



The Guardian

The monthly newsletter of the New Mexico Dept. of Veterans' Services
March 2025

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A Time to Remember and Thank Veterans On National Vietnam War Veterans Day



VIETNAM WAR
VETERANS DAY

March 29

March 29 is National Vietnam War Veterans Day, established as an observance in 2017 to honor the service and sacrifice of Vietnam War Veterans. This day coincided with the withdrawal of U.S. military units from South Vietnam on March 29, 1973. It is a day meant to pay tribute to veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were prisoners of war or who were listed as missing in action. We make no distinction between Veterans who served in-country, in-theater, or who were stationed elsewhere during the Vietnam War. All were called to serve, and none could self-determine where they would serve.

U.S. involvement in Vietnam started slowly with an initial deployment of advisors in the early 1950s, grew incrementally through the early 1960s, and expanded with the deployment of full combat units in July 1965. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates that, today, there are between 6 and 7 million U.S. Vietnam Veterans living in America and abroad, along with millions of families of those who served during this timeframe.

Remember to thank your family members, friends, and neighbors who served in the Vietnam War for their service and sacrifice.

On June 28th, 2024, the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) dedicated the half-scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angle Fire. Like the national wall, the replica wall features black granite panels engraved with the names of the 58,000 fallen U.S. service members from the war, including 398 New Mexicans.

Today, the Memorial includes a visitor center, museum, memorabilia displays, and artwork that provide a glimpse into the daily lives of our troops. It also includes an amphitheater, a memorial walkway, gardens, and a Huey Helicopter display. The Memorial overlooks the Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery and sees approximately 45,000 visitors each year.



Military and Veterans Day at The New Mexico Legislature

On February 19th, 2025, Military & Veterans Day at the New Mexico State Capitol Legislature honored military Veterans, National Guard members, reservists, and active-duty service members. This year's theme, "Enduring Legacy," highlighted the lasting impact of military service across generations.

The Capitol Rotunda ceremony was a profound expression of respect and gratitude, honoring New Mexico's enduring military legacy and recognizing the families of past, present, and future service members. Valdemar De Herrera, at 105, the oldest survivor of the Japanese POW camps of the Bataan Death March during World War II, was honored. Due to health concerns, Juanita De Herrera Clements and Nancy DeHerrera Crochet accepted the honor on their father's behalf.

Representing the future was New Mexico National Guard Member Private First-Class Analisa Toledo, who had just graduated from basic and infantry training. New Mexico Senator Shannon Pinto was recognized for participating in the 2024 Forgotten Heroes Burial Ceremony. Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera presented Senator Pinto with a flag from the ceremony, a symbol of our deep respect and gratitude toward our Veterans.

The event featured interactive and informative tables and displays from the Department of Veterans' Services, the New Mexico National Guard, the VA, and various community service organizations throughout the day.



ABOVE PHOTOS: (left) Juanita De Herrera Clements, NMDVS Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera, and Nancy DeHerrera Crochet. (middle) Private First-Class Analisa Toledo and NMDVS Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera. (right) NMDVS Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera with New Mexico Senator Shannon Pinto.

New Mexico Civil War Veteran Honored with Headstone

James Santiago Taylor, a former Clapham, Union County, New Mexico resident, was honored on Valentine's Day at the Clayton Memorial Cemetery with a marble military headstone to honor his service in the Civil War. This event not only paid tribute to Taylor's service but also connected us to our local history. His family, who has been in the Clayton area for seven generations, has a deep-rooted connection to our community. James Santiago Taylor arrived in the United States from England in 1863 and was a part of the Troop H, 3rd Regiment Colorado Cavalry in 1864. After his service, he relocated from Colorado to Clapham and was a first-generation resident of Union County. He married Maria Apollomia Truillo in 1864 and together they had eleven children.

James Santiago Taylor arrived in the United States from England in 1863 and was a part of the Troop H, 3rd Regiment Colorado Cavalry in 1864. After his service, he relocated from Colorado to Clapham, then Clayton, before passing in 1891.

Great Grandsons Sam, Michael, and Jimmie Taylor have worked together for over a year to grant their Great Grandfather James a Military headstone. David Walker, New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) Bureau Chief of the State Veterans Cemeteries and Memorial Program, assisted in making the headstone a reality. The 1800s design was facilitated by working with the National Cemetery Administration with the help of Stephen McConnell, Interment Specialist Supervisor at the Ft. Stanton New Mexico State Veterans Cemetery.

With a deep commitment to honoring our Veterans, the NMDVS State Benefits Division operates three state Veteran cemeteries. Their dedicated assistance ensures that families can rest assured that their loved ones, including eligible dependents, will have an honorable final resting place.



James Santiago Taylor

Veterans Affairs Annual Salute to Veterans Patients Week



February 14th marked the conclusion of the Veterans Affairs National Salute to Veteran Patients Appreciation Week celebration at the Raymond G. Murphy Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The national salute to Veteran patients is observed annually as a week of honor and appreciation at VA medical facilities. The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) Deputy Secretary, Eric James attended the Valentine's Day cupcake distribution by the medical center staff. NMDVS took the opportunity to honor those who served with New Mexico Veteran pins. This was a moment for NMDVS, to give thanks and support our New Mexico Veterans and their families.

Photo: Medical Center Assistant Director Christopher Kent with Army Veteran Curtis Plaggy and NMDVS Deputy Secretary James.

New Mexico Behavioral Day at the Legislature

The New Mexico Behavioral Health Planning Council hosted its 20th annual Behavioral Health Day at the State Capitol on February 26th. The inspiring theme, “20 Years of Resiliency, Prevention, and Healing Together,” highlighted two decades of advocacy in mental health and substance use recovery. The New Mexico Department of Veterans’ Services (NMDVS) was there to assist Veterans with information on mental health, advocacy, women’s programs, and other services available to our Veterans.



