



April 2018

NDVS Veterans Voice Newsletter

Message from the Director

Greetings!

It's April 2018 and spring is finally in the air. During this time of renewal, we hope you notice the additional new and improved elements to our NDVS Newsletter. We welcome your feedback! With your input, we will ensure this new format makes it easier for you to keep up-to-date and provide you with resources at your fingertips.

Speaking of resources, we just finished our 2018 Nevada Veterans Legislative Symposia. Within the next 30 days, we will provide a report on the issues identified in the two events in Reno and Las Vegas. Once the report is finished, we will post it on our website and provide you a link, as well as provide a summary, in the next NDVS Newsletter in May.

As you may know, the Symposia are held every other year, in between sessions of the Nevada Legislature. It provides the opportunity for veterans to gather together for the purpose of identifying and prioritizing issues and concerns to be legislatively addressed. NDVS will help keep you on top of all legislation of interest to the veterans' community.

Additionally, NDVS is hosting a free two-day training workshop in Henderson this month to set you on the path to becoming a Nevada Veterans Advocate (NVA). It is so popular; 100 people have pre-registered, filling the entire room, two weeks prior to the event! We had to stop accepting registrations! This demonstrates tremendous support for our veterans. NDVS will host another free NVA training workshop in Reno in the fall of this year and another in southern Nevada next spring. In the meantime, you can still take the on-line course to

become an NVA. Start by going here:

<http://www.veterans.nv.gov/page/veterans-advocacy>

Finally, spring time means the start of more community events. Our NDVS Outreach Team and our NVAs are looking forward to "event season." Through the next several months, they will be meeting veterans face-to-face, connecting these veterans to earned benefits. It is an important mission. It's key to our commitment to continue serving Nevada's heroes.

Respectfully,
Kat Miller

Honoring Nevada's Heroes

Long Awaited Korean War Memorial Dedication

By Chuck N. Baker

(Boulder City) - For many years it was standard operating procedure for Americans who fought in Korea in the early 1950s to call their battle "The Forgotten War." There are many reasons why that description was apt. Even today, it bears some agreement by those who lived through it, and those who came later who know little of its history.

World War II was only five years in the past when President Harry Truman called up troops and sent them to Korea to defend the South from invasion by the North, and eventually from intervention by others. But even as our Army fought, the public largely wanted to file away thoughts of war. Peacetime prosperity was at hand, and thoughts of militaristic action did not fit into America's new cultural and economic lifestyle.

Just as it took many years for America to recognize and honor those who fought in Vietnam, it has taken a long time to fully appreciate, recognize and honor those who sacrificed in Korea. In Nevada, that well deserved recognition came to a head last month at the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Boulder City; under the direction of U.S. Army 1st Sgt. (Ret.) Chuck Johnson, hundreds of Americans representing a large diversity of Korean and numerous other heritages dedicated a memorial. It honors Americans who fought below the 38th parallel in ultra-extreme weather conditions that often defy description.

The cemetery is the final resting place of more than 9,126 Korean War veterans. "I promised them that I would do something for them and bring them home," Johnson said. "We (Korean War veterans) are not going to be forgotten." That "something" included a 7,220-pound monument unveiled by the members of the Korean War Veterans Association: Tibor Rubin Medal of Honor Las Vegas Chapter 329. Engraved on the stone are the names of 37 Nevadans who died fighting in the war, but the memorial stands in tribute to honor all those Americans who fought in that Asian nation. The names of the 37 were read aloud by Judy Ariola and Iris Keels.

There were many speakers who gave reverent remarks to the audience of several hundred; Kat Miller, Director of the Nevada Department of Veterans Services, noted, "The three-year war was brutal. (And) when the veterans came home, they were met with silence." She also pointed out some who fought later came home to distinguish themselves publicly including astronaut, John Glenn, actor, James Garner and radio personality, Casey Kasem. But there are also thousands who remain Missing in Action (MIA), including several from Nevada. She noted the men and women of the U.S. military came to the aid of those they didn't know, in the name of freedom and democracy.

Oliver Lee, president of the Korean Association of Las Vegas, welcomed all who attended and said, "Korean-Americans live in freedom in Las Vegas, thanks to those who served." Los Angeleno Wan-joong Kim, Consulate General of the Republic of Korea, praised those who defended South Korea and noted today South Korea can boast of having one of the top 10 economies in the world.

Music played a significant role in the event: Christy Molasky sang the "Star Spangled Banner," and a choral group of Korean women in colorful traditional dress of their homeland provided additional vocal music. Soloist Grace Eunhee Kim sang the Korean national anthem. The colors were posted by the Palo Verde High School Air Force ROTC. Ceremonies culminated as members of the Korean War Veterans Association unveiled the memorial, and attendees left their seats, quickly moving to the front to get a closer glimpse of the granite tribute.

Those who fought in Pusan, the Chosin Reservoir, Inchon, Osan and Heartbreak Ridge, among many other locales, were being remembered and revered on honored burial grounds thousands of miles away. Today especially, the phrase "They shall not be forgotten" rings true in Nevada.

