



# The Guardian

The Newsletter of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

[www.nmdvs.org](http://www.nmdvs.org)

1-(866) 433-8387 toll-free

May, 2020

## DVS Field Offices Continue Offering Assistance By Phone, E-mail, or Video Conference



**TOP ROW, L to R:** Las Vegas VSO Martin Mâriquez, Albuquerque VSO Karen Abeyta, Women Veterans Program Manager Tracie Brazier.

**BOTTOM ROW, L to R:** DVS Field Services Director Larry Campos, Clovis VSO Matt Barela, and Las Cruces VSO George Vargas.

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is continuing to offer assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic by telephone, email, or video conferencing until the New Mexico Department of Health gives the “all clear” for state agencies to resume providing in-office services to the public.

Veterans and unmarried surviving spouses of deceased veterans needing help with filing for or updating their VA or state veterans benefits can contact any DVS Veterans Service Officer (VSO) by via their mobile phone, leaving a message on their office phone number, video conferencing, or e-mail.

Below is the contact information for DVS VSO's. Assistance is provided on a first-call, first-served basis. “Live” video conferencing can be arranged by contacting the VSO.

**Alamogordo (VSO: Larry Weatherwax)**  
Office: (575) 437-4635  
Mobile: (575) 491-3127  
[larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us](mailto:larry.weatherwax@state.nm.us)

**Albuquerque #1 (Karen Abeyta)**  
Office: (505) 346-3986  
Mobile: (505) 429-0856  
[karen.abeyta@state.nm.us](mailto:karen.abeyta@state.nm.us)

**Albuquerque #2 (Gordon Schei)**  
Office: (505) 346-4810  
Mobile: (same as office number)  
[gordon.schei@state.nm.us](mailto:gordon.schei@state.nm.us)

**Carlsbad (Dagmar Youngberg)**  
Office: (575) 885-4939  
Mobile: (575) 988-5900  
[dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us](mailto:dagmar.youngberg@state.nm.us)



*DVS Farmington-based VSO Beverly Charley assisting veterans from her home “office”*

*(continued)*

**Clovis (Matt Barela)**  
Office: (575) 762-6185  
Mobile: (575) 825-9602  
[Matthew.barela@state.nm.us](mailto:Matthew.barela@state.nm.us)

**Farmington (Beverly Charley)**  
Office: (505) 327-2861  
Mobile: *(same as office number)*  
[Beverly.charley@state.nm.us](mailto:Beverly.charley@state.nm.us)

**Hobbs (Dalton Boyd)**  
Office: (575) 397-5290  
Mobile: (575) 241-0714  
[Dalton.boyd2@state.nm.us](mailto:Dalton.boyd2@state.nm.us)

**Las Cruces #1 (George Vargas)**  
Office: (575) 524-6124  
Mobile: (5785) 520-2634  
[George.vargas@state.nm.us](mailto:George.vargas@state.nm.us)

**Las Cruces #2 (Rosa Bycenski)**  
Office: (575) 524-6220  
Mobile: (505) 870-1349  
[Rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us](mailto:Rosa.bycenski@state.nm.us)

**Las Cruces #3 (Craig Chumley)**  
Office: (575) 524-6220  
Mobile: *(same as office number)*  
[Craig.chumley@state.nm.us](mailto:Craig.chumley@state.nm.us)

**Las Vegas, NM (Martin Marquez)**  
Office: (505) 454-0068  
Mobile: (575) 520-5079  
[MartinM.marquez@state.nm.us](mailto:MartinM.marquez@state.nm.us)

**Roswell (Danielle Thompson)**  
Office: (575) 624-6086  
Mobile: (575) 416-2284  
[Danielle.Thompson@state.nm.us](mailto:Danielle.Thompson@state.nm.us)

Veterans can also self-file for their VA benefits online at [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)

### **Help for Veteran-Owned Businesses**

Veterans who own their own business can contact the New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) for information about emergency assistance programs for small businesses affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Rich Coffel**  
**VBOC Director**  
(505) 383-2401  
[richardL.coffel@state.nm.us](mailto:richardL.coffel@state.nm.us)

**Jim Cassidy**  
**VBOC Veterans Business Advisor**  
*(based in SE/southern NM)*  
(575) 624-6002  
[jamesM.cassidy@state.nm.us](mailto:jamesM.cassidy@state.nm.us)

## DVS VSO's Remain Busy During the COVID-19 Pandemic

While working from their homes, DVS Veterans Service Officers (VSO's) have been kept busy during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

### Method of Service Provided

Phone calls	1329
E-Mail Assistance	884
FAX/"regular" mail	68

### Assistance Provided

Property Tax Exemptions	87
Property Tax Waivers <i>(for 100% rated service-connected disabilities)</i>	29
Other State Benefits Claims	224
VA Claims	176
Power of Attorney Cases	56

DVS VSO's are also assisting with other issues outside the realm of veterans benefits, according to DVS Field Services Director Larry Campos.

