



The Guardian

The monthly newsletter of the New Mexico Dept. of Veterans' Services
May, 2023

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

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

2023 New Mexico Spring Honor Guard Conference Concludes in Las Cruces



New Mexico Honor Guards attended the 2023 New Mexico Spring Honor Guard Training Conference on April 21 in Las Cruces at the Sonoma Ranch Golf Course.

The conference is one of two presented annually in the state by the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (DVS), the New Mexico National Guard, and AARP-New Mexico as learning and training opportunities for the state's Honor Guards--the all-volunteer units that perform the rifle volley,

bugle rendition of *Taps*, and the folding of casket American flag at most funerals of honorably discharged veterans in the state. Instruction was provided by members of the New Mexico National Guard's Honor Guard, who then observe and judge the volunteer units as they render honors at mock funerals. The judges awarded first place in the following four categories:

Small unit division: two or three members in a detail)-The Marine Corps League/El Perro Diablo Detachment 478 Scarlet Team from Las Cruces.

Medium-size division: (no more than five members) American Legion Post 12 (Albuquerque)

Large-size division: (six or more members) The Marine Corps League/El Perro Diablo Detachment 478 Scarlet Team from Las Cruces.

“Live” bugle competition: Al Bourget/Albuquerque.

DVS videotaped the conference and has [produced a video showing highlights](#) of the instruction and performances. The second conference this year is scheduled for August 25 in Albuquerque. Service organizations interested in forming an Honor Guard are encouraged to attend. For more information, contact Diana Myklebust at diana.myklebust@dvs.nm.gov or (505) 231-8911.

(photos of the winning Honor Guards are on the next two pages)



1st place/small unit: Marine Corps League Detachment 478 Scarlet Team (Las Cruces)

(L to R): DVS State Cemetery Bureau Chief David Walker...MCL Detachment 478 members Neri Fietze, Gilbert Tarin, Jeffrey Eakman...and NM Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. (retired) William Griego, who served as master of ceremonies for the competition.



1st place, medium unit: American Legion Post 13 (Albuquerque)

(Front row/L to R): Chris Herrera, Lydia Zazueta, Darlene Herrera.

(Back row/L to R): Alfredo Gomez, Antonio Villareal, Peter Cortes, Frank Sandoval, Chris Sedillo, and NM Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. (retired) William Griego.



1st place/large unit: Marine Corps League Detachment 478 Scarlet Team/Las Cruces.

(L to R): Ed Clark, Joe Montoya, Neri Fietze, Don Hanlin, Joe Mendiola, Andres Rivera, Ruben Telles, Gilbert Tarin, Larry Rodriguez, Don Marquez, Jeffrey Eakman, and NM Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. (retired) William Griego.



1st place, "live" bugle performance: Al Bourget/Albuquerque

(L to R): DVS State Cemetery Program Bureau Chief David Walker, Al Bourget, and NM Army National Guard Command Sgt. Maj. (retired) William Griego.

DVS Fills Staff Vacancies in Albuquerque, Las Vegas (NM), and Angel Fire

Helen “May” Chavez is the new DVS Albuquerque Metro Region Veterans’ Service Officer (VSO) supervisor. She will oversee the agency’s three Albuquerque-based VSOs and the VSO in the Belen office .

May has an extensive background working in the city of Albuquerque. She most recently was a teacher with Albuquerque Public Schools. She also worked in the Albuquerque Police Department’s Backgrounds Investigations Unit--where she conducted background investigations on all incoming cadet applicants, lateral-hire officers, police service aides, and civilian employees. She was also APD’s civilian background supervisor. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology, with grad certificates in Logistics and Project Management, from Western New Mexico University; and a Master’s Degree in Forensic Psychology from Nova Southeastern University-Florida.

May Chavez
DVS ABQ Metro
Supervisor

Ronn Saavedra is a new VSO in the DVS Albuquerque office. He comes from Goodwill Industries of New Mexico, where served as that agency’s Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program manager to help veterans find housing and employment.

The Albuquerque native served 16 years in the United States Air Force as an aerospace and ground operations positions at Travis (Fairfield, CA) and Holloman Air Force Bases, completing his service in 1985 as a staff sergeant. Veterans or their eligible dependents can make an appointment with Ronn by contacting him at (505) 479-0672 or ronald.saavedra@dvs.nm.gov or



Ron Saavedra
DVS Albuquerque VSO

Jimmy Saiz is a new VSO in the DVS Las Vegas (NM) office. He joins DVS NW Region VSO Supervisor Arturo Marlow to assist veterans and their families in the northwest part of the state.

The Las Vegas native comes to the agency after working in the private sector as an operations supervisor for Fed-ex contractor. Also worked for cascade process controls in the fiber optic division across New Mexico.

Jimmy retired as a master sergeant from the United States Marine Corps after 20 years of service where he served as a small arms repair man and ground ordnance chief. During his 20-year career, his assignments were in 29 Palms (CA), Yuma (AZ), El Paso, Camp Pendleton (CA), Hawaii, and San Diego. He deployed twice to Iraq, once to Afghanistan, and twice with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.



Jimmy Saiz
DVS Vegas (NM) VSO

Master Sergeant Saiz's personal decorations include. Meritorious Service Medal, Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal (x3), Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal (x4), Iraq Campaign Medal (x2), Afghanistan Campaign Medal, GWOT Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment (x5), NATO/ISAF Medal.

Andy Taylor is a new interment specialist at the DVS-managed Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery. He is part of a three-man crew responsible for all phases of operations at the cemetery—from assisting families with burials, the actual placement of caskets or urns in gravesites or columbarium spaces, and overall maintenance and upkeep of the ten-acre cemetery.

