



# The Guardian

The monthly newsletter of the New Mexico Dept. of Veterans Services  
September, 2022

• [www.nmdvs.org](http://www.nmdvs.org) • phone: (505) 383-2400 • [nmdvs.info@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:nmdvs.info@dvs.nm.gov) (email)  
• Facebook: NMDVSHHealthcare2015 • Twitter: @NMDVS • Instagram: newmexicoveterans

## DVS, Albuquerque VA Regional Office to Host PACT Act Town Hall Meeting October 6 in Albuquerque

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and the Albuquerque VA Regional Office (VARO) will host a PACT Act town hall meeting in Albuquerque on October 6. The meeting will be from 10 a.m.-noon at the National Hispanic Cultural Center's Bank of America Auditorium, located at 1701 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW, and is open to military veterans, active service members, and their families. There is plenty of free parking at the center. There is also an online/virtual option via WebEx:

**Access code: 2761 322 2013**

**Password: WrrN3ydc\$34**

Or you can also access the meeting by phone (toll-free): 1-(833) 558-0712

For more information about this town hall meeting, please call (505) 383-2400.

### What is the PACT Act?

On August 10, President Joe Biden signed into law the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson *Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022* to recognize health issues and provide VA health care for veterans who've served since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Many of these veterans have been denied VA health care for post-service health issues they've long claimed were caused by exposure to toxic chemicals from "burn pits" and other service-related sources.



Burn pits are large holes dug into the ground that the U.S. commonly used in Iraq, Afghanistan and other overseas locations to burn waste collected on military bases. This included items that produced dangerous toxic smoke when burned, such as plastics, rubber, chemical mixtures and medical waste.

The PACT Act removes an eligible veteran's burden of proof when filing a medical claim—giving them the benefit of doubt. It also expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Vietnam War era veterans exposed to the *Agent Orange* herbicide and other toxic chemicals.

The new law also features the *Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022*. This provision allows individuals to sue the U.S. government to recover damages for harm caused by exposure to contaminated water at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987.



## Twenty Nine Veterans Laid to Rest at the 2022 Forgotten Heroes Funeral

The cremated remains of twenty-eight deceased veterans were laid to rest on September 29 at the 2022 Forgotten Heroes Funeral at the Santa Fe National Cemetery.

The 26 men and three women were interred courtesy of the state's Forgotten Heroes Burial Program established in 2009 by the New Mexico Department of

Veterans Services (DVS), the New Mexico National Guard, and Bernalillo County to provide a military funeral at the cemetery for any honorably discharged deceased veteran who, upon their death, is unclaimed by family or friends. Veterans and members of the public attending the funeral serve as "family."

The program now includes participation from all 33 counties in the state.

Director's Choice Mortuary Services of Albuquerque provided the cremation, and AARP New Mexico donated the 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 a motorcycle escort for the hearse from the Strong-Thorne Mortuary in Albuquerque to the cemetery.

At the cemetery, the American Legion Riders and members of the Santa Fe High School JROTC program brought the urns from the hearse to the gravesite ceremony site. Santa Fe National Cemetery Director Victor Vasquez led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the national anthem sung by Marisol Herrera, and an Opening Prayer by the Reverend Jim Hay.

DVS Cabinet Secretary Sonya Smith gave the eulogy at a brief gravesite memorial service. She said she was heartened to see the turnout of people in attendance, making sure that the fallen veterans were not forgotten in the end.

"Even though we may not know the history of these men and women, what we do know is that they also served our country," said Secretary Smith. "I ask that you just take a moment, in your own personal way, to recognize them—and more importantly, to remember them for their service."



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Following the eulogy, New Mexico Army National Guard Brig. General Miguel Aguilar, the adjutant general of New Mexico, read the names of the 28 fallen veterans. New Mexico Gold Star Mothers member Becky Christmas rang the cemetery's memorial bell once after each name was read.

The flag-fold ceremony was performed by the New Mexico National Guard Honor Guard, with a rifle volley by the honor guard from American Legion Post 12 from Santa Fe. Russ McDuffie from Buglers Across America performed Taps. The folded flag was then presented by General Aguilar to Secretary Smith (*photo below*), who accepted it on behalf of the citizens of New Mexico. Mike Henry concluded the gravesite service with a bagpipe rendition of Amazing Grace.