“Our VSO's are also answering questions about economic impact payments, stimulus payments, and COVID 19 testing sites,” said Director Campos. “We refer veteran-owned business owners to our Veterans Business Outreach Center. We're asked for help with the VA Telehealth system. We've referred non-emergency situation calls in the Albuquerque area to the city's 3-1-1 hotline. We've received inquiries about mental health resources. We're also urging veterans to complete the 2020 Census. So as you can see, our VSO's have been busy.”

DVS VSO's are willing to take the extra time needed to guide veterans with things ordinarily handled by the VSO when a veteran stops by the office for an appointment.

“Using the internet has been a challenge for some veterans,” said George Vargas, one of three DVS Las Cruces-based VSO's. “Some have never scanned a document—or attached and sent a document on email. But that's why we're here—we're glad to take the time to walk them through the process.”

But most have been served without any issues, said DVS Albuquerque-based VSO Karen Abeyta—one of four DVS VSO's in the Albuquerque metro area.

“Many veterans are comfortable with computers, while others will ask a family members for assistance,” said Ms. Abeyta. “But many who are not comfortable or able to send information are willing to be patient,—they've told me they're willing to wait until the stay-at-home order is lifted, because they understand that everyone's safety comes first.”

DVS VSO's, like the veterans they serve, said they do miss the personal interaction, and are actually looking forward to resuming in-office visits. Until then, the VSO's will continue to provide phone, FAX, e-mail, or video conference assistance until the “all-clear” is given.

“I really think my job allows me to make a difference in the lives of the veterans I help, “ said DVS Carlsbad-based VSO Dagmar Youngberg. “I look forward to visiting with them again—but until then, I'm just grateful that I'm able to continue helping during this trying time.”

## DVS Cancels Memorial Day Ceremonies in Angel Fire, Ft. Stanton, and Gallup

The Department of Veterans Services (DVS) has canceled Memorial Day ceremonies at three of its sites due to continuing COVID-19 restrictions.

The canceled ceremonies were to be held May 25 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Angel Fire, the Fort Stanton State Veterans Cemetery, and the Gallup State Veterans Cemetery.

The Fort Stanton and Gallup State Veterans cemeteries will be open for normal gravesite visitation during regular 8 a.m.-5 p.m. business hours. Cemetery staff will place miniature American flags at each gravesite on Friday, May 22. On May 25, full-size flags will be flown at half-staff throughout the day. The administrative offices will be closed.



Cemetery staff wearing personal protective equipment will regulate traffic flow to one-way-in, one-way-out, and the cemeteries will be limited to 20 percent capacity at all times to comply with guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the New Mexico Department of Health.

Gravesite visitors will be asked to limit group size to no more than five people, and to observe a 6-foot social distancing within the group.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire will remain closed, but American flags will fly at half-staff throughout the day at the memorial and along the road to the facility.

“DVS recognizes the importance of Memorial Day as the day to honor service members who gave their lives while in service to our country, but the safety of DVS staff and the public is of utmost importance,” said DVS Secretary Judy Griego. “I hope veterans and their families understand the reasons behind the implementation of these safety precautions for Memorial Day.”

### Other Upcoming Event Cancellations

Albuquerque Metro Public Safety Day	May 9	Rio Rancho/Intel parking lot
<i>Run For The Wall</i>	May 14-16	All three routes through New Mexico
National Association of County Veteran Service Officers (NACVSO) Annual Training Conference	June 8	Santa Fe

# Latest COVID-19 Data for New Mexico (for May 10)



Office of the Governor

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**



May 10, 2020

**PLEASE NOTE: Due to a recurring technical delay that affects Sunday reporting totals, reporting results from some labs to the state Department of Health are delayed Sunday, May 10. As a result, the following data reflects only a partial total. The delayed results will be included in the state's reporting Monday, May 11, or as soon as they are received and lab-confirmed. We are continuing to actively investigate cases that are reported to the state throughout the day.**

## Updated New Mexico COVID-19 cases: Now at 4,863

*Update includes nine additional deaths related to COVID-19*

SANTA FE – New Mexico state health officials on Sunday announced 87 additional positive tests for COVID-19. Per the state Department of Health, the most recent cases are:

- 23 new cases in Bernalillo County
- 21 new cases in Doña Ana County
- 1 new case in Lea County
- 14 new cases in McKinley County
- 1 new case in Otero County
- 6 new cases in Sandoval County
- 20 new cases in San Juan County
- 1 new case in Santa Fe County

The Department of Health on Sunday also reported **nine additional deaths** in New Mexico related to COVID-19. Those cases are:

- A male in his 30s from McKinley County. The individual was hospitalized and had underlying medical conditions.
- A second male in his 30s from McKinley County. The individual was hospitalized and had underlying medical conditions.
- A female in her 80s from McKinley County. The individual was hospitalized and had underlying medical conditions.