The NMDVS Healthcare Division is a comprehensive resource for our Veterans and their families' healthcare-related needs. The Division not only develops and coordinates Veteran programs and outreach, but also provides support in areas such as transitional living, housing, suicide prevention, advocacy, and transportation related to healthcare access and issues for New Mexico Veterans. If you need assistance or want more information on the wide range of services and programs available throughout the state of New Mexico, please reach out to NMDVS toll-free at 1-866-433-8387 or visit us at <https://www.nmdvs.org/healthcare/>

Photos: (left) NMDVS Women Veteran Program Manager Amberly Viner, Social Worker and Healthcare Coordinator Theresa Castillo, Lt. Governor Howie Morales, and Tribal Liaison Beverly Charley. (Right) NMDVS staff provide information on programs and services.

March is Women’s History Month

In March, we honor women's history in and out of uniform. Although women have served in the military since 1948, Women's History Month wasn't officially recognized and celebrated until 1987. From the battlefields of the American Revolution to the deserts of Kuwait, women have served in the military in one form or another for more than 200 years. They have had to overcome decades of obstacles to achieve their status: serving in greater numbers, combat roles, and leadership positions worldwide.

Our nation's female Veteran population reflects the increasing number of female service members. According to the VA, there are over two million female veterans, constituting 11 percent of our nation’s 18.5 million Veteran population. In New Mexico, nearly 11 percent (16,600) of our state’s 144,997 Veterans are women, a significant and growing presence. Women today, in March and throughout the year, continue to make significant contributions to the Armed Forces, adding to their rich legacies and shaping the future of our military.



NMDVS ensures that women Veterans and their eligible dependents know about available state and federal benefits and have equitable access to Veteran programs and services through the Women Veterans Program, which advocates for women and their needs.

Women veterans are encouraged to contact NMDVS to file VA claims or apply for state veterans benefits by calling 1-866-433-8387 or visit <https://www.nmdvs.org/womens-veteran-program/>

March 25th is National Medal of Honor Day

National Medal of Honor Day, observed annually on March 25th, is a tribute to the brave recipients of the Medal of Honor. This prestigious award, presented by each branch of the U.S. military, is reserved for those who have demonstrated exceptional courage and selflessness, often at great personal risk, in the face of enemy action. Their actions must have been performed 'conspicuously by gallantry and above and beyond the call of duty.

The first Medals of Honor, a symbol of unparalleled bravery, were awarded on March 25, 1863. This historic event marked the beginning of a tradition that continues today. When Congress passed a resolution in 1990 establishing National Medal of Honor Day, March 25th became the official nationwide holiday to honor the medal and its recipients and connect us with our rich military history.



The Medal of Honor, an award of unparalleled significance, is bestowed only upon the most deserving military members. It is also known as the Congressional Medal of Honor. National Medal of Honor Day is a time to reflect on the sacrifices of exceptional military personnel who have earned this highest honor.

Medal of Honor Recipients Who Were Born In New Mexico

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Fernandez, Daniel, | Army | Albuquerque, NM | Vietnam War |
| Jennings, Delbert Owen | Army | Silver City, NM | Vietnam War |
| Martinez, Joseph P. | Army | Talpa, NM | World War II |
| Miyamura, Hiroshi "Hershey" | Army | Gallup, NM | Korean War |
| Moon, Jr., Harold Herman | Army | Albuquerque, NM | World War II |
| Petry, Leroy Arthur | Army | Santa Fe, NM | War on Terror-Afghanistan |
| Rocco, Louis Richard | Army | Albuquerque, NM | Vietnam War |
| Ruiz, Alejandro Renteria | Army | Loving, NM | World War II |
| Valdez, Jose Frank | Army | Gobernado, NM | World War II |
| Walker, Kenneth Newton | Army AC | Cerrillos, NM | World War II |
| Worley, Kenneth Lee | USMC | Farmington, NM | Vietnam War |

Information on eight of New Mexico's Medal of Honor recipients are displayed at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial in Albuquerque. Click here for hours and visitor information: <https://www.nmvetsmemorial.org/visit.html#/>

Save The Date for Upcoming NMDVS Events

April 9th Bataan Ceremony, Bataan Memorial Building

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 were in the Philippines on Dec. 8, 1941, when Japan launched a surprise attack on that country.

May 3rd All New Mexico Veteran Conference, Location TBD

Our annual conference allows Veterans to learn about programs and services available through NMDVS and its partners. Dedicated to building stronger bonds and collaboration with our Tribal Veterans and Veteran community organizations. Join us for a day filled with networking, breakout sessions, education, and keynote speakers.

June 14th Women Veterans Conference, Location TBD A day dedicated to the education and empowerment of women Veterans in New Mexico. Join us for a day filled with enlightening workshops, inspiring speakers, crucial health care information, VA programs, state benefits, and connection to service organizations dedicated to helping women Veterans. This is an event that can truly make a difference in the lives of our women in uniform.



Why Veterans Should Use NMDVS for Benefits

Why Veterans should consult with a New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) VSO.

Veterans and their families deserve the full range of benefits they've earned through their service, but navigating the VA claims process can be complicated. From filling out paperwork to understanding eligibility, it can often feel overwhelming. That's where a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) can make all the difference.

1. Free of Charge Assistance

The Department of Veterans Affairs does not charge any fees for a VSO's assistance, making it an invaluable resource for those seeking to access their earned benefits. Veterans can receive professional guidance, support, and advice without worrying about hidden costs or expenses. Ensuring your claims are handled efficiently and accurately is a no-risk opportunity.

