

Disabled American Veterans

Department of North Dakota

Tri-Annual News Bulletin



DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

2009 4th STREET NE - JAMESTOWN, ND 58401

SEPTEMBER 2016

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER REPORT



Joe Hall

Department Commander DAV

As I am writing this, we are only days away from Fall! Summer has flown by and I hope everyone has had a great one! It has been a busy one since the end of our State Convention on May 1st. First I attended the DAV National Convention in Atlanta, GA; what a wonderful experience! I encourage all who have not attended to plan on getting to at least one! I have also been busy meeting so many of our Great Comrades' and Auxiliary members across the state. I am happy not to be on a diet since I have attended picnics in Grand Forks, Fargo, Bismarck, and Williston. Also had a great dinner and meeting in Devils Lake! One common theme so far across the Department is every Chapter event I have attended I hear you all brainstorming on gaining active

members and attracting our younger veterans across the state to join the DAV. Ideas will be discussed at our Fall Conference in Valley City which is the 14th and 15th of October. The business meeting is Saturday the 15th, I hope to see membership from all Chapter's in attendance so it can be as successful as possible, please visit the Department website for more details. My year as Commander is almost half over already, please email me at JoeHall.DAV@outlook.com with any suggestions you have to strengthen our organization, I value all ideas and will do my best to address them. The DAV will remain a strong and grow only if we listen to our membership, please within your chapters make sure to listen to all ideas and make sure everyone has a voice. I challenge each chapter to present at least two ideas to the Department: One, how to grow your membership and two: how will you increase attendance to your monthly meetings? You can email me your ideas and we will discuss them at our State Convention in Mandan at the Baymont Hotel (formally the Seven Seas) the last weekend in April 28th thru 30th, 2017!

Have a wonderful Holiday season and thank you for your trust to lead our fine organization.

DAVA DEPARTMENT COMMANDER REPORT



Joyce Stuber

Department Commander DAVA

Thank you to all who supported me in my election as your department commander. Thank you to all the department officers and to the unit leadership.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share some thoughts from our DAVA Commander Frances Acosta on Volunteering.

Volunteering to help our veterans and their families in our communities is so personally rewarding. Now is a great time for members to visit our elderly veterans and surprise them with fresh fruits and vegetables. Many of our veterans may not have proper heating so check and make sure they have some plans to solve the problem. Invite your chapter members to co-sponsor this project and visit with you. Summer is a great time to volunteer at nursing homes, church camps, and senior citizen centers. Donate craft materials, games, books, and packaged treats to homeless shelters along with personal care items such as shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste and brushes, new socks, tee shirts, and

underwear. Remember to add those special items for females and children.

It's never too early to start those projects for the holidays. Contact social directors at your local homeless shelters, children's homes, and nursing homes. Share ideas and make a list of items your unit may need to start collecting. Plan a date and get on their calendar for your event. Volunteer to help a young needy veteran with children. Purchase gift certificates for school clothes and supplies. Let them know you care with a gift card from a local grocery store or assistance with a utility payment.

Now is a perfect time for unit members to plan various fund raisers to support their projects. Find that perfect driveway and set a date and time for a "Treasure Hunt"!!! Get members to donate those "priceless items" hidden away in cabinets, closets, and attics. Remember, someone's trash is another's treasure. Watch for community craft fairs and put those talented members to work making items to sell.

Take this opportunity to recruit new members and invite them to your meetings. For those who can, become a blood donor. Give the gift of life. For those who can't, donate your time and service. Give the gift of hope. "A Hero Lies in You"!!!

From my home to yours, may God bless our veterans, our troops, especially those serving in harms way, and may He keep America Strong.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

DAV/DAVA DEPARTMENT FALL CONFERENCE

October 15, 2016

EaglesClub
Valley City, ND

14th DISTRICT FALL CONFERENCE

October 21-22, 2016

Biltmore on Main
Fargo, ND

(Meeting Saturday 9:00am at Super Buffet on 45th St.)

DAV MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

February 26-March 1, 2017

Crystal Gateway Marriot
Arlington, VA

DAV DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

April 28-30, 2017

7 Seas
Mandan, ND

DAV NATIONAL CONVENTION

July 29-August 1, 2017

Hilton New Orleans
New Orleans, LA



MISSION STATEMENT

We are dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. We accomplish this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

- Providing free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service and provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other agencies of government;
- Providing outreach concerning its program services to the American people generally, and to disabled veterans and their families specifically;
- Representing the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before Congress, the White House and the Judicial Branch, as well as state and local government;
- Extending DAV's mission of hope into the communities where these veterans and their families live through a network of state-level Departments and local Chapters; and
- Providing a structure through which disabled veterans can express their compassion for their fellow veterans through a variety of volunteer programs.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS DEPARTMENT OF NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OFFICERS 2015-2016

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Matt Herrud

Dept. Web Site:
www.davmembersportal.org/nd/default.aspx

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Sue Geising

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Laurel Evans

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Judy Steinhouse

TREASURER

Judy Steinhouse

JUDGE ADVOCATE/INSP. GENERAL

Sandy Dobmeier

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District 14 Fall Conference Set in Fargo

During the 14th District Meeting in Fargo, ND on October 18, 2015, the members in attendance voted to once again hold the 2016 Conference in Fargo, ND. Accordingly, I would advise you that arrangements have been made to conduct said meeting at the Biltmore on Main, October 21-22, 2016. It is, therefore, requested that all Adjutants disseminate the following information regarding the upcoming 14th District Fall Conference throughout their perspective Departments as expeditiously as possible.



The Biltmore on Main (701-281-9700) is located at the junction of I-29 and Main Avenue in Fargo (Approximately 2 miles North of I-94)

Forty (40) rooms have been set aside in the name of the DAV for Friday, October 21st at a cost of \$79.99 plus 10.5% tax for a double room. the Biltmore will only hold these rooms until October 1st so please make your reservations as soon as possible. Take under advisement that lodging in Fargo/Moorhead is a premium, so make your reservations as timely as possible.