- A female in her 70s from McKinley County. The individual was hospitalized and had underlying medical conditions.
- A female in her 60s from McKinley County. The individual was hospitalized and had underlying medical conditions.
- A second female in her 60s from McKinley County. The individual was hospitalized and had underlying medical conditions. The individual was a resident of Cedar Ridge Inn in Farmington.
- A female in her 80s from Sandoval County. The individual was hospitalized and had underlying medical conditions. The individual was a resident of The Village at Alameda in Albuquerque.
- A male in his 50s from San Juan County. The individual was hospitalized and had underlying medical conditions.
- A female in her 80s from San Juan County. The individual was hospitalized and had underlying medical conditions. The individual was a resident of Cedar Ridge Inn in Farmington.

**The number of deaths of New Mexico residents related to COVID-19 is now 200.**

The Department of Health currently reports 19 COVID-19 cases among individuals being held at the federal Otero County Processing Center run by ICE in Otero County.

County totals are subject to change upon further investigation and determination of residency of individuals positive for COVID-19.

As of today, there are 194 individuals hospitalized in New Mexico for COVID-19. This number may include individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 out of state but are currently hospitalized in New Mexico. This number does not include New Mexicans who tested positive for COVID-19 and may have been transferred to a hospital out of state.

As of today, there are 1,285 COVID-19 cases designated as having recovered by the New Mexico Department of Health.

The Department of Health has identified at least one positive COVID-19 case in residents and/or staff at the following congregate living and acute care facilities:

- Advanced Health Care of Albuquerque in Albuquerque
- Albuquerque Heights Healthcare and Rehab in Albuquerque
- Aztec Health Care in Aztec
- Beehive Homes in Farmington
- Bonney Family Home in Gallup
- Brio Assisted Living in Albuquerque
- Cedar Ridge Inn in Farmington
- Central Desert Behavioral Health in Albuquerque
- Clayton Nursing and Rehab in Clayton
- Haciendas of Grace Village in Las Cruces
- Ladera Center in Albuquerque
- Las Palomas Center in Albuquerque
- La Vida Llena in Albuquerque
- Legacy Santa Fe in Santa Fe
- Life Care Center of Farmington in Farmington
- Little Sisters of the Poor in Gallup
- McKinley Care Center in Gallup
- Namaste House Assisted Living in Farmington
- The Neighborhood in Rio Rancho
- Red Rocks Care Center in Gallup

- Sandia Ridge Center in Albuquerque
- Spanish Trails Rehabilitation Suites in Albuquerque
- Sundance Care Home in Gallup
- Taos Living Center in Taos
- Tohatchi Area Opportunity Services (TAOS) in Tohatchi
- Tungland Corporation in Farmington
- Uptown Genesis in Albuquerque
- The Village at Alameda in Albuquerque
- Wellbrook Transitional Rehabilitation Center in Farmington

The Department of Health has detected community spread in the state of New Mexico and is investigating cases with no known exposure. The agency reports that given the infectious nature of the virus it is likely other residents are infected but yet to be tested or confirmed positive.

To that end, **all New Mexicans have been instructed to stay home except for outings absolutely necessary for health, safety and welfare.** These additional restrictions have been enacted to aggressively minimize person-to-person contact and ensure spread is mitigated. New Mexicans are strongly urged to limit travel to only what is necessary for health, safety and welfare.

The New Mexico Department of Health has active investigations into the positive patients, which includes contact-tracing and swabs of symptomatic individuals who have had contact with the positive cases. Every New Mexican must work together to stem the spread of COVID-19. **Stay home.**

New Mexicans who report symptoms of COVID-19 infection, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and/or loss of taste or smell should call their health care provider or the NMDOH COVID-19 hotline immediately (1-855-600-3453).

Thanks to increased statewide testing capacity, the following people may now be considered for COVID-19 testing:

- Asymptomatic people who are close contacts or household members of New Mexico residents who have already tested positive for the coronavirus;
- Asymptomatic residents in nursing homes;
- Asymptomatic people in congregate settings such as homeless shelters, group homes, detention centers;
- Symptomatic people displaying the COVID-19 symptoms of cough, fever, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and/or loss of taste or smell.

