



The Guardian

The monthly newsletter of the New Mexico Dept. of Veterans Services

February, 2023

• www.nmdvs.org • phone: (505) 383-2400 • nmdvs.info@dvs.nm.gov (email)

• Facebook: NMDVSHHealthcare2015 • Twitter: @NMDVS • Instagram: newmexicoveterans

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham Names Donnie Quintana as New DVS Cabinet Secretary



Donnie Quintana
DVS Cabinet
Secretary-Designate

Governor Michelle Lujan has named retired New Mexico Army National Guard Col. Donnie Quintana as her choice for cabinet secretary of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS).

Secretary-Designate Quintana had been serving as deputy secretary and had been leading the agency since late October, working closely with retiring DVS Secretary Sonya Smith and department staff to ensure a smooth and effective transition of leadership.

“Donnie brings decades of leadership experience in both state government and the military to his new role at the Department of Veterans Services,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “As a native New Mexican, a veteran, and a well-respected public servant, his background with both the constituents he serves, and the knowledge of the intricacies of state government services, will be invaluable for New Mexico’s veterans and

their families. I am grateful for his continued service and look forward to what he will accomplish at DVS.”

The Pecos native served 35 years in the military in a variety of leadership positions within the New Mexico National Guard, including brigade commander and chief of staff. He was deployed to Afghanistan and served as the executive officer and corps commander/senior mentor for the Afghan National Army as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Secretary-Designate Quintana experience in public service includes his most recent role as the local government division director for the state Department of Finance and Administration, where he played an integral role in the establishment of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) overseeing the distribution of more than \$200 million in funds. He also previously served for 20 years at the state Economic Development Department in various leadership roles.

Along his career path, he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting, with a minor in Economics, from New Mexico State University, and is a graduate from the Inter-American Defense College in Washington, D.C. (story continues on next page)

“I am extremely humbled and honored to be able to serve New Mexico veterans and their families,” said Secretary-Designate Quintana. “I am committed to ensuring we honor their dedicated service to our country and state by advocating on their behalf and supporting them and their families in every way possible.”

As with all cabinet secretary appointees by a governor, Secretary-Designate Quintana will have a confirmation hearing by the state senate at some point during the 2023 New Mexico Legislature, which convened on January 17 and adjourns on March 18.



DVS Secretary-Designate Quintana Joins U.S. Senator Lujan For Tour of the TorC State Veterans Home

DVS Secretary-Elect Donnie Quintana (*at left, in patterned tie*) joined U.S. Senator Ben Ray Lujan, D-NM (*at right, in dark jacket*), for the senator’s January 12 tour of new construction underway at the New Mexico State Veterans Home in Truth or Consequences.

Senator Lujan and Secretary-Designate Quintana toured the site of what will be six new state-of-the-art residential buildings being built next to the existing 86-year old existing veterans home. The current main facility is in dire need of major repairs and will be closed once the six new buildings are finished.

The senator and secretary were told that everything is proceeding as scheduled for the \$60 million project. The first three buildings should be finished this fall, with the remaining three to be completed in early 2024.

The six new buildings will have a total of 72 single residential spaces. A separate new wing which opened in 2017 has 58 private beds—giving the new state veterans home a total of 130 beds once everything is finished.

The New Mexico State Veterans Home in TorC is managed by the state department of health. It is available on a space-available basis for honorably discharged veterans, their spouses, parents of children killed in military service, and certain members of military reserve units.



DVS Secretary-Designate Donnie Quintana pins a DVS pin on the baseball cap of World War II veteran and state veterans home resident Curtis Wilkenson during the secretary’s tour of the home on January 12.



DVS Takes Part in PACT Act Town Hall Meeting in Silver City

DVS Secretary Designate Donnie Quintana (*left photo, 2nd from right*) joined New Mexico VA Health Care System Congressional Liaison Larry Campos (*far right, standing*) Albuquerque VA Regional Office Director Cesar Romero (*seated, in tan suit*) and New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Robert McKenrick (*seated, far left*) and in hosting a PACT Act town hall meeting at Western New Mexico University in Silver City on January 18.