Andy is a native of England who served for three years with the UK's Corps of Royal Engineers..."Sappers"...a division within the British Army that provides worldwide engineering and logistical support for the entire force . Part of his service included being a member of a regimental shooting team.

He moved to the U.S. five years ago, and gained his U.S. citizenship two months ago. After working in the retail industry, he is excited to join DVS to help honor veterans--and their families who honor and grieve for them.



Andy Taylor
Angel Fire
State Veterans Cemetery
Interment Specialist

VBOC Director Rich Coffel Retires

Saying in his retirement letter to DVS Secretary Donnie Quintana that “it’s time to go fishin’,” Rich Coffel has stepped down as director of the Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC), the business development division of DVS.

Coffel came aboard DVS in 2014 as the VBOC veterans business advisor, where he helped the VBOC director assist entrepreneurial-minded veterans, transitioning active service members, and their wives with starting or growing their own business. He was appointed VBOC director in 2016.

Prior to coming to DVS, Coffel was a long-time small business owner himself. Before this, he served 26-years with the U.S. Air Force—including 18-years in various USAF bases in Asia. He is a combat/Special Operations veteran of the Vietnam War.



Rich Coffel
Retiring as VBOC Director

“I really appreciate all that Rich has done to help our entrepreneurial-minded veterans,” said Secretary Quintana. “In the short time I’ve been with the agency, I saw first hand his devotion to helping these veterans and spouses realize their dream of opening and expanding their own business. I wish Rich nothing but the best in his retirement years.”

A search is underway to fill the vacant VBOC director position. VBOC Veterans Business Advisory Johnny Martinez will serve as interim VBOC director until a permanent director has been named.

The New Mexico Veterans Business Outreach Center



Johnny Martinez
Interim VBOC Director

The New Mexico Veteran’s Business Outreach Center (VBOC) was launched in 2010 by DVS through a successful grant application with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The VBOC was created to help the SBA assist entrepreneurial-minded veterans, transitioning active-duty personnel, National Guard & Reserve members, and their spouses with starting or growing a small business.

DVS was the first state government agency—and just one of a handful of recipients in the nation--selected by the SBA to create these “one-stop-shops” for veteran-owned businesses.

New Mexico’s VBOC is located in the DVS Albuquerque office, in the Pinetree Business Park/Bldg. 2, at 4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd floor. For assistance or more information, contact VBOC Interim Director Johnny Martinez at johnny.martinez@dvs.nm.gov or (505) 429-8501.

DVS to Host Next Local Community Veterans Briefing in Raton

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) will host its next local veterans community briefing in Raton on May 17 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Colfax County Administration Building, located at 230 North Third Street.



DVS Cabinet Secretary Donnie Quintana will be joined by agency division directors to provide updates on DVS initiatives for 2023 and beyond. Among the topics to be outlined are plans to expand coverage of the Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Program currently providing free round-trip rides to medical appointments for veterans in fifteen counties, and the building of a half-scale replica of the national Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at the DVS-managed Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire. *(artist's rendition in the photo below)*



Scheduled to join DVS at the briefing are representatives from the New Mexico VA Health Care System.

The PACT Act is the new law that expands VA medical care to veterans who are experiencing health issues that might be linked to exposure to toxins during their military service. Proof of exposure is not required—a veteran needs only to document his or her service in regions as defined by the PACT Act.

A representative from VA's Loan Service Center will outline the VA home loan process and how veterans can apply for VA home loans.

"I encourage veterans in the northeast part of the state to attend this briefing, and to spread the word to other veterans," said DVS Secretary Quintana. "We're going to have a lot of valuable information which can help you and your family."

The briefing will be videotaped, and an edited video will be posted on the DVS website. Similar briefings are planned for communities in other parts of the state this year.

For more information, please contact DVS Public Information Officer Ray Seva at (505) 8362-6089 or ray.seva@dvs.nm.gov.

DVS Hosts Veterans Property Tax Exemption/Waiver Clinics



DVS staff were busy in Farmington on April 18 (at the San Juan County Assessor's Office/above photos) and Las Cruces on April 20 (below photo/at the Doña Ana County Assessor's Office) assisting veterans and the county assessor staffs to apply for the Veterans Property Tax Exemption or the Disable Veterans Property Tax Waiver.

Upper left photo: DVS Albuquerque-based Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) Hope Fryer (*in red*) and DVS Grants-based VSO April Ball (*in light-blue shirt*)

Upper right photo: DVS Farmington-based VSO Candice Pioche-Zunie (*in pink jacket*).

Upper lower-left: DVS Albuquerque-based VSO Austin Walker (*in light-blue shirt*)



ABOVE PHOTO: Ruben Reyes/Chief Deputy Assessor, Doña Ana County Assessor's Office (U.S. Navy veteran); Allen McBrayer/Appraiser, Doña Ana County Assessor's Office (Air Force); Victor Roman/Residential Appraiser, Doña Ana County Assessor's Office (Army); Christopher Valenzuela/Appraiser, Doña Ana County Assessor's Office (Army Reserve); DVS State Benefits Division Director Ed Mendez (Navy); and David Walker/DVS State Cemetery Program Bureau Chief (Navy).

