1A (505) 863-7457 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a>
<b>GRANTS</b>	<b>HOBBS</b>	<b>LAS CRUCES #1</b>
<b>Patrick Aragon</b> 515 East High Rd. Suite C (505) 287-8387 <a href="mailto:patrick.aragon@state.nm.us">patrick.aragon@state.nm.us</a>	<b>Dalton Boyd</b> 2120 N. Alto Street (575) 397-5290 <a href="mailto:dalton.boyd@state.nm.us">dalton.boyd@state.nm.us</a>	<b>George Vargas</b> 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6124 <a href="mailto:george.vargas@state.nm.us">george.vargas@state.nm.us</a>
<b>LAS CRUCES #2</b>	<b>LAS CRUCES #3</b>	<b>LAS VEGAS #1</b>
<b>Rosa Bycenski</b> 2024 E. Griggs Ave. (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a>	2024 E. Griggs Ave. <i>Please contact Las Cruces offices 1 &amp; 2 for assistance</i>	917 Douglas Ave. <i>Please call toll-free 1-(866) 433-8387 for assistance</i>
<b>LAS VEGAS (NM) #2</b>	<b>ROSWELL</b>	<b>SANTA FE</b>
917 Douglas Ave. <i>Please call toll-free 1-(866) 433-8387 for assistance</i>	<b>Danielle Thompson</b> 1600 SE Main St./Suite A (575) 624-6086 <a href="mailto:danielle.thompson@state.nm.us">danielle.thompson@state.nm.us</a>	<i>Temporarily vacant.</i> <i>Please contact the main Santa Fe office at (505) 827-6334 for assistance</i>
<b>Women Veterans Program</b>	<i>Navajo Nation*</i>	<i>Pueblos Tribal Liaison*</i>
<b>Tracie Brasier</b> Albuquerque/5201 Eagle Rock Ave. NE (505) 383-2431 <a href="mailto:tracie.brasier@state.nm.us">tracie.brasier@state.nm.us</a>	<b>Raymie Hurley/Beverly Charley</b> (505) 863-7457 (505) 327-2861 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a> <a href="mailto:beverly.charley@state.nm.us">beverly.charley@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Farmington Office Outreach)</i> <b>Beverly Charley</b> (505) 327-2861 <a href="mailto:beverly.charley@state.nm.us">beverly.charley@state.nm.us</a>

# DVS Main Field Office Locations

**BOLDFACE = COUNTY**

• **Location of 13 DVS Field Offices**

\* indicates two Veterans Service Officers per office



<b>DVS VSO's also make outreach visits to the following communities* on this page. Please contact the offices to make an appointment.</b>	<i>*Acoma Pueblo</i>	Angel Fire*
	<b>Raymie Hurley &amp; Patrick Aragon</b> (505) 863-7457; (505) 287-8387 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a> <a href="mailto:patrick.aragon@state.nm.us">patrick.aragon@state.nm.us</a>	(Las Vegas Office Outreach) <i>Please call toll free 1-(866) 433-8387 for assistance</i>
<i>Anthony*</i>	<i>Artesia*</i>	<i>Capitan*</i>
<i>(Las Cruces #1 Outreach)</i> <b>Rosa Bycenski</b> (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Carlsbad Office Outreach)</i> <b>Dagmar Youngberg</b> (575) 885-4939 <a href="mailto:dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us">dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Roswell Office Outreach)</i> <b>Danielle Thompson</b> (575) 624-6086 <a href="mailto:danielle.thompson@state.nm.us">danielle.thompson@state.nm.us</a>
<i>Chaparral*</i>	<i>Crownpoint*</i>	<i>Deming*</i>
<i>(Las Cruces #1 Outreach)</i> <b>Rosa Bycenski</b> (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a>	<b>Raymie Hurley, Patrick Aragon</b> (505) 863-7457; (505) 287-8387 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a> <a href="mailto:patrick.aragon@state.nm.us">patrick.aragon@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Las Cruces #1 Outreach)</i> <b>Rosa Bycenski</b> (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a>
<i>Española*</i>	<i>Kewa Pueblo*</i>	<i>Laguna Pueblo*</i>
<i>(Santa Fe Office Outreach)</i> Temporarily halted due to Santa Fe VSO vacancy. Please call (505) 827-6334 for assistance	<i>(Santa Fe Office Outreach)</i> Temporarily halted due to Santa Fe VSO vacancy. Please call (505) 827-6334 for assistance	<i>(Grants Office Outreach)</i> <b>Patrick Aragon</b> 505) 287-8387 <a href="mailto:patrick.aragon@state.nm.us">patrick.aragon@state.nm.us</a>
<i>Los Alamos*</i>	<i>Mescalero*</i>	<i>Quemado*</i>
<i>(Santa Fe Office Outreach)</i> Temporarily halted due to Santa Fe VSO vacancy. Please call (505) 827-6334 for assistance	<i>(Alamogordo Office Outreach)</i> <b>Larry Weatherwax</b> (575) 437-4635 <a href="mailto:larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us">larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Gallup Office Outreach)</i> <b>Raymie Hurley</b> (505) 863-7457 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a>
<i>Raton*</i>	<i>Reserve*</i>	<i>Ruidoso</i>
<i>(Albuquerque #3 Office Outreach)</i> <b>Martín Marquez</b> (505) 383-2406 <a href="mailto:martinM.marquez@state.nm.us">martinM.marquez@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Gallup Office Outreach)</i> <b>Raymie Hurley</b> (505) 863-7457 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Roswell Office Outreach)</i> <b>Danielle Thompson</b> (575) 624-6086 <a href="mailto:danielle.thompson@state.nm.us">danielle.thompson@state.nm.us</a>
<i>Santa Clara (Grant County)*</i>	<i>Santa Rosa*</i>	<i>*Sunland Park</i>
<i>(Las Cruces #2 Outreach)</i> <b>Rosa Bycenski</b> (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Albuquerque #3 Office Outreach)</i> <b>Martín Marquez</b> (505) 383-2406 <a href="mailto:martinM.marquez@state.nm.us">martinM.marquez@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Las Cruces #2 Outreach)</i> <b>Rosa Bycenski</b> (575) 524-6220 <a href="mailto:rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us">rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us</a>
<i>Taos*</i>	<i>Truth or Consequences*</i>	<i>Zuni*</i>
<i>(Albuquerque #3 Office Outreach)</i> <b>Martín Marquez</b> (505) 383-2406 <a href="mailto:martinM.marquez@state.nm.us">martinM.marquez@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Las Cruces #1 Office Outreach)</i> <b>George Vargas</b> (575) 524-6124 <a href="mailto:george.vargas@state.nm.us">george.vargas@state.nm.us</a>	<i>(Gallup Office Outreach)</i> <b>Raymie Hurley</b> (505) 863-7457 <a href="mailto:raymie.hurley@state.nm.us">raymie.hurley@state.nm.us</a>





### DVS Women Veterans Program Bureau

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), women represent the fastest growing segment of the overall veteran population in our country. As of 2019, the data indicates there are 1.9 million women veterans in America—about 10% of the total veteran population of 19.6 million.

Here in New Mexico, VA data shows there are 16,540 women veterans—nearly 11% of the state's veteran population of 156,595.

These are numbers and percentages unprecedented in the history of our country. Unlike the past, today's women service members are not longer confined to desk or administrative jobs. Women today are serving as pilots, commanding warships, squadron leaders, senior-ranking officers, and other positions which were traditionally the domain of males.

As these women service members 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—with unique issues such as women's health issues, Military Sexual Trauma, running a household, 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 to plan, develop, implement, and coordinate helping women veterans in the state.



The program's goal is to improve the awareness of women veterans about their eligibility for VA and state veterans' benefits and services. The program manager assesses the needs of New Mexico women veterans, and makes recommendations to the DVS Cabinet Secretary regarding existing benefits and possible future benefit options and related programs.

The program manager also works with the DVS Field Operations Division to coordinate outreach to women veterans. As a Certified Veterans Service Officer, the program manager can also help women veterans file for their VA and state veterans benefits. The manager also represents the agency and the state of New Mexico at national, state, and local women veterans events, and

operates a Women Veterans Network to share information about national and state women veterans programs and services.

DVS Women Veterans Program Manager Tracie Brasier served 23-years with the New Mexico Air National Guard and Active Guard Reserves (AGR) as a Senior Master Sergeant specializing in aircraft maintenance, 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.



**Tracie Brasier**  
DVS Women Veterans  
Program Manager

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



## Field Services Division 2019 End-of-Year Report

### FY 2019 (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019)

Total Office Visits: 22,859

Total Outreaches Visits: 2,214

#### ***VA Benefits Claims***

VA Regional Office-Related	3,789
Service-Connected Disabilities	2,989
e-Benefits	864
VA Medical Center-Related	793
Death Benefits	583
Non-Service Connected	476
Other Referrals	471
Education/GI Bill	98
Home Loans	119
Miscellaneous	9,159
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,341</b>

#### ***State Benefits Applications***

Property Tax Exemptions	1,673
License Plate Applications	1,478
100%-Disabled	530
Education	414
State Parks Passes	409
Hunting & Fishing	283
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,787</b>

#### ***New Power of Attorney Referrals***

DVS	1,091
DAV	233
VFW	120
American Legion	100
MoPH	13
AMVETS	3
PVA	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,656</b>
<b>Non-POA Claims</b>	<b>1,159</b>

# HEALTH CARE DIVISION



The mandate of the DVS Health Care Division is to educate veterans about their available VA and non-VA health care benefits, and help veterans engage and navigate the process to apply for health care.

The division has formed a strong alliance with the New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS)—which encompasses the main Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, the fifteen VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's) throughout the state, and the four regional VetCenters (Farmington, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Las Cruces) that provide behavioral health counseling for veterans.

DVS and the NMVAHCS collaborate for conferences, workshops, and outreach visits throughout the state to reach as many veterans as possible. More information about the NMVAHCS, the CBOC's and Vet Centers can be found at [www.va.gov/directory/Guide/state.asp?STATE=NM](http://www.va.gov/directory/Guide/state.asp?STATE=NM).



Equally strong alliances have also been formed by DVS with non-VA state and private health care providers throughout New Mexico that serve veterans who choose non-VA health care—including veterans who are not eligible for VA health care.