Taking Flight While Staying Grounded

By Chuck N. Baker

(Las Vegas) - "Honor Flight" holds a solemn meaning for many; the charity raises money to take WWII and Korean War veterans to visit the national memorial of the war in which they participated. The trip is free of charge to the participating veterans. While in Washington D.C., they also get a chance to see the other national memorials, dedicated to those who served in other conflicts.

But as the age of WWII and Korean veterans creeps upward, some are not able to make the trip. The flights, which take place over the span of a weekend, can be difficult to navigate depending on the health of the participants. There are also veterans who are healthy enough for travel, but prefer not to fly for various reasons. So the leaders of the program came up with a workable alternative — the Honor Flight Experience.

The facilities of VegasPBS played host to an Honor Flight Experience in March. The organizers planned a day of honors during a festive lunch that included a film of the various monuments and memorials in our nation's Capitol. Dozens of veterans and family members were lauded for their service to our country. After the film was screened, the name of each veteran was called out, and volunteers fanned out to present them with Quilts of Valor and certificates honoring their military contributions. Cheers and applause filled the room and a few tears of happiness were shed as each veteran received their due.

Belinda Morse, Executive Director of Honor Flight Southern Nevada, emceed the event. After the above noted presentations were made, she asked everyone to stay seated for a few minutes while the next phase of the day was prepared. Then she reminisced about military life and explained that one of the more enjoyable experiences while serving Uncle Sam was daily Mail Call. News from home was generally positive and brought breaths of fresh air to those lucky enough to receive them.

In an effort to replicate those days, relatives of the veterans were asked to write letters to their family members who were being honored. Additionally, local school children were also asked to create letters of thanks with artwork. Those items were gathered and collated and placed inside individual envelopes. Then the names of those being honored were announced as in a regular Mail Call, and each veteran received their "letters from home."

In addition to Morse, some of the participants in the event included the TSA color guard lead by Fred Keeney, the Pledge of Allegiance led by Juan Rangel, VegasPBS General Manager Tom Axtell, PBS Director of Workforce training

Debra Solt, Quilt of Valor representative Louise Davenport, and the Metro Honor Guard.

As the veterans and their families filed outside, dozens of residents from the greater Southern Nevada community greeted them with cheers and applause, waving a sea of American flags. Amid shouts of congratulations, hands were extended and high-fives were the order of the day to pay further tribute to those being honored. Hugs and kisses topped off the celebration.

There was no out-of-state travel involved. The veterans never left southern Nevada. They headed home with wonderful thoughts and memories of their Honor Flight Experience that were so vivid; one could almost imagine hearing an Honor Flight plane landing in the parking lot of VegasPBS.

VegasPBS Documentary Features Las Vegas Vietnam Veterans

By Chuck N. Baker

(Las Vegas) — During a meeting of veterans at VegasPBS that included a screening of an original documentary film on the Vietnam War, attendees were asked if they wanted to share any pertinent comments about veterans' issues. One gentleman stood up and noted, "After WWII, everyone was a veteran! After Vietnam, there were still many veterans. But today, there are fewer veterans despite ongoing conflicts in the Middle East." He pointed out in some cases computers and technologies have replaced the need for actual soldiers. Still, he said it remains important to assist all veterans, whether it's filing for VA benefits or receiving medical help. Everyone agreed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) should remain a topic of great importance.

The documentary included on-screen comments from a dozen local Vietnam War veterans. The stories they told covered topics ranging from their enlistments, basic training, combat tours and the aftermath of their entire military experience. Entitled "Remembering Vietnam: Las Vegas," producers Gary Williams and Jeremy Helal culled the interviews from original short vignettes that ran on VegasPBS alongside the recent Ken Burns documentary, "The Vietnam War."

The Vegas producers put together a half-hour documentary; "Stories of Service," which were one-minute segments, edited together. The documentary included vintage, black and white battle footage of combat action in Vietnam. As the images and audio commentary of the on-screen interviews winded down, there were scenes of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington D.C., and scenes of local veterans organizations in and around the Las Vegas area.

Williams is an Army veteran employed by VegasPBS. He has produced documentaries about WWII and the Holocaust. In addition to his own military service, he explained his late father invested 30 years in the Army. When it came time to locate veterans to be included in his film, he enlisted the help of local individuals from chapters of the Vietnam Veterans of America. The interviewees represented different military services, and each one told of specific events they experienced during the war.

During comments by the audience after the screening, several veterans brought up the subject of PTSD and the fact that it took the government an extended period of time to address the issue and provide professional help to those affected. One man noted that after he received several months of medical attention for his combat wounds, he was then quickly medically discharged and left on his own to re-enter civilian life. It was a story that many in the audience,

of approximately 40 men and women, said they could relate to, as this was common.

Still, some pointed out today things are different. There are multiple organizations that exist to help younger veterans. There are also Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) available to provide free help concerning filing for VA benefits, including medical and educational assistance and financial compensation for wounds incurred through combat. While today there are fewer veterans than in the past, those attending agreed veterans are now treated with the respect and honor they deserve from the day they leave active duty which is a big improvement from the Vietnam years.

First Inaugural Vietnam War Veterans Day Recognized Across Nevada

By Terri Hendry and Chuck N. Baker

(Las Vegas, Carson City, Winnemucca, NV) – The first inaugural National Vietnam War Veterans Day was recognized across Nevada.