Upcoming New Mexico Veterans Property Tax Waiver & Exemption Clinics

Tijeras (May 15)

Tijeras Senior Center
10 Tijeras Ave.
10am-2pm

Albuquerque (May 24)

Raymond G. Sanchez
Community Center
9800 4th Street NW
10am-2pm



New Mexico Dept. of Veterans Services and county assessor's office staff will assist eligible veterans and unmarried widows of veterans with on-the-spot filing for one of the following two state property tax benefits:

Veterans Property Tax Exemption

- A \$4,000 reduction off the taxable value of a veteran's primary residence

Veterans Property Tax Waiver for service-connected disabled veterans

- Waiving/eliminating the entire property tax bill

Please bring one of the following documents for proof of veteran status:

- either a copy of your DD-214, NOAA form 56-16, or PHS form 1867 and one of the following proof of residency documents:
- valid NM driver's license, voter registration card, or latest income tax return

For further information:

Jeff.george.dvs.nm.gov or (505) 827-6300

DVS Staff Provides Outreach At Annual “Hiring Heroes” Job Fair



DVS Women Veterans Program Manager Theresa Figueroa (*left photo*) and DVS/Veterans Business Outreach Center Director Rich Coffel (*right photo/far right*) provided veterans' benefits outreach assistance at the *Eighth Annual Operation Hiring Heroes Employment Event* on April 26—hosted by American Legion Post 13.

More than three dozen federal, state, local, and public/private agencies and businesses were represented at the event, which is billed as a “veteran-focused event open to all job seekers.”





DVS Presents Information at the NATI Native American Veterans Symposium

DVS Cabinet Secretary Donnie Quintana (*left photo*) and several DVS division directors and program managers were speakers at the Native American Training Institute's Veterans' Symposium on April 22-23 at the Isleta Resort and Casino Conference Center at Isleta Pueblo.

DVS State Benefits Division Bureau Chief Jeff George gave a presentation about the many state veterans benefits available for New Mexico's veterans.

Headlining one break-out session was DVS Health Care Division Director Diane Mourning Brown, who was joined by New Mexico VA Health Care System Transportation Program Director Hugo Rodriguez to present information about the NMVAHCS' free transportation program to the Albuquerque Murphy VA Medical Center for veterans in the Albuquerque metro area, and the DVS Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Program—for veterans in 15 select counties for their medical appointments anywhere in the state.

Another breakout session was headlined by DVS Women Veterans Program Manager Theresa Figueroa focusing on VA and state veterans benefits for women veterans. New Mexico Veterans Benefits Outreach Center (VBOC) Interim Director Johnny Martinez also led a session discussing available help for veterans, transitioning active-duty service members, and their spouses looking to start their own small business or grow an existing operation.

On the second day of the conference, DVS Field Services Division Director Robin Wilson presented information about the help her division's 16 field offices/24 veterans' service officers provide for veterans looking to file VA claims or apply for state veterans' benefits.

Pueblos & Tribal Liaison Beverly Charley and Native American Training Institute Vice President Ramus Suiza wrapped up the conference after a morning featuring additional benefits and services for veterans—with an emphasis on Native American veterans.

"The presenters did an excellent job outlining the help available for native-and non-Native American veterans—and there were a lot of great questions asked from the attendees," said Charley. "It was also an excellent networking opportunity not only for the attendees, but also for representatives from the programs that were here to present information. It was just an excellent conference."

New Mexico VA Health Care System Director Robert McKenrick and Albuquerque VA Regional Office Director Cesar Romero also attended the conference and joined their staff members in helping veterans in attendance.



N.M. Native American Veterans Collaboration

*Building Relationships Between DVS
and New Mexico's Pueblos, Nations & Tribes*

Thursday, May 25, 2023

8a.m. – 5p.m.

Mescalero, NM/ *Inn of the Mountain Gods*
287 Carrizo Canyon Rd.

Join the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) for a presentation and discussion about the agency's commitment to working with New Mexico's tribes, pueblos and native nations.

Lunch will be provided. Post-lunch session will be at the nearby Fort Stanton State Veterans Cemetery



For more information: Contact DVS Pueblos & Tribal Liaison
Beverly Charley at (575) 241-3322 or beverly.charley@dvs.nm.gov



DVS Cabinet Secretary Quintana Helps Honor Bataan Defenders at Bataan Remembrance Day Ceremony

DVS Cabinet Secretary Donnie Quintana was among the special guests helping to commemorate Bataan Remembrance Day at an April 8 ceremony in Santa Fe.

The ceremony is presented every year by the New Mexico National Guard, along with the DVS, to honor the 1,800 men of the New Mexico National Guard who suddenly found themselves—and our country—entering World War II on December 8, 1941, when Japan launched a surprise attack on the Philippines. That attack came just hours after Japan launched the infamous attack on the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The guardsmen had been deployed to the Philippines a few months earlier in reaction to increasing hostile actions by Japan throughout Asia.

The ceremony in Santa Fe honors those National Guard members, for being part of the 75,000 American and Filipino soldiers who were surrendered by their own commanding general to the Japanese. The Americans and Filipinos were then forced by their captors to walk more than 60 torture-filled miles to prison camps—in what has come to be known as the *Bataan Death March*. Of the 1,800 New Mexicans who were imprisoned, only two are alive today.

DVS videotaped the ceremony [and has produced a video](#) with highlights of the ceremony, and a brief look at the events leading up to the march to imprisonment. The video also has moving remarks at the ceremony from the daughter of a Death March survivor, who talks about the life-changing visit she just made to Japan to visit her late father's imprisonment site.



LEFT TO RIGHT: At the April 8 Bataan Remembrance Day Ceremony in Santa Fe, DVS Cabinet Secretary Donnie Quintana, Santa Fe Mayor Alan Webber, Margaret Garcia (*daughter of Bataan Death March survivor Evans Garcia*); and New Mexico Army National Guard Maj. Gen. Miguel Aguilar, the adjutant general of New Mexico, place a wreath honoring the defenders of the Bataan Peninsula.