The cremated remains of the following 23 veterans from Bernalillo County were interred with full military honors:

- U.S. Army veteran (rank unverified) Albert Ray Nevarez
- Navy Petty Officer-3 Donald Burlin Pease
- Navy veteran Drew Dean Jordan
- Army Spec-4 Edward Dougherty
- Army Sgt. Horace Edward Gurkin II
- Army Pvt. 1st Class Jeffrey Holger Wade
- Army Spec-4 Jeffrey Owen Seymour
- Navy Yeoman-3 Jerry Bob Moseley
- USAF Airman 1st Class Jerry Bruce Lail
- Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Jon Panlener
- USAF Airman Keith Allen Mager
- Navy Seaman Recruit Kenneth Wayne Davis
- Army Pvt. 1st Class Marie Ann Attwood
- Army veteran Nicholas Bartolotta
- Navy Seaman Recruit Patrick Ernest Murphy
- USAF Sr. Airman Rex Neal Intchauspe
- Army Pvt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Richard Michael McFadden
- USMC Cpl. Richard Allen Shirk
- Navy Aviation Tech Russell Joel Kruppe
- Army Sgt. Sean William Kelly
- Navy Seaman Apprentice Stephen James Goff, Jr.
- Army Spec-4 Thomas Charles Leigh
- USMC Sgt. Victor Baldonado (8/21/2020)
- Army Spec. Jerry Michael Williamson (1/7/2020)



Laid to rest were three veterans from Doña Ana County: Army veteran James Williams Connelli, USAF veteran John Cameron Mockbee, and Army veteran Yvonne Renee Brown...and two veterans from Otero County: Joan Leslie Bennet (Army; rank unverified), and Joe Michael Jones (Army; rank unverified)

DVS videotaped the funeral and is producing a video highlighting the proceedings. An advisory with a link to the video on the DVS website will be sent once the video is finished.

## Recap of the 2022 Northern New Mexico Honor Guard Conference

The 2022 Northern New Mexico Honor Guard Conference was held on September 15, 2022, at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial in Albuquerque.

This annual training conference is presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, the New Mexico National Guard, and AARP New Mexico for the benefit of northern New Mexico's all-volunteer honor guards. (A similar southern New Mexico conference was held in the spring)



The conferences provides training and coaching for the volunteer units by honor guards from the NM National Guard. These volunteer honor guards render military honors at the majority of veterans' funerals in New Mexico. DVS has produced the video below showing highlights of the training and coaching...along with the ensuing performing of simulated funerals by the volunteer units.

DVS has produced [a video](#) highlighting the conference.

## Veterans, Active Service Members Honored at the NM State Fair

United States military veterans and active service members were admitted free to the 2022 New Mexico State Fair in Albuquerque on September 13 on *Military & Veterans Day at the State Fair*.

The annual day at the fair is presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and the State Fair



to honor and thank the men and women who have served or are currently serving our country in the U.S. military.

Throughout the day, DVS along with more than three dozen veterans and community service organizations had tables along the fairgrounds' "Main Street" to dispense information about services available for veterans and their families.

The day was highlighted by an 11 a.m. ceremony on the main stage, where Lieutenant Governor Howie Morales was among the guest speakers. He said as a proud son of a Vietnam War Army veteran, he is proud to help Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and DVS to serve the state's veterans and their families.

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“Thank you for keeping us safe and for protecting our freedoms,” said the lieutenant governor. “No matter what, we’re going to be there to provide services for you. The health care that you may need, the employment opportunities that should be there, and the opportunities to connect for a better life. This is so fully deserved and earned.”

Secretary Smith echoed the lieutenant governor’s pledge, saying she works at the best agency in state government—the one with the best mission.

“Our sole focus is to serve our veterans and their families,” she said. “That’s what we do...because to everyone here at DVS, every day is Veterans Day.”

New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Robert McKenrick urged veterans to help spread the word about the PACT Act that President Joe Biden recently signed into law, which finally opens up VA health care for Post-9/11 and Vietnam War veterans who have developed health issues linked to exposures to toxics from burn pits and other toxic materials while in service.

“There are now more than 20 new presumptive conditions that veterans can get VA health care for,” he said. “This is your new mission—to help all of us up here get the word out about this great new law.”

Military & Veterans Day at the State Fair also coincided with *Albuquerque Navy Week*. The city is one of 13 non-traditional “Navy cities” across the country that the U.S. Navy brings sailors and officers to educate the public about itself.

“You might be asking yourself, ‘Why are we here in Albuquerque? We don’t have a base on the Rio Grande!’ he jokingly said. “What we do is protect our seven seas. Nearly three billion dollars’ worth of goods are exported every year from New Mexico, and 90-percent of it is transported by ship. What we do is ensure safe commercial passage on our high seas.”

Members of Gold Star Mothers of New Mexico, the service group comprised of mothers of sons or daughters killed during active military service, reading the names of the 95 service members from New Mexico since the global war on terror began in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C.

“The reading of these names is a tradition at the conclusion of this ceremony,” said American Gold Star Mothers of New Mexico Vice President Pat Merville. “Thank you for allowing us to read aloud the names, keeping the memory of them alive.”

DVS has produced a [short video montage](#) of pictures from the day’s events.



New Mexico Lt. Governor Howie Morales greets members of the New Mexico Gold Star Mothers prior to the 11 a.m. ceremony on Military & Veterans Day at the State Fair.