In Las Vegas, nearly 300 people attended a special wreath-laying on March 29th, the national day recently named to honor those who served in Vietnam. The event took place at the Las Vegas Veterans Memorial, located in front of the Grant Sawyer Building.

Additional ceremonies were held in Carson City and in Winnemucca on March 31st.

The date of March 29th was set aside in legislation signed into law by President Donald Trump in the spring of 2017 to honor the men and women who served and sacrificed in one of the longest conflicts in United States history. In 1973, March 29th was the date when combat and combat support units withdrew from South Vietnam.

The Vietnam War left an indelible mark on the American psyche. Returning Veterans did not always receive respectful welcomes upon their arrival home on American soil. There were 58,000 killed, never to return. The Vietnam War involved five U.S. Presidents spanning nearly two decades and impacting some 500,000 U.S. men and women who served their country.

For more information on the National Vietnam War Veterans Day go here:

<http://www.holidayscalendar.com/event/national-vietnam-war-veterans-day/>

WWII Army Nurse Turns 100!

(Reno, NV) - Happy 100th birthday Ms. Montoya! Thank you for your service as a nurse in WWII! Northern Nevada media members shared in the celebration:

<http://www.ktvn.com/.../100th-birthday-party-held-for-world-w...>

<http://www.kolotv.com/.../ne.../Veteran-turns-100-477990453.html>

Not Enough Months to Honor Nevada's Great Veterans and Veteran Supporters

By Chuck N. Baker

(Las Vegas) - Some individuals leave the military with a desire to continue serving their community and their fellow G.I.s. Some transition from active duty to a new designation — volunteer!

In Nevada, those who volunteer on behalf of veterans, going far above and beyond a casual assignment or two, are sought out and honored by Governor Brian Sandoval and the Department of Veterans Services. Each month, an individual is selected to join an elite few by receiving the designation, "Veteran of the Month."

In March, Marine Corps veteran Robert Jackson was so honored in a special ceremony at the Grant Sawyer Building in Las Vegas. The former Lance Corporal served in Operation Desert Storm. Currently he is a member of the Marine Corps League, the Marine Corps Riders and "Heroes in the Rough."

Jackson works tirelessly to assist service members in transitioning to civilian life. He often provides rehabilitative opportunities. As head of "Heroes in the Rough," he and other volunteers take wounded veterans, at no cost, to enjoy a round of golf. At the ceremony, he told those attending, "It's important for younger veterans to get out of the house and to stay active, on their road to leading productive lives." In addition to his work with "Heroes in the Rough," he attends veterans' funerals at the Boulder City Veterans Cemetery.

Governor Brian Sandoval told the audience the fact Jackson takes the time to attend veteran burials is reflective of his dedication in honoring the veterans' community. A fan of veterans and military, Sandoval appeared emotionally moved when he made the comment.

In addition to "Veteran of the Month," the State also honors a "Veteran Supporter of the Month" during the same ceremony. VegasPBS received this special honor and designation in March. The organization provides workforce training, economic development, grants and a host of events each month including Coffee & Conversation, Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans, as well as involvement at the Veterans Home in Boulder City, job fairs, recognition ceremonies and more.

Accepting on behalf of the company was Debra Solt, who directs the work force program for VegasPBS. In her comments she harkened back to the recent recession. She said veterans were coming home at the time and needed jobs, with only a limited number of jobs available. "They needed to get into a job

NOW!" she explained. Many of them also had families to support. She began to enroll them into specialized online education courses. "We trained them at a rapid pace in such areas as food service, customer service and computer certification. Many were able to find employment soon after graduating," she said.

The selection of "Veteran of the Month" and "Veteran Supporter of the Month" are made quarterly by the Veteran Service Commission.

To nominate a "Veteran of the Month" go here:

<http://www.veterans.nv.gov/page/veteran-of-the-month-program>

To nominate a "Veteran Supporter of the Month" go here:

<http://www.veterans.nv.gov/page/Veteran-Supporter-of-the-Month>

Gulf War Veteran? Free Gift for You!

The State of Kuwait is providing a special "thank you" to the men and women who served in Operation Desert Storm. Gulf War veterans may receive a free commemorative, first-edition book, *The Liberation of Kuwait*. It includes a companion, feature-length documentary on DVD. The set retails for \$49.95 but is yours, free, because of your service.

The high quality book was published in 2016 by Remember My Service Productions. It is full color, printed on heavy glossy paper. The 9" X 11" book has a hardcover and dust jacket.

We regret we cannot mail the free book sets due to cost. But you may arrange to pick up your free copy by emailing hendryt@veterans.nv.gov. We can make arrangements for you to pick up your copy from the nearest NDVS office. Thank you for your service!

Health and Wellness

New VA Tools to Better Manage Your Health Care Information

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4021>

Former VA Secretary Visits Nevada to Discuss Veteran Suicides

By Chuck N. Baker

(North Las Vegas) - Medical breakthroughs have overcome physical and mental health problems since modern medicine began. But as in all endeavors, some problems take longer to solve than others. Suicide by veterans and active-duty military is such an area.