The DVS Health Care Division is under the direction of Jemia Warner, who came to the agency in 2020 from the Salvation Army-Harbor Light Center in Washington, D.C., where she was the agency's Senior Substance Abuse Counselor. Her work included providing evidence-based individual and group counseling.

The Chicago native earned her Bachelor's and Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She can be contacted at [jemia.warner@state.nm.us](mailto:jemia.warner@state.nm.us) or (505) 383-2408



**Jemia Warner**  
DVS Health Care  
Division Director

## Key Federal/State/Community Health Care Partners

### The New Mexico VA Health Care System

The DVS Health Care Director is the agency's main liaison with the New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS)—which provides VA health services to veterans in New Mexico, southern Colorado, and west Texas. The NMVAHCS is a part of the VA's Desert Pacific Healthcare Network (VISN 22) which also encompasses VA health care systems in Arizona and Southern California.

The bulk of the state's VA health care is provided by the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center in Albuquerque (*right photo*)—named after the Korean War Medal of Honor recipient who after the war worked for the Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office in Albuquerque, and later served as a volunteer at the medical center.

The Murphy VA Medical Center is a joint commission-accredited, VHA complexity level 1B Tertiary Care Referral Center with a 24-hour Emergency Room. It is also the central hub for fifteen Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC's) providing affiliated health services in other parts of the state, and the four VA behavioral health care-focused VetCenters (Farmington, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Las Cruces). counseling.



### The New Mexico State Veterans Home

DVS works in an advisory capacity to the state Department of Health (DOH). DVS Veterans Service Officers regarding the New Mexico State Veterans Home in Truth or Consequences. DVS Veterans Service Officers make regular outreach visits to assist residents of the home and their families or caretakers with the veterans' benefits needs.

The home sits on sixteen picturesque acres near Elephant Butte Lake. It is the only state-managed facility dedicated to the long-term housing and care of elderly honorably discharged veterans, their spouses, or parents of service members killed in combat action.

The facility originally opened in 1937 as the Carrie Tingley Hospital for Crippled Children. In 1985 the hospital moved to a new location in Albuquerque, and the vacant original facility was converted to serve as New Mexico's first state veterans' home.

The state veterans home has 135 nursing home and 10 assisted living beds--providing long term sub-acute memory care, and assisted living care.

A new \$24 million Memory & Long Term Assisted Care wing (*right photo*) opened in 2017. The new 68,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility features a 39-bed long-term memory care unit, a 20-bed skilled nursing unit, a rehabilitation section for inpatient and outpatient services, and a unique therapy pool heated by water supplied from an underground natural thermal spring. For admission policy and procedures, or for additional information about the home, please call (575) 894-4200.





## Homeless and Near-Homeless Veterans

DVS refers homeless and near-homeless veterans to two facilities/programs—one each in northern and southern New Mexico.



### The New Mexico Veterans Integration Center

The New Mexico Veterans Integration Centers (VIC) (*left photo*) in Albuquerque provides housing and transition services for homeless and near-homeless veterans at its unique shelter based within the El Sereno Apartments—at 1301 Ortiz Drive SE.

More than just a homeless shelter, the VIC asks residents to commit to a two-year program featuring life-skills training designed to help them reintegrate into society. Residents must also pledge to abstain from consumption of alcohol and illegal drugs for the duration of the residency/program. For more information about the New Mexico Veterans

Integration Center, please go to [www.nmvic.org](http://www.nmvic.org).

DVS also participates in the annual October two-day *Stand Down & Project Hand Up! for Homeless Veterans* in Albuquerque—a multi-agency collaboration to provide housing, food, medical screening, and benefits assistance for homeless and near-homeless veterans.

### Southern NM/Mesilla Valley Community of Hope

In southern New Mexico, a program is offered for veterans and non-veterans through the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope (*right photo*) in Las Cruces. For more information, please go to the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope website at [www.mvcommunityofhope.org](http://www.mvcommunityofhope.org).



### Mental Health —The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

DVS is a member of the state's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Policy Academy.

SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

New Mexico's effort places a strong emphasis on serving the state's 156,000 veterans and their families. New Mexico's SAMHSA academy consists of a broad group of high-level state agency and community leaders, with an emphasis on those serving veterans.

The academy has identified the lack of transportation options for veterans as among the biggest challenges to helping the state deal with mental health issues in the state's large veteran population—citing the difficulty many face getting to appointments and counseling sessions. Members meet regularly to discuss how the state can better address this, as well as other mental health issues—as well as issues facing women veterans, and aging veterans.





### Transportation Services for Veterans

Veterans and disabled veterans can get free rides to and from their home and the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Albuquerque. For more information or to make a reservation, call the VAMC at (505) 265-1711/ext.1053.

Transportation is also provided free of charge by the *Disabled American Veterans (DAV) of New Mexico*. For more information or to make a reservation, call the DAV Transportation Network at (505) 256-2821.

In the southeastern part of the state, the *Southeast New Mexico Veterans Transportation Network* provides this to and from Roswell and the Albuquerque Murphy VAMC or the Artesia CBOC. For more information, please call (575) 622-0729.

### VetConnect 24-Hour Transportation Hotline

More information about veterans' transportation options elsewhere in New Mexico is also available by calling the toll-free 24-hour *VetConnect* phone service at 1-(800) 672-7006.

### New Mexico Veterans Treatment Court

Veterans who run afoul of the law in the Albuquerque metro area can elect to have their cases adjudicated through the New Mexico Second Judicial District's *Veterans Treatment Court*. DVS helped establish this alternative to incarceration for eligible veterans who are arrested for certain felony crimes and who may be suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), or substance abuse. For more information, call (505) 841-5430.

### New Mexico Domestic Violence Court/Veterans Track

The Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court launched a Domestic Violence Early Intervention Program/Veterans Track designed to help veterans facing first-time domestic violence charges in Bernalillo County to receive counseling and treatment in lieu of incarceration.

The program is part of the Court's Domestic Violence Early Intervention Program, but geared specifically for veterans. The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services helped advise the Court with the formation of the program, which was launched in June of 2014.



*New Mexico Second Judicial District Courthouse*



*Bernalillo County Metropolitan Courthouse*

Participating veterans must enter the program voluntarily, have no previous domestic violence charges, display a desire to take responsibility for their actions, be screened by the court's probation department and be approved by a judge.

For more information, call the court at (505) 841-8182.

# The New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)



**Rich Coffel**  
VBOC Director

The New Mexico Veteran's Business Outreach Center (VBOC) was created in 2010 by the passage of *Public Law 110-186*, which enabled the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to increase its effort of helping entrepreneurial-minded veterans, transitioning active duty personnel, and spouses.

DVS was selected as one of the first recipients of an SBA grant to fund our nation's first state-managed Veterans Business Outreach Center to carry out the SBA's new mandate.

New Mexico's VBOC can help with everything from business planning, start-up and expansion funding, marketing, and anything else a small business needs to launch and grow. Though based in

Albuquerque, the VBOC also serves veterans in Colorado. All VBOC services are free for transitioning active-duty personnel, veterans, or their spouses. More information about the VBOC can be found at [www.nmvmvoc.org](http://www.nmvmvoc.org), or by contacting VBOC Director Rich Coffel at (505) 383-2401 or [richardL.coffel@state.nm.us](mailto:richardL.coffel@state.nm.us).

VBOC Veterans Business Advisor James Cassidy can provide assistance in southern and southeastern New Mexico from the VBOC field office in Roswell. He can be contacted at [jamesm.cassidy@state.nm.us](mailto:jamesm.cassidy@state.nm.us) or (575) 624-6002.



*The New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center is located in the DVS Albuquerque Northeast Heights office, located at 5201 Eagle Rock Boulevard NE.*



**James Cassidy**  
VBOC Veterans Business Advisor

## VBOC 2019 End-of-Year Report

- Helped nine veteran-owned businesses secure \$1.58 million in federal contracts.
- Number of new business started 15
- Number of entrepreneurial-minded veterans counseled 273
- Number of Boots-to-Business classes presented 24
- Outreach events attended/information services rendered 135
- VBOC Veterans Business Advisor Jim Cassidy named Veterans Business Champion of the Year" by the SBA-New Mexico District Office (see story on page 36)

# Employment Help for Job-Seeking Veterans



DVS has formed a strong partnership with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) to help veterans with employment and training opportunities.

DWS employs a State Veterans Workforce Coordinator as a Program Manager for the federally-funded Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). This grant employs several Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER's) for veterans' job development, and also promotes the value hiring of veterans to employers.

The JVSG also utilizes the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) to assist eligible veterans with significant barriers to employment. The grant also provides job readiness skills, job training referrals, and community-based resource referrals. LVERs and DVOPs are assigned to 12 workforce connections centers permanently, and nine workforce connections centers on an out-station basis.



Through the JVSG, DWS works with DVS to assist active-duty transitioning service members and military spouses. The grant also provides assistance with "Stand Downs" for homeless veterans, the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program, the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, the VA *Supportive Services to Veterans and Families Program*, veterans suicide prevention, the veterans court program, veterans job/career fairs, veteran small-business initiatives, apprenticeships, internships, work-study programs, and other veteran-related activities.

Additional information about DWS is available at its website: [www.dws.state.nm.us](http://www.dws.state.nm.us), the Workforce Connections Online System at <https://www.jobs.state.nm.us>, or the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service website at [www.dol.gov/vets](http://www.dol.gov/vets).



# **2019 YEAR IN REVIEW**



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW—January



### Retired New Mexico Air Force Brigadier General Judy Griego Named DVS Cabinet Secretary

Retired New Mexico Air National Guard Brigadier General Judy M. Griego was introduced as DVS Secretary-Designate at the first Quarterly Veterans & Community Call on January 7 in Albuquerque (*left photo*). She had just been nominated by newly-elected Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham a week earlier.

Secretary-Designate Griego was then unanimously confirmed in the Senate on February 6 during the 2019 New Mexico Legislature. (*below right photo: top center, in light coat*)

"As a native New Mexican, I am humbled to be given this chance to serve my state's veterans and their families," said Secretary Griego after her confirmation. "I have seen the incredible sacrifice they've made to serve our country. The DVS staff and I will work hard to help veterans receive every VA and state veterans' benefit to which they're entitled—and will work to find ways to further improve their lives."