## DVS Fills Three Key Vacancies

**Robert “Bobby” Guinn** is the new veterans service officer in the DVS Farmington office, located in the Student Veterans Center of San Juan College/ room 1715-B. He comes to DVS from the San Juan County human resources department, where he was a recruiter for the county. Prior to this, he served 15 -years in the U.S.Army, serving two tours in Iraq and once to Afghanistan. While there, he “flew” more than 500 sorties/2,000 flight hours operating the RQ 7B/C “Shadow” and the RQ-1 “Hunter” unmanned aircraft, or drones. The native of Hampton, Tennessee, completed his service in June of 2020 as a staff sergeant.



**Robert Guinn**  
DVS Farmington VSO

Bobby is eager to help his fellow veterans in the Four Corners area. Veterans and their eligible dependents can make an appointment by contacting him by email at [robert.guinn@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:robert.guinn@dvs.nm.gov), or by calling (505) 327-2861.



**Christina Kreuz**  
State Benefits Division  
Support Specialist

**Christina Kreuz** is the new state benefits division support specialist based at the DVS main office at the Bataan Memorial Building in downtown Santa Fe. She is the person most veterans or dependents will meet or hear when contacting the state benefits division. The Albuquerque native comes to the agency from the New Mexico Department of Health, where as a data entry specialist, she helped to maintain DOH's birth, death, and paternity databases.

Christina earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from Reed College, an Associates Degree in Public Health & Safety from Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque, and was trained in mental health crisis responses from the Agora Crisis Center in Albuquerque.

**Eugene “Gene” Valdez** is the new account auditor with the DVS administrative services division—the division which oversees all financial and administrative matters for the agency.

The Española native comes to DVS from the New Mexico Army National Guard, where he was a military pay/accounting/financial services specialist. He also served 22-year with the Guard as a chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear operations team leader, supply operations specialist, and a petroleum supply logistics team leader. He was deployed to Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, the Sinai Peninsula (Egypt, Damp Doha (Kuwait), BIOP (Iraq), and stationed at Ft. Drum, New York, Aberdeen Proving Ground (Maryland), Camp Stanton/Camp Hovey (South Korea), Fort Shafter (Hawaii) and the Johnston Atoll in the South Pacific.



**Eugene Valdez**  
Account Auditor

Upon his retirement in 2018 as a staff sergeant, Gene used his G.I. Education Benefit Bill to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Management from Northern New Mexico College, and a Master's in Science Business Management from the University of Phoenix.



## All State Agencies Switching to New Email Addresses

Effective Saturday, October 1, all New Mexico state agency employees will switch to new email addresses.

The new email addresses will use the following format, utilizing an employee's first name and last name: first-name.lastname@initials of agency.nm.gov.

For employees of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS), their new email addresses will look like this: [firstname.lastname@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:firstname.lastname@dvs.nm.gov). Numbers will no longer be featured in these new email addresses.

According to the New Mexico Department of Information & Technology (DoIT), the agency that oversees the technology matters of all state agencies, the new email addresses creates a better agency digital identity, and aligns an employee's email address more closely with his or her state agency.

To ensure a smooth transition through the month of October, emails sent to old [state.nm.us](mailto:state.nm.us) addresses will be automatically re-directed to the employee's new addresses.

## Request For Information For 2022 Veterans Day Events

DVS is seeking your input to help compile the agency's annual list of statewide Veterans Day ceremonies and events. This list will be put on the DVS website and sent to the media for publication or broadcast in communities throughout the state. Please send answer to the question Below... to DVS Public Information Officer Ray Seva at [ray.seva@state.nm.us](mailto:ray.seva@state.nm.us).

(Note: After October 1, the new email address will be [ray.seva@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:ray.seva@dvs.nm.gov))

- date of event
- city
- nature of event (i.e. parade/ceremony/church service, etc.)
- time of event
- venue & address
- sponsor of event (VFW/American Legion Chapter, city of Santa Fe, other organization etc.)
- point of contact (POC) and a phone number (*no email addresses*)

Please include all of the above information. DVS will not publish an event sent with an incomplete response. Especially important is a POC and phone number. This is needed in order to direct any questions about an event to someone connected with the event.

DVS thanks you for your assistance!



# SAVE THE DATE

Friday, November 11, 2022

8am - 4pm

Isleta Resort and Casino



## Southwest Native American Veterans Health and Wellness Symposium 2022



Sponsored by:

Isleta Pueblo Veterans

New Mexico VA Healthcare System

AARP New Mexico

Hosted by:

The Pueblo of Isleta Veterans Association



**DVS staff will give presentations and answer questions  
regarding VA and state veterans benefits.  
More details to follow...**



## October DVS Benefits/Services Outreaches

DVS has scheduled the following veterans benefits outreach visits in October at the locations listed below.

Veterans or their eligible dependents can drop by to get information about or help with filing VA claims, applying for state veterans benefits, or assistance with any other issues a veteran needs help with.