The trio gave presentations and answered questions relating to the PACT Act—a new law signed by President Joe Biden last summer that greatly expands VA medical care for veterans exposed to burn pits, the *Agent Orange* herbicide, and many other toxic substances during their service. The new law adds to the list of eligible health conditions, and substantially lowers the burden of proof in tying these conditions to exposure during service. Click [here](#) for more information about the PACT Act.

Next PACT Act Briefing:
Las Cruces
Saturday, February 25 (9 a.m.—1 p.m.)
Las Cruces Convention Center (680 E. University Ave.)
For more information: sam.jones@va.gov or (575) 674-2602

DVS Provides Benefits Information at Dept. of Game & Fish Open House

DVS Las Cruces-based Veterans Service Officer Miguel Martinez (*right photo/seated*) answered questions about VA and state veterans benefits at a New Mexico Department of Game & Fish open house for veterans at the DGF Southwest Area office in Las Cruces on January 23.



The open house was the first of several scheduled events hosted by DGF in the upcoming weeks as an opportunity for veterans to get information about or apply for veterans hunting and fishing licenses, and apply for draw hunts and purchases. (*Please see the flyer on the next page for information about upcoming DGF open houses*).

New Mexico Department of Game & Fish Military Veterans Open House

Dept. of Game & Fish Regional Offices

DGF staff will be available to provide information about/help apply for unique hunting and fishing licenses and other opportunities available for veterans...and help with applying for draw hunts and purchases



New Mexico Department of Veterans (DVS) staff will be available to answer questions about or help file VA claims or apply for state veterans benefits

February 9 (9 a.m.—3 p.m.)
Santa Fe—DGF Main Office (1 Wildlife Way)
Raton—DGF Northeast Area Office (214 York Canyon Rd)

February 22 (9 a.m.—3 p.m.)
Roswell—DGF Southeast Area Office (1615 West College Blvd.)

March 1 (9 a.m.—3 p.m.)
Albuquerque—DGE Northwest Area Office (7816 Alamo Rd. NW)



The New Mexico Department of Game & Fish

presented by:



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services



DVS Looking to Fill Las Vegas (NM) VSO Supervisor and Angel Fire Interment Specialist Position Vacancies

DVS is looking to fill two vacancies: a cemetery interment specialist position at its Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery, and a veterans service officer supervisor (VSO) vacancy in its Las Vegas, NM, office.

Las Vegas/Northeast NM VSO Supervisor Position (listed as “Eligibility Interviewer Supervisor)

The main responsibility of the Las Vegas/Northeast NM VSO Supervisor position is to supervise four veterans service officers (VSOs) in the north-central part of New Mexico. The four VSOs are the DVS staff members who directly help veterans and their eligible dependents file VA claims, apply for state veterans benefits, and provide help with anything else a veteran or dependent needs help with.

The VSO supervisor also coordinates, plans and develops marketing strategies, community veteran outreach events, and town hall meetings to help get the word out about the regional office. The VSO supervisor will also address concerns raised by veterans about the status of their veteran’s claims.

Angel Fire Interment Specialist Position

The interment specialist works with other interment specialists and under the supervision of the cemetery supervisor to assist with the burials of deceased veterans and their spouses—either in in-ground crypts or in the cemetery’s columbarium wall. The cemetery crew also performs regular maintenance of the ten-acre site, located at the northern end of the beautiful Moreno Valley and adjacent to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

To Apply For Either Position

Both positions are full-time “classified” state positions offering competitive pay, excellent health insurance, paid sick days and vacation time, enrollment in the state employee pension system, and other health and insurance benefits.

Applicants must apply through [the New Mexico State Personnel Office \(SPO\) online job portal](#). After clicking on the link:

- to apply for the vacant Las Vegas/Northeast NM VSO supervisor position, enter **130763** under the “Search Jobs” line at the top of the page. The deadline for application is February 28.
- to apply for the vacant Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery interment specialist position, enter **130750** under the “Search Jobs” line at the top of the page. The deadline for application is February 11.