Her first speaking engagement as DVS secretary was at "Senior Day at the Legislature" in the Capitol Rotunda on February 22 (*left photo*). At the invitation of the Aging and Long Term Services Department, Secretary Griego urged senior veterans to make sure they're enrolled with the VA, and to "make sure your benefits are up to date...because things change...our bodies change...from when we first applied for our benefits."

### Ed Mendez Named State Benefits Division Director

Edward L. Mendez was named by Secretary Judy Griego as Director of its State Benefits Division.

Mr. Mendez is a Navy veteran who was initially hired by DVS in 2015 to manage a two-year Rural Veterans Coordination Program Grant awarded to DVS by the VA. He was instrumental in overseeing the smooth transition from the previous gubernatorial administration. He had been serving on an interim basis as state benefits director since the spring of 2018.

More information about the State Benefits Division can be found on page 9 of this Annual Report.



**Edward L. Mendez**  
State Benefits Division Director

## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW—February

### DVS Staff Busy With Outreach Visits to Rural Parts of the State



In addition to providing benefits assistance at their field offices, DVS Veterans Service Officers (VSO's) and other staff were well underway making outreach visits throughout the state. On February 9, then-DVS Women Veterans Program Manager Amanda Somerville (*left photo*) provided assistance at the request of the New Mexico National Guard for its Wellness Fair at the Roswell Readiness Center. Guard Personnel were able to obtain information mental health services, women's health programs, service member services & benefits, health clubs, nutrition, and other Health Clubs, nutrition advice, and VA and state veterans benefits available for them in the Chaves County area.

**(RIGHT PHOTO)** On February 11, DVS Albuquerque-based Veterans Service Officer Martin Márquez (*at right, standing*), then-Deputy Health Care Director John Griego (*middle/seated*), and Veterans Business Outreach Center Director Rich Coffel (*seated at left*) made an outreach stop in Moriarty at the invitation of Congresswoman Deb Haaland—the first veterans outreach for the newly elected Congresswoman from New Mexico's First Congressional District.



### DVS Secretary Griego Named Honorary Girl Scout



DVS Secretary Judy Griego was named an honorary Girl Scout at a special Girl Scouts of New Mexico ceremony during the 2019 legislature session on February 8 at the State Capitol Rotunda.

The secretary was honored for, according to the Girl Scouts, being an example of its mission of "building girls of courage, confidence, and character...who make the world a better place"...and for believing in the power of G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader).

Secretary Griego, a retired new Mexico Air National Guard Brigadier General, was the first woman to be promoted to that rank (in 2011) in the history of the New Mexico National Guard.



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW—March

### DVS, NM National Guard Present *Military & Veterans Day at the 2019 New Mexico Legislature*

Veterans and active-service members were honored on *Military & Veterans' Day at the Legislature* on March 11 at the State Capitol in Santa Fe. The annual day during the legislative session is presented by DVS and the New Mexico National Guard to honor New Mexico's military community. Keynote Speaker Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham thanked veterans and service members for their service for our 'country .



"I am a daughter of a veteran. My grandfather was a veteran. Several family members of mine served in the military, so I saw firsthand how our veterans sacrificed to serve our country," said the Governor. "I would not be here today, if not for the courage and sacrifice of our veterans who have served our country. Thank you for your sacrifice for our country, keeping us safe here at home."



This year's ceremony featured veterans of Operations Enduring Freedom (in Afghanistan) and Iraqi Freedom. Of New Mexico's 156,500 veterans, 36,000 are OEF/OIF veterans.

"Tens of thousands of New Mexicans and New Mexico-based service members served in Iraq and Afghanistan—including 6,000 from the New Mexico National Guard," said the Governor. "This new generation of veterans is the latest example of how New Mexico is always ready, willing to welcome our military men and women home, and care for them."

### Vietnam Veterans Group Receives \$5,000 Donation to Help Build Replica Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Angel Fire

Prior to the Military & Veterans Day at the Legislature ceremony on March at the state Capitol in Santa Fe, members of Vietnam Veterans of American/Northern New Mexico Chapter 996 were presented with a check for \$5,000 from American Legion Post 25 in Clovis. The donation will help VVA #996's fundraising effort to pay for a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, which will be on 'display at the DVS Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire.

#### FRONT ROW: VVA Chapter 996 Board

'Member Jerry Martinez (with a certificate from AL Post 25), State Rep. (and Vietnam War veteran Eliseo Alcón/D-Cibola & McKinley Counties), VVA Chapter 996 President Jake Lopez (holding the check), and VVA Chapter 996 Board 'Member Tom Wagner.



**BACK ROW:** American Legion Post 25 member Dale Movius, Chapter 996 board member Eddie Romero, Chapter 996 Board Member James Martsh, VBOC Director (and Vietnam Veteran) Rich Coffel, and Chapter 996 Board Member Henry Griego.



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (March-continued)



### DVS Secretary Griego Celebrates 100th Birthday of a Santa Fe WWII Veteran

DVS Secretary Judy Griego was invited to attend a 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of World War II U.S. Army Air Force veteran Joe Salazar in Santa Fe on March 2.

Secretary Griego presented a birthday letter, DVS Challenge Coin, and DVS Veteran Pin at a party hosted by Mr. Salazar's family and friends at the Santa Fe Elks Lodge.

In that letter, which she read aloud, she praised the Santa Fe native for being awarded a Bronze Star "...for your heroic actions against invading Japanese forces on the eve of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. Your ensuing service and hardships endured on the island of Saipan in the hot and humid south Pacific theater was instrumental in helping American long-range bombers the tide of the war in America's favor."

Secretary Griego also added, "I would like to extend my sincerest birthday wishes to you as you gather with loved ones to celebrate your 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. It takes an incredible amount of strength of body, mind and spirit to reach the century mark. I have a tremendous amount of admiration for you for achieving this incredible milestone in life."



### DVS Veterans Service Officer Inducted Into the Southern New Mexico Veterans Hall of Fame

DVS Veterans Service Officer (VSO) J.R. Turner was inducted into the Southern New Mexico Veterans Hall of Fame on March 9.

The Last Cruces-based VSO (*photo, in white shirt*) was selected for what the committee said is his continued support U.S. military veterans and their families. The award was presented to him by Committee President LTC James W. Harbison (USA-Retired) at the annual Veterans Car Show at the Bormian Autoplex on March 9.

His name is scheduled to be added along with those of previous inductees on a proposed Southern New Mexico Veterans Hall of Fame Monument at Veterans Memorial Park.

Mr. Turner retired from DVS later in the spring after 13-years with the agency. He is a retired U.S. Air Force F-111 Fighter/Bomber and F-117

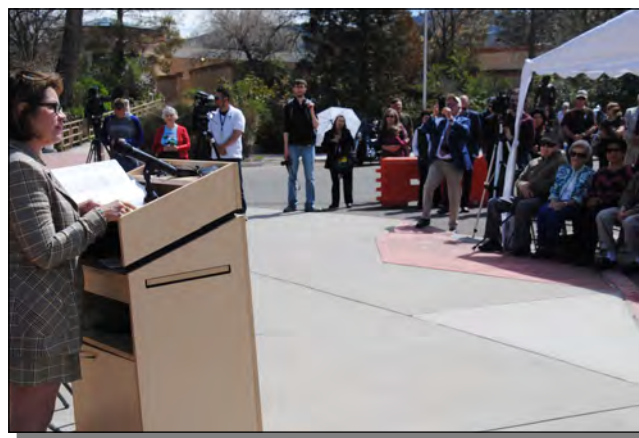
Stealth Fighter Avionics Technician who was deployed twice to Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm. Mr. Turner is a life member of VFW Post 6917 and a committee member of the Employee Support for the Guard & Reserve (ESGR).

## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (April)

### Bataan Remembrance Day Observed in Santa Fe

DVS Secretary Judy Griego had the honor of reading the 2019 Bataan Remembrance Day Proclamation from Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham at a Bataan Remembrance Day Ceremony in Santa Fe on April 9.

The ceremony is presented annually by the New Mexico National Guard at the Eternal Flame Monument outside the Bataan Memorial Building to honor the fall of the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines after a valiant response to a surprise attack launched by Japan just hours after the December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor attack.



Though greatly outnumbered, 1,800 New Mexico National Guardsmen of the 200th and 515th Coast Artillery Regiments—part of the 75,000 U.S. and Filipino defending force—were ordered by U.S. Command to surrender on April, 1942. Most were then endured a brutal 65-mile march to prison camps, which became known as the Bataan Death March. Many perished along the way; survivors endured an equally brutal imprisonment. About 900 New Mexicans were alive when Japan formally surrendered September 2, 1945.

"I hereby proclaim today as Bataan Remembrance Day throughout the state in honor of the brave New Mexicans who suffered in the name of freedom," read Secretary Griego from the Proclamation. "America will forever remember these heroes of Bataan who relied on extraordinary physical, mental, and emotional strength to defend the Bataan Peninsula and fight back in the name of freedom--enduring tremendous suffering so that we would remain free." Only five of the 1,800 New Mexican Bataan defenders are alive today. None were able to attend the ceremony.



### VBOC Veterans Business Advisor Named by SBA as New Mexico Small Business Champion of the Year

New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) Veterans Business Advisor Jim Cassidy was honored by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)/New Mexico District Office as *New Mexico's Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year*.

The prestigious award is given annually by the district office for, according to conditions of the award, "...fulfilling a commitment to advancing small business opportunities for veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces."

Mr. Cassidy was among 15 small businesses owners, lenders, and other "champions" honored for various small-business categories at the 2019 SBA New Mexico Small Business Week Awards Breakfast on May in Albuquerque.

**Jim Cassidy**

*VBOC Veterans Business Advisor*

The VBOC is the business development division of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS). Mr. Cassidy is based in the VBOC's Roswell office to help the center's Albuquerque-based main office increase its reach to help entrepreneurial-minded veterans in southeastern and southern New Mexico.

Mr. Cassidy is an Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veteran who retired from 20-years of service with U.S. Air Force retiree, specializing in aircraft maintenance and logistics at numerous bases stateside and around the globe. Based in Roswell, he is the VBOC's contact for entrepreneurial-minded veterans and their spouses in southern/SE New Mexico—and can help with all aspects of creating or expanding a small business. Mr. Cassidy can be contacted at [JamesM.Cassidy@state.nm.us](mailto:JamesM.Cassidy@state.nm.us) or (575) 624-6002.