2. VA Accreditation

Veteran Service Officers are accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), which means they have met strict qualifications and adhere to a high standard of training. This accreditation ensures that VSOs are knowledgeable and authorized to assist veterans in filing claims and accessing benefits. Accredited VSOs have a deep understanding of the VA's regulations and guidelines, making them uniquely qualified to navigate the often-complex VA system on behalf of veterans.

3. Experience with Claims Laws and Processes

The VA claims process can be a maze of paperwork, deadlines, and regulations that are difficult to understand without experience. VSOs bring years of hands-on experience working with veterans and their families to guide them through the claims process. They stay updated on changes to laws, policies, and requirements, ensuring that the veterans they serve have the most up-to-date information.

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

Upcoming DVS Veterans' Benefits Outreach Visits

DVS is scheduled to make the following January and February outreach visits at the locations listed below. Veterans and/or their eligible dependents are encouraged to stop by to file for--or ask information about--VA disability ratings, VA medical or mental health care, retiree pensions, military burials, and many other VA benefits.

Staff can also help with applying for state veterans' benefits such as fishing and hunting licenses, Veterans' license plates, new property tax exemptions and many more state Veterans' benefits.

Please bring a copy of your DD Form 214 Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, which are necessary for filing all Veterans' benefits claims. DVS can help assist veterans file for lost or misplaced DD 214s.

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|---|-------------|
| Artesia | 3/25, 4/22 | United Veterans Hall, 402 W Hermosa Dr. | 10am-3pm |
| Aztec | 4/2 | San Juan Country Assessor, 100 S. Oliver Dr. | 9am-3pm |
| Carlsbad | 3/18, 4/8 | 101 N Halagueno St. | 10am-3pm |
| Cannon AFB | 3/11, 3/25 | Military & Family Readiness Center | 2:30-5:30pm |
| Capitan | 4/2, 6/4, 8/6 | Capitan Library/101 E 2nd St. | 10am-2pm |
| Clovis | 3/28 | American Legion Post 25, 2400 W. 7th St. | 9am-2pm |
| Deming | 3/12 | Old VFW Bldg. 4045 Overhill Dr. NW | 10am-1pm |
| Holloman AFB | 3/10, 3/24 | Military Family Readiness Center | 8am-10am |
| Los Alamos | 3/8 | VFW Post 8874, 1793 Deacon St. | 9am-2pm |
| Moriarty | 4/17 | Soil & Water Conservation Dist. Facility, 2506 NM-333 | 9am-2p |
| Raton | 3/10 | Colfax County Assessor, 230 N St. Raton, NM 87740 | 9am-2pm |
| Ruidoso | 3/12, 5/7 | Ruidoso Community Ctr/501 Sudderth Dr. | 10am-3pm |
| Santa Rosa | 3/27 | Guadalupe County Veterans' Ctr/720 Lake Dr. | 10am-2pm |
| Socorro/Belen | 1st & 3rd Tue. | Forget Me Not Veteran Ctr/705 N. California | 9am-3pm |

The following are weekly outreach visits:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Santa Fe | Mon.-Fri. | Santa Fe Vet Center/2209 Brothers Rd. | 9am-3pm |
| Truth or Consequences | Wed. | State Veterans Home/992 S. Broadway | 9am-4pm |

As a reminder, Veterans and their eligible dependents can always contact any of the 17 DVS field offices statewide listed on the last two pages of this newsletter. Each office is staffed by nationally certified Veterans' service officers (VSO), who can also offer assistance by phone or email. **If you know of or are hosting a veterans' or community event that would benefit from having a Veterans' Service Officer on site to help answer questions on benefits available please contact DVS Field Services Director Robin Wilson at Robin.Wilson@dvs.nm.gov**

Upcoming NMDVS Veterans' Property Tax Exemption Events

Both proposed Veterans' Property Tax Exemption Amendments 1 and 2 were passed during the November 2024 General Election and are now undergoing the legislative approval process for enactment. At this time the exemption has passed the State House and is waiting to be heard in the Senate Tax, Business and Transportation Committee. NMDVS and the TAX REV department will collaborate closely with the County Assessor's offices to develop and implement rules for the upcoming 2025 tax exemption changes.

A revised NMDVS DVS-1 application will be introduced with a new disabled percentage rating certificate for implementation. As soon as the rules process is approved for implementation, information on when to apply for the new certificate will be announced.

What will change for the 2025 Property Tax Exemption?

Amendment 1 changes the New Mexico Constitution to extend the existing property tax exemption for 100% disabled Veterans and their widows and widowers. This extension now includes veterans with less than 100% disability and their widows or widowers. The exemption amount is based on a Veteran's federal service-connected disability rating, as determined by federal law.

Amendment 2 changes the New Mexico Constitution to increase the Veterans' property tax exemption for honorably discharged members of the armed forces and their widows or widowers from **\$4,000 to \$10,000**. The amount will then be adjusted for inflation after 2025.

NMDVS will keep you updated on the process and has scheduled veteran property tax exemption events throughout the state to explain the changes for the 2025 tax year. DVS will also have Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) on-site to assist Veterans and their eligible dependents with filing VA claims and obtaining federal and state benefits.