Certainly some progress has been made. But there is much more to be done. To that end, former Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. David Shulkin and other VA medical professionals developed several programs designed to address veteran suicide. Last month Shulkin visited the Southern Nevada Health Care Clinic to talk about this topic to employees, veterans and others. Several high-ranking elected officials also attended.

Shulkin announced Las Vegas is one of eight cities to participate in the "Mayor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families." The goal of the program is to reduce suicides among those individuals by using a public health approach as well as prevention. He said the VA is now treating the mental health of veterans as well as their physical health.

Men and women who have been in combat or who have served several overseas deployments can be at-risk. But in many cases, veterans who have never been deployed or never seen combat are also often prone to suicide. After the meeting, Shulkin was asked about that unique condition. He said, "We believe there might be something protective about being in a unit with your combat buddies." He added, "When people are isolated and they don't feel a part of a community, that's when they often look toward something as dramatic as suicide. So we're trying to figure out what we can do for those who are stateside to make sure they are supported in the same way."

Governor Brian Sandoval was asked about state programs. He touted the Nevada Department of Veterans Services and its work within the veterans' community. He praised that Nevada will now take part in the "Mayor's Challenge" and will also now be able to take advantage of the additional

resources the program will provide. He emphasized, "Helping to stop veteran suicide is an absolute priority for me."

Congresswoman Dina Titus (D-NV) spoke to the group noting, "We need to have a strong VA. We don't need to sell it off; we need to keep it strong." She praised the decision by Shulkin to give the mental health of veterans the attention it needs.

Mayor John Lee of North Las Vegas said there are some 40,000 jobs tied to the military in his city, and lauded the patriotic spirit of its citizens. Las Vegas City Councilman Steve Seroka, a retired Air Force colonel, said "It's great to be among friends," acknowledging all the veterans in the auditorium. He also praised Nevada officials saying "We have leaders who understand these are not partisan issues. (Those afflicted) are American veterans."

The VA states there are several myths concerning suicide it works to counter. The number one myth is that asking about suicide may lead a veteran to take their life. The reality is that asking about suicide does not create suicidal thoughts. The act of asking the question simply gives veterans permission to talk about their thoughts or feelings.

There is help available. The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text.

Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, [chat online](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ChatTermsOfService.aspx) (Josh, insert this: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ChatTermsOfService.aspx>) or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for [deaf and hard of hearing](#) (Josh, insert this: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/GetHelp/Accessibility.aspx>) individuals is available.

In some instances, callers may experience difficulty connecting with the Veterans Crisis Line. If you have trouble reaching the call line, please [click here](#) (Insert this: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ChatTermsOfService.aspx?account=Veterans%20Chat>) to connect to chat, or text **838255** for immediate support.

New Northern Nevada State Veterans Home Construction Update

(Sparks, NV) – Construction on the new Northern Nevada State Veterans Home remains on schedule for a ribbon-cutting at the end of 2018. NDVS Deputy Director Wendy Simons provided an update on the Home during a Town Hall on March 28, 2018 at the Washoe County Senior Center.

Interest in the Home remains high. To-date, some 50 people are now signed up on the "interest" list, which means they want more information about becoming a resident at the skilled nursing care facility. To fill out a form of interest or view the project construction "live" from our website, go here:

<http://www.veterans.nv.gov/page/Northern-Nevada-Veterans-Home>

When complete, the new 96-bed Veterans Home in Sparks, Nevada is designed to feel just like home, not a facility. It will feature several amenities, including a sports bar, coffee bistro, barber and beauty shop as well as a Town Hall Center.

The new Home was recently featured on "Face the State" with Channel 2's Arianna Bennett. To watch, click here:

<http://www.ktvn.com/category/169828/face-the-state>

Addiction Resources:

<https://addictionresource.com/addiction/veterans-and-substance-abuse/>

Annual Women Services Report is Out

<https://www.military.com/military-report/annual-women-services-report.html>

Programs and Services for You

Meet the New Women Veterans Program/Rural Outreach Coordinator

Air Force veteran Janel Gibson is the newest member of the NDVS team!

Gibson is the coordinator for the Women Veterans Program. She will also be traveling across Nevada conducting outreach to rural veterans. In her new position, she will assist the Nevada Women Veterans Advisory Committee and oversee the coordination of programs that address the unique needs of women veterans.

Gibson spent most of her military career in Finance, serving in numerous positions including; Non Commissioned Officer in Charge, Accounting, Flight Chief, Customer Service, Unit Deployment Manager, Recourse Advisor, Acting Superintendent and Acting First Sergeant. Most recently, she served as the Financial Analysis Flight Chief, 99th Comptroller Squadron, Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. She holds Associate Degrees in Accounting and Business Management.

During her service, Gibson deployed to New Kabul Compound and Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and was assigned to the United States Forces-Afghanistan, J8. While deployed she filled the roll as a Senior Budget Analyst and also provided perimeter security to support New Kabul Compound. She also deployed to Niamey, Niger as a Disbursing Agent in support of Joint Special Operations Air Detachment, Special Operations Command-Africa.

Gibson will be based out of Las Vegas in the Grant Sawyer Building. She may be reached at (702) 486-5627 or gibsonj@veterans.nv.gov.