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW *(April-continued)*



### DVS Helps Certify Native-American Veterans Service Officers

Thirteen representatives from pueblos, the Navajo Nation, and Mescalero Apache Nation were certified as Veterans Service Officers (VSO's) at the DVS annual certification training for its own VSO's from April 22-26 in Santa Fe.

The conference provides the latest benefits and filing information for DVS VSO's. DVS Secretary Judy Griego invited Native American representatives to become certified and help with outreach to the more than 9,000 Native American veterans in the state—most of whom live far from DVS offices.

**ABOVE PHOTO: Front Row (L to R):** Avelino Calabasa/Kewa Pueblo, DVS Secretary Judy Griego, Angela Salas /Zia Pueblo, Loraé HoMana Pawiki/VA Office of Tribal Government Relations, Kathy Natachu/Zuni Pueblo, Sam Lovato/Kewa Pueblo.

**Second Row (L to R):** Heidi Barlow/Kewa Pueblo Health Services, Ambrose Corriz/Kewa Pueblo, KC Hawkins/Trainer, National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Jeremy Chino/Albuquerque VAMC, Mark Kasehagan/Rocking J Re-Awakenings Veterans Ranch, Jamytta Bell/Trainer, National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, Kelton Starr/Mescalero Apache Tribe, Johnny Shack/Zuni Pueblo, David Walker/DVS Deputy Cemetery Program Manager, Adrian Julian/Jicarilla Apache Tribe.

### DVS Field Operations Director Helps WWII Veteran Celebrate 100th Birthday

World War II Army veteran Prudencio Briseno celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with family and friends in his hometown of Artesia on April 28.

DVS Field Operations Director Larry Campos (*right photo/2nd from right*), an Artesia native and long-time friend of the family, presented a congratulatory letter from Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, a DVS Challenge Coin, and a New Mexico Veterans Pin.

In the letter, the Governor congratulated Mr. Briseno on reaching the milestone birthday, and for his service as a U.S. Army Private First Class/Heavy Mortar Crewman during World War II in the Philippines and New Guinea in the South Pacific Theater of the war.



"Our nation's World War II veterans are living monuments to the courage and sacrifice made by men and women who paved the way to a free world as we know it today," read Director Campos from the letter. "On behalf of your grateful fellow New Mexicans, I humbly thank you for your service and wish you many more wonderful birthdays to come."



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (May)

### DVS Opens the Gallup State Veterans Cemetery

DVS opened the Gallup State Veterans Cemetery at a Memorial Day ceremony (May 27)—the state's second state veterans cemetery managed under the agency's State Benefits, Cemeteries, and Memorial Operations division.

Keynote Speaker Lt. Governor Howie Morales hailed the event as a landmark day for veterans and their families from Gallup and the surrounding western/northwestern regions of the state, because they no longer have to make the difficult decision of either burying a veteran in a public cemetery that may not adequately honor one's military service—or at one of the state's two existing national cemeteries (Santa Fe and Ft. Bayard) more than 200 miles away.



The 2.5-acre Gallup State Veterans Cemetery features 448 gravesites, 140 in-ground cremains burial sites, and 400 columbarium wall crypts—with another adjoining 23.5 acres readily available for future expansion. It is the second of four planned state veterans cemeteries built through an initiative launched by DVS in 2013 to build cemeteries for rural-area veterans of New Mexico. The first—the Ft. Stanton State Veterans Cemetery—opened in the fall of 2017. Ground was broken last October for a third cemetery in Angel Fire next to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, with completion scheduled for the spring of 2020. The fourth cemetery, currently involved in the pre-construction planning phase, will be built in Carlsbad.

### DVS Presents Memorial Day Ceremony at its Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire

DVS hosted a Memorial Day Ceremony at its Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire.

Health Care Division Director Mitchell Lawrence was the Guest Speaker speaking in place of DVS Secretary Judy Griego, who was attending the opening of the Gallup State Veterans Cemetery (*see above story*).



The annual 40-minute Flag March preceded the ceremony with the carrying of flags from the State Highway 484/US 64 intersection to the outdoor amphitheater (*below photo*).



In his remarks at the ceremony, Mr. Lawrence said "Memorial Day is more than just the unofficial start of summer. We must never forget that it is a day dedicated to the ultimate sacrifice our fallen service members gave for our country...while in service, in the name of freedom for us here at home."

## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (*May—continued*)



### DVS Presents Annual Metro Public Safety Day

Families got a “hands-on” look at law enforcement, first responder, and military equipment on *2019 Metro Public Safety* at the Cottonwood Mall in Albuquerque on May 11. This annual free family-friendly event is presented by DVS and the Cottonwood Mall for the public to meet first responders, law enforcement and military personnel, and learn how they serve and protect the citizens of New Mexico.

During a brief opening ceremony, DVS Secretary Judy Griego presented a DVS Certificate of Appreciation to New Mexico VA Health Care System Police Officer John Thomas.

On January 2, Officer Thomas noticed a swerving vehicle on the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center campus (*right photo*).

Recognizing that the driver was experiencing a medical emergency, Officer Thomas quickly intercepted the vehicle and brought it to a stop. He then called for the Resuscitation Education Initiative Team to the scene, which transported the driver to the Emergency Room for life-saving treatment for a ruptured artery. The driver was saved, thanks to the quick action of Officer Thomas.



### DVS Secretary Griego Attends USS Ticonderoga Veterans Association 48th Reunion



DVS Secretary Judy Griego was a guest speaker at the USS Ticonderoga Veterans Association 48th Reunion on May 17 in Albuquerque. After welcoming the veterans on behalf of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, she was presented with a USS Ticonderoga plaque from Ticonderoga veteran and former DVS Veterans Service Officer Sardo Sanchez (*right photo*). There were “Tico” veterans representing two versions of the ship: CV-14, an Essex-Class Aircraft Carrier which saw action in World War II, the Vietnam War, and recovered “splash-down” crews from Apollo 16, 17, and Skylab 2...and CG-47, the lead ship of 27 *Ticonderoga-Class* Guided Missile Cruisers first commissioned in 1983. CG-47 was the first ship in the world to be equipped with the Aegis Combat System, which allowed the simultaneous tracking of multiple weapons. The ship was decommissioned in 2004. Today, 22 Ticonderoga-class cruisers are still active.



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (May—continued)

### Run For The Wall Riders Rumble Through New Mexico



Hundreds of motorcycle riders spent the night in New Mexico between May 16-18 as part of the annual *Run for the Wall* cross-country motorcycle ride to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. The ride honors the memory of military personnel Killed in Action (KIA) and those still listed as Missing in Action (MIA). It features three cross-country routes:

**Southern** Riders entered the state along Interstate 10 on May 16 and spent the night in Las Cruces

**Midway** I-40; spent the night of May 16 in Albuquerque, and departed the next morning—continuing east on I-40

**Central** I-40; spent the night of May 16 in Gallup. On May 17, the riders continued east on I-40 to I-25, SR-599, and U.S. Highway 84/285—stopping for lunch at the Cities of Gold Casino in Pojoaque. DVS Cemetery Program Administrative Assistant Deanna Anaya (*bottom left photo*) was there to greet riders stopping for lunch. She distributed veterans benefits brochures, bumper stickers, and other items. After lunch, the riders continued northbound on Hwy 84/285, to SR-68, and then east on U.S. Hwy 64 to Eagle Nest, where they spent the night. The next morning (May 18) the riders departed eastbound on SR-64 and back to I-25 North for Colorado.

All three routes began May 15 in Ontario, California—about an hour east of Los Angeles—ending in Washington, D.C. in time for Memorial Day Weekend ceremonies.



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (June)

### DVS Secretary, VSO Deliver Keynote Addresses at DAV, American Legion Conventions



DVS Secretary Judy Griego and DVS Clovis-based Veterans Service Officer Matt Barela were the keynote speakers at the 2019 Disabled American Veterans (DAV) State Convention on June 7 in Albuquerque...and the American Legion-Department of New Mexico State Convention on June 27 in Clovis.

Both speakers stressed the refocusing of DVS on outreach to veterans, to “refocus on what our mandate is. We need to help veterans file for or update their benefits. And we need to keep looking for those veterans who haven’t even registered with the VA. This is the reason why DVS was created 15-years ago.” Both also stressed the immediate mission of ensuring a smooth transition of the state veterans home in Truth or Consequence from DVS to the Department of Health—ensuring that everything was in place for the

### Northern New Mexico Honor Flight of WWII, Korean War Veterans Returns to Albuquerque

Twenty-six veterans from three war eras returned to the Albuquerque International Sunport on June 7 from a whirlwind two-day trip to Washington, D.C. ---courtesy of the sixth annual *Honor Flight of Northern New Mexico*. The WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans were accompanied by out-of-pocket-paying volunteer escorts on the flight, which brings older veterans to our nation’s capital for first-time visits to the national war monuments dedicated to their era of service. The airfare, lodging, and meals are provided free for the veterans.



DVS Secretary Judy Griego and DVS Deputy Cemetery Program Director David Walker (*left photo, in black shirt*) were among the hundreds of cheering people providing a hero’s welcome for the returning veterans. The DVS duo presented DVS Veterans Pins to the veterans, and thanked them for their service.

“To see the faces of the returning veterans...to see their reaction...was something else,” said Deputy Cemetery Program Director Walker—himself a Vietnam War Navy veteran. “I don’t know who enjoyed it more—the returning veterans, or the people like me welcoming them home.”

## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW *(June-continued)*

### SAA Holds State Training Conference for College/University Officials



The DVS State Approving Agency (SAA), in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), presented the *2019 School Certifying Official Conference* June 17-19 in Albuquerque at the CNM Workforce Center.

The three-day training provided school certifying officials (SCO's) with updated information and training to better support veterans, eligible families, and military service members who use their GI Bill® education benefits. The DVS SAA is tasked with overseeing compliance by these institutions. *(more information about the SAA can be found on page 8)*

A university, college, or training institute's SCO is responsible for submitting enrollment certifications to the VA verifying all rigid standards and protocols for a veteran's utilization of the GI Bill® have been met. More information about education benefits is available at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill>.