A symbolic white flag of surrender is raised at the Bataan Remembrance Day ceremony on April 8 in Santa Fe.



Bataan Memorial Building BBQ/Cleanup Day

Saturday, May 20

10a.m.—1p.m.

Bataan Memorial Building
Downtown Santa Fe (400 Don Gaspar Ave.)



The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services is seeking volunteers to help us refurbish plaques around the Bataan Memorial Building that honor the 1,800 New Mexico National Guardsmen WWII POWs who valiantly defended the Bataan Peninsula.

Please bring:

- "Brasso" or other brass cleaning products
- Applicator/buffing cloths

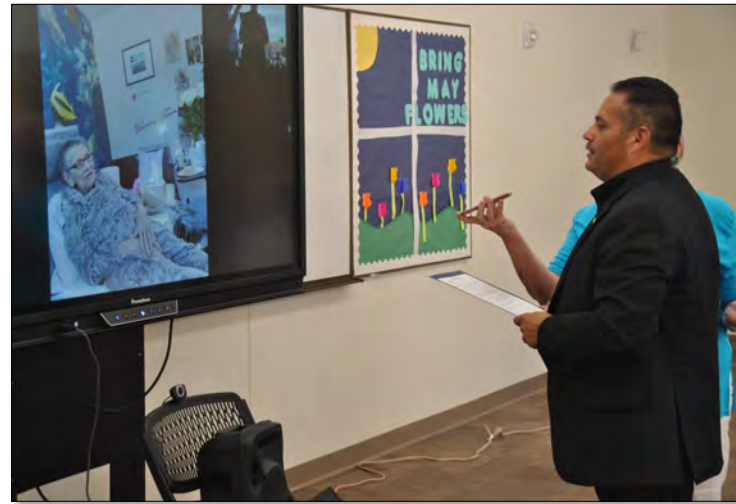
For more information:

DVS State Benefits Division Director Edward Mendez
edward.mendez@dvs.nm.gov or (505) 382-3760

World War II WAVE Celebrates Her 100th Birthday

Former U.S. Navy WAVE Dorothy Blanchard celebrated her 100th birthday in a special closed-circuit “party” on April 29 in Albuquerque.

DVS Cabinet Secretary Donnie Quintana joined a handful of Blanchard’s family and friends at the North Domingo Baca Multi-Generation Center to relay birthday wishes via a Zoom hookup to Jensen’s room at a nearby assisted living facility.



In 1943, then-Dorothy Jensen enlisted in the U.S. Navy’s *Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services* program a year after it was formed. The “WAVES” were a newly-created U.S. navy Auxilliary unit of women who filled critical naval support functions here at home—allowing male service members to go off to battle in Europe and the South Pacific.



Her main function was to serve as the private secretary for Admiral Arleigh Burke at the Pentagon—including working on several classified operations at the rank of chief petty officer, and where she met and married fellow navy Chief Petty Officer Earl Blanchard. She then worked for Assistant Secretary of the Navy John Floberg, who was one of the key figures that helped develop our nation’s nuclear program. Her husband continued his naval service when Dorothy retired in 1952 after the birth of their daughter Linda—who was at the birthday ceremony at the Domingo Baca facility (*below photo, in red*)

“As a retired Army National Guard colonel, I am deeply appreciative of what you have done for our country,” said DVS Secretary Quintana via the Zoom connection (*upper right photo*). “On behalf of grateful Americans, I thank you for your military service and sacrifice—and wish you a very happy 100th birthday!”



VFW Post 5432's Historic Cemetery Clean-Up



Members of VFW Post 5432 in Corrales spent the morning of May 6 cleaning up the historic Corrales San Ysidro Cemetery to commemorate *VFW National Day of Service*. The group was joined by a local Boys Scouts troop leader to clean gravesites for a planned Memorial Day ceremony at the end of the month. **(RIGHT PHOTO, L to R):** VFW Post 5432 Trustee Zack Furlow, Post 5432 Trustee Seth Orell, Post 5432 member Marjie Furlow, Post 5432 Chaplain Tom Totoris, Post 5432 Commander Terry Brown, and Post 5432 Sr. Vice Commander Pat Orell. (not pictured: Boy Scouts Troop 702 Scout Leader Sara Pecak, who took the photo)

Request for Memorial Day Event Info

Memorial Day this year is on May 29 (the last Monday of May). If you are a part of, or know of any Memorial Day/ weekend ceremonies in your area, please email us the information requested below—and DVS will add it to our list of Memorial Day events. This will go on our website, to statewide media, and will be on our social media platforms. Please make sure to include the POC and his/her email. DVS will not list any event that does not have this information—which is for the benefit of anyone to call if they need additional information about your event(s).



- date of event
- city
- venue
- time of event
- address of venue
- nature of event (i.e. parade/ceremony/concert/BBQ, etc.)
- point of contact (POC)
- POC's phone number and Email



New Mexico PBS / KNME -- Ch. 5.1 & Ch. 5.4

presents

Veterans - Related & Memorial Weekend programs May 23 – May 31, 2023

For Those Who Serve / Served, and Their Families, Friends & Communities

For more details, please visit www.nmpbs.org

Programs are available for free streaming following the broadcast -- on the PBS App.