Free NVA Training in Southern Nevada

By Terri Hendry

(Henderson, NV) – The Nevada Department of Veterans Services is hosting a free, two-day training workshop to set you on the path to becoming a Nevada Veterans Advocate (NVA). What do NVA's do? Simply put, they are volunteers who help connect veterans to earned benefits and resources.

The workshop will help introduce, train, and update those interested in becoming an NVA. Certificates will be provided to those who complete the two-day course.

The workshop will take place over the weekend of April 7th through April 8th at the Sunset Station Hotel and Casino. The sessions run from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. each day.

A complimentary continental breakfast will be provided each day as well as snacks and beverages. Vouchers are available for southern Nevada attendees who will be traveling in excess of 60 miles, but to qualify, you must be pre-approved by contacting McKensie King at 775-321-4708 or kingm@veterans.nv.gov.

You may save a seat for the workshop by pre-registering here:
<http://bit.ly/2GUIMPi>

Registration is also available on Saturday, April 7th beginning at 7:00 a.m. at the sign-in table in front of the event.

Guitars for Vets



(Reno, NV) – A special graduation ceremony was held in Reno last month according to Tim Berry, founder of the Reno chapter of Guitars for Vets. On March 8th, one of his students graduated after completing 10 lessons to earn ownership of a brand new Fender guitar with steel strings.

What is Guitars for Vets? Simply stated, the program offers healing through the joy of music. Thousands of veterans are afflicted with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). But many are finding hope and healing behind the wood and strings of an acoustic guitar. Music can help soldiers cope. That's why Guitars for Vets provides veterans with guitars and a forum to learn how to play.

Please read to learn more out about the program and how you can help those who served rediscover their joy through the power of music by going here: <http://www.guitars4vets.org/>

There are now two chapters in Nevada.

In Reno, contact Tim Berry at: g4v.reno.nv@gmail.com

In Gardnerville, Gary Swift is the contact at: g4v.gardnerville.nv@gmail.com

Eligible Volunteers receive Free SafeTALK Training

By Cathy Yates

It is called safeTALK and it's one weapon in the fight against veteran suicide. The Nevada Department of Veterans Services is providing FREE safeTALK training to eligible Nevada Veterans Advocates (NVAs). NVAs are volunteers who complete an online educational course and receive their NVA certificate. The training enables them to better serve and connect veterans to earned benefits. Go here to learn more: <http://www.veterans.nv.gov/page/veterans-advocacy>

On February 28th, seven NVAs participated in SafeTALK training. The next class will be offered in Reno on April 26 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the TMCC/Meadowood Campus. To sign up for the safeTALK April class, contact Cathy Yates at 775-321-4774 or yatesc@veterans.nv.gov.

Additionally, three NVAs volunteered for the 11th Annual Nevada Urban Indians Diabetes Health Fair, held on March 17 at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno. Cynthia Donahue, Graham Stafford and Seth Welman, spoke to 104 people who visited the NDVS table. Our Veteran Service Officers will be following up with eight veterans who attended the event and requested further benefit information.

April is shaping up to be a very busy month for outreach. We are pleased to have so many NVAs who are willing to volunteer their time to speak to veterans and family members and provide Nevada benefit information at these events.

April Outreach events include:

- Nevada Women's Expo on April 6 and 7
- Office of Military and Legal Assistance Resource Fair at the VA in Reno on April 13 and 14
- Veterans Housing Summit, April 14
- Veterans Job and Resource Fair at TMCC on April 20
- Reno Earth Day at Idlewild Park on April 22
- Office of Military and Legal Assistance Resource Fair in Winnemucca at the National Guard Armory on April 27 and 28. **If you are interested in volunteering for any of these events, contact Cathy Yates.**

Operation Recognition

(Boulder City, NV) – For Charm McElree, her passion with *Operation Recognition* began in San Bernardino, California after she saw a 91-year-old veteran walk across a high school stage to receive his diploma. McElree said right then and there, she was hooked after seeing the joy and tears of happiness on his face.

Operation Recognition is a program honoring eligible veterans by helping them receive their high school diploma, if they left high school to serve their country before they had a chance to graduate. The veteran must have served in the Armed Forces of the United States between the dates of September 16, 1940 and May 7, 1975.

A veteran, guardian of a disabled veteran or a member of the deceased veteran's family may apply on behalf of the deceased veteran. Eligible veterans, who obtained their GED while in the service during the dates listed, may also apply.

McElree now lives in Boulder City, Nevada. She helps veterans across Nevada, and in other states, in receiving their diploma. To apply, she said you will need a copy of the veteran's DD214. Eligible veterans must have an Honorable Discharge. McElree also said she will help in obtaining an application for the diploma issued by the state of interest.

For more on the program, check this out.

<https://vimeo.com/238329601>

To contact McElree call (760) 885-0935 or email Cmcelree2000@yahoo.com

Nuts and Bolts on Housing Benefits for Veterans

By Chuck N. Baker

(North Las Vegas) – Crosby, Stills and Nash sang about it, “Our house, is a very, very, very fine house.” Rosemary Clooney also sang about it, “Com’on-a my House,” and Frank Sinatra did too, “The House I Live In.” Home ownership can inspire and fulfill the American dream. But because it is such a major purchase, there is a lot to consider and a lot to learn.