Please be advised that a reception i.e., hospitality room will be hosted by 14th District on Friday evening from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm in Rooms 174, 175 and 176 of the Biltmore. The Saturday breakfast at the 14th District Meeting will be the hotel breakfast offered to the guests of the Biltmore on Main. If you are staying at the Biltmore, then you are fee to have the hotel offered breakfast on Saturday morning. The meetings will be held at the Super Buffet at 1000 45th Street in Fargo at 9am. Lunch vouchers will be provided for those members and guests who would like to stay for lunch after the meeting at the Super Buffet. If you want to eat breakfast at the Super Buffet, then that is on your own dime.

DAV and DAVA Fall Conference

The Department of North Dakota DAV/DAVA Fall Conference will be held at the VFW Club, Valley City, on Saturday October 15, 2016. The meeting begins at 10:00 am. On Saturday and expected to be completed by early afternoon. Coffee and donuts will be available Saturday morning at the VFW.

There are several motels located in Valley City. Among them are the Super 8 (1-800-800-8000 National Toll Free or 701-745-1140) and the Wagon Wheel Inn (701-845-5333).

At the State Fall Conference in Valley City on October 15th, the DAV Auxiliary will be having a bake sale instead of their usual silent auction. The items will NOT be priced as it will be a free-will donation on the items you purchase. It will be set up in the same area as the previous silent auction and at least two of our Juniors will be manning the tables. Come early as we can not prevent the general public at the VFW from purchasing the items.



DEPARTMENT CONVENTION
October 15, 2016
Valley City, North Dakota

Exposure to Contaminants in Water Supply at Camp Lejeune

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published proposed regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases affecting military members exposed to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The presumptive illnesses apply to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served for no less than 30 days at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with the following conditions:

- * adult leukemia
- * aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- * bladder cancer
- * kidney cancer
- * liver cancer
- * multiple myeloma
- * non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- * Parkinson's disease

"We have a responsibility to take care of those who have served our Nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service," said



Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "Establishing a presumption for service at Camp Lejeune will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they deserve."

Environmental health experts on VA's Technical Workgroup conducted comprehensive reviews of scientific evidence, which included analysis and research done by the Department of Health and Human Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Environmental Protection Agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the National Toxicology Program, and the National Academies of Science.

Military members with records of service showing no less than 30 days of service, either concurrent or cumulative, at Camp Lejeune during the contamination period can already be granted Veteran status for medical benefits, following passage of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, and perchloroethylene, a dry cleaning agent (PCE), as well as benzene, and vinyl chloride were discovered in two on-base water supply systems at Camp Lejeune. These systems served the housing, administrative, and recreational facilities, as well as the base hospital. The contaminated wells supplying the water systems were shut down in February 1985.

VA acknowledges that current science establishes a link between exposure to certain chemicals found in the water supply at Camp Lejeune and later development of one of the proposed presumptive conditions. However, VA experts agree that there is no scientific underpinning to support a specific minimum exposure level for any of the conditions. Therefore, VA welcomes comments on the 30-day minimum exposure requirement and will consider other practical alternatives when drafting the final rule. VA also notes that the proposed 30-day requirement serves to establish eligibility for service connection on a presumptive basis; nothing in this proposed regulation prohibits consideration of service connection on a non-presumptive basis. The 30-day public comment period on the proposed rule is open until Oct. 10, 2016.

Routine Audiology & Optometry Appointments Will Soon Be Able to Directly Schedule Initiative Gets Veterans Into Appointments Quicker

WASHINGTON – Veterans receiving care at Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Medical Centers will now be able to schedule routine ear and eye appointments at local VA Audiology and Optometry clinics without a primary care referral – a move that eliminates multiple steps and gets Veterans into appointments quicker.

Before now, Veterans seeking appointments with audiologists or optometrists had to first make an appointment with a primary care physician for a referral for a routine clinic consult visit. A clinic representative would contact the patient to set up the consult appointment, which could result in a several weeks'-long lag between the appointment and when the Veteran was actually seen. The new process, the Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative, which began as a successful pilot at three sites in 2015, is being expanded to all VA Medical Centers.

"The Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative allows Veterans who need eye and ear care to be seen sooner," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "It also has the benefit of freeing up primary care physicians so access to primary care improves for other Veterans as well. This kind of process improvement is exactly the type of innovation we expected when we launched MyVA in 2014. In the end, we changed a VA process by considering the needs of our Veterans, a change that allows for more timely care and an improved Veteran experience."

The Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative is one of a number of efforts underway at VA to improve Veterans' access to care and wait times. Among those recent accomplishments:

- VA and Choice contractors created more than 3.1 million authorizations for Veterans to receive care in the private sector from May 1, 2015 through Apr. 30, 2016. This represents an 8-percent increase in authorizations when compared to the same period in 2014/2015.

- In FY 2015, 12 percent of all Veterans enrolled for VA care received telehealth-based care. This includes more than 2 million telehealth visits touching 677,000 Veterans; 45 percent of these Veterans live in rural areas.

- In FY 2015, more than 6,300 Veterans accessed VA care through live interactive video telehealth from home.

- VA has activated over 3.9 million square feet of space in the past two years.

- We've increased authorizations for care in the community 46% in the past two years.



- Clinic production is up 10 percent as measured by the same productivity standard used by many private-sector healthcare systems. This increase translates into roughly 20 million additional hours of care for Veterans.

- As we improve access to care, more and more Veterans are choosing VA care

— for the quality, for the convenience, or for the cost-savings so even though we're completing millions more appointments, we continue to have more work to do. "VA has increased salaries for physicians and dentists to close the pay gap with the private sector and to make VA an employer of choice. With more competitive salaries, VA will be better positioned to retain and hire more health care providers to care for Veterans.