<u><b>Date</b></u>	<u><b>City/Venue</b></u>	<u><b>Address</b></u>	<u><b>Time</b></u>
Oct. 3	<b>Rio Communities/Del Rio Senior Center</b>	351 Rio Communities Blvd.	10am-2pm
Oct. 4	<b>Albuquerque/South Valley Public Library</b>	3904 Isleta Blvd. SW	10am-2pm
Oct. 5	<b>Mosquero/VA Outreach @ the Mosquero Senior Center</b>	24 Main Street/Suite B	10am-2pm
Oct. 6	<b>Capitan/Capitan Public Library</b>	101 East 2nd Street	10am-3pm
Oct. 8	<b>Albuquerque/Veteran &amp; Community Extravaganza/ @ the NM Veterans Memorial</b>	1100 Louisiana Blvd. SE	11am-4pm
Oct. 22	<b>Silver City/WNMU Veterans Outreach</b>	1000 West College Ave.	10am-5pm
Oct. 26	<b>Española/NM Workforce Connection Outreach</b>	319 Paseo de Oñate	8am-3pm
Oct. 31	<b>Albuquerque/North Valley Senior Center</b>	3825 Fourth St. NW	10am-2pm

Please note: Veterans from anywhere in the state can also contact any DVS veterans service officer with in-person office assistance...or through remote assistance by phone or email. For a list of all DVS field offices, please go to <https://www.nmdvs.org/new-mexico-offices/>. You can also call (505) 383-2400.

### **“Stand Downs” for Homeless & Near-Homeless Veterans**

DVS staff will also offer claims/benefits assistance at the following three “stand downs” for homeless and at-risk-for-homeless veterans:

#### **Gallup (Oct. 7)(9am-3pm)**

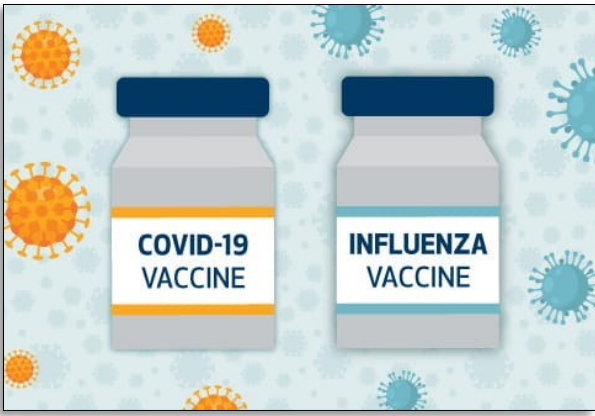
Red Rock Park (5757 Red Rock Park Drive)

#### **Farmington (Oct. 14)(8am-2:30pm)**

San Juan College Health & Human Performance Center (4601 College Blvd.)

#### **Albuquerque (Oct. 20)(9am-2pm)**

The Rock at Noon Day (2400 2nd Street NW)



## NM Dept. of Health Recommends Flu Vaccines and COVID/Omicron Booster Shots This Fall

The New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) strongly recommends getting vaccinated for both the flu and staying up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters, saying it is safe to receive both flu vaccine and Omicron booster at the same time.

Flu is a respiratory illness most often spread by coughing and sneezing. Flu is a mild illness for most infected people but may lead to serious complications, including pneumonia. These complications can result in hospitalization and even death for at-risk populations. Getting vaccinated for flu season will mitigate the effects of both flu and COVID-19 spread.

“Two weeks ago I got my flu vaccine and Omicron booster at the same time,” said David R. Scrase, M.D., acting DOH secretary. “Fall is here, and cooler weather is on the horizon, it’s time to think about flu and COVID-19 risks. We spend more time indoors this time of year creating more opportunities for viruses to spread. To protect yourself and loved ones, I strongly encourage you get your flu shot and to stay up-to-date on your COVID vaccinations and boosters and remember face masks work significantly well in protecting against respiratory illnesses.”

Public Health Offices and pharmacies will be offering the vaccines free of charge. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all people 6 months and older get vaccinated against the flu, with rare exceptions. You can find a flu vaccine in your area at: [vaccines.gov/find-vaccines](https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines).

The CDC also recommends everyone who has completed their primary series and received their last booster dose at least two months prior, receive an updated COVID-19 booster, with protection against the Omicron variant. Omicron boosters are manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna and are available. Visit: [ItsTimeNM.org](https://ItsTimeNM.org) to schedule an appointment.

- Pfizer Omicron booster for people age 12 and older.
- Moderna Omicron booster for adults age 18 and older.

Flu season in the United States is generally from October to April, with peaks in January and February. While ideally it is recommended to get vaccinated in September or October, vaccination after October still provides protection during the peak of flu season.

Other than getting vaccinated, how can we protect ourselves and communities from flu? Taking precautions such as frequent handwashing, covering your coughs and sneezes and staying home when you feel sick can prevent the spread of flu.