Our VSOs also help connect veterans to vital community resources, such as transitional housing and medical and behavioral health care. Information and assistance on federal and state benefits, local Veterans' programs, and referral services are available at any of our field office locations.

| | | | |
|------------|------|--|---------|
| Raton | 3/10 | Office of Colfax County Assessor, 230 N St. Raton, NM 87740 | 9am-2pm |
| Belen | 3/18 | Valencia County Senior Citizen Center, 715 S Main St. Belen, NM 87002 | 9am-2pm |
| Santa Rosa | 3/27 | Guadalupe County Veterans, Center 720 Lake Dr., Santa Rosa, NM 88435 | 9am-2pm |
| Clovis | 3/28 | American Legion Dean Lucas Post 25, 2400 W. 7th St. Clovis, NM 8810 | 9am-2pm |
| Roswell | 3/29 | Veterans Symposium Hobson Hall, SE NM Fairgrounds, Roswell, NM | 9am-2pm |
| Aztec | 4/2 | Office of San Juan Country Assessor, 100 S. Oliver Dr., Aztec, NM 87410 | 9am-3pm |
| Moriarty | 4/17 | Soil & Water Conservation Dist. Facility, 2506 NM-333 Moriarty, NM 87035 | 9am-2pm |
| Las Cruces | 4/24 | Dona Ana County Assessors, 845 N Motel Dr., Las Cruces, NM 88007 | 9am-2pm |

If you have any further questions on the new Veterans' property tax amendments, please call our offices at: 505-827-6300 or 505-383-2400 or you can visit nmdvs.org

VALENCIA COUNTY ASSESSORS VETERANS PROPERTY TAX EVENT

Tuesday March 18th (9:00 am – 2:00 pm)

Valencia County Senior Citizens Center
715 S Main St Belen, NM 87002



NM Dept of Veterans' Services and Valencia County Assessor representatives will be on site to assist eligible veterans and unmarried widows of veterans with applying for their qualified property tax waiver or exemption.

Veterans Property Tax Exemption

A \$4,000 reduction of the taxable value of a Veterans' New Mexico property assessment

Veterans Property Tax Waiver

For veterans with a service-connected VA-rating of 100% Permanent & Total
Waives the property tax payment of a veteran's primary residence

The following documents will be required to verify Property Tax certificate eligibility:

1. A copy of your DD-214, NA 13038, NOAA form 56-16, or PHS form 1867
2. If applicable, VA Award letter verifying Permanent & Total service-connected disability
3. Proof of New Mexico Residency – Includes one of the following documents:

Valid NM Driver's license / Current voters registration card / Most recent NM income tax return

For more information:

Valencia County Assessor's Office (505) 866-2065 or
Jeff George jeff.george@dvs.nm.gov (505) 699-4087

GUADALUPE COUNTY ASSESSORS VETERANS PROPERTY TAX EVENT

Thursday March 27th (9:00 am – 2:00 pm)

Guadalupe County Veterans Center
720 Lake Drive Santa Rosa, NM 88435



NM Dept of Veterans' Services and Guadalupe County Assessor representatives will be on site to assist eligible veterans and unmarried widows of veterans with applying for their qualified property tax waiver or exemption.

Veterans Property Tax *Exemption*

A \$4,000 reduction of the taxable value of a Veterans' New Mexico property assessment

Veterans Property Tax *Waiver*

For veterans with a service-connected VA-rating of 100% Permanent & Total
Waives the property tax payment of a veteran's primary residence

The following documents will be required to verify Property Tax certificate eligibility:

1. A copy of your DD-214, NA 13038, NOAA form 56-16, or PHS form 1867
2. If applicable, VA Award letter verifying Permanent & Total service-connected disability
3. Proof of New Mexico Residency – Includes one of the following documents:

Valid NM Driver's license / Current voters registration card / Most recent NM income tax return

For more information:

Guadalupe County Assessor's office (575) 472-3738 or
Jeff George jeff.george@dvs.nm.gov (505) 699-4087

CHAVES COUNTY ASSESSORS VETERANS PROPERTY TAX EVENT

Saturday March 29th (9:00 am – 2:00 pm)

**Chaves County Veterans Symposium
Hobson Hall, SE NM Fairgrounds Roswell, NM**



NM Dept of Veterans' Services and Chaves County Assessor representatives will be on site to assist eligible veterans and unmarried widows of veterans with applying for their qualified property tax waiver or exemption.

Veterans Property Tax *Exemption*

A \$4,000 reduction of the taxable value of a Veterans' New Mexico property assessment

Veterans Property Tax *Waiver*

For veterans with a service-connected VA-rating of 100% Permanent & Total
Waives the property tax payment of a veteran's primary residence

The following documents will be required to verify Property Tax certificate eligibility:

1. A copy of your DD-214, NA 13038, NOAA form 56-16, or PHS form 1867
2. If applicable, VA Award letter verifying Permanent & Total service-connected disability
3. Proof of New Mexico Residency – Includes one of the following documents:

Valid NM Driver's license / Current voters registration card / Most recent NM income tax return

For more information:

Chaves County Assessor's office (575) 624-6603 or
Jeff George jeff.george@dvs.nm.gov (505) 699-4087

New Mexico Veteran’s Business Outreach Center

“Boots to Business” Classes

Join us at the New Mexico Veteran’s Business Outreach Center (VBOC) for our exciting “Boots to Business” classes! We're dedicated to empowering veterans, transitioning service members, National Guard and Reserve members, as well as spouses who are eager to start or grow their businesses.