"We want our Veterans and those who care for them to know that we are doing everything that we can to improve their experience with VA and to provide the care our Veterans deserve in a thoughtful and timely way," said VA Under Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "We have made progress, but know there is more work to be done. This Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative is one of many initiatives underway to improve Veterans access to care."

The Audiology and Optometry Direct Scheduling Initiative is expected to be fully operational within all VA Medical Centers by the end of 2016.

GI Bill Update

The Veterans Affairs Department is warning thousands of U.S. military veterans enrolled at ITT Tech to brace for the possibility the for-profit college franchise "goes out of business," according to a recent notice. The parent company, ITT Educational Services Inc., based in Carmel, Indiana, on Monday suspended all new enrollments after the U.S. Education Department barred the college, which has about 130 campuses in 38 states, from accepting students who use federal financial aid. States such as California and Washington have followed suit.



While the moves don't affect veterans' GI Bill benefits, "these actions do raise significant concerns about the financial viability of ITT," the VA wrote in a recent message on its Facebook page. "It's important that you understand that if ITT goes out of business before you complete your education, you will not be able to use your GI Bill benefits to keep attending that school and under this scenario, you would no longer be able to pursue your education at that school." The message continues, "As you know, finding another school where you can complete your educational objectives may take time as not every school offers the same programs as ITT. Also, it is not guaranteed that another school offering the program you are pursuing will accept transfer credits from ITT."

State and federal officials have been investigating ITT's recruiting and accounting practices. The federal government in 2014 launched its investigation into

the company after allegations surfaced that school employees persuaded students to take out high-interest private loans, often with high risk of default and high rates of interest, when their federal loans failed to cover all of their costs. ITT has long catered to military veterans, a demographic that makes up close to a fifth of its enrollment, which is falling fast, according to corporate financial documents. Overall enrollment at the school was 40,015 students as of June — a decrease of 16.4 percent from the same period a year ago, according to the company's quarterly filings. A total of 6,842 GI Bill recipients either attend ITT Tech or plan to do so during an upcoming term, according to an email on Tuesday from Terry Jemison, a spokesperson for the VA's Veterans Benefits Administration, which oversees the educational program.

Revenue at the parent company totaled almost \$850 million in 2015, down 11 percent from \$962 million the previous year, according to financial documents. The company is now a penny stock, trading at 40 cents a share on 30 AUG on the New York Stock Exchange, down from a high of \$127 a share in 2007. Just a few years ago, in October 2013, it traded as high as \$40 a share. "ITT is effectively out of business," Peter Appert, managing director and senior research analyst at Piper Jaffray & Co., who follows ITT, told CNN. "I don't see any way they survive this." If it does file for bankruptcy, ITT wouldn't be the first. Corinthian Colleges, a for-profit chain, last year shut down its 28 locations and more recently was ordered to pay a nearly \$1.2 billion fine for false advertising and misleading lending practices. [Source: Military.com | Brendan McGarry | August 30, 2016++]



DAV & Auxiliary Gathering

Minot (ND) Daily News, Tuesday August 16, 2016

Many Disabled American Veterans Chapter 4, Minot, and Minot DAV Auxiliary members and their family members held their annual family picnic at the VFW picnic grounds August 11, 2016. North Dakota DAV Commander Joe Hall of Mandan, reported his recent trip to the National DAV Conference in Atlanta, special emphasis was given to pending legislation concerning caregivers of disabled veterans and ND DAVA Commander Joyce Stuber discussed the problems of returning veterans, including depression, suicide and homelessness.



From the left, North Dakota DAV Commander Joe Hall, Minot DAV Commander Ric Gutierrez, and ND DAVA Commander Joyce Stuber.

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FRANCIS J. BEATON Chapter No. 1

Fargo, North Dakota

Meetings Held 2nd Thursday of each month

Expansion of Veterans Economic Communities Initiative

25 Communities Added to Program that Expands Education and Employment Opportunities for Vets

COSTA MESA, CA – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the expansion of a program aimed at increasing education and employment opportunities to America's Veterans to an additional to 25 new communities. The Veterans Economic Communities Initiative (VECI) brings together local and national partners to coordinate services for Veterans, Servicemembers and military families.

Announcement of the expanded communities was made in Costa Mesa by senior VA officials to more than 500 leaders from the business, nonprofit, philanthropic and local government communities who are attending VA's two-day inaugural VECI Policy Academy, which began September 29. The Policy Academy serves as a forum for local, regional and national partner organizations to engage in honest dialog about Veteran economic issues; receive interactive training on national philanthropic and community-based best practices; and hear from leaders in the field about emerging data, trends and opportunities.

"History has shown that when you give Veterans an opportunity to succeed, they go above and beyond. And we as a nation owe them those opportunities to succeed," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "There is a tremendous amount of goodwill from the American people towards Veterans; they want to help. Through public-private partnerships like those formed and harnessed by VA's Economic Communities Initiative, we will now be able to provide better networks and tools to Veterans in 50 communities nationwide."

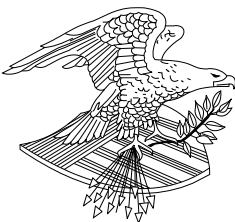
Secretary McDonald launched the VECI campaign in May 2015 to promote local collaboration, dialog and partnership among organizations that serve transitioning

Servicemembers, Veterans and their families. VECI is part of Secretary McDonald's department-wide transformation called MyVA, which is dedicated to putting Veterans at the center of everything VA does and enhancing strategic partnerships to extend VA's reach of services.

"We have made great strides in how Veterans and their families are being supported at the local and national level through the first 25 communities that launched this incredible initiative," said Rosye Cloud, Senior Advisor for Veteran Employment during the opening session of the Policy Academy. "It is because of the success of the partnerships formed through VECI that we are able to double the program from 25 to 50 communities participating. And we are excited that this announcement was made at our first-ever VECI Policy Academy."