New Mexicans who have non-health-related questions or concerns can also call 833-551-0518 or visit [newmexico.gov](http://newmexico.gov), which is being updated regularly as a one-stop source for information for families, workers and others affected by and seeking more information about COVID-19.

<u>County</u>	<u>Cases</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
McKinley	1,522	50
Bernalillo	1,073	48
San Juan	1,034	65
Sandoval	458	22
Dona Ana	221	2
Santa Fe	111	1
Cibola	86	3
Valencia	55	1
Socorro	48	2
Curry	29	
Chaves	27	2
Rio Arriba	27	
Taos	20	
Torrance	18	
Grant	15	
Guadalupe	15	
Lea	15	
Eddy	14	1
Roosevelt	11	
Otero	8	
Luna	7	1
Los Alamos	6	
San Miguel	6	
Colfax	5	
Quay	4	1
Union	3	
Catron	2	1
Lincoln	2	
Harding	1	
Sierra	1	
De Baca	0	
Hidalgo	0	
Mora	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,844</b>	<b>200</b>

# Tested	102,498
<b>Deaths</b>	<b>200</b>
Hospitalized-	198
Hospitalized-	789
Recovered	1,189
<b>Deaths (by Age Group)</b>	
	0
	12
	9
	18
	31
	36
	58
	36
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>200</b>

*The total incorrectly shows 4,844 instead of 4,863. DOH will have a correct accounting on Monday, May 11*

## New Mexico Veterans Stepping Up to the Plate to Help Others

Throughout the past six weeks, as New Mexicans have been observing the COVID-19 public health order, many veterans and their families have been making extra sacrifices to help others in their communities—proving once again that veterans continue to serve their country long after their military service to our country has finished.

*The Guardian* reached out to the state's veteran community...and asked for pictures showing how they have been helping others in need in their communities.



**ALBUQUERQUE**—Peggy Walker, wife of DVS State Cemetery Program Bureau Chief David Walker, sewed protective masks for health care workers and other volunteers who were unable to find masks. The material was either purchased by David & Peggy or was already on hand. *(Photo courtesy of David Walker)*

**RIO RANCHO**—Former DVS Secretary Jack Fox, who preceded current DVS Secretary Judy Griego, was joined by his wife Marvine to help volunteers pack food boxes on April 28 at Colinas del Norte Elementary School.

The donated food was courtesy of the Road Runner Food Bank and community members. *(photos courtesy of Jack Fox)*





**RIO RANCHO**—Roy Briscoe and Cynthia Archuleta from VFW post 5890 in Rio Rancho delivered groceries to a homebound veteran.

The Post was notified by the VA's Community Based Outreach Center (CBOC) in Rio Rancho. Clinic staff asked Post 5890 if members could come by the clinic to pick up and deliver food which had been donated and collected...for a particular veteran in Rio Rancho who is confined to a wheelchair and had difficulty arranging to go grocery shopping. VFW Post 5890 asks any veteran in Rio Rancho to give them a call if they need help with grocery shopping or other light errands. The phone number is (505) 891-2470. *(photos courtesy of Cynthia Archuleta/VFW Post 5890 Veterans Service Officer)*



**RIO RANCHO**—Vietnam War veteran Bill Martin of Corrales showed his appreciation for Sandoval County Food Services workers on May 4 by singing to them while they were on a break from delivering food at the Meadowlark Senior Center in Rio Rancho. The service has averaged 230 pick-ups a day, and 290 home delivered meals per day during the COVID-10 shelter-in-place order. Of these numbers, it is estimated that 40% of the recipients are veterans.

Mr. Martin, a life member of VFW Post 5432 in Corrales, sang songs which he had sung in a tryout for a Broadway musical in June of 1952. He was not selected. However, a month later he received orders to report to Naval Air Station Pensacola for flight training. He spent the next 23 years in The Navy.

Mr. Martin is currently is president of the *Veterans and Patriots Performance Group*, a volunteer organization of veterans with PTS and other disabilities. The group supports veterans organizations throughout New Mexico with a professional variety show for fundraisers and special events. In addition to entertaining appreciative audiences, the performance, according to group members, has proven to help facilitate their healing. *(Photos courtesy of Warren Herrington/VP, Veterans and Patriots Performance Group.)*

**ZUNI PUEBLO**—The Pueblo of Zuni has experienced shortages of food and other necessary resource like many other communities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the pueblo lies within McKinley County—the hardest-hit of New Mexico’s 33 counties by the COVID-19 (see *COVID-19 statistics on page 5*).



