

**The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services**

**Michelle Lujan Grisham** *Governor*

**Sonya L. Smith** *Cabinet Secretary*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Help For OEF/Afghanistan War Veterans Dealing With**

**Post-Troop Pullout Emotions**

**SANTA FE**- The recent pullout of U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan—and the ensuing turn of events throughout that country—is no doubt eliciting varied reactions from veterans who served in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

OEF veterans may find themselves feeling angry, resentful, or perhaps doubting the worth of their service in the war which saw more than 800,000 American service members deploy since October 7, 2021—the date when the United States launched the first OEF air strikes in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks on our country less than a month before.

Though the war officially ended on December 31, 2014, an American military presence was maintained through *Operation New Dawn (OND)* to train the Afghan military to be self-sufficient, and help maintain order.

All told, 2,352 American service members lost their lives in Afghanistan—including 29 from or stationed in New Mexico. More than 20,000 were wounded.

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) would like ~~angry or confused~~ OEF veterans to know that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a *Let’s Talk About It* campaign highlighting several programs available to help navigate through this difficult time.

If you are having thoughts of suicide, please call the Veterans Crisis line at 1 (800) 273-8255…then press “1.” You will get immediate help. For more information:

[***http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/***](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDksInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vd3d3LnZldGVyYW5zY3Jpc2lzbGluZS5uZXQvIn0.5PB_TqRG87EZ6fcSiX7GHaXFceJR2S02l-BSySgMtWk%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855947428%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=BdXV58H1mmvMQ1l9REcrKbwoNxZt1tMfgo%2BICyY6MRc%3D&reserved=0)

If you haven’t yet registered with VA health care, please do so by contacting DVS at (505) 383-2400 or[**nmdvs.info@state.nm.us**](mailto:nmdvs.info@state.nm.us). This can be done with a DVS veterans service officer over the phone, by email, or for an appointment-only in-person office visit.

“These events in Afghanistan may trigger some strong emotions—and many OEF veterans here in New Mexico may not have the support system needed to process it all—or to just talk about it,” said DVS Secretary Sonya L. Smith. “But if you feel like you need some help processing your emotions, PLEASE! Please call us…or contact the VA at the information below. We are here for you.”  
  
Once you’re registered, or if you already are, the New Mexico VA Health Care System can lend an ear, or offer more in-depth help at its four Vet Centers specifically dedicated to mental and behavioral counseling. The vet centers are in Farmington, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces. For more info:

[**https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?dnum=ALL&STATE=NM**](https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp?dnum=ALL&STATE=NM)

The NMVAHCS also offers a full range of comprehensive care management and transition help through its Albuquerque Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center for OEF, OND, and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veterans. For more info: [**https://www.albuquerque.va.gov/services/returning/index.asp**](https://www.albuquerque.va.gov/services/returning/index.asp)

Nationally, VA offers the following resources:

• [**VA Mental Health Services Guide**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy52YS5nb3YvZmlsZXMvMjAyMC0xMS9tZW50YWwtaGVhbHRoLXF1aWNrLXN0YXJ0LWd1aWRlLnBkZiJ9.Ks1kicdtl7kucGsDcU_OICTviIfhTYFXSdGdJPNCsak%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855957403%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=DBq95ZQM8p5WfUFPWaCheUxKzugrMq7tTuGyJQAjElo%3D&reserved=0)- This guide will help you sign up and access mental health services.

**•** [**MakeTheConnection.net**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5tYWtldGhlY29ubmVjdGlvbi5uZXQvIn0.yy8Z9q2HnfDMziNLUzzoAedTqaEeUPhSsIXfazaAGIo%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855957403%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=TtZsjXCSfrlV4MOG9H%2FnBVZYTQOIkz4Fqr%2BxWbxvM3c%3D&reserved=0)- information, resources, and veteran-to-veteran videos for challenging life events and experiences with mental health issues.

**• RallyPoint** - Talk to other veterans online. Discuss: [**What are your feelings as the Taliban reclaim Afghanistan after 20 years of US involvement?**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5yYWxseXBvaW50LmNvbS9hbnN3ZXJzL3doYXQtYXJlLXlvdXItZmVlbGluZ3MtYXMtdGhlLXRhbGliYW4tcmVjbGFpbS1hZmdoYW5pc3Rhbi1hZnRlci0yMC15ZWFycy1vZi11cy1pbnZvbHZlbWVudCJ9.UI5JY3Get4PHHZfc4YT5drz_qs5O0rh4ldSwBqFjRJ8%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855967336%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=bWUGifbOZc7vaOKbR75pysJumVBKcTMUl92insYsYcU%3D&reserved=0)

**•** [**Download VA's self-help apps**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5wdHNkLnZhLmdvdi9hcHB2aWQvbW9iaWxlLyJ9.N0k4br4GSUtuQrMbIVb96sjXqwfC0kYbBfLrbJPEyhE%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855967336%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=7ZVdv8zbBxfKhXuBCtzxtqjmwnGlgBnkVPceG8Y9pCQ%3D&reserved=0) - Tools to help deal with common reactions like, stress, sadness, and anxiety. You can also track your symptoms over time.

**Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)** -  [***Request a Peer Mentor***](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy50YXBzLm9yZy9yZXF1ZXN0YXBlZXJtZW50b3IifQ.hWy9BTV48CQw4XUL_KHo2hedj23eW0W1OjpD98KX300%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855977294%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=3XcuNh99dWZzSfS97oHViF7CiiQ5mxToAlVDBSPHXzs%3D&reserved=0)

**• VA Women Veterans Call Center** - Call or text [***1-855-829-6636***](tel:18558296636) (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 6:30PM ET)

**• VA Caregiver Support Line** - Call [***1-855-260-327****4*](tel:18552603274) (M-F 8AM - 10PM & SAT 8AM - 5PM ET)

**• Together We Served** -[***Find your battle***](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2Jsb2dzLnZhLmdvdi9WQW50YWdlLzczNTUyL3RvZ2V0aGVyLXNlcnZlZC1wcm92aWRlcy12aXJ0dWFsLWJhc2UtY29ubmVjdGluZy12ZXRlcmFucy8ifQ.uuSrWYYybXx6kofSAEmDRSqpOAQ6bQa37-Lv3_8j3w8%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855977294%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=HZWRZf9r8Z9VZqzQ2MZsFK%2BRZPfCg%2Fl6hu7qNDkTw1Q%3D&reserved=0) [***buddies***](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTgsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2Jsb2dzLnZhLmdvdi9WQW50YWdlLzczNTUyL3RvZ2V0aGVyLXNlcnZlZC1wcm92aWRlcy12aXJ0dWFsLWJhc2UtY29ubmVjdGluZy12ZXRlcmFucy8ifQ.EkP07kNZxCLYgtFzH9_xUAr2EhFTbpEAwwPQKqQ0lsQ%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855987249%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=qSNBGsX6wGUXYSYtbAe5XCfSVZfmeeiPe%2FhIBe5FYZ8%3D&reserved=0) through unit pages

**• George W. Bush Institute** - Need help or want to talk? [***Check In***](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTksInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5idXNoY2VudGVyLm9yZy92ZXRlcmFuLXdlbGxuZXNzL2NsaW5pY2FsLWNhcmUuaHRtbCJ9.NXVGgSOXufjHeEPPAffCCJILJ-8okmHkfErU656fTSY%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855987249%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=DDqUzgjCo%2BrcVaOl3GbonOVP4hcjsJdVBM5ECtjzAMA%3D&reserved=0) or call:[***1-630-522-4904***](tel:16305224904) or email:[***checkin@veteranwellnessalliance.org***](mailto:checkin@veteranwellnessalliance.org)

**• Elizabeth Dole Foundation Hidden Heroes -** [**Join the Community**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2hpZGRlbmhlcm9lcy5vcmcvam9pbi1vdXItY29tbXVuaXR5Lz90eXBlPXN0b3J5JmZpbHRlcnM9JTVCJTVCJTIydHlwZSUzQXN0b3J5JTIyJTVEJTJDJTVCJTIyZmVhdHVyZWRfYXJlYXMlM0FKb2luJTIwT3VyJTIwQ29tbXVuaXR5JTIyJTVEJTJDJTVCJTIyZmVhdHVyZWRfYXJlYXMlM0FKb2luJTIwT3VyJTIwQ29tbXVuaXR5JTIyJTVEJTVEIn0.Km3PqWU8ulE2QqGoTweg1Aon8Cp7Vh-xT8jKLWtIFMM%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855987249%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=o1bZkjWQ43bktj2%2Ff9qmIFp5f%2F%2BKUxECnCZq3khzIwU%3D&reserved=0)

**• American Red Cross Military Veteran Caregiver Network** -[***Peer Support and Mentoring***](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5yZWRjcm9zcy5vcmcvZ2V0LWhlbHAvbWlsaXRhcnktZmFtaWxpZXMvc2VydmljZXMtZm9yLXZldGVyYW5zL21pbGl0YXJ5LXZldGVyYW4tY2FyZWdpdmVyLW5ldHdvcmsuaHRtbCJ9.r1nbRC5hLdrQM94Ke3KXnDiT-8NwOatf0nlUWKxy8mM%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855997228%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=XIPFqhdoLZnoGi7ZyHzPk4wVYEPlPUZwQbOcQY2tWk4%3D&reserved=0)

**• Team Red, White & Blue** - Hundreds of events weekly. [*Find a chapter*](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy50ZWFtcndiLm9yZy9jaGFwdGVyLWxvY2F0b3IvIn0.Z5nEp56lX12IZKYf6bCDb8nVoldM_f7bxVphzahwRRs%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563855997228%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=FFrDppNslIpcnRbyYbw5TlbyWDg%2F7aQRbWi%2BzEdglyM%3D&reserved=0) in your area.

**• Student Veterans of America** - Find a [***campus chapter***](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3N0dWRlbnR2ZXRlcmFucy5vcmcvY2hhcHRlcnMvZmluZC1hLWNoYXB0ZXIvIn0.DPqMb3EWOdv0qS0gESzr3I4iw50DUELe-vZB4B9Un-I%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563856007190%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=ox6601mcL%2FujojC0ZczPQj7fSUIhfXdyN%2FHlevFkThc%3D&reserved=0) to connect with.

**• Team Rubicon** - Find a [***local support***](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMjQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA4MTYuNDQ2MzQwMDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3RlYW1ydWJpY29udXNhLm9yZy9zdXBwb3J0LXNxdWFkLyJ9.ivaMNVQYq1CqnfRyB7MVyl_VRY0QvJC_Ogr53mXbQ0I%2Fs%2F395427262%2Fbr%2F110997543771-l&data=04%7C01%7Cray.seva%40state.nm.us%7Cc839340138d04297d41c08d96114aace%7C04aa6bf4d436426fbfa404b7a70e60ff%7C0%7C0%7C637647563856007190%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=QJ065Obs6NJwezEFJciL6xpaVPylQ6LnhEdq1TJlsjc%3D&reserved=0)squad.

**The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services**

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) provides support and services to New Mexico’s 151,000 veterans and their families. DVS treats every veteran, regardless of their rank achieved during military service, with the respect and gratitude befitting someone who has served our country. We strive every day to live up to our agency’s official motto: *Serving Those Who Served*

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