*(continued on next page)*

At-risk groups include those who are 65 and older, American Indian and Alaska Natives and pregnant women and infants. These groups should sign up to receive their flu shots in September or early October. Flu vaccines are available at pharmacies and public health offices throughout the state.

For more information about flu in New Mexico, visit the flu vaccination page on [nmhealth.org](https://nmhealth.org). Additional information about COVID-19 and vaccines can be found at <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>

## Flu/Omicron Vaccine Information From the New Mexico VA Health Care System

# Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines & bivalent boosters are available



If you received your primary series of the COVID-19 vaccine you can now receive a bivalent booster. You can receive both flu and the bivalent booster at the same time. The bivalent booster covers multiple strains of COVID-19 and will provide more protection against the virus. This vaccine is for Veterans, SAVE LIVES Act persons who are eligible and employees. Flu shots for employees available on 9/21 and for Veterans 10/3.

*\*Please note that the vaccination clinic remains open for primary series of the COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer and Novavax). If you still need your initial vaccination (first or second shot), please come by our drive-thru clinic 0730 to 1500, Mon. - Fri.*

**Vaccines/boosters will be given from 0730 to 1500 Mon.- Fri. @ Bldg.12  
Just drive up, get your shot and drive away, it's that easy!**

For those who receive care at any of our Community-Based Outpatient Clinics please contact them for dates and times.

**For more information about vaccines through the NM VA Health Care System:**

**(505) 265-1711**



# Veterans Community Bulletin Board

The following page(s) feature event and informational flyers provided to DVS by veterans and community service agencies. These flyers are published for the convenience of New Mexico's veteran community. Inclusion in *The Guardian* does not constitute an endorsement by DVS of the organization, content, products, or services contained therein.

DVS invites government agencies and non-profit service organizations to send flyers for publication in *The Guardian* announcing an upcoming or ongoing veteran-related event. DVS will run these flyers as a public service courtesy to the veteran community.

However:

- Flyers must have the name of a point-of-contact from the organization...along with the contact's phone number or email address. Flyers without this information will not be published.
- DVS is not responsible for the accuracy of the content, products, or services in these flyers.
- Views expressed in these flyers are the independent views of the authors/owners of the third-party entity that created the flyer—and does not necessarily reflect the views of DVS.
- To the maximum extent permitted by law, DVS expressly denies liability for any and all losses suffered by any persons or organizations who, in their independent discretion and reliance, either directly or indirectly rely on content, products, services or information offered by these independent third-party organizations.
- DVS reserves the right to edit or decline to publish any flyer.

# Hero & Family Appreciation Day

**Thursday, October 13th**

**Mountain View Club**

**1000-1005 Opening Remarks by Colonel Vattioni**

**1005-1130 Storytelling Panel**

**(Active Duty, Spouses, Government Employees, and Retirees)**

**1130-1300 Information Fair**

Panelists will share their stories and resources they've used to overcome adversity/challenges.

Helping agencies will provide information concerning services and resources available from local and community organizations who serve those with special needs and challenges.

**Agencies that will be in attendance include but are not limited to:**

Affirmative Employment/Disability Program

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

ARCA Neuro Rehab Division

Behavior Change Institute, LLC

Cloud Dancers Therapeutic Horsemanship

EFMP - Medical/Family Support

Employee Assistance Program

Goodwill/HVRP

Goodwill - Supportive Services for

Veteran Families (SSVF)

Loving Thunder Therapeutic Riding, Inc.

Military & Family Readiness Center

Military OneSource

NM Department of Veterans Services

Paws N' Stripes

Positive Behavior Supports Corp

Presbyterian Health Plan

The Arc of New Mexico

TRUE ABA

UNM Center for Development & Disability

WIC (Women, Infants and Children)

Wounded Warrior Program

**\*Hors D'oeuvres will be provided**

**\*Sponsored by the Military and Family Readiness Center in Recognition of National**

**Disability Employment Awareness Month\* Please call (505) 846-0741 for additional information.**





The American Legion  
Department of New Mexico  
Dean Lucas Post 25

## Veterans Benefits & Health Fair

### October 22, 2022

### 9AM – 3PM

#### **Receive assistance with filing for or information about:**

VA Health Care Benefits, VA Health Care for Women Veterans, VA Disability Ratings, Compensation and Pension, Death Benefits, Veteran Cemetery Burials, GI Educations Benefits, Employment Assistance for Veterans, New Mexico Property Tax Exemption for Veterans and Surviving Spouses, Hunting and Fishing Licenses, State Parks Passes and Disabled Veteran License Plates.

#### **Bring your DD-214 and all supporting documents!**

The American Legion  
Dean Lucas Post 25

2400 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street Clovis, NM 88101

questions contact Tom Creehan 575-799-3382 or Dale Movius 505-273-0086





# A Powerful Mountain Retreat to Reduce Stress, Gain Insight, and Strengthen Your Relationships

The National Veterans Wellness & Healing Center offers FREE 7-day retreats for Veterans and their partners that are coping with Post Traumatic Stress (PTS).