Military & Veterans Day at the 2023 Legislature

“Yesterday...Today...and Tomorrow”

Monday, February 20
Ceremony @ Noon
State Capitol Rotunda

Guest Speakers:

Col. Donnie Quintana (NMARNG-retired)
DVS Cabinet Secretary-Designate

NM Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Miguel Aguilar
Adjutant General of New Mexico

**Informational tables & displays in the
East & West Wings of the Rotunda (8am-noon)**



*Presented by the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services and
the New Mexico National Guard*



February is Black History Month

February is National Black History Month. It is a time to celebrate the achievements of Black Americans, and recognize their critical role in shaping the history of the United States of America.

Black Americans have served in our country's Armed Forces since the Revolutionary War, when enslaved and freed former slaves serving in all-Black regiments helped colonists fight for and ultimately gain independence from British rule. The hope for these Black regiment members was that a victory by the colonists would gain them freedom from enslavement. At the same time, many Blacks also fought for the British side—either by force, or because they mistakenly thought slavery had ended in England, giving them a better chance of gaining freedom. But that freedom never came for Blacks who fought for the colonists. And most of those who served for the British were shipped off to live their newly-gained freedom in the Caribbean or West Africa.



Enslaved and freed former slaves, for the same reasons as in the Revolutionary War, also fought for both sides in the War of 1812, when America declared war on Great Britain over that country's trade restrictions and actions in the Midwest frontiers and in Canada.



In our country's Civil War, freed former slaves and escaped slaves helped Union forces defeat Confederate forces. After the war, many of these Black "veterans" along with newly-freed former slaves served in the United States Army Cavalry-- assigned to remote posts and tasked with protecting America's interests on the western frontier—including the New Mexico Territories.

They were given the name *Buffalo Soldiers* by American Plains Indians, who thought the soldiers' dark, curly hair resembled the coat of a Buffalo. The name also was out of respect of the soldiers' fierce nature of fighting.

In World War I, more than 380,000 Black Americans served in the U.S. military. But interestingly, many fought to actually fight in combat—as most were assigned to labor, stevedore, and other non-combat battalions.

(story continues on next page)



In World War II, more than one million Black men and women served our country. One of the most decorated units of the war was the famed 332nd Fighter Group and 477th Bombardment Group of the U.S. Army Air Force. These were the first Black aviators in what was still a mostly segregated United States military.

The pilots, navigators, bombardiers, mechanics and other support staff were educated or trained at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama.

Nicknamed “The Red Tails” due to the painted red

tails of the P-40 “Warhawk” and P-47 “Thunderbolt” fighter/escort aircraft (and red bands on the noses of P-51 “Mustangs”) the groups flew 1,578 combat missions over Europe, and 179 bomber escort missions. 72 Red Tail pilots are credited with downing 112 enemy aircraft, including three Messerschmitt Me-262s—the world’s first jet aircraft.

The men earned three Distinguished Unit Citations, and numerous individual Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Stars, Air Medals, Purple Heart Awards, and other citations and awards—as well as the respect from their German *Luftwaffe* counterparts.

Shortly after the war, President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9811—desegregating the U.S. Armed Forces. But military leaders continued to segregate service members—and as a result, most of the 600,000 Black Americans who enlisted to fight in the Korean War still found themselves in all-Black regiments. Among the most notable unit was the 2nd Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne). The unit performed the first airborne assault in Army Ranger history, near Munsan-ni, on March 23, 1951.

The Vietnam war proved to be the first time the Armed Forces was fully integrated. More than 300,000 Black Americans served in Vietnam. In 1965, 31% of all in-country ground personnel were Black Americans.

Black American enlistment in the military continued on a steady pace after the Vietnam War...on through the Gulf War and current Post-9/11 war eras.