FRONTLINE “Once Upon A Time In Iraq: Fallujah”

Ch. 5.1 - Tuesday, 5/23, 9pm

The enduring story of the battle of Fallujah, told by the people who lived through it. 20 years after the invasion of Iraq, soldiers, journalists and ordinary Iraqis recount one of the defining episodes of the war.

GOING TO WAR

Ch. 5.1 - Tuesday, 5/23, 10pm

What is it really like to go to war? For millennia, only warriors could really answer that question. This documentary takes us inside the experience of battle and reveals the soldier's experiences as never before, with firsthand experience, hard-won wisdom, and an abiding commitment to telling the warrior's story with insight and unflinching candor.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT 2023

Ch. 5.1 – Sunday, 5/28, 7 pm & 8:30 pm; Tuesday, 5/30, 7pm & 8:30 pm

The 34th annual broadcast of this special concert event, returns live from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol. A more than three-decades-long tradition unlike anything else on television, America's national night of remembrance takes us back to the real meaning of the holiday through personal stories and tributes interwoven with musical performances. Co-hosted by acclaimed actors Joe Mantegna and Gary Sinise, and an all-star lineup with the National Symphony Orchestra. The multi-award-winning event honors the military service of all our men and women in uniform, their families and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

(continued on next page)

JOURNEY HOME TO THE USS ARIZONA

Ch.5.4 - Monday, 5/29, 1 pm

Narrated by Matthew Broderick, this one-hour documentary follows the family of Raymond Haerry Sr. as they travel 5,000 miles from New Jersey to the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii, to place his ashes aboard the sunken battleship. Following the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941, 19-year-old Ray was blown into the water and swam through oil and fire to Ford Island, an islet in the center of Pearl Harbor, Oahu. There he found a rifle and opened fire on Japanese planes. Later, Ray helped to recover the bodies of his fallen shipmates.



UNSETTLED HISTORY: AMERICA, CHINA AND THE DOOLITTLE TOKYO RAID

Ch.5.4 - Monday, 5/29, 2 pm

This program examines a key moment in American/Chinese history from the perspectives of the children of both the "Doolittle Raiders" and the Chinese villagers who aided in their rescue.

THE SEABEES ON IWO JIMA

Ch. 5.1 - Monday, 5/29, 9pm; Wednesday, 5/31, 4pm

Narrated by CBS Sports' Jim Nantz, this film focuses on the story of the U.S. Naval Construction Battalions of World War II. The "Seabees," some of whom were in their '60s, were recruited from the construction trades to join special battalions that built the airfields and bases needed to stage a successful war effort. The "Seabees" not only built the infrastructure for the Allied war effort in Europe and the Pacific, but also often had to put down their shovels to pick up rifles and fend off enemy attacks.



THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN: RETURN TO RAMITELLI

Ch.5.1 - Monday, May 29, 10 pm; Wednesday, 5/31, 3pm

This program tells the story of the Tuskegee Army Airfield, a group of Black military pilots who broke stereotypes and helped win World War II with their daring fighter escorts of American bombers. Narrated by country music star Darius Rucker, the film returns to Ramitelli airfield in Italy to share the history of the air squadron that helped shift the tides of the war.



State Office of Broadband Access & Expansion Hosting Series of Statewide Community Engagement Events

The state Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) is hosting a series of community engagement events throughout New Mexico, which began last month with kick off meetings in Alamogordo and Los Lunas. As part of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity programs, the regional events are opportunities for OBAE leadership and staff to hear from New Mexicans directly as it relates to the challenges and opportunities that exist in individual communities associated with broadband access.

BEAD and Digital Equity programs provide a historic opportunity to address all aspects of the digital divide in a thoughtful, concerted manner – with the promise of lasting impact statewide.

“My staff and I take very seriously our obligation to host these educational/listening sessions in every corner of the state to hear from New Mexicans directly in order to accurately assess their unique needs for improved broadband,” said OBAE Director Daniel Schlegel. “These regional meetings are not only necessary as part of our federal requirement to receive broadband funding, they are fundamental to our mission to facilitate access and meaningful usage for all our state’s residents.”

The first of the series of regional broadband meetings, also known as “Spring Sprint,” took place in mid April with Region 6 meeting in Alamogordo and Region 3 in Los Lunas. Upcoming regional meetings include:

- May 11 - Region 4 in Springer
- May 12 - Region 5 in Las Cruces
- May 15 - Region 1 in Farmington
- May 16 - Region 2 in Hernandez

Local stakeholders, non-profits, internet service providers, elected officials as well as members of the general public are invited to participate in any of the regional meetings. Additionally, there will be a series of webinars for community stakeholders over the next six weeks to include interested participants representing community anchor institutions, non-profits, internet service providers, and a host of other stakeholders. The virtual events are scheduled as follows:

(continued on next page)