As part of the VECI initiative, a VA economic liaison in each community will expand and encourage collaboration among private and public organizations that offer resources related to Veteran education, training and employment. Through strategic partnerships, and by offering Veterans innovative forms of learning and employment opportunities, these communities will help Veterans gain competitive career skills and knowledge in locally in-demand fields.

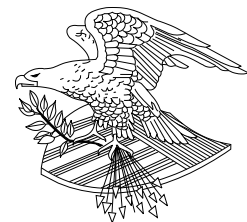
Campaign partners include the Departments of Defense and Labor, the Small Business Administration, and regional and national nonprofits, businesses and educators. All VECI communities were selected based on the size of transitioning Servicemember and Post-9/11 Veteran populations; unemployment, employment opportunity and job growth; and education spending.



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VA Awards \$7.8 Million in Adaptive Sport Grants to Aid Disabled Veterans

Grants Promote Rehabilitation, Health and Wellness and Community Reintegration

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald announced the awarding of up to \$7.8 million in grants for adaptive sports programs for disabled Veterans and disabled



Servicemembers of the Armed Forces. The grant recipients may use these funds for planning, developing, managing and implementing these adaptive sports programs.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is awarding the grants to national governing bodies, which prepare high-level athletes for Paralympic competition; Veterans service organizations; city and

regional municipalities; and other community groups to provide a wide range of adaptive sports opportunities for eligible Veterans and Servicemembers. The grants will support activities ranging from rowing, cycling, skiing, equestrian sports and Tai Chi.

“We are honored to partner with so many organizations across the country to provide adaptive sports programs where our Veterans live,” said Secretary McDonald. “Adaptive sports gives freedom to those who have fought for our freedom, and empowers Veterans to believe in themselves and to let go of what others may see as limitations.”

VA will distribute the grants to 90 national, regional and community programs serving all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Approximately 10,000 Veterans and Servicemembers are expected to benefit. Authorities for certain adaptive sports programs and grant programs expire on September 30, 2016 without reauthorization action by Congress.

Information about the awardees and details of the program may be found at www.va.gov/adaptivesports.

VA Blue Water Claims Update

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has once again turned down an effort by Navy veterans to get compensation for possible exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. In a document released 12 AUG, the VA said it would continue to limit benefits related to Agent Orange exposure to only those veterans who set foot in Vietnam, where the herbicide was sprayed, and to those who were on boats in inland rivers. The VA compensates these veterans for a litany of associated illnesses, including diabetes, various cancers, Parkinson's Disease, peripheral neuropathy and a type of heart disease.



Advocates for some 90,000 so-called Blue Water Navy veterans who served off the coast of Vietnam have been asking the VA for more than a decade to broaden the policy to include them. They say that they were exposed to Agent Orange because their ships sucked in potentially contaminated water and distilled it for showering, drinking, laundry and cooking. Experts have said the distillation process could have actually concentrated the Agent Orange, which contained the toxic chemical dioxin and was used to kill vegetation and deny enemy cover. ProPublica and the Virginian-Pilot profiled their effort to gain coverage in SEP 2015 as part of an ongoing project to chronicle the impact of Agent Orange on vets and their families.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims last April struck down VA rules that denied compensation for sailors whose ships docked at certain harbors in South Vietnam, including Da Nang. Those ports, the court determined, may have been in the Agent Orange spraying area. The court ordered the VA to review its policy. But on Friday, the VA largely stood by its old policy and once again asserted that there's no scientific justification or legal requirement for covering

veterans who served off the coast.

“Environmental health experts in VA's Veterans Health Administration have reviewed the available scientific information and concluded that it is not sufficient to support a presumption that Blue Water Navy Veterans were exposed to Agent Orange,” the VA said in a fact sheet. U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., the ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, criticized the VA's decision. “Rather than siding with veterans, VA is doubling down on an irrational and inconsistent policy,” he said in a statement. “Young sailors risked their lives during the Vietnam War, unaware that decades later, they and their children and grandchildren would still feel the toxic effects of exposure. Veterans who served offshore and in the harbors of Vietnam were exposed and deserve the presumption of service connection for Agent Orange-related diseases.” Blumenthal and others are seeking adoption of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, which would ensure that all vets exposed to Agent Orange are compensated.

The VA opposes the legislation, as it has several previous iterations dating back to 2008. The VA's new review rejecting benefits relied on a 2011 report by the respected Institute of Medicine, as well as other published research, according to the agency's fact sheet. The Institute of Medicine report said there was no way to prove Blue Water vets were exposed to the chemicals, but it identified plausible routes that Agent Orange could have traveled out to sea and into a ship's distillation system. Although military policy at the time recommended against distilling water closer than 10 miles to shore — where the chemical concentration would have been highest — veterans said doing so was often unavoidable, and their commanding officers routinely ordered it. The VA said it is working with veterans groups to “initiate a groundbreaking study of Blue Water Navy Veterans health outcomes.