*Zuni Pueblo Veterans Service Officers Kathy Natachu and Angela Waseta-Rivera delivering groceries to Army Veteran Wesley Hooee.*

The Zuni Veterans Program responded by working with the Zuni Emergency Food Pantry to address the needs of the pueblo’s veteran population. Zuni Pueblo Veterans Service Officers Kathy Natachu and Angela Waseta-Rivera have delivered over 60 packages of food and supplies to veterans living within the pueblo. (photos courtesy of Tyler Lastiyano/Zuni Pueblo Public Safety Division Director & Veterans Service Officer)



*Vietnam/Navy Veteran Edmond Lementino*



*Marine/Vietnam Veteran Martin Vacit*



*WWII Veteran Lujan Ondelacy*



**LEFT PHOTO, L to R:** Zuni Pueblo Veterans Service Officer Angela Waseta-Rivera, Public Works Division Director & Zuni Community Pantry Co-Founder Kathy Noble, Zuni Pueblo Veterans Service Officer Kathy Natachu, and Zuni Pueblo Public Safety Division Director & Veterans Service Officer Tyler Lastiyano.

**ALBUQUERQUE**—Navy veteran James Anderson and his family (*right photo*) organized some of their neighbors in Tijeras to help veterans in need of food but were facing difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Among the neighbors that benefited from the group’s efforts were two veterans: “Nicholas,” (*below left photo*), who is medically home-bound...as was “Billy,” who recently had his apartment burglarized of most of his valuables while he was away.



*Photos courtesy of Vanessa Valadez Anderson and Yolanda Serrano*



**ALBUQUERQUE**—Vietnam War Army veteran Douglas “Moose” Archibald (*left photo*) has been donating cookies and sandwiches to residents at the New Mexico Veterans Integration Center’s (VIC) transitional housing complex in SE Albuquerque. He wants to let them know he is thinking about and cares about them during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Photos courtesy of Yolanda Serrano,*



**MIDDLE PHOTO L to R:** Transitional Housing Program Manager Jewel Kessler-Fike and Lead Monitor Josie Simpson deliver some of Doug Archibald’s donated food items to a resident at the VIC.

**RIGHT PHOTO:** Second picture is one of our Resident Monitor’s Natasha Joe prepares to drop off more of Mr. Archibald’s donated items.



**ALBUQUERQUE**—Dale Wallingford sold all of his possessions in order to buy an Amtrak ticket back to his home state of Minnesota, where he had to return due to a family situation. But he didn't have nearly enough money.

Air Force Veteran Judy Quintana, her brother Richard Kiesel, Vietnam War Army veteran Douglas "Moose" Archibald, and the New Mexico Chapter of the Disabled American Veterans heard of his plight, and pitched in to buy that ticket.

*Richard Kiesel (2nd from right) poses for a picture with Dale Wallingford...moments before Mr. Wallingford boarded an Amtrak train to Minnesota. (photo courtesy of Judy Quintana)*

**RIO RANCHO**—Judy Quintana and her brother Richard Keisel helped round up donated furniture for Michael Smith, a veteran Actor who moved to New Mexico in hopes of finding acting work. Judy and Richard helped move the furniture into Mr. Smith's Rio Rancho apartment.

Mr. Smith then posed for a picture holding an American Flag blanket donated by Vanessa Valadez Anderson. *(photo courtesy of Judy Quintana)*



# KNME (New Mexico PBS TV) to Air Special Programming in Honor of Memorial Day



New Mexico PBS / KNME-TV, Ch. 5.1 & KNMD-TV Ch. 9.1 presents

**Veteran-related & Memorial Weekend programs throughout MAY 2020**

For more details, please visit [www.nmpbs.org](http://www.nmpbs.org)

*In Chronological Order:*

## **THE REGISTRY**

Ch. 5.1 - Tuesday, 5/12, 10 p.m.

Ch. 9.1 - Sunday, 5/17, 8 p.m.; Monday, 5/25, 8:00 a.m.;  
Monday, 5/25, 2:00 p.m.

This film breaks open the hidden history of the US Army's Military Intelligence Service (MIS) during World War II -- a story made possible because of a few aging Japanese American veterans with a little Internet savvy and a lot of determination.

## **1ST TO FIGHT: PACIFIC WAR MARINES**

Ch. 5.1 - Tuesday, 5/19, 10:00 pm

Ch. 9.1 - Thursday, 5/21, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 5/23, 3 p.m.;  
Sunday, 5/24, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 6/13, 11:00 p.m.

On the Pacific island of Guadalcanal in 1942, the famed 1st Marine Division - the oldest, largest, and most decorated division of the U.S. Marine Corps - defeated Japanese forces in a turning point of WWII. This program, narrated by actor Jon Seda (HBO's *The Pacific* and NBC's *Chicago P.D.*), documents the experiences of these veterans who took part in the historic fight.