Date	Time	Stakeholder Group	Zoom Registration Links
Wednesday, May 10	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Local and regional govt	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0scOqhrD0pGdcvHM-T2PjrViqQucuBVoBS
Friday, May 19	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Community anchor institutions	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMvce6oqzouH9PBvre_dzTOqb4rGvCbq9_o
Friday, May 19	1:30 – 2:30 pm	Health centers, health alliance (CAIs)	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYrceuvpz0tGNzzUfdFml-c7YulHxjbRZ7g
Monday, May 22	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Digital equity org/ covered populations	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0vd-6ppzMpHdwRQisuVB0AMXtBbk-gD-g7
Friday, May 26	12:30 – 1:30 pm	Digital equity org/ covered populations	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMlde-hpj4uGd2e7RxfZYpFVsYDNfMt63HT
Tuesday, May 30	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Workforce development	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kc-6qpz8jGNOKZqFY1KooSfxkhz5x7keL
Wednesday, May 31	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Workforce development	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUiscequqTluEtBszojAanTM4R6kQ2ne7ur
Wednesday, May 31	1:30 – 2:30 pm	Local and regional govt	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtceqopzssHdCt-JNJ6lNsENiVq0tyPK8e
Monday, June 5	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Internet Service Providers	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZWsd-iurzMjE9A4iZJ9wIN1iVvmjuqYoR10
Thursday, June 8	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Internet Service Providers	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkc-irqT8oE9Qt71tayiBWWQszyC6KakwR
Friday, June 9	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Tribal stakeholders	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcpdO-sqT4oH9J-XcyG8_nfu46RnhQEh7AF
Monday, June 12	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Business & Economic Development	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ufu2grzkjHdS4UpR_yXrx2UHzOcWww08W
Wednesday, June 14	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Business & Economic Development	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvf-6sqzkrH9zpm2TJO92cJ9mF8syotkpH

For more information, interested participants can log onto <https://connect.nm.gov/regional-meetings.html> to learn more.

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.

FREE Post-Traumatic Stress Retreats for Veterans & Partners



Veterans & their
partners will
experience 7.5
days of relief &
healing from
PTS in Red River,
New Mexico



April 23-30, 2023
May 14-21, 2023
August 6-13, 2023
October 15-22, 2023

**Offering education, counseling, massage, acupuncture, reiki, yoga, art therapy,
nutrition, chiropractic care, horseback riding and more!**

VeteransWellnessAndHealing.org

575-377-5236

Info@veteranswellnessandhealing.org

Contact us for an application TODAY!



Join us for

Older Americans Month



Senior Health & Information Fair

Village of Tijeras Senior Center

10 Tijeras Ave., Tijeras, NM

Monday, May 15 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

60+ Lunch 11:30am- 1pm - **Reserve your lunch** before 12 noon,

Friday, 5/12/23 at (505) 930-2658.

Entertainment by *Jazz Roots Duet* 12:00-1:00pm

Agencies attending:

- Wellcare
- BeeHive Homes of Edgewood
- Hamilton Relay
- Presbyterian
- Alzheimer Association NM Chapter
- Department of Senior Affairs Info & Assistance
- Americorp Volunteer programs
- Senior Legal Services
- Humana
- ACHR Senior Peer Case Management
- East Mountain Historical Society
- BlueCross BlueShield Care Van
- NM Veteran Services Department; VA Hospital
- Bernalillo County Assessor; County Commissioner
- Lions Club Diabetes Awareness
- TOPS (Taking Pounds Off Sensibly) weight loss program



*Blood Pressure checks, Nutrition Program,
Exercise Demonstrations, Refreshments & Giveaways*

For more information call the Village of Tijeras Senior Center at (505) 286-4220



Santa Fe
Habitat
for Humanity®



VETERANS BUILD

MAY 27, 2023

8:30 AM - 3:30PM

PLAZA BONITA SUBDIVISION

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER

SCAN WITH PHONE:



DIR. VOLUNTEER SERVICES

PASCUAL HERNANDEZ

(505) 986 - 5880 EXT.102

PASCUAL@SANTAFEHABITAT.ORG

SANTAFEHABITAT.ORG/VOLUNTEER

Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Victims: Now is the Time to Submit a Notice of Loss



The Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office encourages anyone impacted by the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire to submit a Notice of Loss to start the claims process. Once you submit a Notice of Loss, a Claims Navigator will reach out to you directly to begin collecting information on your full range of losses.

Information Needed to Submit a Notice of Loss

The Notice of Loss indicates to the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office your intention to file a claim for compensation from the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Assistance Act. When you submit a Notice of Loss, you are essentially raising your hand saying you want to be included in the process.

You do not need to include any supporting documentation, such as receipts or photos, to submit a Notice of Loss.

Some information you will need to fill out your form includes:

- Current, up-to-date contact information
- Claimant name(s)
- A list of your types of loss (loss of property, business loss, financial loss or personal injury loss)
- Information on whether you filed for insurance and other assistance related to the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire such as FEMA disaster assistance, loans from the Small Business Administration and other state and federal organizations.
- If desired, you may identify a third-party representative such as, but not limited to, a family member who you authorize to represent you during the claims process.
- If desired, we can connect you with a Disaster Case Manager to assist you in addressing additional unmet needs and you may consent to share your information with the State of New Mexico for this purpose.
- Whether or not you will need a translator or special accommodations during the claims process

You will also be required to sign that your information is correct and accurate.

(continued on next page)

A Claims Navigator Will Contact You

Once you submit your Notice of Loss, a claims navigator will contact you within 30 days to discuss your claim. They will work to address any questions you have and guide you through the claims process, including the collection and submission of paperwork to include with your Proof of Loss form.

Once your Notice of Loss is determined to be complete, the Claims Office will send an official letter of acknowledgement. This letter starts the 150-day timeline you have to complete your Proof of Loss. If you are unable to collect estimates or receipts for the full scope of loss during this 150-day period, the Claims Office will work with you to extend your deadline to allow for additional information.

Your Claims Navigator will also focus on helping you identify straightforward losses and more easily-documented claims to speed up the review and processing of your claim to allow for partial payments.

You may be eligible to receive a partial payment for some of your losses. A Partial Payment is a payment that can be made to you before your final compensation is determined. These payments are an opportunity to get funding to you quickly and are not intended to disadvantage you in the calculation of your final compensation. Partial payments will not directly affect the 150-day timeline you have to complete your Proof of Loss.