### DVS Teams With Two Native American Veterans Agencies to Present Isleta Benefits Conference

DVS collaborated with the Native American Training Institute (NATI) and the Southwest Native American Veterans Association to present a benefits conference on June 22-23 at the Isleta Resort & Casino in Albuquerque. DVS Secretary Judy Griego along with DVS division directors covered the available federal VA and state veterans benefits available for veterans—and especially Native-American veterans.

During a Q&A session *(right photo)*, a female U.S. Air Force veteran thanked DVS for helping her get treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). She said she came to DVS "...knowing something was wrong in me—but not knowing what it was." DVS had put her in touch with the Murphy VA Medical Center, from which she is greatly benefitting from therapy and counseling.



The following day, DVS Health Care Division Director Mitchell Lawrence was approached by a male veteran seeking similar advice. Mr. Lawrence worked with the veteran over the next couple of days to direct him to the Murphy VA Medical Center.



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW *(June-continued)*



### American Gold Star Mothers Holds National Convention in Albuquerque

DVS Secretary Judy Griego was among the dignitaries welcoming American Gold Star mothers from across the nation to the organization's 2019 National Convention *(left photo)*—held this year on Jun 28-30 in Albuquerque.

The convention also marked the end of the one-year term of AGSM National President Becky Christmas. *(below right photo)* The long-time resident of Wagon Mound in Mora County joined the New Mexico chapter following the 2004 death of her son, U.S. Army Capt. Todd Christmas. This Iraq War veteran and Bronze Star recipient was among

seven killed in a helicopter crash near Fort Hood, TX.

"It has been an honor to serve on the national executive board for the past eight years. I have had wonderful experiences, met amazing people—and have gotten to know many Gold Star Mothers and hear the story of their child," she said. "I will always remember this year with a smile and gratitude--and I know my son would be very proud of me."

She will remain active with the New Mexico chapter, and volunteering at the Las Vegas (NM) Vet Center and Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC).



### DVS Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire Hosts Flag Retirement Ceremony

DVS Vietnam Veterans Memorial Manager DB Herbst *(at left)* served as Master of Ceremonies for a Flag Retirement Ceremony on Flag Day (June 14) at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire.

Dozens of old, faded, or tattered American, state, and other flags were brought to the Memorial by veterans organizations, civic groups, and private citizens for the ceremony hosted by DVS.

According to the United States Flag Code: "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning." The Flag Code does not actually give specifics on how to destroy the flag. One should use common sense making sure the procedure is in good taste and shows no disrespect for the flag."





## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (July)

### First 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.



### DVA, Vietnam Veterans Group Sign Agreement to Build Replica Vietnam Memorial Wall in Angel Fire

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 National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in New Mexico.

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

Vietnam Veterans of America/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](http://www.vietnammemorial.net). Donations are tax-deductible.

*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...for the DVS Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire. 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.*

## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW *(July-continued)*



### **DVS Attends Seventh Annual NMVAHCS 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 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Mental Health Summit presented by the New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) on July 31 in Albuquerque.

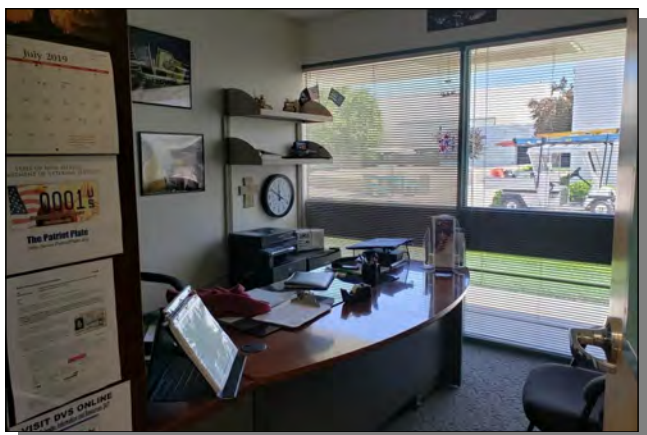
The focus of the Summit at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial was “Creating a Community of Hope”—to foster partnerships between veterans service agencies and community partners to improve mental health and well-being of veterans and their families. DVS pledged to continue its statewide outreach of veterans 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.”

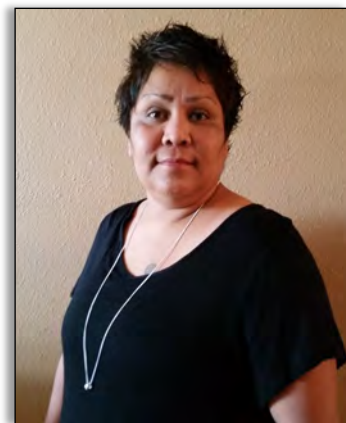
The NMVAHCS has four Vet Centers throughout the state—in Farmington, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces--that are solely dedicated to providing mental health counseling and care. The VA also has fifteen Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC’s) which can refer veterans to other agencies. The Vet Centers and CBOC’s can be found at:

<https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?STATE=NM&dnum=ALL>:

### **DVS Moves its Four Corners-Area Field Office to Farmington’s San Juan College**



**Beverly Charley**  
*DVS-based Farmington  
Veterans Service Officer*



DVS opened its new Four Corners-area field office in Farmington at San Juan College.

The centralized location, easier access, and more parking were the main reasons behind the move. DVS Veterans Service Officer Beverly Charley is now located in college’s Student 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](mailto:beverly.charley@state.nm.us) or (505) 327-2861.

Ms. Charley is also the agency’s Native American Tribal Liaison. Native American veterans anywhere on Navajo nation land or anywhere else in the state can also contact her for benefits assistance.



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (August)

### DVS, NMNG, AARP Present Annual Military Honors Burial Training Conference

DVS, the New Mexico National Guard, and AARP New Mexico presented the 2019 *Military Honors Burial Training Conference* on August 25 in Albuquerque.

The conference is part of the *Military Honors Burial Program* created a decade ago by DVS and the NMNG to ensure that all honorably-discharged fallen veterans in New Mexico receive a military honors funeral featuring a Flag-Fold, Rifle Volley, and/or Bugle rendition of *Taps*. Federal law stipulates all deceased veterans who are retired or were discharged from service under conditions other than dishonorable are entitled to an Honor Guard at their funeral.



There are more than 30 all-volunteer units throughout the state to render this "final salute." At the conference, attendees receive training/instruction, and an opportunity for new all-volunteer Honor Guards to register with DVS

Neither DVS nor the NMNG is involved with the scheduling of an Honor Guard—families must work with their local funeral home to secure this free service. For more information about all-volunteer Honor Guards, contact DVS Cemetery Program Deputy Director David Walker at [david.walker@state.nm.us](mailto:david.walker@state.nm.us) or (505) 827-6356.

### Two Former WWII MIA's Reinterred at the Santa Fe National Cemetery

In August, DVS Secretary Judy Griego presented state flags to families at the reinterment funerals for two service members who were killed in action in WWII and initially buried as "unidentified."

Marine Corps Platoon Sgt. George E. Trotter was interred on August 9 at the Santa Fe National Cemetery. Sgt. Trotter was 38-years old when he was among more than 1,000 U.S. service members who lost their lives in the Battle of Tarawa November 20-23, 1943, in the South Pacific. The Kansas City native was killed on the first day of combat. His body was recovered, and along with hundreds of other unidentified casualties, were buried as "unidentified" on the island. Advances in forensics finally revealed his identity in the spring of 2019. A niece living in Taos requested reinterment in Santa Fe.

On August 19, the remains of U.S. Navy Fireman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Billy James Johnson were also laid to rest at the cemetery (*right photo*). F1C Johnson—who was born in Caney, KY—spent his teenage years in Chama, NM. He was among 429 crew members 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.

F1C Johnson's identity was also confirmed this spring. A nephew in Truth or Consequences requested reinterment at the Santa Fe National Cemetery. The flags presented by DVS Secretary Griego to both families had been flown at the State Capitol in honor of the reinterment of these two fallen WWII veterans.





## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (August-continued)



### Hundreds of Commemorative Bricks Laid at the DVS Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire

Dozens of motorcycle riders who rode in the 2019 pre-Memorial Day *Run For The Wall* cross country motorcycle ride earlier this year came back for the annual Bricklaying Ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Angel Fire on August 31.

The riders were joined by volunteers to lay special commemorative bricks along a walkway on the southern side of the Memorial.

The bricks bore the name of a veterans—along with his or branch of service and years served. The bricks were purchased by anyone wishing to honor a veteran—living or deceased.

All funds went to the David Westphall Veterans Foundation—which initially managed the Memorial shortly after it was built in honor of Albuquerque native David Westphall, who was killed in action in Vietnam in 1968. The New Mexico State Parks Division assumed management of the Memorial in 2005, before it was transferred to DVS in 2017.



### Purple Heart Recipients Honored in Santa Fe

Purple Heart Award recipients from throughout New Mexico were honored for their sacrifice at a Purple Heart Recognition Ceremony in Santa Fe on August.

The ceremony was presented by DVS, the New Mexico 'National Guard, the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MoPH), Berardinelli Family Funeral Service, and the City of Santa Fe to honor recipients of our nation's oldest combat decoration. The Purple Heart is awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who are wounded in combat action, or awarded posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who killed in action or die of combat-related wounds.

Keynote Speaker and past MoPH State President Roger Newall--a Purple Heart recipient who flew more than 3,000 combat hours in a C-123K plane during the Vietnam War—referred to the award as one that no one seeks, nor is able to request.

The Purple Heart traces its origins to the end of the Revolutionary War, when then- Continental Army General George Washington wanted to honor Union soldiers who were injured in combat during the war—particularly the enlisted ranks, who unlike officers were not honored. There are an estimated 3,500 Purple Heart recipients currently living in New Mexico



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (*August-continued*)

### **DVS Takes Part in Annual Aging & Long Term Services Division Conference in Albuquerque**

DVS was among the more than four dozen agencies participating in the 41<sup>st</sup> annual New Mexico Conference on Aging on August 13-14 in Albuquerque.

The conference is one of the biggest social services conferences of any kind in the state. It is presented by the New Mexico Aging & Long-term Services Department, and attracts hundreds of citizens from throughout the state seeking information and assistance from the participating agencies.