Today, according to the latest population projections from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA),

there are 2.3 million Black American veterans—nearly 13% of the total veteran population of 18.5 million. Here in New Mexico, there are 6,350 Black American veterans—nearly 5% of the state’s veteran population of 144,134.



(story continues on next page)

Five “Firsts” In Black American Military History



Phyllis Mae Dailey
WWII Navy Nurse

1945 - Phyllis Mae Dailey is the first Black American woman sworn into the Navy Nurse Corps.

Dailey, a nurse and Columbia University student, was one of only four African American women to serve in the Navy during World War II.

1968 – James Anderson Jr. is the first Black American Marine awarded the Medal of Honor.

Anderson was killed in February 1967 when he grabbed a live enemy grenade during an intense firefight in dense jungle and used his body to absorb the blast. His extraordinary valor saved his comrades from serious injury and possible death.



USMC PFC James Anderson, Jr.
First African American Medal of Honor Recipient



Gen. Daniel James, Jr.
First African American Four-Star General

1975 – Daniel “Chappie” James Jr. becomes the first African American four-star general of any military branch.

General James was a Tuskegee University graduate who trained pilots of the all-Black 99th Pursuit Squadron during World War II. then served in Korea and Vietnam before retiring from the Air Force in 1978. Gen. James passed away just three weeks later.



**U.S. Army CPL
Freddie Stowers**
*The only Black
American WW I
Medal of Honor
Recipient*

1991 – World War I hero Freddie Stowers posthumously awarded The Medal of Honor.

Stowers, who died fighting in France on September 28, 1918, is the only Black American service member to receive the nation's highest award for valor during World War I. Stowers led an assault on two German trenches after all of the senior officers in his segregated unit were killed in an intense battle. Corporal Stowers continuing to lead and fight, even after being wounded twice, before succumbing to his injuries. He was buried in Romogne Meuse, France, and was posthumously awarded a Distinguished Service Cross.



No Medals of Honor were granted to Black soldiers in WWI or WWII. However, Stowers was eventually upgraded to our nation's highest combat award after a review of all Distinguished Service Cross awards to black soldiers in the 1980s and 90s. On April 24, 1991, President George H.W. Bush presented the award to his sisters Georgina Palmer and Mary Bowens at a special White House ceremony.



USCG Lt. Cdr. Jeanine McIntosh
*First Black American Woman Aviator
in the U.S. Coast Guard*

2005 – Jeanine McIntosh becomes the first Black American female aviator in the Coast Guard.

Lt. Cdr. McIntosh, originally from Jamaica, joined the Coast Guard in 2003 after graduating college at Florida International University. She earned her wings at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas and piloted the HC-130 Hercules. McIntosh also flew rescue missions in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.



Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
Outreach, Transition & Economic Development (OTED)

will host a

Virtual Minority Veteran Outreach Symposium

Thursday, February 9, 2023
1:00 – 4:00 p.m. (EST)



In recognition of Black History Month, this symposium will celebrate African American service in military, as well as Veteran contributions to our Nation. The symposium will also provide information on current and future VA benefits, to include filing a VA disability claim online, fraud prevention and awareness and the Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

Join on Your Computer or Mobile App via WebEx
[Click Here to Join the Symposium](#)

Or Call-In (Audio Only)

Phone: 1-404-397-1596 Access Code: 2762 187 6496



DVS Pueblos & Tribal Liaison Gives Presentation at Zuni Pueblo

DVS Pueblos and Tribal Liaison Beverly Charley was among the speakers and presenters at a special social gathering and dinner on January 31 at Zuni High School. Nearly 200 people attended the event, with many Zuni Pueblo veterans and members of the Zuni High School National Honor Society volunteering as food servers.



In addition to outlining the services offered for veterans by DVS, Ms. Charley also talked about the new PACT Act law that expands VA health care benefits to veterans who believe they were exposed to toxic chemicals during their service.