The Nevada Department of Veterans Services recently held a Veterans Benefits Seminar that described a variety of home buying programs specifically geared to help veterans buy a home. There are also programs that make home ownership more affordable for veterans.

Nia Girma of Nevada's Housing Division of the Department of Business and Industry explained qualified veterans, who are first-time homebuyers, can see federal tax savings over the life of their mortgage. The savings are provided through the Mortgage Credit Certificate program or MCC. Benefits of the program include savings of up to 30 percent of the interest paid on a mortgage loan and a waiver of MCC fees. There are requirements that must be met and those who are approved must take a homebuyer education course to learn the ins and outs of home ownership. For more information, go to HomeisPossibleNV.org.

Scott Robinson, Vice President of the Las Vegas Chapter of the Veterans Association of Real Estate Professionals (VAREP), gave a presentation detailing many regulations of a VA loan guarantee. He also explained the need for veterans to first obtain Certificates of Eligibility before applying for a loan. VAREP representatives and certified Veteran Service Officers can assist veterans with obtaining Certificates of Eligibility. For more information, veterans can call (888) 768-2132. The VAREP organization is a non-profit group whose members are licensed Realtors. It provides financial-literary education, VA loan guarantee awareness and related information for active-duty and veterans in the United States.

Robinson demystified one myth about "VA loans." The VA does not actually fund these loans. In fact, the loans are provided by traditional banks or mortgage lenders, and are guaranteed by the VA. The loans are insured by the VA so that if a veteran defaults on a mortgage, the government will pay the lender. Some of the benefits of VA guaranteed loans include no down payments, flexible credit guidelines, competitive interest rates and flexible debt-to-income ratios. Veterans defaulting on their loans are rare, and to date, more than 18 million home loans have been made through VA programs.

The State of Nevada also has a "Home is Possible for Heroes" program that helps veterans and active-duty military members buy homes. One of the benefits is a below-market, fixed interest rate on a 30-year loan. The program reduces your monthly mortgage payment, there is no first-time homebuyer requirement, and it can be combined with the Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) with program fees waived. For more information, visit: <https://www.homeispossiblenv.org/program/home-possible-heroes>

Home Builder Richmond American provided information for active-duty personnel who want to purchase a home. In addition to the regular VA requirements and benefits, the company explained the Basic Allowance for Housing, or BAH program. That program provides financing for members of the military assigned to permanent duty stations like Nellis AFB, but who are not furnished with government housing. The dollar amount is adjusted by duty location, pay grade and dependents.

Ernie Gonzales, president of the local VAREP chapter, was asked about the availability of new homes in southern Nevada. He pointed out that builders in Las Vegas and elsewhere have begun to get more active in today's economy. In Boulder City, there are currently two new home developments under construction. And in Pahrump, builders have also started new neighborhoods.

In a published statement, Son Nguyen, the founder of the organization, wrote that while VAREP programs "may not end the epidemic of homelessness among the veteran community ... (it) can prevent it from happening in the future, one veteran at a time."

Buy a Veterans License Plate and Benefit Veterans

The State of Nevada offers a very unique way for you to show the world you're a veteran, proud of your country and your duty. At the same time, your display will also be helping other veterans across the Silver State. Veteran license plates are available through the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and with each purchase, the money goes towards veterans outreach programs all aimed at connecting veterans to benefits, services and programs to which they are entitled and have earned.

Any veteran, his or her spouse, parent or child can purchase a veteran license plate. The initial cost for veterans plates with a standard number is \$61 plus a Prison Industry fee of 50 cents per plate. The annual renewal fee is \$30. The initial cost for personalized versions is \$97 plus a Prison Industry fee of 50 cents per plate. The annual renewal is \$50. Twenty-five dollars of the initial fee and \$20 of the annual renewal are used to support outreach programs and services for veterans and their families administered by Nevada Department of Veterans Services.

Plates with standard numbers are in stock at DMV Full Service Offices. You can order personalized versions by mail, fax, or in person at a DMV Full Service Office too. There are Veteran Unit Decal Plates available as well. The DMV is authorized to offer veterans plates with extra space for unit logos. Army Airborne and Navy Seabees are available. So are Air Force and Army logos on National Guard Plates.

Motorcycle plates for Army Airborne and Navy Seabees are available! Unfortunately, they are not kept in stock so you will have to custom-order yours.

Visit the Nevada DMV by clicking here:

<http://dmvnev.com/platesveterans.htm>

News You Can Use

More Information! VA Announces Rollout and Application Process for New Veterans ID Card

(WASHINGTON D.C.) The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the application process for the national Veterans Identification Card (VIC) is now available for veterans — yet another action honoring their service.

This has been mandated through legislation since 2015 to honor veterans, and today's rollout of the ID card fulfills that overdue promise.

Only those veterans with honorable service will be able to apply for the ID card, which will provide proof of military service, and may be accepted by retailers in lieu of the standard DD-214 form to obtain promotional discounts and other services offered to veterans.