These engaging sessions are held from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, with some on-base classes from 8:00am to 4:30pm. Don’t forget, on-base privileges are required for those special sessions marked with an asterisk (*). We can't wait to support you on your entrepreneurial journey!

| City | Dates | Venue/Address |
|---------------|---------------|--|
| Tucumcari | March 11-12 | B2B Reboot, Mesalands CC911 10th Street |
| Las Cruces | March 24-27 | AgrAbility– NM Farm and Ranch Museum |
| Albuquerque | April 7 & 8 | B2B Reboot, Pinetree Center, 4801 Indian School Rd. Bldg. #2 |
| Silver City | April 15 & 16 | B2B Reboot, Western NM University, SMB Seminar Room |
| *Holloman AFB | May 29-30 | HAFB Airman & Family Readiness Center |

The Boots to Business Program

These free two-day introduction to entrepreneurship courses will present information about the key elements of small business ownership and expansion, techniques for evaluating the feasibility of business concepts, and the steps needed to develop an all-important business plan—a “must” for anyone looking to start or expand a business.

The classes will also introduce a broad spectrum of entrepreneurial business concepts, such as accessing resources available for obtaining start-up or expansion capital, technical assistance, and pursuing federal contracting opportunities. To register for these classes, please go to the blue registration links found with each listing. For additional information about the Boots to Business program, or the New Mexico VBOC, contact VBOC Director johnny.martinez@dvs.nm.gov or call (505) 469-8501.

Funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The New Mexico Veteran’s Business Outreach Center (VBOC)

The VBOC is funded by a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) grant managed by DVS to help Veterans, transitioning active service members, National Guard & Reserve members, and their spouses who are interested in starting or growing a small business. It can help with everything from business planning, start-up and expansion funding, marketing, landing federal contracts, and anything else a small business needs to launch and grow.

DVS was the first state agency in the nation funded by the SBA to offer this “one-stop-shop” when the SBA launched this grant program in 2010.

The VBOC is located in the DVS Albuquerque office at 4801 Indian School Road NE/Building 2. Drop-in visits for business counseling are welcome—but scheduling an appointment is strongly recommended.



The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) recognizes Ernest "Ernie" Sutliff, Administrative Services Coordinator of the Angel Fire Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Ernie has been with NMDVS since May of 2021 and served in the United States Army from 1999-2005.

Why NMDVS Ernie?

It is an honor to join and work for an organization that helps our state's Veterans. There is no higher calling than being a Veteran who helps Veterans. I am so thankful and proud to be part of the NMDVS family.

What do you enjoy most about your duties with NMDVS in Angel Fire?

Given the hallowed ground and history of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, combined with growing up in Moreno Valley and having a Vietnam Veteran Father. It's truly an honor to come to work each day shoveling snow, mowing grass, curating museum exhibits, and performing administrative duties. Giving our Veterans, especially our Vietnam Veterans, a place they are proud to call home is always the priority. For me, it's not just a job, what this Vietnam Veterans Memorial stands for, how it touches our Veterans and Visitors; it's a passion led by heart, pride, and desire to make this Memorial the best place for our Veterans to visit.

Little about yourself, hobbies, family, what you do for fun?

I have been married to my lovely wife Tanaya for fourteen years; we have a seven-year-old son, Glenn, who is my world. My hobbies are Fishing, Hunting, and Snowboarding. All are amazing to do when you live and work where I do.

How would you describe your unique workplace in Angel Fire, New Mexico?

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has seven acres of maintained property out of thirty-five total acres, a museum, an amphitheater, the amazing Peace and Brotherhood Chapel, and the newly dedicated Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall site that three staff maintain. Our titles may say manager, administrator, or groundskeeper. Still, it takes all three of us doing all necessary jobs to keep the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as the premier destination of Northern New Mexico. I often tell visitors when asked what I do; I am the curator; I curate the museum, the grounds, the bathrooms, and everything else in between." And I do it proudly for our Veterans! NMDVS is proud to have Ernie as a part of our talented team of professionals whose mission is "Serving Those Who Served."



NMDVS is hiring! View new job postings on the State of New Mexico careers page at <https://careers.share.nm.gov/>





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

Health Impacts of Chronic Stress and How to Manage

For many people, everyday life can be both joyful and stressful. VA has launched a new campaign called "Stress Discussed" to better assist Veterans in managing stress for improved health. As part of this initiative, VA now offers a checklist for patients to complete before their scheduled appointments. This checklist helps patients identify their stress levels and facilitates discussions with their primary physician. Chronic stress can have a serious impact on both physical and mental health. Therefore, understanding and managing chronic stress is crucial.

New Mexico VA Health Care System Registered Nurse Deborah Meyer, who leads the Stress Distressed Campaign, suggests empowering Veterans with the necessary tools.

"If we equip our Veterans with knowledge about the symptoms related to stress, we can address the root causes of their stress rather than just managing the symptoms that might be contributing to their worries," said Ms. Meyer.

Effective Stress Management involves caring for your body and mind, practicing relaxation techniques, and connecting with others. There are also relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, and biofeedback, which can help manage stress. Additionally, Veterans have access to community resources, including the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. This service offers free and confidential emotional support and crisis counseling 24/7 by calling 9-8-8 (press 1 after the prompt if you are a Veteran). Engaging in self-care activities, such as pursuing hobbies, relaxation, and taking time for oneself, is also essential.

While stress can significantly impact health, with the right tools and support, Veterans can lead healthier, more balanced lives. The Stress Discussed campaign aims to empower Veterans to transform everyday stress into a more manageable aspect of their lives.

Click here for the full checklist and article: <https://www.va.gov/new-mexico-health-care/stories/stress-discussed/>
For stress management help visit the VA Veterans health library here: <https://www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/HealthyLiving/Stress/>

988: THE 24/7 LIFELINE FOR EMOTIONAL, MENTAL OR SUBSTANCE MISUSE SUPPORT

Connecting to a crisis center can be a crucial step in getting the help and support you need in times of distress.