DVS Acting Health Care Division Director John Griego gave a presentation on how DVS can assist aging/elderly veterans with their federal VA and state veterans benefits. DVS staff also provided assistance at outreach tables on both days



*DVS Legal Secretary/Administrative Assistant Connie Acosta and then-DVS Acting Health Care Division Director John Griego were busy providing information about veterans benefits to attendees at the August 13-14 Aging & Long term Services division Conference in Albuquerque.*



### **DVS Provides Veterans Benefits Information at Governor's "Cabinet in Your Community" Outreach**

DVS assisted veterans attending the Governor's Cabinet in Your Community outreach event in Albuquerque on August 10.

Every state cabinet agency had high-level staff on hand to assist walk-in constituents with issues ranging from child welfare/care, employment, state income taxes, immunizations, well-water issues/testing, land rights, and other issues served by the 25 state-level cabinet agencies. Telephone assistance was also provide by six assistants at the Governor's office for those not able to attend.



**LEFT PHOTO:** *DVS Veterans Service Officers George Vargas (in black shirt, at left) and Martín Márquez .*

**RIGHT PHOTO:** *DVS Secretary Judy Griego (standing at left, in black shirt) DVS Veterans Service Officer George Vargas (seated in center/black shirt) and DVS Veterans Service Officer George Vargas.*



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (September)



### 22 Unclaimed Deceased Veterans Laid to Rest With Military Honors at a *Forgotten Heroes Funeral*

The cremated remains of twenty-two deceased veterans were laid to rest at a *Forgotten Heroes Funeral* on September 26 at the Santa Fe National Cemetery.

The eighteen men and four women—sixteen from Bernalillo County; two from Otero County—were interred courtesy of the state's *Forgotten Heroes Burial Program* established in 2009 by DVS, the New Mexico National Guard, and Bernalillo County to provide a military funeral at the cemetery for any honorably discharged deceased veteran whose body goes unclaimed upon their death. Those in

attendance serve as the "family." The program now includes participation from all 33 counties in the state.

Daniels Family Funeral Services of Albuquerque has also joined the effort—providing the cremation and assisting with the overall coordination of the interment process. Students from Mr. Gino Perez's woodshop classes at Valley High School in Albuquerque designed and built the wooden urns. Members of the Albuquerque police Department, Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, New Mexico State Police, the Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office, the Santa Fe Police Department, and the American Legion Riders provided an escort for the hearse from the Strong-Thorne Mortuary in Albuquerque to the Santa Fe National Cemetery. American Legion Riders members loaded the urns at the mortuary, and brought the urns to the funeral service upon the procession's arrival at the cemetery.



Lt. Governor Howie Morales delivered the Eulogy in place of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, who was unable to attend due to a previously-scheduled series of meetings in Washington, D.C.

"Though these fallen veterans died without the presence of actual family, thanks to the Forgotten Heroes Burial Program, all of you here today...are serving as the family of these fallen veterans. So I am comforted in knowing that these fallen veterans are not alone in the end. All of us here today are standing together beside them...so that they are not alone," said the Lt. Governor. "May their souls now finally and forever rest in peace. To the souls of these men and women...and to all veterans... I want to thank you for your service...and God Bless you."

The cremated remains of the following twenty veterans from Bernalillo County were interred with military honors: John Anderson (USN BTFN), Brenda Bock (USAF A1C), Ronald Copeland (USMC PFC), Lawrence Clyde Curry (USA PFC), Lesley Donovan (USA S4C), Roberta Gordon (USN-unknown rank), Glenn Hamilton (USA-unknown rank), Robert Jeannoutot (USA PFC), Darlene Johnson (USA SPC), Gary Johnson (USA PFC), Jeremy Myron Kuhr (USA PFC), Steven Lopes (USA SGT), John McCann (USA-unknown rank), Bruce McMaster (USMC Cpl), Joann Shockey (USA PFC), Gary Silverblatt (USA PFC), Jack Sparacio (USA-unknown rank), Eugenio Torres (USA-unknown rank), Roy Wagoner (USN PO3), and John Winter (USA PFC). Laid to rest were two from Otero County: Alfred Russell Miller (USA-unknown rank), and Harold Dean Whitmire (USA SPC).



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (*September-continued*)



### DVS, NM National Guard, NM State Fair Host Military & Veterans Day at the State Fair

Military veterans and National Guard/Reserve/active-duty personnel were admitted free to the New Mexico State Fair for *Military and Veterans Day at the State Fair* on 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.

In addition to the numerous rides and attractions at the state fair, there were 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 was a presentation by New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Andrew Welch 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 concluded with members from the *American Gold Star Mothers/New Mexico Chapter* (*left photo*) 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.



### DVS Launches YouTube Video Channel

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) has launched a YouTube channel to showcase video accounts of selected DVS-sponsored, partnered, or attended veterans' events.

These events will be videotaped and edited at Ultra-High Definition, or "4K," and can be viewed in 4K on any 4K-compatible television, computer, smartphone or other compatible device. The videos can also be viewed in "regular" 1080p High Definition (HD) and Standard Definition (SD).

The DVS YouTube channel can be found by entering "New Mexico Department of Veterans Services" on the YouTube homepage search bar. A video link is also being developed on the DVS website and Facebook page

The video sources provide another outreach tool for the agency to inform and educate veterans and their families about DVS news and events, said DVS Secretary Judy Griego.

"We live in a 'video' world today, so it is important that DVS be able to utilize video to reach out to veterans," said Secretary Griego. "We are involved in so many events that are not only important, but also very visually appealing--which can be powerfully and beautifully presented on video."

## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (October)



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** *Vietnam Veterans of America/NM State Council President Bill Garcia, DVS Cemetery Program Deputy Director David Walker, DVS State Benefits Director Ed Mendez, and VVA Northern NM Chapter Member Jerry Martinez...with the "Best Practices Award in Economic Development" plaque.*

### DVS Wins Award at State Finance Conference

The DVS State Benefits Division was named a "Best Practice Award" winner in economic development at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference (NMIFC) in Las Cruces on October 23.

The award was for development and expansion plans of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire. In awarding DVS, the NMIFC said "recognition is provided to an organization that undertook and successfully completed a project... incorporating community solutions and participation."

DVS was honored for working with the David Westphall Veterans Foundation, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) / Northern New Mexico Chapter 996, the Village of Angel Fire, and Colfax County to further develop the monument through the construction of the Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery—which is scheduled to open in the spring of 2020 (*photo below*) and a half-scale Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall (*artist's rendition/lower-left*)

In nominating DVS for the award, Juan Torres, Director of Finance Development Programs at the New Mexico Economic Development Department, wrote that these developments will not only further honor veterans, they will also boost the economy of the Moreno Valley area.

"The project is greater than the sum of its parts in that it provides a contemplative, healing space to honor the military fallen--and also introduces visitors to an area that would not otherwise have been there," wrote Mr. Torres. "The contemplative nature of the Memorial is a perfect complement to the outdoor activities available to visitors for continued reflection."



*Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery (January 14, 2020)*



The Memorial was built in 1971 by Albuquerque residents Victor and Jeanne Westphall to honor their son, Marine 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. David Westphall. The 28-year old was one of sixteen Marines killed in an ambush by North Vietnamese forces on May 22, 1968. The David Westphall Foundation was created to help operate the facility. In 2005, the Foundation donated the Memorial to the state parks division. In 2017, management was transferred to DVS.

The replica Wall will be a half scale replica of the Washington D.C. Vietnam Memorial Wall, featuring the names of the 58,320 service members killed in action—including 398 New Mexicans. The \$300,000 projected cost is being financed by fundraising efforts of VVA Chapter 996. 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](http://www.vietnammemorial.net). Donations are tax-deductible.



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (October-continued)

### DVS, Bernalillo County Honor High School That Provided Urns For Forgotten Heroes Funeral

DVS and Bernalillo County thanked Albuquerque's Valley High School woodshop students at an October 9 school assembly for making the urns used in the 2019 Forgotten Heroes Funeral two weeks earlier (*see page 58 for story*).

DVS Secretary Judy Griego presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the school and Woodshop & Metals Class teacher Geno Perez (*below photo*).

"Thanks to your compassion, you allowed these deceased men and women to be buried with dignity," she said. "You helped us to provide the Final Salute which they earned through their military service."



Valley High School became after Mr. Perez attended the 2017 Forgotten Heroes Funeral. He thought the deceased veterans deserved something better than a plain, unmarked box—and contacted the county to see if his students could instead make wooden urns.

"The urns were made out of love for our veterans by the students," said Mr. Perez after the school assembly. "We are extremely honored to have played a small role in the funeral. Those men and women deserve to be buried with dignity—and we are happy to help do this."

### DVS Provides Assistance at "Stand Downs" for Homeless and Low-Income Veterans

DVS Field Services Director Larry Campos (*right photo/2nd from left*) and DVS Women Veterans Program Manager Tracie Brasier (*far right*) were among the representatives from more than three dozen service agencies providing assistance at the 2019 Albuquerque Stand Down & Project Hands-Up Stand Down for homeless and low-income veterans on October 24 at The Rock at Noonday shelter.

The annual event, presented by the New Mexico Veterans Integration Centers, the New Mexico National Guard, and the Noonday shelter also provided hot meals, shoes/clothing, back packs, blankets and other items to needy veterans. Participating service agencies helped with filing for veterans benefits, housing, employment, and information about many more services and programs available for veterans and their families.



The Stand Down concept is modeled after military stand downs popularized during the Vietnam War to offer battle-weary soldiers a temporary safe haven to rest, receive medical treatment, get a hot meal, and receive other services before returning to combat. Similar Stand Downs hosted by other local agencies were also presented in Las Cruces on September 27 at VFW Post 10124, and Farmington on Oct. 11 at San Juan College. Upcoming Stand Downs are scheduled in Gallup (Nov. 1 at Red Rock Park) and Santa Fe (Nov. 9 at Advent Life Church).



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (November)



### Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham Gives Keynote Address at the Santa Fe Veterans Day Ceremony

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham celebrated Veterans Day at the annual Veterans Day ceremony in Santa Fe on November 11. The ceremony at the Santa Fe Veterans Memorial was presented by DVS, the city of Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Veterans Advisory Board, Vietnam Veterans of American Chapter 996, American Legion & Auxiliary Post 1, VFW Post 2951, and the New Mexico National Guard.

"Sometimes in every community around the country, it can be too easy...just for a moment...to forget about the sacrifice that the men and women and their families make," she said. "But today in communities all across New Mexico, these celebrations and recognitions of these sacrifices are taking place. New Mexicans will always be grateful for the service of those who have served our nation."