“The new Veterans Identification Card provides a safer and more convenient and efficient way for most veterans to show proof of service,” said former VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. “With the card, Veterans with honorable service to our nation will no longer need to carry their paper DD-214s to obtain veteran discounts and other services.”

The VIC provides a more portable and secure alternative for those who served the minimum obligated time in service, but did not meet the retirement or medical discharge threshold. Veterans who served in the armed forces, including the reserve components, and who have a discharge of honorable or general (under honorable conditions) can request a VIC.

To request a VIC, veterans must visit [vets.gov](https://www.vets.gov), click on “[Apply for Printed Veteran ID Card](#)” on the bottom left of the page and sign in or create an account.

Veterans who apply for a card should receive it within 60 days and can check delivery status of their cards at www.vets.gov. A digital version of the VIC will be available online by mid-December.

Veterans Speak Up and are Heard by Nevada Lawmakers

By Terri Hendry and Chuck N. Baker

(Las Vegas and Reno, NV) – The 2018 Nevada Veterans Legislative Symposia is held every other year when the Nevada Legislature is between sessions. During these "off" years, one symposium is held in northern Nevada, the other in southern Nevada.

The events provide an opportunity for participants to identify and prioritize key areas in the veterans' community in preparation for the 2019 Session of the Nevada Legislature. Federal issues are brought before Nevada's Congressional delegation for review and consideration.

On March 24, approximately 100 people packed the room at the Washoe County Senior Center. They heard from State Senator Julia Raffi and Assemblyman Jim Wheeler, along with Nevada's Congressional delegation representatives.

United Veteran Legislative Council Chairman Tony Yarbrough and Cesar Melgarejo, with the Legislative Counsel Bureau, outlined the legislative process. Both stressed the importance of participation during the legislative session. Visibility of veteran service organization hats and pins during legislative hearings makes a difference.

There were 23 issues identified. The top five were as follows:

1. Continue funding the Adopt-A-Vet Dental Program
2. Enhance the women veteran coordinator position to include being a Veteran Service Officer
3. Improve support and training to veteran caregivers
4. Provide more programs to educate families about suicide prevention
5. Expand affordable or low-cost mortgage housing opportunities for veterans and military

The following weekend in Las Vegas, it was standing room only as participants jammed into the first floor auditorium of the Southern Nevada VA Medical Center.

A report, outlining all the identified issues and priorities, will be available within 30 days. The information will be posted on the front page of our website at www.veterans.nv.gov

You may also stay current on bills or legislation relevant to veterans on the same website once the 2019 Legislative Session commences.

Ronny Jackson named VA Secretary

<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/03/28/trump-says-hell-nominate-white-house-doctor-ronny-jackson-to-be-va-secretary-490886>

Critical Deficiencies Found at VA Medical Center in Washington D.C.

<https://www.va.gov/oig/pubs/press-releases/VAOIG-DCVAMCPressRelease.pdf>

Things Have Changed for LGBTQ Veterans!

By Rob Williams

(Las Vegas and Reno, NV) - NDVS is currently conducting an Outreach Program to connect with LGBTQ veterans who were discharged under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) and previous DOD policies. Current statistics indicate approximately 14,500 LGBTQ service members were discharged under DADT.

NDVS is working to connect with these veterans who were discharged in an improper or inequitable manner without aggravating factors. Veterans who were discharged less than honorably due to their LGBTQ orientation are encouraged to work with an NDVS Veteran Service Officer to:

- Upgrade the character and narrative of their discharge
- Update the separation and reentry codes on the DD-214

Having a veteran's discharge upgraded may give them access to benefits such as education, job and vocational training, VA home loans and health care. Such benefits may not have been available to veterans with less than honorable discharges.

NDVS has a team of Nevada Veterans Advocates who are located throughout the State. They can answer general questions about veteran benefits and help organize the paper work for the upgrade appeals.

Our Veteran Service Officers will file the actual appeal and advocate for the LGBTQ veteran.

The contact info to make an appointment with one of our Veteran Service Officers is as follows:

Reno	775/321-4880
Las Vegas	702/224-6025
Elko	775/777-1000

First Woman to Command a U.S. Aircraft Carrier?

https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/03/09/could-be-first-female-carrier-co-history.html?ESRC=eb_180312.nl

Retention of Female Submariners on Par with Men

https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/03/08/retention-female-submariners-par-men.html?ESRC=eb_180308.nl

Employment and Education

Become a Patriot Employer!

By Terri Hendry

(Las Vegas, NV) – Depending on your skill set, landing a good paying job can be a challenge, particularly for military members transitioning from service to civilian life. That's in part what the Patriot Employer Program seeks to address.

The Patriot Employer Program provides employers with the tools and knowledge to hire and retain veterans. Just as important, it also demonstrates to Nevada businesses the benefits of utilizing men and women who have served in the Armed Forces.

The benefits of hiring veterans go far beyond tax breaks and incentives. Anyone who has served in the military is familiar with discipline and teamwork. They have respect for policies and procedures and they know the importance of overcoming adversity to complete the mission.

Most former military are comfortable with technology and have been in positions where they have had to learn new skills or adapt quickly. They also come with a set of values that would make any business or company proud that includes integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness. They know what it means to put in a "good, honest day of work."