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Burn Pit Toxic Exposure

Veterans and Servicemembers Document Exposures and Report Health Concerns

VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry allows eligible Veterans and Servicemembers to document their exposures and report health concerns through an online questionnaire. In total, 61,338 Veterans and Servicemembers completed and submitted the registry questionnaire between April 25, 2014 and February 28, 2016. Eligible Veterans and Servicemembers include those who served in:



- Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/ Operation New Dawn
- Djibouti, Africa on or after September 11, 2001
- Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm
- Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990

Check your eligibility and sign up at veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry. It takes about 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You can do it in one sitting or save it and come back later. You can print and use your completed

questionnaire to discuss concerns with your provider. VA providers can also access an online copy of your questionnaire. Some important points about the Burn Pit Registry are:

- No cost to participate
- Not a disability compensation questionnaire or required for other VA benefits
- Enrollment in VA's health care system not necessary
- Based on Veterans'/Servicemembers' recollection of service, not on their military records
- Veterans'/Servicemembers' family members are not eligible to participate

Data from the burn pit registry are available in the following reports:

- Report (1.68 MB, PDF) highlighting health conditions and physical limitations experienced by Veterans and Active Duty Servicemembers who filled out the registry survey between April 25, 2014 and December 31, 2014 www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/exposures/va-ahobp-registry-data-report-june2015.pdf. Report (1.48 MB, PDF) on the health effects of exposures, including burn pits and other environmental hazards, experienced by Veterans and Active Duty Servicemembers who filled out the registry survey between April 25, 2014 and September 30, 2014 (www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/exposures/va-ahobp-registry-data-report-april2015.pdf).

If you have health concerns, talk to your health care provider or local VA Environmental Health Coordinator who can be located at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp.

Source: Veterans Health – March 14, 2016
www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/registry.asp

REMEMBER VETERANS DAY - NOVEMBER 11



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ANDY NOMLAND
Chapter No. 2

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September - June



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Valley City, North Dakota

We ask you to support your Department and Chapter Projects

VA Emergency Treatment Claims

More than two million claims for private sector emergency healthcare services provided to VA-enrolled veterans since February 2010 could be eligible for VA reimbursement if a recent ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims is allowed to stand, the VA general counsel has warned. The counsel also has warned in court documents that over the next decade VA could be swamped with an estimated 68.6 million additional claims for emergency care reimbursements, which could drive up VA health costs over that period by as much as \$10.6 billion.

Despite these alarms, and VA introducing a new legal argument, a full panel of judges on the claims court voted six-to-one last month to deny VA's motion to rehear the case, and instead made final its ruling of last April in the case of Richard W. Staab v. Robert A. McDonald. VA has 60 days, until 20 SEP, to appeal the decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, a near certainty given what's at stake. Meanwhile, VA officials say they are unable to begin to pay any of the emergency healthcare claims that the Staab decision requires until they can prepare new regulations to support the complex review process. "Even if the Staab decision is upheld," VA officials explained in a statement 17 AUG, "the statutory authority [cited by the court] does not set forth a payment methodology or payment limitations necessary for VA to implement the decision. Therefore, VA must follow legal procedures to [draft, publish for public comment and] implement regulations that would allow it to process payments for claims impacted by Staab."

In Staab, the court agreed with lawyers for an 83-year Air Force veteran that the Department of Veterans Affairs wrongly ignored "plain language" of a 2010 statute meant to protect VA-enrolled veterans from out-of-pocket costs when forced to use outside emergency care. So VA should not have turned down Staab's claim for roughly \$48,000 in healthcare costs he was forced to pay following open-heart surgery in DEC 2010.

For many years VA has maintained that, by law, it can reimburse VA-enrolled veterans for outside emergency care only if they have no alternative health insurance. That includes Medicare, TRICARE, employer-provided health insurance or contracted health plans of any kind. The practical effect is that veterans with other health insurance often are stuck paying hefty out-of-pocket costs that their plans won't cover, while veterans with no other insurance see VA routinely pick up their entire emergency care tab.

The logic of this offended some lawmakers and in 2009 they persuaded Congress to clarify the law on VA coverage of outside emergency care. A single provision was changed to say VA could "reimburse veterans for treatment in a non-VA facility if they have a third-party insurance that would pay a portion of the emergency care." To ensure colleagues understood the change, Staab's attorneys noted, Sen. Daniel Akaka, then-chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said in a floor speech that it would "modify current law so that a veteran who has outside insurance would be eligible for reimbursement in the event that the outside insurance does not cover the full amount of the emergency care." The change took effect Feb. 1, 2010. But in preparing new regulations, VA officials interpreted the revised law as still preserving its way of screening most emergency care claims.

The revised regulation said VA would continue to cover outside emergency care only if the "veteran has no coverage under a health-plan contract." That was wrong, a three-judge panel on the appellate claims court ruled last April, citing the "plain language" of the revised statute. It deemed the revised regulation as invalid and vacated a Board of Veterans' Appeals decision that had upheld VA denial of Staab's claim.

The board, it said, had relied on a faulty rule rather than the revised statute. VA's general counsel immediately asked the three-judge panel to reconsider its decision but also asked the full appellate court to review the case. Reconsideration was denied in late June.

On 14JUL, while a decision on full court review was pending, VA filed a motion to "stay the precedential effect" of Staab, that is, to not require payment of previously denied emergency claims given the "strong likelihood" the decision will be reversed. In the same motion, VA argued that the claims court erred by not focusing on language in the statute Congress didn't change in 2010, which VA believes still bars reimbursement if the veteran has a separate health-plan contract. Instead, the claims court based its decision on changes to another section of the statute.

VA argues the intent of that change was only to address situations where veterans benefit from third party insurance coverage, not their own alternative health plans. VA appears to be saying that the 2010 law was intended to allow VA only to cover emergency costs not fully covered, for example, by the insurance of a driver at fault in an accident that injured a veteran. But to be eligible, the veteran still can't have other health insurance. This was an argument VA previously made, said Bart.

Military Appreciation Night with the Fargo Red Hawks

Each year, the Fargo Red Hawks minor league baseball team host a Military Appreciation Night to honor veterans, current serving service members and their families. This year's game was on June 30th and DJ Guerrero, a member of DAV Chapter 1 of Fargo was selected to throw out the first pitch. DJ is a Vietnam veteran who received numerous injuries during his time in Vietnam. He served 20 years in the Marine Corps and retired with 5 purple hearts.