Notice of Loss forms can be found [at fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_notice-loss-hermits-peak-fire-form.pdf](https://fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_notice-loss-hermits-peak-fire-form.pdf). Visit fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema.gov_hermits-peak-calf-canyon-fire-how-to-submit-notice-of-loss-form_20221114.pdf for instructions about how to fill out the form.

Notices of Loss forms can be emailed to the Claims Office at fema-hermits-peak@fema.dhs.gov or mailed to:

FEMA Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office

P.O. Box 1329

Santa Fe, NM 87504

Even if you previously applied to FEMA for disaster assistance, regardless of if you were approved for assistance, you will still need to file a claim through the Claims Office. The deadline to submit a Notice of Loss is Nov. 14, 2024.

For more information about the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Assistance Act and the Claims Office, visit fema.gov/hermits-peak. For information in Spanish, visit fema.gov/es/hermits-peak. You can also follow our Facebook page and turn on notifications to stay up to date about the claims process, forms, deadlines and other materials at facebook.com/HermitsPeakCalfCanyonClaimsOffice/.

POL BENEFITS SERVICES
PROGRAM PRESENTS:

PACT ACT 2022 Town Hall Meeting

FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2023

PLACE: DANCING EAGLE CASINO
EVENT CENTER 11:00AM - 3:00PM

For Veterans who may have been exposed to toxins
such as burn pits, agent orange, asbestos or toxic
related issues. May be eligible for VA compensation.

In Collaboration with Raymond G. Murphy
Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

QUESTIONS?? CALL CHRISTINE 505-552-5674



STOREHOUSE WEST

Serving the Community of Sandoval County since 1992

To alleviate poverty in Albuquerque's West Mesa and rural areas of Sandoval County.



The food pantry serves qualifying veterans and family residents of Sandoval County meeting federal guidelines for low-moderate income households as defined by The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). We supply registered households with a food package once a month. In addition to our food pantry, Storehouse West has a **Kids Clothing Closet** that serves children from newborn to 18 years of age.



Hours of Operation

Monday 9:00am - 1:30 pm (Closed for lunch 12:00 - 12:30)

Wednesday 12:00pm - 4:30 pm

Friday 9:00am - 1:30 pm (Closed for lunch 12:00 - 12:30)

Contact Us

1030-F Veranda Dr. SE

Rio Rancho, NM 87124

505-892-2077

Email: storehousewest@storehousewest.org; Web: <https://www.storehousewest.org/>

**HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?
GET CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH!
THE YMCA'S BLOOD PRESSURE
SELF-MONITORING PROGRAM
IS OPEN TO EVERYONE!**



AVAILABLE ONLINE VIA ZOOM OR IN-PERSON

This 4-month wellness program gives you tools to **reduce your blood pressure, develop healthier eating habits, and properly take your own blood pressure** with help from our specially trained staff. The program is open to anyone who has high blood pressure and is over 18 years old.

Our monthly **FREE nutrition seminars and mindfulness/stress management classes** will help you make the lifestyle changes to improve your health and blood pressure. **You do not have to be enrolled in the Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program to attend.**

SIGN UP TODAY!
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

FOR MORE INFORMATION about the
Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program or FREE classes,
please email **bloodpressureymca@gmail.com**



*Blood Pressure Monitors available for purchase by
registered participants for \$35

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



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



More Than a Half-Million Toxic Exposure-Related Claims Have Been Filed Since Passage of the PACT Act

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reporting that veterans and their survivors have filed more than 500,000 claims for toxic exposure-related benefits under the [PACT Act](#) since President Joe Biden signed it into law last August.

To date, VA has awarded more than \$1 billion in earned benefits to veterans and survivors who filed PACT Act-related

claims. *(According to the Albuquerque VA Regional Office, as of April there have been **3,369** PACT Act claims filed by New Mexico veterans. No data is available about the monetary amount.)*

VA also announced that more than 3 million veterans have received VA's new [toxic exposure screenings](#) since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law, with approximately 42% reporting a concern of exposure. More than 215,000 veterans have enrolled in VA health care during that period, a 15% increase from the same period the year before.

In April, VA also processed its millionth disability compensation and pension claim during fiscal year 2023, putting VA on pace to process a record number of veteran claims for the third year in a row. Thanks to aggressive hiring and modernization efforts, VA processed a record number of veteran claims in 2021, exceeded that in 2022, and is on track to exceed it again in 2023. In total, VA has delivered more than \$65 billion in earned compensation benefits to veterans during FY2023.

The PACT Act is the biggest expansion of Veteran health care and benefits in generations. VA encourages all [eligible](#) veterans and survivors to [file a claim](#) — or [submit their intent to file a claim](#) — for PACT Act-related benefits now. Most Veterans who do so before August 10 will have their benefits, if granted, backdated to Aug. 10, 2022.

“The millions of veterans who fought our wars for the past 30 years — who breathed in debris from sandstorms, fumes from burning trash, and more while overseas — are now taken care of for the conditions that followed them home from war,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “We’re proud that 500,000+ veterans and survivors have applied for their hard-earned benefits to date, but we won’t rest until every veteran and every survivor gets the VA health care and benefits they deserve.”

(continued on next page)

VA is delivering health care and benefits at record rates partly due to a dramatic increase in hiring. The Veterans Health Administration welcomed 27,181 new hires in the first six months of the fiscal year, the highest hiring level in the history of VA for that period. The Veterans Benefits Administration's total workforce grew by 2,040 employees in the first six months of the fiscal year — the highest growth rate in the past 15 years.