“Many veterans who now have post-service health issues have always thought it is linked to being exposed to toxic substances during their military service, “ she said. “With this new law, you don’t need proof. VA will presume exposure. All you need to show is when you served, and where.”



She cited examples of possible exposures for Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans to “burn pits” used by U.S. bases to destroy waste material—many of which emit toxic smoke when burned—or Vietnam War veterans exposed to the Agent Orange herbicide sprayed by the U.S. to clear out jungle growth in Southeast Asia.

During the event, she also presented a DVS “coin” to 92-year old former Army Military Police Cpl. James Lunasee (*left photo*). He was acknowledged for his military service, and subsequent 42-year career working in the federal government.

Native American Veterans Quarterly Briefing

February 4 in Albuquerque (11 a.m.—2 p.m.)

Hispano Chamber of Commerce/Wells Fargo Room (130 Fourth Street NW)

DVS Secretary-Designate Donnie Quintana, DVS Pueblos & Tribal Liaison Beverly Charley, and other agency staff will brief pueblo and tribal representatives about DVS initiatives for this year—and beyond, including goals and programs for Native American veterans. Lunch will be provided. The briefing is also open to Native American veterans in general. For more information, contact Beverly Charley at beverly.charley@dvs.nm.gov or (575) 241-3322.

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2023



2023



**WOMEN VETERANS
CONFERENCE**

"STILL MAKING A DIFFERENCE"

RSVP early and reserve your seat today!

Space is limited

Email: theresa.figueroa@dvs.nm.gov

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.

Please note:

- 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.

REGISTRATION FORM
MUST BE RECEIVED BY 21 FEBRUARY 2023

TRIBUTE TO WOMEN IN THE MILITARY



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*“Celebrating & Honoring Military Women in all Branches of Service”
Past~Present~Future*

This year we are:
COMMEMORATING THE “PRESENT” MILITARY

Friday, 3 March 2023

At the
AMERICAN LEGION POST 49
11005 Central Ave NE • Albuquerque, New Mexico 87123

0800 hrs - Registration Opens, Exhibits, Refreshments,
Networking

0900 hrs - Opening Ceremonies

0930 hrs - Morning Entertainment

1130 hrs - Luncheon

Keynote Speaker

TSGT SHEENA HLIVKO, USAF

Tribute XXXVIII Chair: Diana Wong, USAF (Ret) (575) 640-3042
Registration Info: Ms. Ethel Tilley (505) 853-1718

www.TributeToWomenInTheMilitary.org

March 18 Event in Las Cruces...



UNITED MILITARY WOMEN
OF THE SOUTHWEST PRESENT



5TH *Anniversary*

Women Veteran's Monument



Veteran's Park



SATURDAY
18 MARCH 23
10AM-2PM

UMWSW PRESIDENT KAREN
WOODS 575.639.1265
UMWSW VICE PRESIDENT PAMELA
CISNEROS UMWSWPC@GMAIL.COM



VETERANS PARK 2651 N ROADRUNNER



News from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)



VA Pays \$201 Million in Retro Benefits to “Blue Water” Veterans *(story courtesy of Stars & Stripes)*

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) paid about \$201 million in retroactive benefits over the past two years to nearly 7,000 “blue water” Navy Vietnam War veterans and their survivors in connection to exposure to Agent Orange, according to the veterans advocacy group *National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP)*.

The VA recently informed NVLSP that since 2021 it had paid that amount in back benefits to 6,922 Navy veterans who served on ships in open sea off the shore of Vietnam, the NVLSP said in a news release.

The payment report was among the other requirements in a Nov. 5, 2020, ruling by the U.S. District Court for Northern California in favor of thousands of veterans who were exposed to the defoliant Agent Orange while serving on ships within 12 nautical miles of Vietnam.

U.S. forces fought in South and North Vietnam from the early 1960s until 1973.

The U.S. sprayed just over 11 million gallons of Agent Orange to defoliate jungle during the extended war. The chemical caused multi-generational birth defects to Vietnamese inhabitants and a host of diseases among U.S. veterans who had been exposed during service.