HELP IS THREE NUMBERS AWAY

CALL 9-8-8

Help & Hope in New Mexico

988

1 PRESS 1 FOR VETERANS CRISIS LINE

2 PRESS 2 FOR SPANISH CRISIS LINE

REMAIN ON THE LINE TO BE CONNECTED WITH YOUR LOCAL CRISIS CENTER

Prepare for VA's Secure Sign-In Changes

VA is moving to a more modern online sign-in experience to simplify your options and continue to protect your identity and benefits. Your health portal isn't going away. The VA is just changing the way you sign in. Learn why we're making these changes—and how to create your Login.gov or ID.me account.

The option to sign in with a My HealtheVet user ID and password is scheduled to go away on March 4th. After September 30, 2025, the VA will remove the option to sign in with a DS Logon username and password. However, rest assured, you'll have two sign-in account options: Login.gov or ID.me. Here is a link for more information and help to make the change. <https://www.va.gov/initiatives/prepare-for-vas-secure-sign-in-changes/>

Prepare for My HealtheVet sign-in changes

In 2025, you'll need to switch to using a **Login.gov** or **ID.me** account to sign in to all VA websites and apps – including My HealtheVet.



Create your account now:
www.va.gov/sign-in-changes



Tax Season Assistance Programs from VA

tax
season
Guidance for Veterans

As tax season approaches, many Veterans gather their necessary financial documents and consult with tax professionals. VA wants Veterans to know they may qualify for special tax breaks and [free assistance programs](#) to help them navigate the filing process and maximize their returns.

Whether Veterans file their taxes independently or use a tax professional, VA encourages Veterans and their loved ones to review the tips and resources to help them navigate the tax season confidently and avoid [scams](#).

- Free tax assistance programs: Veterans can access several free tax assistance programs.
- Always verify communications: With the increasing sophistication of scams targeting Veterans, it's important to distinguish between legitimate and fraudulent communications from the VA.
- Protect your personal information: The tax filing season has become a prime opportunity for scammers to exploit unsuspecting taxpayers through various communication methods.

Tax season can be stressful, but Veterans can avoid scams and protect their finances by increasing their knowledge and taking precautions. Understanding Veterans' tax benefits, choosing a trusted professional or service, [recognizing scams](#), and safeguarding are all steps to ensure a safe and secure tax filing experience.

Veterans who suspect they are victims of fraud can find resources to file a report to the appropriate agency by calling 833-38V-SAFE. For more information visit the VA site at: <https://news.va.gov/138085/tax-season-guidance-for-veterans/>

Veterans' Community Bulletin Board

The following pages feature events and informational flyers provided to the New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services (NMDVS) 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 NMDVS of the organization, content, products, or services contained therein.

NMDVS invites government agencies and non-profit service organizations to send flyers for publication in *The Guardian* announcing an upcoming or ongoing veteran-related event. NMDVS 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.
- NMDVS 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 do not necessarily reflect the views of DVS.
- To the maximum extent permitted by law, NMDVS expressly denies liability for any 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.
- NMVS reserves the right to edit or decline to publish any flyer.

Please send you submissions to DVS.PIO@dvs.nm.gov



VETERANS RESOURCE FAIR



Friday March 21, 2025

Zuni Wellness Center

31 Pincion st.

Zuni, NM 10am-2pm

Join us and connect with support service vendors who are here to assist you

VA Benefits

Healthcare

Education

VA claims

Housing

Health and wellness services

**Open to
community**

For more information call Zuni Veterans Program

(505)782-7281/7124



WHY WE SERVE

Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces



Teko Photography

Visit the Loma Colorado Main Library to see

Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces

March 22, 2025 through June 1, 2025

Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces honors the Native Americans who have served in the US military, often in extraordinary numbers, since the American Revolution. The exhibition offers a comprehensive look at Native military involvement and explores Native American military service from its origins to the present day. It highlights the contributions Native Americans have made to the US military throughout our country's history.

Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian.

Rio Rancho Public Library Events

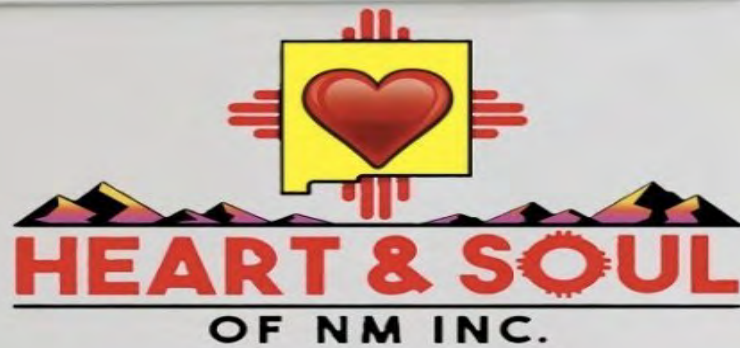
We're hosting the following events in addition to the traveling exhibition:

Chester Nez: World War II Navajo Code Talker

Saturday, March 29, 2025 | 2:00pm - 3:00pm

Loma Colorado Main Library

The Rio Rancho Public Library is excited to host Judith Avila for a lecture on the life of Chester Nez (1921-2014), one of the original 29 Navajo code talkers to complement *Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces* organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian. [Click here for more information about this event!](#)



**Looks like you
have a lot on your
shoulders.**

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NEW!