The Fargo-Moorhead United Patriotic Bodies comprised of all the honor guards from service organizations surrounded the in-field with American, POW, service organization, state and military service flags. Lee Greenwood sang the National Anthem and other patriotic songs during the evening. The Budwiser Clydesdale's also made an appearance. It was a great night of baseball followed by fireworks for the sell out crowd.



DJ Guerreo, member of DAV Chapter 1, throwing out the first pitch at the FM Red Hawks baseball game.



Awards Day Ceremony Army ROTC Grand Forks



PDC, Roy Fillion, Commander Chapter 2, William Boner, Vice Commander Chapter 2, Bobby Beauchamp presented "Award of Excellence" to Noah Quidera, Red River High School, Gordon Isler and Angelina Cerone, Central High School and Julia Bensen, Red River High School on April 23, 2016 during their annual Awards Day Ceremony for the Detachment.



Commander Chapter 2, William Boner presented a \$200 check to Instructor, Sergeant Rick Thatcher in support of the JR Army ROTC programs at Red River and Central High Schools in Grand Forks, ND.

Service Dogs for America Receives Donation

Shelly Nannenga, Service Dogs for America representative accepts a \$500 donation presented by Bill Boner, DAV Chapter 2 Commander Grand Forks, ND. Lou Lombardi, Grand Forks County Veteran Service Officer arranged for Shelly to present at a DAV Regular Meeting. Charlie the dog was the star of the presentation. Shelly led Charlie through various commands and what the dogs do to assist individuals with special needs. many Veterans and others are in need of these dogs. The goal and the mission of Service Dogs for America is to facilitate specialized training, education, and ensure placement of service dogs to individuals with special needs, without causing financial burdens. They are located in Jud, North Dakota.



Shelly Nannenga from Service Dogs for America receives a donation from William Boner, Chapter 2 Commander. Chapter Lou Lombardi assisted in the presentation.

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Suicide Prevention Month: #BeThere

VA Highlights Initiatives to Prevent Veteran and Servicemember Suicide

WASHINGTON – Today marks the start of Suicide Prevention Month and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is asking for the entire nation's help in reducing Veteran suicide. VA is calling on community leaders, supervisors, colleagues, friends, and family members to BeTherefor Veterans and Service members starting with a simple act, which can play a pivotal role in preventing suicide.

"You don't have to be a trained professional to support someone who may be going through a difficult time," said Dr. Caitlin Thompson, Director of the VA Office of Suicide Prevention. "We want to let people know that things they do every day, like calling an old friend or checking in with a neighbor, are strong preventive factors for suicide because they help people feel less alone. That's what this campaign is about - encouraging people to be there for each other."

The campaign also highlights VA resources that are available to support Veterans and Servicemembers who are coping with mental health challenges or are at risk for suicide, and it encourages everyone to share these resources with someone in their life.

"We hope our Suicide Prevention Month efforts help educate people about the VA and community resources available nationwide," said VA Under Secretary for Health David J. Shulkin, M.D. "We're committed to working with experts and organizations across the country to identify ways we can help Veterans and Servicemembers get the care they deserve and to expand the network of mental health support." Veteran suicide data released by the VA Office of Suicide Prevention in early August 2016 serves as a foundation for informing and evaluating suicide prevention efforts inside the VA health care system and for developing lifesaving collaborations with community-based health care partners.

VA plans to host a series of roundtable discussions with key stakeholder groups in the coming months as part of its plan to develop a public health strategy for preventing Veteran suicide. In August, VA hosted its first roundtable discussion, "Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business," with corporate sector partners. In September, VA will host the Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Innovations event, which will bring together a community of experts from business, industry, academia, and government agencies to collaboratively identify solutions for reducing suicide rates among Veterans and Servicemembers. In addition, new programs such as REACH VET are being launched nationwide in September to identify Veterans in VHA care who may be vulnerable, in order to provide the care they need before a crisis occurs.



For more information about VA's suicide prevention efforts:

- Suicide Prevention Month website: VeteransCrisisLine.net/BeThere
- Suicide Prevention Month toolkit: VeteransCrisisLine.net/SpreadTheWord
- Suicide Prevention Fact Sheet
- Va's Veterans Crisis Line: Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1; chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat or text to 838255 — even if a Veteran is not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care.
- Make the Connection website: <http://maketheconnection.net>
- VA Mental Health website: <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>

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Maranda's Story - Applying for Compensation

Women Veterans When to Apply

During my Army service, I developed a medical condition that required foot surgery while I was deployed to Iraq (stubbornly, I insisted it would be better to be operated on in a tent than leave my team during the deployment). When I left the military in 2005, a Veterans service officer (VSO) walked me through the process of applying for disability compensation for the lingering problems I was experiencing (and had me document exposure to burn pits in case I developed additional problems later on). I was lucky: my exam was not difficult and my claim was decided swiftly. Later, a combination of factors led to a claims backlog that took several years to bring under control, and many Veterans' claims took far too long to be decided. In addition, for some Veterans, the process of applying for benefits and going through one of more exams can be difficult. However, as Maranda eloquently describes, the process was worth the support it brought her.

Military Sexual Trauma

Women are disproportionately likely to have experienced sexual harassment and/or assault during their military service. Unfortunately, this trauma can result in conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (go here for more information on military sexual trauma — or MST — treatment available from VA), as well as a cascading impact on all aspects of life. Due to increased awareness of this problem and the challenges of providing corroborating evidence in many cases, VA has taken a number of steps to better serve MST survivors applying for disability compensation. These include relaxing evidentiary standards in 2002, conducting special training for VA regional office personnel who process MST-related claims beginning in 2011, and offering specialized training to medical examiners who provide input on these cases in 2012. Concerned that some claims may have been erroneously denied before these changes took place, in 2013, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) invited over 2,500 Veterans whose MST-related PTSD claims had been denied to resubmit them for reconsideration. Today, VBA continues to analyze data on approval rates, gauge the effect of process changes, and pursue continual improvement. For help with disability compensation related to MST, contact the MST coordinator at your local Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office.