Download an application on our website or call to have one mailed to you.

This opportunity for healing is one of a kind!

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

You will enjoy activities like:

- Group education to enlighten you and give you over 50 new coping tools
- Individual counseling to ensure privacy
- Alternative modalities to reduce stress and promote strength and healing like: Massage, Acupuncture, Chiropractic Care, Reiki, Qi-gong, Yoga, and Art
- Equine experiences to teach non-verbal communication skills

2022 Retreat Dates:

\*May 1-8

\*June 5-12

\*August 21-28

\*October 23-30

For more retreat information and to download an application,  
please visit

<http://www.VeteransWellnessAndHealing.org>

email or call us at:

[info@veteranswellnessandhealing.org](mailto:info@veteranswellnessandhealing.org)





### Housing Outreach Mentorship Encouragement (H.O.M.E.)



The H.O.M.E. Program provides transitional housing, on-site case management, food, clothing, transportation, child care subsidy/assistance, employment support, and other essential support services to homeless women Veterans and their children.

The H.O.M.E. Program focuses on integrating women Veterans into their local communities and choosing safe and suitable residential areas.

Our H.O.M.E. Program collaborates with our resource partners that include targeted supportive services to help women Veterans reach their goals.

Although based in the D.C. Metro Area, our programs have assisted women Veterans and children in over 32 States and Territories.

We also assist with permanent placement once Veterans are ready to transition from our residential facilities.

#### H.O.M.E Eligibility

1. Must have an "honorable or under honorable conditions" discharge; verified by DD-214\*.  
(\*Requires completion of initial service obligation (ISO), unless medically discharged)

2. Must be willing to adhere to terms of the Resident Agreement and 2-Year Plan for Independence.

Note 1: Final Salute, Inc. will review discharges beyond honorable conditions on a case-by-case basis.

Note 2: Financial education classes are mandatory as part of the H.O.M.E. Program.

To apply for H.O.M.E (housing assistance) please [click here](#)



## MISSION

**Final Salute Inc. (FSI) 's mission is to provide homeless women Veterans and their children with safe and suitable housing.**

The federal government estimates there are currently 55,000 homeless women Veterans in the United States on any given day. For the sacrifices they and their families made, this is an unacceptable state. Final Salute Inc. believes in paying women Veterans with the proper respect due to them for the service they have provided to our country. Final Salute also works with the Veteran in establishing her plan towards independence. [Veteran Homelessness White Paper V2.pdf](#)

**FSI was established to identify and meet the unique needs of homeless women Veterans and their children.**

#### Next Uniform

The Next Uniform provides support for women Veterans and military women in transition. As a woman Veteran in transition, you need more than a resume to ensure a successful transition into the civilian workforce.

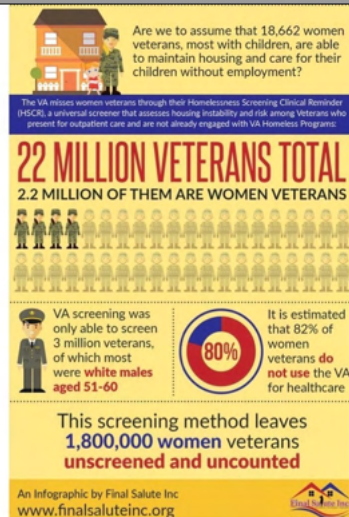
We provide (free of charge):

- Professional Business Attire
- Dress Shoes
- Accessories
- Make-Overs
- Image Consulting
- Professional Head-Shots (Linked-In Profiles)



The purpose of this event is to honor the service and sacrifice you have made to this great nation and support our Sisters-in-Arms who are in transition or have transitioned and may need an image boost.

We realize that some women Veterans, especially single mothers, may find the cost of securing an up-to-date professional wardrobe unattainable.



### Savings Assessment and Financial Education (S.A.F.E.)



The purpose of S.A.F.E. is to prevent homelessness by easing financial hardships.

Our S.A.F.E. program also provides valuable financial education resources on saving, budgeting, and living on a fixed income.

S.A.F.E. provides emergency financial support by assisting with past due rent, security deposits, and utility assistance.

Residents of our H.O.M.E. program must participate in the financial education component of our S.A.F.E. program.

The S.A.F.E. program is open to women Veterans and members of the U.S. Military Reserve and Guard component forces, regardless of their location. Our programs have assisted women Veterans and children in over 30 States and Territories.

#### S.A.F.E ELIGIBILITY

1. Proof of Veteran\* status or current U.S. Military Reserve/Guard component service.  
(\*Requires completion of initial service obligation (ISO), unless medically discharged)
2. Copies of the bills that you are having difficulty paying (must be past due).
3. Military I.D. (if Reserve or Guard)
4. Final Salute, Inc. may also request additional documents such as an Employment Letter.