NVLSP attorneys filed suit against the VA in 1986 challenging, among other things, the agency’s regulation maintaining that only chloracne, a rare skin disease caused by exposure to dioxins, was associated with exposures to Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the war. A federal court invalidated that regulation in 1989, as well as all decisions made by the VA based on upon it.

In 1991, the veterans’ attorneys negotiated a consent decree with the VA that requires the agency to recognize emerging scientific evidence about the effects of Agent Orange exposure.

(story continues on next page)

VA must also identify previously denied claims involving newly recognized diseases and pay disability and death benefits retroactive to the date of the claims.

In the decades since that consent decree, medical research has found a positive association between Agent Orange exposure and about a dozen forms of cancer, diabetes, ischemic heart disease and Parkinson's.



Those links have led to the VA paying out about \$4.9 billion in retroactive disability and death benefits “to hundreds of thousands of Vietnam veterans and their surviving family members,” the news release said.

Congress passed the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act in 2019, which granted a presumption that veterans who served on ships off the Vietnam coast were exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides.

But that legislation did not require the VA to automatically assess whether a veteran or survivor was entitled to retroactive compensation due to a prior denial.

Under the 2019 law, back compensation was triggered only if a veteran or survivor files a claim after Jan. 1, 2020, and specifically identifies the Agent Orange-related disease that was the subject of the earlier denied claim.

The law also did not require the VA to pay retroactive compensation if the blue water Vietnam veteran had been wrongly denied but is now dead.



In July 2020, NVLSP filed a motion in federal court on behalf of thousands of blue water veterans and their survivors arguing that the terms negotiated under the 1991 consent decree had been breached in light of the provisions of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act.

Four months later in November 2020, the federal court ordered the VA “to automatically readjudicate thousands of benefits claims that the Court found had been wrongly denied under the Consent Decree,” the news release said.

Veterans Facing Suicide Crisis Can Now Go to Any VA or Non-VA Emergency Facility

Veterans in acute suicidal crisis are now able to go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit.



This expansion of care will help prevent veteran suicide by guaranteeing no cost, world-class care to veterans in times of crisis. It will also increase access to acute suicide care for up to 9 million veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA.

Preventing Veteran suicide is VA's top clinical priority and a top priority of the Biden-Harris Administration. This effort is a key part of VA's 10-year National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide and the Biden-Harris administration's plan for Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide. In September, VA released the [2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#), which showed that veteran suicides decreased in 2020 for the second year in a row, and that fewer veterans died by suicide in 2020 than in any year since 2006.



“Veterans in suicidal crisis can now receive the free, world-class emergency health care they deserve—no matter where they need it, when they need it, or whether they're enrolled in VA care,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “This expansion of care will save veterans' lives, and there's nothing more important than that.”

VA has submitted an interim final rule to the federal register to establish this authority under section 201 of the Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment (COMPACT) Act of 2020. The

final policy, which takes effect on Jan. 17, will allow VA to:

- Provide, pay for, or reimburse for treatment of eligible individuals' emergency suicide care, transportation costs, and follow-up care at a VA or non-VA facility for up to 30 days of inpatient care and 90 days of outpatient care.
- Make appropriate referrals for care following the period of emergency suicide care.
- Determine eligibility for other VA services and benefits.
- Refer eligible individuals for appropriate VA programs and benefits following the period of emergency suicide care.

(story continues on next page)

Eligible individuals, regardless of VA enrollment status, are:

- Veterans who were discharged or released from active duty after more than 24 months of active service under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Former members of the armed forces, including reserve service members, who served more than 100 days under a combat exclusion or in support of a contingency operation either directly or by operating an unmanned aerial vehicle from another location who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Former members of the armed forces who were the victim of a physical assault of a sexual nature, a battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment while serving in the armed forces.