The ceremony concluded with a quilt presentation by *Quilts of Valor* to five Native American Women veterans in appreciation for their service to our country—and to DVS Secretary Judy Griego, who prior to coming to DVS retired as a Brigadier General in the New Mexico Air National Guard. She was the first woman to be promoted to the rank of general in the history of the New Mexico National Guard.



*DVS VBOC Veterans Business Advisor Jim Cassidy presents a Heroes Award to members of the Roswell Veterans Honor Guard.*

### First Responders, Veterans Honored at Heroes Banquet in Roswell

New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) Veterans Business Advisor Jim Cassidy served as Co-Master of Ceremonies for the ninth annual Heroes Banquet honoring 36 veterans on November 2 at the Eastern New Mexico State Fair Event Building in Roswell.

More than 300 people attended the event, which was presented by the nonprofit service organization Homes for Heroes of Chaves County—of which Mr. Cassidy is vice president.

The theme of the evening was "Sacrifice in Service," which was also the name of the award given posthumously to Roswell firefighter Jeff Stroble, who passed away on July 21 from injuries sustained when he responded to a massive June 5 fireworks explosion in Roswell. Roswell Fire Department Chief Devin Graham presented the award to the Stroble family ([right photo](#)).



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (*November-continued*)



### DVS VBOC Presents 2019 Southwest Veterans Business Conference

One-hundred sixty veterans attended the two-day 2019 Southwest Veterans Business Conference on November 4-5 in Albuquerque. The conference was presented by the New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)—the business development division of DVS—along with the Small Business Administration (SBA) New Mexico Regional Office, SCORE, the Veterans' Procurement Assistance Center, and the Small Business Development Center of New Mexico (SBDC).

The conference presented information for anyone looking to start or expand their own business. SBA Administrator Chris Pilkerton gave the opening remarks. (*right photo*)

"I'm very impressed by the turnout today," said Mr. Pilkerton. "This is one of the better-attended conferences I've attended. It's a testament to the strong interest of veterans here in New Mexico who want to succeed in their new careers—and to the excellent assistance available to them by the agencies here at this conference."



### Unclaimed Deceased Veteran Laid to Rest at the DVS Gallup State Veterans Cemetery

The cremated remains of former U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Timothy John Clark were laid to rest on November 14 at the DVS Gallup State Veterans Cemetery. He was unclaimed by family members after passing away at the age of 69 on September 14 in the Four Corners area.

A small gathering of local veterans attended the funeral, Medal of Honor Recipient and Gallup native Hiroshi Miyamura (*left photo*). The Tohatchi Veterans Organization Honor Guard provided a rifle volley and a bugle rendition of *Taps*.

The funeral was part of the DVS *Forgotten Heroes Funeral Program* which ensures that all honorably-discharged veterans who are unclaimed upon their deaths will be buried with military honors.

"Former Staff Sgt. Timothy John Clark should be thanked for serving and protecting our country through his service in the U.S. Army," said Secretary Griego in her Eulogy. "Although he is no longer with us...and though no one knew him personally...he is not forgotten...and not alone today."

Nothing else was known about Mr. Clark other than his name and Social Security number when this cremated remains were brought to the cemetery. DVS then contacted the Albuquerque VA Regional Office to request help in tracking down more information about Mr. Clark. The office was able to confirm that Mr. Clark was honorably discharged as a Staff Sgt. after serving in the Army from 1965-1970.



## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (November-continued)



### 2019 Native American Veterans Health and Wellness Symposium

DVS Secretary Judy Griego attended the 19th Annual Native American Veterans Health & Wellness Symposium on November 8 at Isleta Pueblo.

The event was sponsored by the New Mexico VA Health Care System, the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service, and AARP New Mexico to provide information about health and mental health services for Native American veterans and their families.

At the welcome ceremony, Secretary Griego presented a letter and certificate of appreciation to representatives of the family of WWII surgical nurse Eloisa Apachito, who at the last minute had to cancel her visit to be recognized for her service during the war.

"The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services certificate of appreciation presented to Eloisa Apachito," said Secretary Griego, "for your service to our country during World War II as a Surgical Nurse with the U.S. Army Nurse Corps. The deep sense of selfless caring instilled in you while growing up in Taos Pueblo enabled you to provide critical care for countless men suffering from the horrors of the war. Thank you for this service to our country." NMVAHCS Native American Veterans Coordinator Terry Obrego accepted the certificate and letter on behalf of the family.



### DVS Provides Assistance at the Governor's Cabinet in Your Community Outreach in Roswell

DVS was among the 20 state agencies providing assistance at Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's "Cabinet in Your Community" outreach on November 2 at Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell campus.

The "one-stop shopping" event provided southeastern New Mexicans with information about services available from the state and local agencies.

The first Governor's Cabinet in Your Community was in Albuquerque in August. The Governor said similar events will also take place in communities throughout the state.

**RIGHT PHOTO:** *DVS Women Veterans Program Manager Tracie Brasier, DVS Carlsbad-based Veterans Service Officer Dagmar Youngberg, DVS Roswell-based Veterans Service Officer Danielle Thompson, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, DVS Secretary Judy Griego, and DVS Clovis-based Veterans Service Officer Matt Barela.*





## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (December)

### DVS, Bernalillo County Announce Launch of Veterans Property Tax Exemption Outreach Drive

DVS and the Bernalillo County Assessor's Office is kicking off the third annual Veterans State Property Tax Exemption Outreach drive on December 19.

A DVS Veterans Service Officer (VSO) will be at the county assessor's office, located near downtown Albuquerque at 501 Tijeras Blvd. NW, to assist veterans with filing for the Veterans State Property Tax Exemption—a \$4,000 reduction in the taxable value of a veteran's primary residence. This benefit is also available to un-remarried surviving spouses of veterans who would have otherwise qualified for this benefit. Veterans rated at 100% service-connected disabled can have the total property tax liability waived.



The VSO can also help with filing for or updating VA or state veterans' benefits claims.

No appointment is necessary. Veterans must bring a copy of their DD-214 separation papers or any documents from the VA as proof of veteran status in order to receive the veterans' property tax exemption certificate or help expedite any on-site filing veterans' benefits processes. The DVS VSO can assist with filing for lost DD-214's.

This joint effort between DVS and the County Assessor's Office continues through next year, with outreach stops at the office on January 16, February 20, March 19, April 16, and concluding on April 23.



### Christmas Wreaths Laid at Gravesites in New Mexico at Wreaths Across America Ceremony

DVS Secretary Judy Griego was among the guest speakers at the 2019 Wreaths Across America Christmas tribute at the Santa Fe National Cemetery on December 14.

The 10 a.m. 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 service members who are no longer with us is not forgotten this Christmas season," said Secretary Griego. "Today is a day to remember that Americans are able to freely celebrate the Christmas season because of the service and sacrifice of the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces."



Secretary Griego (*left photo*) then joined the crowd to place more than 2,500 special Christmas Wreaths at selected gravesites. The wreaths were pre-purchased by anyone wishing to honor the service of deceased veterans during the Christmas holiday season. Wreaths were also laid at the DVS Ft. Stanton and Gallup State Veterans Cemeteries.

## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (*December-continued*)



### **Eighteen State Veterans Home Residents Presented With Medals from South Korean Government**

Eighteen veterans of the Korean War now living at the New Mexico State Veterans Home in Truth or Consequences were presented with an *Ambassador of Peace Medal* on December 13.

DVS Secretary Judy Griego joined Republic of Korea (South Korea) Consul General/Los Angeles Consulate Kim Wan-Joong to present the medal on behalf of his government as an expression of appreciation to American service men and women who served in the war against North Korea from June, 1951-July 1953...or in the ensuing UN peacekeeping mission through 1955.

The Medal was initially presented by the South Korean government as a memento to American service members who served in the combat zone and who later returned to visit as part of a special "revisit program." But it has since been expanded to include any Korean War combat-zone veteran who cannot make the journey.

"The South Korean government would like to express its sincere appreciation for your service in this war which helped keep our people free from Communism," said Mr. Kim in his remarks shortly before the presentation of the medals. "South Korea will always be grateful to your service and sacrifice for us."



Presented with medals were veterans' home residents Efido Arguello, Edward Bashista, Robert Blair, Leonard Bullington, Jerry Jim Calkins, Joseph Eiken, Enrique Garcia, Elmer Hans, Garland Hawkins, Lloyd Henson, Tommie Higgins, Herbert Holm, Wilfred Holzer, Richard Hughes, Samuel Lazard, Joseph Moulder, Floyd Poland, and Henry Tyler.





## 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW (*December-continued*)



### DVS, Bernalillo Launch State Veterans Property Tax Workshop Series

DVS and the Bernalillo County Assessor's Office kicked off the third annual Veterans State Property Tax Exemption Outreach drive on December 19.

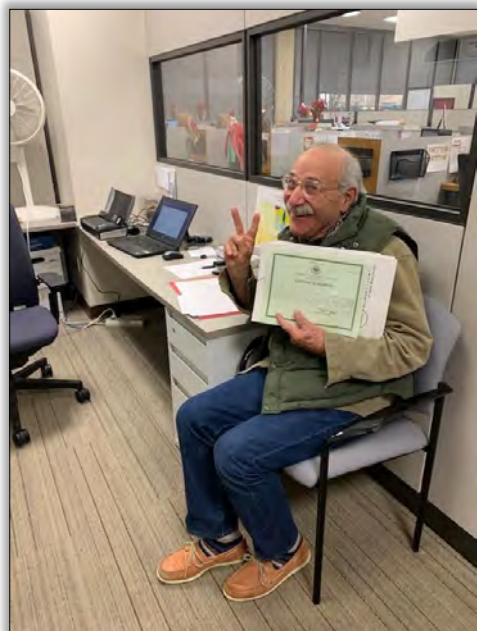
DVS Albuquerque-based Veterans Service Officer Gordon Schei (*left photo, in light-colored shirt*) and DVS Event Coordinator Joseph Dorn joined Bernalillo County Assessor Tanya Giddings (*below right photo*) at the county assessor's office in downtown Albuquerque to assist veterans with filing for the Veterans State Property Tax Exemption—a \$4,000 reduction in the taxable value of a veteran's primary residence.