For more information on VA's implementation of the PACT Act, visit the [PACT Act Dashboard](#). VA publishes this dashboard every other Friday to document the implementation of this legislation and highlight its impact on Veterans and survivors. The next dashboard, which will reflect the 500,000 PACT Act claim milestone and the three million toxic exposure screenings milestone, will be published April 28.

Veterans and survivors can apply or learn more about the PACT Act by visiting [VA.gov/PACT](https://va.gov/PACT) or by calling 1-800-MYVA411 (800-698-2411)



VA, National Institutes of Health Launch Gulf War Illness Study

VA and National Institutes of Health (NIH) [began a joint, five-year study](#) that aims to explain the chronic symptoms of [Gulf War Illness](#). The study may lead to more definitive diagnostic criteria for Gulf War Illness, development of new diagnostic testing, and potential treatments.

Gulf War Illness affects multiple systems in the body and includes chronic symptoms such as fatigue, headache, memory and cognitive difficulties, joint and muscle pain, poor sleep, and problems with gastrointestinal and respiratory function. This disease affects about a third of the nearly 700,000 men and women who served in the Persian Gulf during operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

This week, the first veteran arrived at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, to participate in the study. Veterans who served in the Gulf War and [meet the enrollment criteria](#) can inquire about participating in the study by emailing vhawas.indepth@va.gov.

“Effective treatments for Gulf War Illness have remained elusive, forcing health care providers to mostly focus on easing patient symptoms,” said VA Chief Research and Development Officer Rachel Ramoni, DMD, ScD. “VA and NIH’s collaboration will bring together experts who will meticulously investigate the underlying causes of Gulf War Illness symptoms. With the help of the veterans who volunteer for the study, researchers will lay the groundwork for care that will meaningfully improve the lives of the hundreds of thousands of veterans living with this disease.”

(continued on next page)



“This is an important collaboration that we hope will lead to many answers to those suffering from Gulf War Illness,” said Director of [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke](#) Walter Koroshetz, M.D. “Taking advantage of the resources available only at NIH, this comprehensive study will take a new look at this illness and uncover biological mechanisms that may pave the way to treatments.”

VA researchers will screen 1990-91 era Gulf War veterans through the Miami VA Medical Center and the California and Washington, D.C., sites of

VA’s [War Related Illness and Injury Study Center](#). Veterans will then be referred to NIH to gain more insight into Gulf War Illness. NIH researchers will identify how the illness presents itself — in ways that can be measured or observed — in each participant. The research will focus on the immune and autonomic nervous systems, as well as the body’s energy-production pathways.

[Eligible](#) veterans will visit the [NIH Clinical Center](#) for up to two weeks, with most Veterans staying at the Clinical Center. Travel arrangements to and from the Clinical Center will be coordinated with the patient and the study team.



Comprehensive testing will be done during the 14 days to look at multiple body systems affected by Gulf War Illness and how these systems operate functionally and structurally at rest as well as when the body is placed under stressors. Among other tests, researchers will administer a peak exercise challenge to trigger symptom flares. The procedure has been used to explore the mechanisms of other chronic illnesses, such as myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome.



VA researchers will maintain a data repository of participants, oversee veterans’ overall experience in the study, and help to communicate individual participants’ study findings to their VA care providers as needed.

Learn more about the [Gulf War Illness study](#) here.



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

May Chavez (*region supervisor*)

Pinetree Business Park/Bldg. 2
4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr
(505) 383-2400

helen.chavez@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque Metro Area

Austin Walker

Pinetree Business Park/Bldg. 2
4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr
(505) 383-2400

hope.najera@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque Metro Area

Hope Fryer

Pinetree Business Park/Bldg. 2
4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr
(505) 383-2400

hope.najera@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque Metro Area

Ronn Saavedra

Pinetree Business Park/Bldg. 2
4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd flr
(505) 479-0672

ronald.saavedra@dvs.nm.gov

Belen/Albuquerque Metro Area

Rob Miller

Belen Business Center
719 South Main. St.
(505) 537-9339

rob.miller@dvs.nm.gov

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.
(575) 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

Candice Pioche-Zunie

San Juan College Vet Center
Room 1715-B
(505) 916-4835

candice.pioche@dvs.nm.gov

Gallup/Northwest NM

John Livingston

908 E. Buena Vista Ave/Room 1A
(505) 389-8731

john.livingston@dvs.nm.gov

(more offices are on the next page)

Grants/Northwest NM**April Ball**

551 Washington Ave.

(505) 521-8132

april.ball@dvs.nm.gov**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****Arturo Marlow** (*supervisor*)

917 Douglas Ave.

(505) 331-8838

arturo.marlow@dvs.nm.gov**Las Vegas/Northeast NM****Jimmy Saiz**

917 Douglas Ave.

(505) TBD

jimmy.saiz@dvs.nm.gov**Rio Rancho/NW NM****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**Bataan Memorial Bldg. 1st Floor/
Room 134/407 Galisteo St

(505) 218-3125

nicholas.mckenzie@dvs.nm.gov**Silver City/Southwest NM****Clarissa Sierra**Western New Mexico University
Juan Chacon Bldg./Rm. 138A

1000 West College Ave.

(575) 313-5627

clarissa.sierra@dvs.nm.gov**Taos/Northwest NM****Leticia “Lety” Cano**Health & Human Service Bldg.
145 Roy Rd.

(575) 709-5263

leticia.cano@dvs.nm.gov**Women Veterans Program****Theresa Figueroa**

Pinetree Business Park

4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd floor

(505) 372-9106

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