Over the past year, VA has announced or continued several additional efforts to end veteran suicide, including:

- [establishing 988 \(then press 1\) as a way for Veterans to quickly connect with caring, qualified crisis support 24/7](#)
- proposing a new rule that would [reduce or eliminate copayments](#) for veterans at risk of suicide
- conducting an ongoing outreach effort on [firearm suicide prevention and lethal means safety](#);
- leveraging a [national Veteran suicide prevention awareness campaign, “Don’t Wait. Reach Out.”](#)





DVS Field Offices in New Mexico

DVS has field offices throughout the state that are staffed with nationally accredited veterans service officers who are dedicated to helping veterans with filing VA claims, applying for state veterans benefits, or with helping with anything else a veteran or their family needs with.

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

Alamogordo/Southeast NM

David Henley

411 10th Street #107

(575) 937-5620

david.henley@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque Metro Area

Dayle Bad Warrior

5201 Eagle Rock Blvd. NE/Suite 2

(505) 383-2400

dayle.badwarrior@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque Metro Area

Austin Walker

5201 Eagle Rock Blvd. NE/Suite 2

(505) 274-0393

austin.walker@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque Metro Area

Hope Najera

5201 Eagle Rock Blvd. NE/Suite 2

(505) 383-2400

hope.najera@dvs.nm.gov

Belen/Albuquerque Metro Area

(opening soon)

718 South Main St/Space A, Unit 8

(TBD)

[TBD](#)

Carlsbad/Southeast NM

Dagmar Youngberg

101 N. Halagueno

(575) 988-5900

dagmar.youngberg@dvs.nm.gov

Clovis/Southeast NM

Matt Barela (*region supervisor*)

904 W. Sixth St.

825-9602

matthew.barela@dvs.nm.gov

Clovis/Southeast NM

Ben Padilla

904 W. Sixth St.

(505) 537-1445

ben.padilla@dvs.nm.gov

Farmington/Northwest NM

Robert Guinn (*region supervisor*)

San Juan College Vet Center/

Room 1715-B

(505) 327-2861

robert.guinn@dvs.nm.gov

Farmington/Northwest NM

Temporarily vacant. Please

contact the other Farmington VSO

for in-office assistance...or any

DVS VSO for phone or

email benefits assistance

Gallup/Northwest NM

John Livingston

908 E. Buena Vista Ave/Room 1A

(505) 389-8731

john.livingston@dvs.nm.gov

Grants/Northwest NM

April Ball

908 E. Buena Vista Ave/Room 1A

(505) 389-8731

april.ball@dvs.nm.gov

(more offices are on the next page)

Hobbs/Southeast NM

Fred Solis-Littlejohn
2120 North Alto St.
(575) 241-0714
fred.solis-little@dvs.nm.gov

Las Cruces/Southwest NM

Miguel Martinez (*supervisor*)
2024 E. Griggs Ave.
(505) 216-8782
miguel.martinez@dvs.nm.gov

Las Cruces/Southwest NM

Vincent Tellez
2024 E. Griggs Ave.
(505) 216-8782
vincent.tellez@dvs.nm.gov

Las Cruces/Southwest NM

Clint Anderson
2024 E. Griggs Ave.
(505) 216-8782
clint.anderson@dvs.nm.gov

Las Vegas, NM/Northeast NM

Martín Márquez (*supervisor*)
917 Douglas Ave.
(575) 520-5079
Martin.marquez@dvs.nm.gov

Las Vegas/Northeast NM

Arturo Marlow
917 Douglas Ave.
(505) 331-8838
arturo.marlow@dvs.nm.gov

Rio Rancho/Albuquerque Metro

Dustin Newsom
Sandoval County Admin. Bldg.
1500 Idalia Rd./Bldg. D, Room 2041
(505) 221-7190
dustin.newsom@dvs.nm.gov

Roswell/Southeast NM

Danielle Thompson
1600 SE Main Street /Suite 2A
(575) 416-2284
danielle.thompson@dvs.nm.gov

Santa Fe/Northwest NM

Nick McKenzie
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