To apply for S.A.F.E (financial assistance) please [click here](#)

Please be advised, assistance is dependent upon funding currently available.

<https://www.finalsaluteinc.org/AssistanceRequest.html>



## News from the VA



### VA Extends Its Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

VA's [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) (PCAFC) is expanding to include [eligible](#) veterans and family caregivers of all eras.

Previously, PCAFC was only available to eligible veterans who served on or after Sept. 11, 2001. This expansion opens the program to eligible veterans who served after May 7, 1975, and before Sept. 11, 2001.

PCAFC provides caregivers of eligible veterans with resources, education, financial assistance, health insurance, beneficiary travel, peer support and more. The program is a cornerstone of VA health care, ensuring that veterans get the world-class care they deserve and that caregivers get the comprehensive support they need.

“For the first time, eligible Veterans of all service eras can participate in VA’s Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers,” says Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Donald Remy. “We recognize the critical role family caregivers play in caring for veterans, and through this expansion, we’re able to ensure that family caregivers of all eligible veterans have access to the comprehensive support they deserve.”

This is the second expansion of PCAFC, and it will expand access to the program for tens of thousands of veterans and their family caregivers. The first expansion of PCAFC began in Oct. 2020, as part of implementation of the VA MISSION Act of 2018. PCAFC has added approximately 20,000 active veteran and family caregiver participants during the past two years.

Earlier this month, VA announced an interim final rule that will extend PCAFC eligibility for legacy participants, legacy applicants and their family caregivers, by three years to Sept. 30, 2025. Legacy Participants or Legacy Applicants are veterans and their family caregivers who participated in PCAFC prior to Oct 1, 2020.

[Learn more](#) about the PCAFC expansion and VA’s Caregiver Support Program, reach out to a [local CSP team](#) or call our Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET.



## Online VA Medical Debt Relief Now Available

It's now easier than ever for veterans to apply for and receive medical debt relief. If you are concerned about your medical copayment debt and want to seek relief, you can now apply online at VA's new online debt access page:

<https://www.va.gov/manage-va-debt/>.

VA has simplified and streamlined the application process to allow Veterans better access to the help they might need. Simply click the link, log into your VA.gov account, and follow the application instructions.



There, you can also:

- Check the amount and status of your VA debt related to VA disability compensation, non-service-connected pension, or education benefits;
- Check the amount and status of copay bills at each VA health facility where you receive care;
- Find out how to make payments or request help;
- Download billing statements, debt notices, and collection letters.

Objective income threshold criteria are used for the processing and consideration of debt relief, and supplemental documents to support requests are no longer recommended for submission of applications. Application can still be made in a facility revenue office or by calling the Health Resource Center.

Information on these programs can be found online, in VA medical center facility revenue offices and via phone: <https://www.va.gov/manage-va-debt/>

Health Resource Center: 866-400-1238, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to p.m. ET

Remember, patient statements are mailed monthly or can be viewed online at: <https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/> or <https://www.va.gov/manage-va-debt/>.

### Debt relief resources

• [VA Online Debt Access page](#)

• [Reference Guide for Veterans – Income and Assets](#)

• [https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB10-454\\_quick\\_reference\\_guide\\_income\\_and\\_assets.pdf](https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/publications/IB10-454_quick_reference_guide_income_and_assets.pdf)



## DVS Field Offices in New Mexico

DVS has field offices throughout the state that are staffed with nationally-certified veterans service officers. These VSOs are military veterans themselves who are dedicated to helping their fellow veterans with filing VA claims, filing for state veterans benefits, or helping with anything else a veteran or their family needs.

Office hours are Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm, (excluding holidays). Though this service is free, appointments are required and can be made by contacting the offices below.

**Please note that in addition to in-office assistance, veterans from anywhere in the state can contact *any* DVS VSO for phone or email assistance.**

Also listed below and on the following page is the contact information for the DVS women veterans program for women veterans who prefer assistance by a woman VSO, and the DVS Tribal/Pueblo Liaison for Native American veterans preferring assistance from a Native American VSO. Contact information is also listed for the Angel Fire, Fort Stanton, and Gallup State Veterans Cemeteries, and the New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) for veterans who want to open, expand, or purchase a business—or bid on state or federal government contracts.