PSYCHIATRY OPEN
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INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, AND
GROUP THERAPY

INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT
THERAPY (IOP)

PSYCHIATRY SERVICES

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COMMUNITY SUPPORT
SERVICES (CCSS)

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(505)312-0040

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY UNIT #29

DAV Auxiliary
Making a Difference

DOOR
PRIZES

KIDS
JUMPERS

==== ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ =====

1st Annual Veterans & Family Resource Fair

==== ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ =====



WHEN: FRIDAY APRIL 11TH
TIME: 9AM - 3PM

WHERE: VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK
1100 LOUISIANA BLVD SE ALB NM 87108

Vendor Tables
\$40

DAV National Service Officers
Veterans Organizations



Resource Tables With Lots Of Information

For more information or to reserve a table please call 505-977-4423
NMDAVA29@gmail.com



RSVP TODAY!

RSVP for One or More of the Upcoming Dates and Locations with the Listed Point of Contact.

Wednesday, March 26
10 AM to 2 PM

Las Cruces, Convention Center
 680 E. University Ave.
 Las Cruces, NM 88001

fernando.caro@dws.nm.gov
575-680-0837



Thursday, April 24
10 AM to 2 PM

Farmington Elks Lodge 1747
 801 Municipal Drive
 Farmington, NM 87401

kevin.bahe@dws.nm.gov
505-416-0148



Wednesday, April 9
10 am to 2 pm

Alamogordo, Tays Event Center
 5001 Scenic Dr.
 Alamogordo, NM 88310

michael.gardner@dws.nm.gov
575-437-9210 ext 1011



Wednesday, April 30
10 AM to 2 PM

Albuq, American Legion Post 13
 1201 Legion Rd NE
 Albuquerque, NM 87102

joseph.luebbers@dws.nm.gov
505-588-3006



Tuesday, April 22
10 AM to 2 PM

Los Alamos, American Legion Post 90
 1325 Trinity Dr.
 Los Alamos, NM 87544

corey.dabney@dws.nm.gov
505-303-1479



To Register For All
 Events Scan Here:



Employers must have job openings to participate. No fee to participate. Organizations that choose to make donations to the American Legion Post for this event will be listed as a sponsor.

WWW.JOBS.STATE.NM.US



[@AJCnewmexico](https://www.instagram.com/AJCnewmexico)



ALBUQUERQUE FISHER HOUSE



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
New Mexico VA Health Care System



IS YOUR FAMILY MEMBER ELIGIBLE? ASK YOUR VA CARE TEAM

A "home away from home" allowing families and loved ones to be close during an inpatient stay and to focus on what's important--the healing process.

A member of the inpatient Veterans Care Team must enter the request for bedside support of a veterans, a family member cannot call directly **FISHER HOUSE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (50 FAMILIA)**

- 50 miles/from ABQ Fisher House
- Family member/caregiver of an inpatient Veteran at the VA
- Actively engaged in the inpatient's treatment plan
- Medically stable and capable of self-care (Guest must be)
- Independent and able to live in a shared space setting
- Living in stable, permanent housing (not homeless)
- Is free from communicable illness (flu, chicken pox, measles, C-Diff, COVID, etc.)
- Agrees to the Fisher House Guest Agreement and Rules



Raymond G. Murphy/NMVAHCS
Albuquerque Fisher House
1501 San Pedro Dr. SE, Building 85
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108
(505) 265-1711 Ext. 3180 - ABQFisherHouse@va.gov

because A Family's Love
is Good Medicine

ARE YOU A VETERAN IN SEARCH OF GUIDANCE?

Enjoy a complimentary week filled with mindful education, body rejuvenation, and uplifting camaraderie alongside fellow veterans and their partners in the beautiful mountains of New Mexico. Discover valuable therapeutic and holistic tools while embracing Post Traumatic Growth.

NATIONAL VETERANS WELLNESS & HEALING CENTER 2025 RETREAT SCHEDULE

NEW DATE ADDED!!

April 6-13

April 27- May 4

June 1-8

September 7-14

October 19-26

Retreats offer complimentary lodging, meals, and a variety of activities such as massage therapy, acupuncture, yoga, horseback riding, and much more! Please note that travel expenses are not included.

Eligibility Criteria for Attendance:

- 1. Veterans diagnosed with PTS
- 2. A support partner must accompany you
- 3. Participants must have been free from drug or alcohol abuse for at least 12 months

Note: New Mexico veterans will receive priority. Veterans from other states will be accepted as funding permits.

505-501-8337

retreats@vethealingcenter.org

Apply Today!



Donate Today!



APRIL 5 2025 **Disabled Veterans - Veterans - Active Duty**
Fly Fishing 101 Class - Free!
Estancia, NM - Arthur Park Lake



Fly Fishing 101 Beginners Class
For Disabled Veterans - Veterans - Active Duty
April 5, 2025 - Estancia, NM - It's free!

Learn how to fly fish!
Bring a military buddy!
Lunch provided! - Door prizes!

Space is limited - Sign-up with the link below
Or scan QR code

tu.myeventscenter.com/event/Flyfish101april5-104799



Gurner-Ficklin-Ghomas, Post 22 Estancia D.D.

POC: Doc Thompson, Trout Warriors, Director. Email: doct@flyfishnewmexico.com



Calling All Veterans



There is a Lions Club for YOU!

Your Service Continues Here

As a veteran, your commitment to serving others is unmatched. The Lions Club offers you the opportunity to extend your legacy of service into your community. By joining our network of volunteers, you can make a meaningful impact, forge lasting friendships, and create a brighter future.

Be a Part of a Team Again


Reconnect with the camaraderie you experienced in service by working alongside others dedicated to making a difference.

Use your skills and abilities

Veterans know that there is nothing a vet can't do and there are many people who can benefit from your military experience.