## **NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT 2020**

Ch. 5.1 - Sunday 5/24 at 7 p.m. & again at 8:30 p.m.

Ch. 9.1 - Monday 5/25 at 7 p.m. & again at 8:30 p.m.

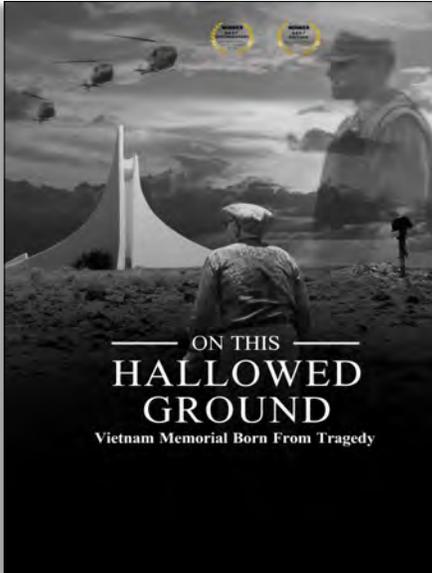
Tune in to the 31st annual broadcast of America's national night of remembrance, honoring the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, their families at home, and all those who gave their lives for our country.

**ON THIS HALLOWED GROUND: VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL BORN FROM TRAGEDY**

**Sunday, May 24 at 10 p.m.**

**and again Monday, May 25, at 8 p.m. on Ch. 5.1**

**-- Also streaming for free at [nmpbs.org](http://nmpbs.org) from May 24-June 8--**



*ON THIS HALLOWED GROUND: VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL BORN FROM TRAGEDY* is the story of the Peace and Brotherhood Chapel in Angel Fire. The Chapel, which opened in 1971, has since been renamed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire and is managed by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services. The Memorial has become a place revered by veterans and their families from both sides of the conflict—serving as a beacon, calling all wounded hearts to heal and giving honor to them all.

In the fury of battle, ideology and good intentions meet the harsh reality of survival and politics. Young lives are cut short by the edge of a bayonet or the pull of a trigger, and the aftermath is filled with the broken hearts of those who loved them. Such was the case for Victor “Doc” Westphall and his wife, Jeanne, when they were told by the Marine Corps that their son, Lt. David Westphall, had died in an ambush at Con Thien in Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam, on May 22, 1968. The crushing news left them with an unavoidable question that haunts millions who have lost

loved ones in the tragedy of War: “What do we do now?”

For Doc and Jeanne, their response was to honor the only thing that is worthy of honor in fatal conflict -- the sons and daughters, mothers and fathers -- who fought and bled when their country called. Their response became a battle of its own. Through financial struggles, political controversy, and a broken spirit, they succeeded in building a place to heal the brokenhearted, and honor their boy. This film has been awarded two Telly awards for Best Documentary and Editing, and a Gold Remi Award in the Features Documentary Category.

**Filmmaker Sarah Kanafani**

With over 17 years of Directing, Editing and working as a Director of Photography, Sarah Kanafani takes her passion for filmmaking and dives deep into films focused on the human condition and social issues. *ON THIS HALLOWED GROUND: VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL BORN FROM TRAGEDY* is Kanafani’s award-winning directorial debut and is now available for purchase or rental on Amazon Prime.

Kanafani resides with her husband Scott and their four children in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where they own and operate Luminance Pictures, a full-scale film production company. Ms. Kanafani has won several awards for directing, editing and graphic design, and her credits include Miller Coors, A&E, Heritage Hotels, Mack Avenue Records, Artistry Music, National Geographic and more.

**New Mexico PBS (NMPBS)**

Celebrating over 60 years of service, NMPBS (KNME & KNMD-TV) serving New Mexico and the Navajo Nation, broadcasts a wide array of nature, history, current affairs, health, performance, children's, educational and entertainment programs. NMPBS produces *NEW MEXICO IN FOCUS*, *COLORES!* and a variety of specials. NMPBS operates 5 digital broadcast channels: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 9.1, and 9.2. NMPBS is co-licensed to the University of New Mexico (UNM) and Albuquerque Public Schools (APS).