Learn More and Apply

In previous eras, women Veterans were less likely to self-identify as Veterans and may not have applied for all the benefits they earned through their service. For example, in 2000 women were 6 percent of all Veterans, but made up only 5.2 percent of Veterans receiving disability compensation. However, in 2015, about 9.3 percent of Veterans receiving disability compensation were women – roughly the same as percent we make up in the overall population of Veterans. This is tremendously encouraging news, indicating to me that outreach and awareness efforts are making a difference.



However, we can still do more!

Please help us raise awareness among women Veterans that, if they have disabilities, medical conditions, or injuries incurred or aggravated during active military service – no matter when or where they served – they may be eligible to receive tax-free monthly benefits. There are many ways to apply for VA disability benefits – more details are available at ExploreVA.

The fastest and simplest way is to submit all supporting documents and evidence together in a fully developed claim (FDC) online at www.ebenefits.va.gov or by mail. If you think you want to file but aren't quite ready yet, start an FDC, save your incomplete application, gather all your documents and then submit your claim up to one year later to preserve your effective date. Apply NOW.

Some Veterans may be eligible for a VA pension, which is a needs-based benefit for wartime Veterans with limited or no income who meet certain age or non-service connected disability requirements. Women Veterans make up less than 5% of those receiving pension benefits. Learn more about eligibility requirements and how to apply at ExploreVA. Women Veterans are much less likely to live in poverty than women non-Veterans (9.4 percent vs 15.6 percent) or be in a household using SNAP – “food stamps” – benefits (11.7 percent vs 17.6 percent) – but for any who are struggling, VA benefits could make a significant difference. Spread the word among women Veterans about VA compensation benefits, and start a conversation about the State of #WomenVeterans in your community – and how it might be improved.



**Have You
Thanked
A Veteran
Today**

Jerome Krejci DAV Chapter 2 Memorial Scholarship



Jerome Krejci

Jerome Krejci was indeed a special human being. Jerome was raised on the family farm outside of East Grand Forks, Minnesota and was a graduate of Sacred Heart High School.

Jerome joined the North Dakota National Guard at age 17 and served as a Sergeant in M Company of the 164 Infantry.

He was activated and served in the United States Army during the Korean War.

After training in the US, Jerome went to Korea and saw action with the 24th Infantry Division.

Jerome was awarded the Bronze Star and was also awarded a Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Clusters.

Jerome was proud of his service to his country while also saying throughout his life that war was, "No way for countries to solve their differences".

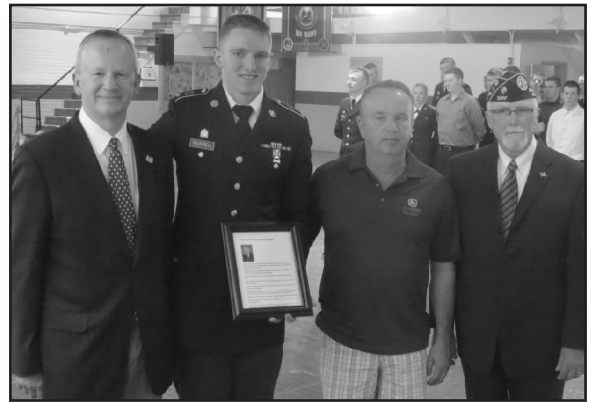
Jerome was a life member of the Andy Nomland Chapter 2 Grand Forks, ND. He was a member for six decades. Jerome held many offices at the local, state and national level.

He was a much loved man and will be missed by everyone that knew him and his memory of all the lives he touched will always be with us.



Left: UND Army ROTC Cadet Erik Trusdell received the first annual Jerome Krejci DAV Chapter 2 Memorial Scholarship from Commander Arnold Phillips during Award Ceremonies May 5, 2016 at the ROTC Armory UND Campus.

Cadet Trusdell received a scholarship for \$1000 and a Certificate of Excellence from the Andy Nomland Chapter 2 Grand Forks for his high academics of a GPA of 3.5 or higher, proven leadership abilities, high moral character, excellent adherence to military discipline and patriotic understanding of the importance of the Reserve Officer Training Corps.



Standing left to right: Mark Krejci (son), Cadet Trusdell, Mike Krejci (son), and Commander Arnold Phillips, Andy Nomland Chapter 2 Grand Forks.

Congratulations Cadets



Certificates of Excellence and Medals, Scholarship and Certificate of Excellence were presented by Andy Nomland Chapter 2 during Award Ceremonies for UND Army ROTC May 5, 2016 UND ROTC Armory.

Pictured left to right: Larry Holweger, Dept. of ND DAV Senior Vice Commander, Arnold Phillips, Commander DAV Chapter 2, Cadet Nicholas Kirchoff, Mark Krejci, Cadet Erik Trusdell, Mike Krejci, Cadet Derick Ngoran, PDC Roy Fillion and William Boner, Commander DAV Chapter 2.



Left: Commander DAV Chapter 2 William Boner with Cadet Derick Ngoran. Right: Department of ND DAV Senior Vice Commander Larry Holweger with Cadet Nicholas Kirchoff. Both cadets received a Medal and Certificate for Academic Excellence, dependability, good character, and adherence to military discipline, and patriotic understanding of the importance of the Reserve Officer Training Corps.

EXCELLENCE
AWARDED FOR

Million Veteran Program is Now Largest Genomic Database in the World

Program Enrolls 500,000th U.S. Veteran

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs' Million Veteran Program (MVP) has reached an important milestone when an Army Veteran from Montgomery, Alabama, became the 500,000th to voluntarily enroll in the research database program – making MVP the largest genomic database in the world. Launched in 2011, and part of the White House Precision Medicine Initiative, participants donate blood from which DNA is extracted. A baseline and periodic follow-up surveys track Veterans' military experiences, health and lifestyles. Researchers believe the information contained in the database could hold the key to preventing and treating diseases.