### **Alamogordo/Southern NM**

**David Henley**

411 10th Street #107

(575) 937-5620

[david.henley@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:david.henley@dvs.nm.gov)

### **Albuquerque Metro Area**

**Jesus Palomino**

DVS Albuquerque Office

5201 Eagle Rock Blvd. NE/Suite 2

(505) 681-6998

[jesus.palomino@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:jesus.palomino@dvs.nm.gov)

### **Albuquerque Metro Area**

**Dayle Bad Warrior**

DVS Albuquerque Office

5201 Eagle Rock Blvd. NE/Suite 2

(505) 383-2400

[dayle.badwarrior@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:dayle.badwarrior@dvs.nm.gov)

### **Albuquerque Metro Area**

**Patrick Abney**

5201 Eagle Rock Blvd. NE

(505) 525-3331

[patrick.abney@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:patrick.abney@dvs.nm.gov)

### **Carlsbad/Southeast NM**

**Dagmar Youngberg**

101 N. Halagueno

(575) 988-5900

[dagmar.youngberg@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:dagmar.youngberg@dvs.nm.gov)

### **Clovis/Eastern New Mexico**

**Matt Barela**

904 W. Sixth St.

(575) 825-9602

[matthew.barela@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:matthew.barela@dvs.nm.gov)

### **Farmington/Northwest NM**

**Robert Guinn**

San Juan College Vet Center/  
Room 1715-B

(505) 327-2861

[robert.guinn@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:robert.guinn@dvs.nm.gov)

### **Gallup/Western NM**

**John Livingston**

908 E. Buena Vista Ave/Room 1A

(505) 389-8731

[john.livingston@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:john.livingston@dvs.nm.gov)

### **Grants/Western NM**

**April Ball**

551 Washington Ave.

(505) 521-8132

[april.ball@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:april.ball@dvs.nm.gov)

*(more offices are listed on the next page)*

**Hobbs/Southeast NM****Fred Solis-Littlejohn**

2120 North Alto St.

(575) 241-0714

[fred.solis-little@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:fred.solis-little@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Cruces/Southern NM**

*The third Las Cruces VSO position is temporarily vacant. Please contact the two other Las Cruces VSOs for local assistance—or any DVS VSO for assistance by phone or email.*

**Rio Rancho/Central NM****Dustin Newsom**Sandoval County Administrative Bldg.  
1500 Idalia Rd./Bldg. D, Room 2041

(505) 221-7190

[dustin.newsom@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:dustin.newsom@dvs.nm.gov)**Silver City/Southwest NM****Chris Teran**Western New Mexico University  
Juan Chacon Bldg./Room 138-A

1000 West College Ave.

(575) 313-5627

[christopher.teran@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:christopher.teran@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Cruces/Southern NM****Miguel Martinez**

2024 E. Griggs Ave.

(505) 216-8782

[miguel.martinez@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:miguel.martinez@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Vegas, NM/Northeast NM****Martín Márquez**

917 Douglas Ave.

(575) 520-5079

[martin.marquez@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:martin.marquez@dvs.nm.gov)**Roswell/Southeast New Mexico****Danielle Thompson**

1600 SE Main St./Suite “A”

(575) 416-2284

[danielle.thompson@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:danielle.thompson@dvs.nm.gov)**Taos/Northern New Mexico****Leticia “Lety” Cano**

Health &amp; Human Services Bldg/

145 Roy Rd

(575) 709-5263

[leticia.cano@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:leticia.cano@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Cruces/Southern NM****Vincent Tellez**

2024 E. Griggs Ave.

(505) 216-8782

[vincent.tellez@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:vincent.tellez@dvs.nm.gov)**Las Vegas/Northeast NM****Arturo Marlow**

917 Douglas Ave.

(505) 331-8838

[arturo.marlow@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:arturo.marlow@dvs.nm.gov)**Santa Fe/Northern NM****Nick McKenzie**Bataan Memorial Bldg/1st floor  
407 Galisteo St./Room 134

(505) 218-3125

[nicholas.mckenzie@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:nicholas.mckenzie@dvs.nm.gov)**Women Veterans Program****Theresa Figueroa**

DVS Albuquerque Office

5201 Eagle Rock Blvd. NE/Suite 2

(505) 916-7449

[theresa.figueroa@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:theresa.figueroa@dvs.nm.gov)**Pueblos/Tribal Liaison****Beverly Charley**

San Juan College Veterans Center

4601 College Blvd./Room 1715-B

(575) 241-3322

[beverly.charley@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:beverly.charley@dvs.nm.gov)**Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)****Rich Coffel (Director)**

DVS Albuquerque Office

5201 Eagle Rock Blvd. NE/Suite 2

(505) 220-9932

[richard.coffel@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:richard.coffel@dvs.nm.gov)**Angel Fire  
State Veterans Cemetery****Randy Myklebust (Supervisor)**

34 Country Club Rd.

(505) 225-4341

[randal.myklebust@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:randal.myklebust@dvs.nm.gov)**Ft. Stanton  
State Veterans Cemetery****Stephen McConnell  
(Supervisor))**

1398 State Highway 220

(505) 383-4381

[stephen.mcconnell@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:stephen.mcconnell@dvs.nm.gov)**Gallup  
State Veterans Cemetery****Gilbert Lopez (Supervisor)**

333 National Cemetery Dr.

(505) 905-9771

[gilbert.lopez@dvs.nm.gov](mailto:gilbert.lopez@dvs.nm.gov)