[www.nmpbs.org](http://www.nmpbs.org)



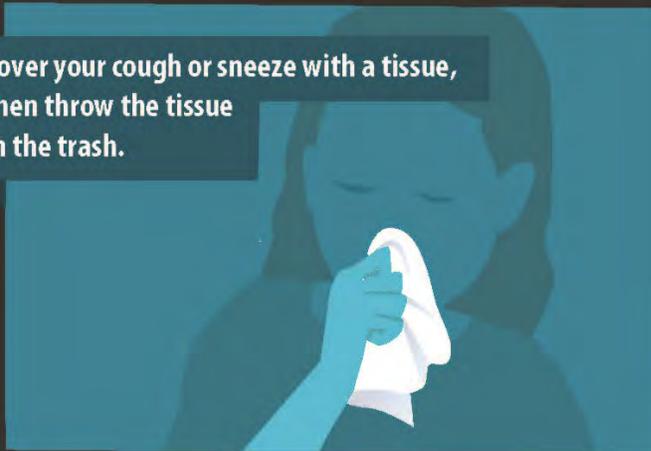
# STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

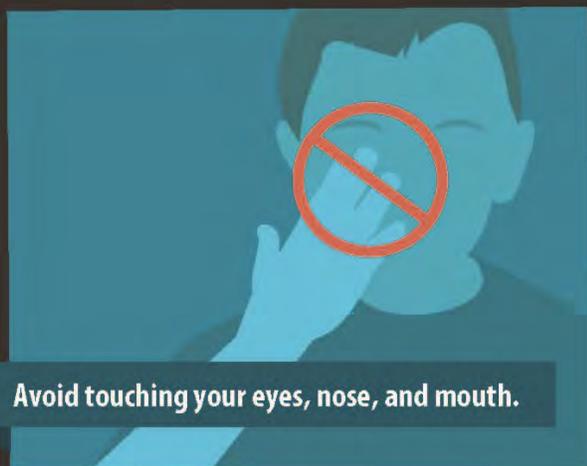
Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



NEW MEXICO  
DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH

For more information: [cv.nmhealth.org](http://cv.nmhealth.org)

## VA Gets Boost to Provide Emergency Assistance for COVID-19 Affected Homeless/Near-Homeless Veterans



**VA Secretary  
Robert Wilkie**

*For more news and  
benefits information  
from the VA, visit  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)*

*The VA has a regional  
office in Albuquerque.  
For more Information:  
[www.benefits.va.gov/  
albuquerque](http://www.benefits.va.gov/albuquerque)*

*For information about the  
New Mexico VA  
Health Care System:  
[www.albuquerque.va.gov](http://www.albuquerque.va.gov)*

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has expanded support services enabled by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to make available immediate relief for veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CARES Act allocates \$17.2 billion for the Veterans Health Administration, \$300 million of which will be used this fiscal year to address the challenges faced by homeless and at-risk veterans.

“A significant percentage of homeless veterans or those at risk of homelessness are uniquely vulnerable to COVID-19 due to their living conditions, age and chronic health complications,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The funds from the CARES Act are vital and will allow VA to continue working diligently to prevent the spread of infection in communities and keep veterans safe and on the pathway to permanent housing during this perilous time.”

Funding is provided for three critical VA programs to assist with the emergency response needed for veterans living without safe, stable housing:

**Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program** - \$202 million has been allocated to provide emergency housing and homelessness prevention assistance to very low-income veteran families to mitigate the expected wave of evictions and potential homelessness that will result from extensive unemployment. Funds for this program will also assist the Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing program in placing Veterans in safe housing to isolate them from the virus.

**Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program** - Grants from the GPD program usually consist of a capped per diem payment from the VA to community organizations to provide transitional housing and supportive services to veterans. \$88 million has been allocated to this program, which allows the VA to waive per diem limits during the crisis and help GPD grantees to provide all needed emergency housing and supportive services, including emergency placement for veterans who need to be isolated for their safety or the safety of others.

**Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program** - \$10 million has been allocated to provide emergency shelter and supportive services during the crisis, including placement in hotel rooms for veterans needing emergency shelter or isolation to avoid spreading the virus. Housing will be paired with care, treatment, and rehabilitative services. Learn more about how the VA is working to protect Veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic and VA’s homeless programs at <https://www.va.gov/homeless/>

# GI Bill® Working to Increase Paperless Environment

Due to the COVID-19 national emergency, the GI Bill® program is working to increase capabilities for a paperless environment as much as possible.

## What has changed?

All incoming mail must be submitted to VA electronically either through <https://www.va.gov> or through “Ask a Question” <https://gibill.custhelp.va.gov/>. Although VA may be able to continue to send some letters through the mail, there are several letters that can only be delivered to you electronically, therefore, it is critical that VA have an updated email address for all GI Bill® students. Additionally, many schools have informed us that employees are no longer on campus to send or receive paper mail, therefore, electronic communication is critical to schools as well.