Join us for an Informational Meet & Greet


 **Location: Veterans Memorial Meeting Room,**
1100 Louisiana Blvd. SE


 **Date & Time: Wednesday, March 26th, 2025**
at 4:30 pm


The meeting will last 30 minutes.

Come meet local Lions members and learn how you can contribute! Refreshments will be served.

Make a Difference to other vets, their families, and our community

 Contact us at: info@edgewoodlions.org

 Call us at: 480-353-7814

 Learn more: about Lions: www.lionsclubs.org

"Where there's a need, there's a Lion!"



CONTACT US TODAY

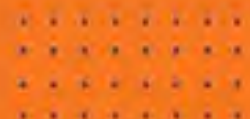
Dani Thompson (575) 550-5585 ext 4
twv@chavescountyhc.org



March 29, 2025
10:00 am - 2:00 pm

HOBSON HALL • ENM STATE FAIR GROUNDS

CHAVES COUNTY VETERANS SYMPOSIUM





NMDVS Field Offices in New Mexico

NMDVS has field offices throughout the state that are staffed with nationally accredited veterans service officers (VSOs) dedicated to helping veterans with filing VA claims, applying for state veterans benefits, or 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 VSOs below. **Please note: VSOs can also provide help by phone or email for any veteran or eligible dependent anywhere in New Mexico.**

Alamogordo/Southeast NM

David Henley/Tarrell Newell

411 10th Street #107
(575) 937-5620/(575) 546-8367

david.henley@dvs.nm.gov
tarrell.newell@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque Metro Area

May Chavez (*ABQ metro supervisor*)

Pinetree Corporate Center/Bldg. 2
4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd floor
(505) 527-2302

helen.chavez@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque (Bernalillo/Moriarty)

Melissa Sena

Pinetree Corporate Center/Bldg. 2
4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd floor
(505) 274-0939

melissa.sena@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque (Downtown)

Corey Riedel

Dennis Chavez Federal Bldg.
500 Gold Ave. SW/3rd floor
(505) 479-0672

corey.riedel@dvs.nm.gov

Albuquerque (VA Hospital)

DVS staff (9am-4pm)

Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Ctr.
1501 San Pedro Dr. SE
(no appointment needed)

(505) 383-2400

Belen/ABQ Metro & Central NM

Rob Miller (*Albuquerque Supervisor*)

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

rob.miller@dvs.nm.gov

Carlsbad/Southeast NM

Covered by Hobbs and Roswell

101 N. Halagueno
(575) 988-5900

fred.solis-little@dvs.nm.gov
Danielle.thompson@dvs.nm.gov

Clovis/Southeast NM

Matt Barela (*SE 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

Ambrose Oliver

San Juan College Vet Center 4601
College Blvd./Room 1715-B

(505) 916-4835
Ambrose.oliver@dvs.nm.gov

Gallup/Northwest NM

John Livingston (*NW supervisor*)

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

john.livingston@dvs.nm.gov

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.
(575) 644-6869

miguel.martinez@dvs.nm.gov

Las Cruces/Southwest NM

Vincent Tellez

2024 E. Griggs Ave.
(505) 361-5298

vincent.tellez@dvs.nm.gov

(continued on next page)

Las Cruces/Southwest NM**Clint Anderson**

2024 E. Griggs Ave.
(505) 261-8782

Clint.anderson@dvs.nm.gov

Rio Rancho/Northeast NM**Dustin Newsom**

Sandoval County Admin. Bldg.
1500 Idalia Rd./Bldg. D/room 2041
(505) 221-7190

dustin.newsom@dvs.nm.gov

Silver City/Southwest NM**Clarissa Sierra**

Western New Mexico University
1000 West College Ave.
Juan Chacon Bldg./Rm. 138A

(575) 313-5627

clarissa.sierra@dvs.nm.gov

Woman Veterans Program**Amberly Viner** *(Program Manager)*

Pinetree Corporate Center/Bldg. 2
4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd floor
(505) 372-9106

Amberly.viner@dvs.nm.gov

NMDVS women veterans program is committed to making sure women veterans have equitable access to programs and services.

Las Vegas, NM/Northeast NM**Arturo Marlow** *(supervisor)*

917 Douglas Ave.
(505) 331-8838

arturo.marlow@dvs.nm.gov

Roswell/Southeast NM**Danielle Thompson**

1600 SE Main Street /Suite A
(575) 416-2284

danielle.thompson@dvs.nm.gov

Taos/Northeast NM**Leticia “Lety” Cano**

Health and Human Services Bldg. 145
Roy Rd.

(505)-709-5263

leticia.cano@dvs.nm.gov

Tribal Liaison**Beverly Charley**

San Juan College Veterans Center
4601 College Blvd./Room 1715-B
(575) 241-3322

beverly.charley@dvs.nm.gov

NMDVS tribal liaison focuses on educational outreach and claims-filing.

Las Vegas/Northeast NM**Tracy Knox**

917 Douglas Ave.
(505) 520-5079

tracy.knox@dvs.nm.gov

Santa Fe/Northeast NM**Phillip Hernandez**

Bataan Memorial Bldg.
407 Galisteo St./1st Floor, Rm 134
(505) 218-3125

phillip.hernandez@dvs.nm.gov

State Veterans Home/T or C NM**VSO Staff/Every Thursday**

922 South Broadway St.
Truth or Consequences, NM

NM Veterans Business Outreach Center (ABQ)**Johnny Martinez** *(Director)*

Pinetree Corporate Center/Bldg. 2
4801 Indian School Rd. NE/2nd floor
(505) 372-9106

johnny.martinez@dvs.nm.gov

VBOC provides assistance for veterans and spouses who are looking to open a small business, expanding an existing operation, or securing federal contracts.