This benefit is also available to un-remarried surviving spouses of veterans who would have otherwise qualified for this benefit.

Veterans rated at 100% service-connected disabled can file to have their total property tax liability waived. Mr. Schei also assisted with filing for or updating VA or state veterans' benefits claims.

This joint effort between DVS and the County Assessor's Office continues through next year, with outreach stops at the office on January 16, February 20, March 19, April 16, and concluding on April 23.

No appointment is necessary. Veterans must bring a copy of their DD-214 separation papers or any documents from the VA as proof of veteran status in order to receive the veterans' property tax exemption certificate, or to help expedite any on-site filing veterans' benefits processes. Mr. Schei can also assist with filing for lost DD-214's.



# **New Mexico's Veteran Population**

## ***Facts & Figures***

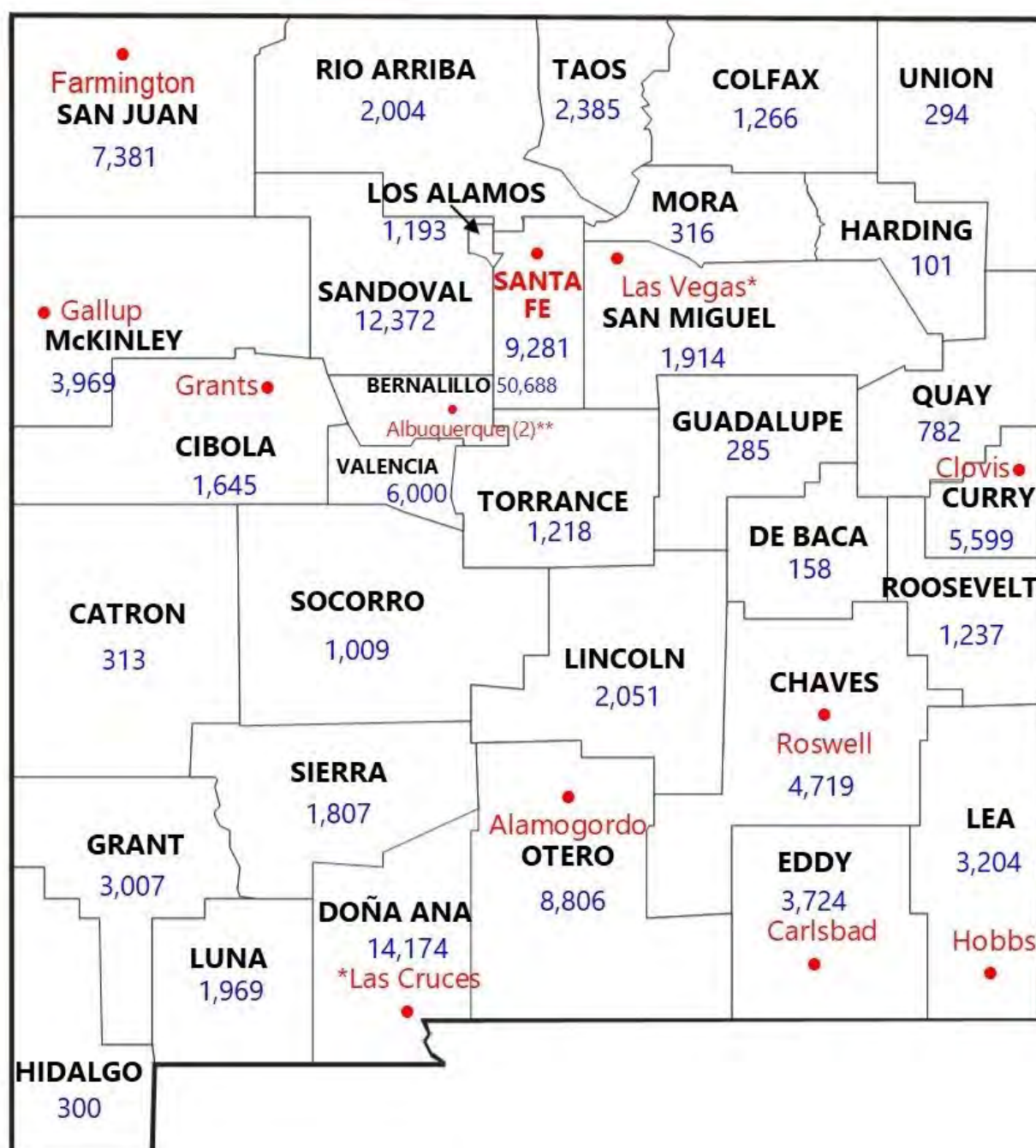
***(Source: 2019 VA Population Projections)***



# New Mexico's Veteran Population (Map View)

The population data in this section is based on the VA's actuarial projection models developed by the VA's Office of the Actuary (OACT). Using the best available veteran data, the VA calculates the veteran population according to key demographic characteristics such as age, gender, period of service, and race/ethnicity. These projections are subject to adjustments.

**COUNTY IN CAPITAL LETTERS**  
**Blue=Veteran Population (Total: 154,172)**  
**Red=13 DVS Field Offices**  
*\*indicates two VSO's at the office*



## New Mexico's Veteran Population (by County)

<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>County</u></b>	
1	Bernalillo	50,688
2	Dona Ana	14,174
3	Sandoval	12,372
4	Santa Fe	9,281
5	Otero	8,806
6	San Juan	7,381
7	Valencia	6,000
8	Curry	5,599
9	Chaves	4,719
10	Eddy	3,724
11	Lea	3,204
12	Grant	3,007
13	McKinley	3,969
14	Taos	2,385
15	Lincoln	2,051
16	Rio Arriba	2,004
17	Luna	1,969
18	San Miguel	1,914
19	Sierra	1,807
20	Cibola	1,645
21	Colfax	1,266
22	Los Alamos	1,193
23	Roosevelt	1,237
24	Torrance	1,218
25	Socorro	1,009
26	Quay	782
27	Mora	316
28	Catron	313
29	Union	294
30	Hidalgo	300
31	Guadalupe	285
32	De Baca	158
<u>33</u>	<u>Harding</u>	<u>101</u>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>154,172</b>



## Quick Facts About NM's Veteran Population

**National "General" Population** **329,183,450**  
*(Source: U.S. Census "World Clock"/as of Noon EDT, January 15, 2020)*

**National Veteran Population** **19,209,704**  
*(Source: U.S. Census/as July 1, 2019—latest data)*

**National Veteran Percentage of Population** **5.9%**

**New Mexico's "General" Population** **2,096,829**

**New Mexico's Veteran Population** **154,172**

**New Mexico's Veteran Percentage of Population** **7.4%**

### Five Largest Veteran-Populated Counties in New Mexico

Bernalillo	50,688
Doña Ana	14,174
Sandoval	12,372
Santa Fe	9,281
<u>Otero</u>	<u>8,806</u>

**Total 95,321**

*Nearly 62% of New Mexico's veterans live in these five counties*

### Albuquerque Metro Area Veteran Population

Bernalillo	51,688
Sandoval	12,174
Santa Fe	9,281
<u>Valencia</u>	<u>6,000</u>

**Total: 79,143**

*51% of New Mexico's veterans live in the four-county Albuquerque metro area*

<b>Wartime Veterans</b>	<b>120,941</b>
<b>Peacetime Veterans</b>	<b>33,231</b>
Pre-WWI and/or WWI	0
<b>Between WWI-WWII</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>WWII Era Veterans</b>	<b>2,758</b>
WWII only	2,343
WWII, Korean War Era	218
WWII, Korean War Era, & Vietnam	197
<b>Between WWII &amp; Korean War Era</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>Korean War Era Veterans</b>	<b>8,886</b>
WWII, Korean War Era	218
WWII, Korean War Era, & Vietnam	197
Korean War Era Only	7,416
Korean War Era & Vietnam	1,055
<b>Between Korean War Era &amp; Vietnam</b>	<b>10,264</b>
<b>Vietnam War Era Veterans</b>	<b>53,017</b>
WWII, Korean War Era, & Vietnam	197
Korean War Era & Vietnam	1,055
Vietnam War Era Only	47,617
Vietnam War Era & Gulf War	3,363
Vietnam War Era, Gulf War, & Post-/11	784
<b>Between Vietnam War &amp; Gulf War Eras</b>	<b>22,602</b>
<b>Gulf War Era Veterans (includes Post-9/11)</b>	<b>62,094</b>
Vietnam War Era & Gulf War	3,363
Vietnam War Era, Gulf War, & Post-/11	784
Gulf War Only	20,984
Gulf War & Post 9/11	13,770
Post 9/11	23,193



# Age Breakdown of New Mexico's Veterans



<u>Age</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>18-19</b>	<b>66</b>
<b><u>20-29</u></b>	<b><u>7,071</u></b>
20-24	2,003
25-29	5,068
<b><u>30-39</u></b>	<b><u>14,652</u></b>
30-34	6,524
35-39	8,128
<b><u>40-49</u></b>	<b><u>17,280</u></b>
40-44	7,991
45-49	9,289
<b><u>50-59</u></b>	<b><u>24,725</u></b>
50-54	10,947
55-59	13,778
<b><u>60-69</u></b>	<b><u>31,556</u></b>
60-64	15,487
65-69	16,069
<b><u>70-79</u></b>	<b><u>37,200</u></b>
70-74	22,582
75-79	14,618
<b>80-84</b>	<b>9,623</b>
<b>85+</b>	<b>11,998</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>154,172</b>

*Data Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*

## Racial Makeup of New Mexico's Veteran Population

<u>Race</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Vet Population</u>
White	87,801	58%
Hispanic	47,936	31%
Native American	10,321	6%
African American	6,016	3.5%
Asian	1,316	<1%
Other	782	<1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>156,595</b>	



## New Mexico's Women Veteran Population

**Number of Women Veterans in the USA:** **1,920,965**  
 Percentage of the USA's Veterans That Are Women: **10%**

**Number of Veterans (Male & Female) in New Mexico: 154,172**

**Number of Women Veterans in New Mexico:** **16,710**  
 Percentage of New Mexico's Veterans That Are Women: **10.9%**

### Age Breakdown of New Mexico's Women Veterans

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>
18-19	18
20-29	1,426
30-39	2,854
40-49	2,991
50-59	3,605
60-69	3,569
70-79	1,395
80+	854