"Our Veterans continue to demonstrate their selfless sacrifice, and the nation has yet another reason to owe them a debt of gratitude," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "Many of our Veterans have saved lives on the battlefield and because of their participation in MVP, their participation has the potential to save countless lives – now and for generations to come."

As part of the program, participating Veterans grant researchers secure access to their electronic health records and agree to be contacted about participating in future research.

Samples and data used are coded to protect participants' identification and privacy.

Research using MVP data is already underway, studying a range of medical issues like mental illness and heart and kidney diseases. The program also has rich data on various health conditions that are common in Veterans. Approximately 62 percent of MVP enrollees report a current or past diagnosis of high blood pressure and about a third report tinnitus. Also, nearly a third or 32 percent of Veterans present with a history or current diagnosis of cancer.

"We believe MVP will accelerate our understanding of disease detection, progression, prevention and treatment by combining this rich clinical, environmental and genomic data," said Dr. David J. Shulkin, VA Under Secretary for Health. "VA has a deep history of innovation and research. MVP will allow the nation's top researchers to perform the most cutting-edge science to treat some of the nation's most troubling diseases." For more information about MVP, including how to participate, visit www.research.va.gov/MVP/. For information about the 52 VA sites currently enrolled in the program, visit www.research.va.gov/MVP/all-clinics.cfm.



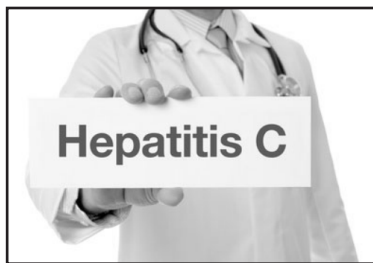
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VA Launches Hepatitis C–Advanced Liver Disease Disparities Dashboard

Dashboard Bolsters VA Effort to Identify and Treat Veterans With Hep C and Liver Disease

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is stepping up its efforts to accelerate treatment for Veterans with hepatitis C and advanced liver disease (ALD) through the creation of a Hepatitis C–ALD dashboard. The dashboard works by using a set of criteria, including age, gender, geography, service era along with and race and ethnicity, to distinguish Veteran groups at highest risk for ALD as a result of hepatitis C.

"The dashboard is a powerful data tool to help VA identify Veteran groups disproportionately affected by Advanced Liver Disease and to ensure they receive the appropriate health care," said Dr. David Shulkin, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "VA will provide data directly to facilities for any of the vulnerable groups identified by the dashboard and support outreach efforts to Veteran populations disparately impacted and not currently served by VA health care. This is an important step in assuring all Veterans with ALD receive timely, appropriate care."



VA's Veterans Health Administration's Office of Health Equity developed the dashboard as part of its efforts to target and accelerate care of Veterans with this serious disease. The new resource promotes equitable diagnosis and treatment of underserved Veterans with hepatitis C and ALD nationally and compliments existing clinical hepatitis and liver disease dashboards available in some Veterans Integrated Service Networks or VISNs.

Chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is the most common blood-borne infection in the world. Complications that result from untreated HCV infection include progressive liver damage leading to cirrhosis, primary cancer of the liver, liver failure and death. Although many of these complications are treatable or even preventable, three-quarters of the individuals with HCV infection in the U.S. are unaware they are infected. VA leads the country in hepatitis screening, testing, treatment, research and prevention.

The Hepatitis C–ALD dashboard further advances the vision for quality care and improved access to care identified in VA's Blueprint for Excellence. For more information on the dashboard, visit <http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/news/video/heap.cfm>.

Help Is Available to Beat the Winter Doldrums

According to psychologist Michael Terman, as many as 60 million Americans suffer winter doldrums. Consequently, they often don't find much to celebrate during the holiday season. Add PTSD to the mix 11-20% of Veterans who served in Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF) have PTSD in a given year – and the “season to be jolly” can be downright challenging.

Fortunately, Va's National Center for PTSD offers online resources for identifying the condition and how to get help for yourself, a friend or a family member. And the Department of Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury have put together some low-tech suggestions and high-tech apps that can help you or a loved one better manage holiday stress.

Of course, sometimes it helps to talk with a



professional. And the responders and staff at the Veterans Crisis Line at the Department of Veterans Affairs make sure that they are accessible at all times, including the holiday season. The recent HBO film about the VA crisis line features a sequence on Christmas Eve. The responders understand that PTSD and depression don't take a holiday. If anything, they can become more intense at those times of year when people are expected to “make merry”.

Veterans and their loved ones can receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

- Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
- Chat Online

- Or send a text message to 838255

For more information, visit www.veteranscrisisline.net

State of Women Veterans Social Media Campaign Launched

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is partnering with Women Veterans Interactive (WVI) to launch a State of Women Veterans' social media campaign. The goal of the campaign is to raise awareness of women Veterans' military and societal contributions and provide an avenue for informing women Veterans about the VA benefits they have earned.

“This campaign is a collaborative effort to establish partnerships with nonprofit organizations that advocate and provide assistance on behalf of women Veterans,” said Kayla Williams, Director of VA's Center for Women Veterans. “We are elated to be partnering with WVI in this important

initiative. The new State of Women Veterans' social media campaign offers another way to connect with women Veterans to raise awareness about VA care and benefits and to encourage collaborative partnerships.”

The campaign will conclude over the Veterans Day weekend and will be recognized and featured during a WVI- sponsored event in November.

For more information or to join in the conversation, follow @DeptVetAffairs on Twitter, like the Department of Veterans Affairs Facebook page and use the hashtag State of #WomenVets.



Department of Veterans Affairs



Partner to Launch

State of Women Veteran's Social Media Campaign



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Tom Saddler
ND Department Commander

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