## What do you need to do?

We’re asking GI Bill® students to ensure VA has a current email address on file for you. This will help ensure we can contact you with important updates to your education benefits. You can update your email address by submitting a request through the “Ask a Question” link <https://gibill.custhelp.va.gov/>. You can also contact the Education Call Center at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) or 001-918-781-5678 from Overseas, Monday – Friday, 7:00 am – 6:00 pm CST to help update your contact information.

## How are we going to contact you?

If Education Service emails you a letter, it will be in an encrypted format to help protect your information. You should expect to receive an email notifying you that either the Muskogee, St. Louis, or Buffalo Regional Processing Office has sent you an encrypted message. The email will provide you with step-by-step instructions on how to decrypt the message (you will be presented the option to either register with the system or to use several common log-in credentials, such as your Google account). Please follow the instructions to decrypt and view the message.

## What if the VA cannot contact you through email?

If VA does not have an email address for you, your letters will be available upon demand through the “Ask a Question” link <https://gibill.custhelp.va.gov/> or by calling the Education Call Center. Please allow the VA 15 days after you submit your information to process your submission before requesting a copy of any decision letters.

## Does this new process include OJT and Apprenticeship Programs?

Yes, it does. Education Service is committed to ensuring you are paid in timely manner. We have notified your OJT or Apprenticeship training establishment’s certifying officials that faxes will not be accepted, and your monthly hours must be submitted through the “Ask a Question” link: <https://gibill.custhelp.va.gov/> or through VA’s electronic certification system (VA ONCE) to be processed. VA has provided your training establishment with guidance on how to do this.

## Additional questions:

If you have questions about your specific circumstance, please contact the Education Call Center at: 1-888-442-4551 between 8 AM and 7 PM Eastern Time, Monday-Friday, or submit your questions through <https://gibill.custhelp.va.gov/>.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Office of the Director  
Washington, DC 20233-0001

## An Open Letter to the Veteran Community From the U.S. Census Bureau

To our Nation's Veterans:

Throughout our history, you have rallied time and again to protect and serve your family, neighbors, and friends. Your leadership, patriotism, and entrepreneurship exemplify the American spirit.

As Article I Section II of the Constitution directs, every 10 years, we conduct a census to determine representation in Congress. Think of it as a national roll call. The next national roll call is coming, and we must hear from you. The 2020 Census is a mission-critical opportunity to make your numbers known. This opportunity only comes once a decade, so 2020 will be the time to make sure your community is counted.

We need your help! Please get your community prepared by taking the following steps:

- **JOIN OUR TEAM.** We want to hire veterans for temporary census jobs. Apply to work as a census taker at <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs.html>. If you know others who are looking for work, please spread the word.
- **RAISE AWARENESS.** Tell other veterans how the 2020 Census impacts services they rely on. Discuss this at veteran service organization chapter meetings or the next veteran gathering you attend.
- **PARTNER WITH US.** Visit <https://2020census.gov/en/partners.html> to learn more, become a partner, and download materials to share with other veteran leaders, business owners, and nonprofit partners in your community.
- **RESPOND TO THE CENSUS.** Mark Census Day, April 1, 2020, on your calendar, and plan to respond to the short census questionnaire for your household as soon as you can. Mailings will go out, and the online response portal will open in mid-March. You can choose your preferred method of response: securely online, over the phone, or by mail.

Veterans benefit directly when their communities are counted correctly. Billions of dollars in federal funds are distributed each year based on census data that support education, housing, health care, hospitals, fire stations, and more. An accurate count is especially crucial for veterans in rural communities, those with disabilities, and those at risk of homelessness. Data from the 2020 Census will also help the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs plan programs and assess emerging needs for veterans.

To get started, visit <https://2020census.gov/en.html>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven D. Dillingham". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Steven D. Dillingham  
Director



# Veterans shaped our past, and they shape our future.

Veterans are the backbone of communities across America. No matter when you served, your response to the 2020 Census will play a part in shaping our future.

Responses to the 2020 Census will determine how more than \$675 billion in federal funds is distributed annually for the next 10 years. That money is used for education and public services like parks, public transportation, health care, emergency services, and more.

**2020CENSUS.GOV**

D-HP-MV-EN-437

**Shape  
your future  
START HERE >**

**United States  
Census  
2020**

## Census data impacts funding for things like:

- > Emergency services
- > Medical facilities
- > Community mental health services
- > Education
- > Public transportation and roads
- > Disabled Veterans Outreach Program

If you live in a group housing or assisted living facility, a representative of the building will fill out the census questionnaire for everyone in the facility.

For more information, visit:  
**2020CENSUS.GOV**

**Shape  
your future  
START HERE >** **United States  
Census  
2020**