The Patriot Employer Program provides businesses with a toolkit. Employers also receive knowledge through an online course. Upon completion of the course, that business is eligible to receive a decal and certificate, signed by the Governor to be presented in a ceremony and then proudly displayed.

For more information on the Patriot Employer Program click here:

<http://www.veterans.nv.gov/page/Patriot-Employer-Program>

Always Remember, Never Forget

In April 1992 Civil War erupted in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bosnia-Herzegovina was the scene for the most violent armed conflict in Europe since World War II.

Read more about the U.S. Army's Role here:

https://history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-97-1/cmhPub_70-97-1.pdf

The *Los Angeles Times* looks at the role of U.S. Marines in the conflict:

http://articles.latimes.com/1995-12-11/news/mn-12975_1_bosnian-serb-news

The U.S. Navy provides dates of its Bosnia Operations:

http://www.navy.mil/navydata/nav_legacy.asp?id=248

Here is an overview of the U.S. Air Force role in Bosnia:

<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a391295.pdf>

There's this from the National Guard Association of the United States

<https://www.ngaus.org/newsroom/news/proving-ground-bosnia-mission>

By the year 2000, here is more on the National Guard's role:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/05/world/army-will-give-national-guard-the-entire-us-role-in-bosnia.html>

The Small Wars Journal provides an overall assessment of the mission:

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-war-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina-1992-1995-an-assessment-of-the-war%E2%80%99s-historical-context-a>

More on the U-S involvement:

<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h2071.html>

Medal of Honor Spotlight: Dr. Mary Edwards Walker

Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was a surgeon, POW and a spy! Of the nearly 3,500 Medal of Honor recipients, she was the only woman to receive one and just before her death, it was rescinded! But her story doesn't end there! Read all about this trail blazer here:

https://www.military.com/history/dr-mary-edwards-walker.html?ESRC=eb_180313.nl

Mark Your Calendar

Dates to Remember

April is the Month of the Military Child

April 5 – Gold Star Spouses Day

April 14 – Air Force Reserves Birthday

April 23 – Army Reserves Birthday

Some Key Veteran Events

Veteran's Career Information Seminar

Career assistance programs for veterans with Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits and/or qualified dependents.

April 5, 12, 19, 26

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

2625 S Rainbow, Suite B100, Las Vegas, *one block south of Sahara on the West side of Rainbow, at the corner of Laredo and Rainbow.* For more information call 702-853-7482 and ask for Shelley or Eva.

Veterans Involved Parkinson's VIP Support Group

This group is for veterans and those who are looking to support veterans who have been adversely impacted by the physical and emotional effects of Parkinson's disease.

April 6

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

VFW Post 10047 4337 North Las Vegas Blvd. Las Vegas. For more information call Jamillah Ali-Rahman at 702-381-4141 or email at: friendsofparkinsonslv@gmail.com

Nevada Veterans Advocate Two-Day Free Training Workshop

Free training sets you on the path toward becoming a Nevada Veterans Advocate, who helps connect veterans to earned benefits.

Registration now CLOSED.

April 7-8

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. both days

Suncoast Hotel & Casino, 1301 West Sunset Road, Henderson. For more information contact McKensie King at 775-321-4708 or email at: Kingm@veterans.nv.gov

Ask A Lawyer

Free legal services to veterans provided through Nevada Legal Services. Click link for specific services provided: <https://www.lacsn.org/practice-areas/military-veterans>

April 13, 23

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Northeast Primary Care Clinic

4461 East Charleston Blvd., Las Vegas

For more information call 702-386-1070

Office of Military Legal Assistance

Free legal assistance in providing wills and powers of attorney as well as other civil matters to military members and veterans through the Attorney General's Office.

April 13-14

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Reno VA Medical Center

975 Kirman Avenue

Rooms L1927 and L1929

April 27-28

Winnemucca Armory

735 West 4th Street, Winnemucca

For more information visit: <http://nvagomla.nv.gov/>

Veteran Service Commission Meeting

April 19

9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Nevada Department of Veteran Services Headquarters

6630C South McCarran Blvd. Suite 204, Reno

Conference Room

Saturday Night Survivors Ride

Get out of the house and have some fun riding a FREE Trike (3 wheel bike) provided by Forgotten Not Gone

April 7, 14, 21, 28

Starts at 8:00 p.m.

Meet at The Forgotten Not Gone Headquarters located at 3355 Clayton Street, Suite 15, North Las Vegas, 1 mile from the VA Recovery Center off Cheyenne on Clayton. For more information call 702-706-5777 or email at:

Trikes@ForgottenNotGone.Org

Veteran's Coffee Talk

Opportunity for veterans to gather, chat and learn. April topics are; learning to navigate the VA system and finding out about benefits you have earned.

April 17 in Summerlin, 8885 West Charleston Blvd.,

April 23 in Henderson, 1000 North Green Valley Parkway

For times and other information contact Rob Cole at rcole8@humana.com

For more April 2018 events visit our NDVS calendar at:

<http://www.veterans.nv.gov/calendar>

You may also post your own veterans events on the NDVS calendar by signing up for VetNet at: <http://www.veterans.nv.gov/>